



SWATANTRA PARTY MANIFESTO

TO PROSPERITY THROUGH FREEDOM

1. Once or twice in a generation the call comes to a free people to make a momentous decision. Such a challenge to democracy will come in February 1962 when the people of India will have an opportunity to choose a new Parliament and a new Government and State Legislatures, which may more fully and faithfully reflect their needs and their aspirations and which may be capable of evoking the best that is in the people.

2. After fifteen years of national independence, the Indian people experience a sense of deep disappointment. They feel the need for a clean and efficient administration. They feel that they are not free but are at the mercy of officials and partymen. Those who are engaged in productive and distributive activities wish to be released from the fetters of bureaucracy so that their dynamism may take the country forward faster and more happily than is now the case. They want to see an end to the growing

statism of the ruling party, the maladministration, the manoeuvres and intrigues of those in office, their indifference to grievances, the destruction of social bonds by thoughtless legislation, the neglect of the religious spirit which inspires selfless conduct, the deterioration of law and order in various parts of the country, and, above all, the added humiliation of Chinese occupation of part of our soil.

Need for an Opposition

3. Clean and efficient government, which the people need and deserve but which they do not today enjoy, requires not only a good party in office but a strong and vigilant Opposition. Any government, however good it is to start with, must inevitably become irresponsible and arbitrary if it is not subjected to the criticism of an effective opposition and its readiness to replace it. The degeneration of the Congress government over the past fifteen years is largely the result of the absence of such an opposition. Parties like the Socialist parties and a Fifth Column like the Communist Party cannot provide such an Opposition.

4. Led by the veteran patriot, Rajaji, the Swatantra Party was organised to provide this missing component in the democratic framework of our national life. If the electorate gives it a mandate, the country will be equipped, for the first time, with an Opposition with a clear-cut alternative way of governance which can take over from the present ruling party whenever the people call upon it to do so. Every voter who realises the importance of such an Opposition and who does not want the all-embracing statism of the Congress Party cannot but vote for the Swatantra Party candidate in every constituency where one is put up.

5. One of the significant principles of the Swatantra Party is that it will not seek to curb the freedom of its members, whether in the legislatures or outside, to give expression to their personal convictions in any matter not included in the Party's Statement of Policy

or Manifesto. This would guarantee that national views will prevail and not those of the majority within the ruling party as is now happening under the Congress regime.

6. The Swatantra Party is a new party only two years old. It is severely limited in the way of material resources by reason of the lack of vision, suicidal short-term selfishness and surrender to intimidation on the part of the vast majority of those with means. It will, none the less, do its best within its capabilities to give a substantial part of the electorate an opportunity to exercise a choice between the two distinct ways of life and governance represented by the Congress Party and the Swatantra Party.

Clear-cut Alternative

7. The Congress Party claims special credit for all things done by the Government during these past fourteen years. Much of it is obviously what any government which collects taxes and has undertaken the duties of administration must do. Such achievements cannot be claimed as a special merit of the Congress Party.

8. The Congress Party as now led stands for a system where all real political and economic power and all responsibility is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a party in office. This has resulted in a tyrannical regulation of national life through controls, permits and licences, progressively denying opportunities to the people to participate in the country's economic development. It has meant heavy and oppressive taxes and higher and yet higher prices. It has meant reckless and wasteful expenditure, spiralling inflation and black-markets. A reduction in even the miserable standard of subsistence of the people in order to make possible indulgence in wasteful projects marked by gigantism is inherent in the planning of the party in power. It has sacrificed the immediate interests of the common man to near-communist

planning by subordinating his interests to spectacular long-term projects. It has, by its erroneous policy of putting citizens at the mercy of officials, ministers and party bosses, fostered widespread corruption resulting in the breakdown of moral values.

9. The Swatantra Party's way of governance, in contrast, is based on faith in the people leading to ordered progress. It keeps the individual citizen with his unquenchable impulse towards self-expression in the centre of the picture. All governance must subserve this end. The Swatantra Party stands for the principles Mahatma Gandhi always pleaded for, that government is best which governs the least, and the diffusion of power provides the best climate for the citizen's freedom, so that the people may grow to their full stature.

10. The Swatantra Party pledges itself, given the opportunity, to work for the following objectives and policies:

II

The Common Man

11. In pursuance of its fundamental policies, the Swatantra Party stands, first and foremost, for the common man; for providing him with food, clothing and shelter, as the primary obligation of government; for fuller employment, production of more foodgrains, more small irrigation works, more schools, and more small industries producing goods which the common man consumes.

12. Top priority will be given to the supply of clean drinking water in rural areas and to housing not only in urban and suburban areas but also in the countryside.

13. The Party recognises the supreme importance

of the development of roads, culverts and bridges and of road and inland water transport.

14. Mobile ambulance facilities will be organised so as to enable the rural population to obtain the services of well-equipped medical institutions without hardship or loss of time.

15. These objectives are within the easy reach of the country if funds now being spent on spectacular and gigantic projects unrelated to the immediate needs of the people or in great part being wasted in their application to unproductive enterprises are diverted to a programme of cheap clothing and the stimulation of small-scale modernised industries which provide gainful employment to a large body of labour at low capital cost, making it possible for all able-bodied persons in the country to find employment.

End Inflation

16. An honest rupee and stable prices are the best friends of the common man. Without them the common man is on the way to ruin and the middle classes are doomed. The Congress Party has filched from the poor man the hard-earned rewards of his labour and enterprise by letting inflation loose on the country, resulting in a continuously steep rise in prices from year to year during the last five years. The Swatantra Party will reverse the ruinous policies that have brought this about.

Reduce Taxation

17. The Party will enforce a drastic reduction in the present excessive burden of taxes which hampers production and employment, including *inter alia* the reorganisation and reform of the Sales Tax so as to minimise harassment and bring it in harmony with the conditions of the small traders in our country. A reduction in indirect taxation will bring down the price of commodities in daily use by the people. Direct taxes will be so regulated as to release the

creative genius of our people for productive purposes which will meet the country's needs and raise its level of prosperity.

18. Through such policies alone would the real income and standard of life of the bulk of the peasantry and agricultural labour in the villages and the middle and working classes in the cities which have been stagnating throughout the past decade be enabled to rise. The energies of the Indian people cannot be harnessed in furtherance of the policy embodied in the current pattern of planning which sanctifies misery in the name of progress and tries to build the uncertain prosperity of a distant future on the privations of today, a policy which has been borrowed from countries under totalitarian dictatorship.

III

Agriculture

19. Agriculture will receive priority and be put on a sound basis, automatically leading to the emergence of a viable industrial sector.

20. The Swatantra Party is convinced that, in a predominantly agricultural country like ours, the people can advance only if the village economy is restored to its self-generating vitality on the basis of peasant proprietorship. The Party will respect the property rights of the peasants in their holdings, big or small, and thereby remove uncertainties and provide incentives.

Self-Employed Peasantry

21. The Party stands for the independent and self-employed farmer, who should be provided with facilities for the intensive cultivation of his land in the form of water, fertiliser, seed, tools, credit and improved techniques. The Swatantra Party is opposed

to and will reverse without creating fresh inequities all expropriatory measures which among other things deprive the peasant population of sound rural leadership.

22. The Swatantra Party will initiate and support all reforms such as will bring about harmonious relations between owners and tenants and labour, and will oppose every move calculated to create uncertainty, apathy and conflict.

Against Collective Farming

23. The Swatantra Party stands for land reforms without expropriation in any form including that which is directly or indirectly involved in collective farming camouflaged as "joint cooperative farming" under official control. The Party believes in every form of genuine cooperative effort such as service co-operatives, industrial cooperatives, consumer cooperatives and cooperative banks, but not as a means to collectivisation of land.

24. The Swatantra Party will repeal such amendments to the Constitution as have enabled the Congress Party to expropriate land belonging to peasant proprietors on payment of grossly inadequate compensation and will secure real compensation to those agriculturists who have been so expropriated under the guise of land reform.

25. The Swatantra Party stands for a fair deal to the farmer and holds that the peasants who under difficult conditions follow the avocation of producing food for the nation should not be taxed but should be adequately rewarded for their service. It will

- (a) abolish taxes on land except to the extent necessary for maintaining ownership records;
- (b) take steps to support an adequate level of agricultural prices in parity with the prices of industrial commodities required for rural life; and
- (c) establish an insurance fund against natural calamities.

Agricultural Labour

26. The Swatantra Party stands for an adequate wage to landless agricultural labour and for the protection of permanently employed labour in agriculture. The problem of landless labourers is in substance an aspect of the problem of rural unemployment and the Party's policy of the establishment of small industrial units will help in opening avenues of employment and reduce the pressure on land.

Electrification

27. The Swatantra Party will

- (a) give special attention to speedy electrification in rural areas;
- (b) establish small-scale modernised industries in the countryside in order to divert surplus agricultural labour; and
- (c) provide technical education and workshop services to help agricultural and other machinery being kept in good order.

28. The Swatantra Party will organise the farmers to improve the breed of cattle, to afforest available land not acquired for agriculture and to reclaim waste land through the agency of enterprising farmers and concessional grants for limited periods, giving priority to the poor and backward agricultural classes.

IV

Industry and Trade

29. The Party will seek to ensure the widest possible distribution of industrial ownership through measures such as the establishment of investment societies and trusts through which the small man may

make his modest investment, and by facilitating the provision of employees' shares so that a large body of employees may share in the ownership of the concerns for which they work. In these ways and through the stabilisation of peasant proprietorship on the land, a democracy consisting of men interested in production of every kind would be helped to emerge.

Role of Government

30. The Party is opposed to nationalisation. The role of government in industry and trade should be that of a helper and regulator, but not a participant. The business of Government is government, not business. There is a great deal that government can do in a developing country, through the development of roads and other forms of communications, transport and cheap electric power. Today, these functions of government are being neglected, while government needlessly enters the field of trade and manufacture of products, not all of which are of any significance to the life of the country.

Balanced Development

31. The Swatantra Party stands for the balanced development of capital goods industries, organised consumer goods industries and rural industries that afford supplementary employment in the processing of the products of agriculture. While not opposed to the development of heavy and basic industries commensurate with the availability of resources, the Party rejects the lop-sided priority given to heavy industry and the neglect of agriculture, cottage industries and organised and light industries producing consumer goods which help to make life happy for people with low-grade incomes.

32. The Party holds that a great part of the process of industrialisation must take place through decentralised distribution of industry so as to reduce regional disparities. It stands for the preservation of the freedom of the small and self-employed artisan,

craftsman and trader. The Party stands for nursing the spirit of industry as distinguished from what is called industrialisation. In these matters, the Party follows Mahatma Gandhi and is opposed to the ruling party's imitation of Soviet policy.

33. The Swatantra Party stands for the encouragement of private enterprise, activated where necessary by loans and aids, and for widespread rural public works in order to create employment opportunities for the people everywhere so as to reduce the pressure on the land.

34. The Swatantra Party will rectify the confusion and corruption which have entered the economy on account of controls, permits, licences and quotas at the disposal of the ruling party and of the officials taking their cue from that party.

Trusteeship

35. The Party believes that the free choice of the producer, the investor, the worker and the consumer must be given due place and importance. It believes in the incentives for higher production and expansion inherent in competitive enterprise, with adequate safeguards for the protection of labour and against unreasonable prices, profits and dividends in those cases where there is no competition or where competition is not adequate to secure the necessary corrective. Adhering to the principles of Trusteeship enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi, which is inherent in the Indian way of life from time immemorial, the Party stands for a system of free peoples' enterprise restrained as well as enriched and reinforced by a sense of social obligation encouraged by State policies.

No Monopoly

36. The Party is opposed to monopoly and concentration of power whether in the State or in the free sector. It will promote anti-monopoly legislation

wherever necessary and will end the monopoly at present enjoyed by Governmental Corporations such as the State Trading Corporation in certain fields of trade, the Life Insurance Corporation and State Transport Corporations and Authorities.

37. The Party believes in a dynamic, expanding mixed economy where State and free enterprise work side by side as natural allies in the service of the community and show results by competing on equal terms. As much competition as possible, as little regulation as necessary—should be the watchword.

38. The Swatantra Party will improve Government undertakings by organising commercial management and adequate supervision under statutory Boards independent of political interference.

Planning — Which Type?

39. The Party will seek to restore the real and effective supremacy of Parliament and the people by abolishing the much boosted Planning Commission which has tended in effect to bring into being a non-responsible super-government and will free the administration at the Centre and the State Governments from the extra-constitutional dictation of the Planning Commission.

40. The Swatantra Party rejects the current pattern of centralised and top-heavy planning of the Soviet type involving a series of targets that are not achieved and of restrictions which are intolerable and which are calculated to perpetuate the regime of the party in power. The Swatantra Party stands for planning carried out within the limits of the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, to develop the growth of conditions in which the people's enterprise will find full and unfettered scope. It believes that the appropriate organisation for such planning of the affairs of the nation and for submitting the annual programme is the Cabinet responsible to Parliament and through it to the people; and that, while the Government may

resort to such expert assistance as it desires, there should be no other body which in effect usurps the power of making policy affecting the life of the nation.

Exports

41. While the Party recognises without question the vital need for India to expand its exports, it is opposed to the policy of compulsion in respect of exports of goods resulting in privation and distress in India.

Exports can only be promoted by a policy of increased productivity and efficient production at low cost so that our goods can compete in the world's markets. This would be facilitated by the Swatantra Party's policies.

Foreign Loans

42. The Congress Party's pattern of planning is based on extensive foreign aid that hangs on the slender thread of international peace which may snap any day. The Swatantra Party is totally opposed to the policy of huge foreign debts being incurred without any plan or prospect of adequate exports to enable India to discharge these obligations. The Party will endeavour its best to halt this grievous programme without damage to the national reputation. The Party will support and encourage the flow of foreign capital into private enterprises in India which would contribute to rapid industrial progress.

V

Labour

43. The Swatantra Party stands for a Fair Deal to labour, both industrial and agricultural. The Party accepts the workers' right to organise themselves in order to improve their conditions of life and work.

Strong and responsible trade unions managed by the workers themselves and not, as at present, play-things in the hands of political parties are an integral part of a democratic industrial order. The Party stands for the workers' right to collective bargaining involving, where necessary, the right to withdraw their labour.

44. The Swatantra Party stands for closer association of the workers and the management of industries, so that a spirit of partnership may develop among all those engaged in production.

Progress Sharing

45. The Party stands for a good wage for a good day's work. Encouragement should be given to "progress sharing" through an increase in earnings of employees alongside of an increase in productivity without detriment to the overall aim of national prosperity through the reduction of costs.

VI

The Constitution and Public Administration

46. The Swatantra Party stands for fully respecting the democratic implications of our Constitution, so that self-government becomes a spontaneous and continuous effort of the people. To that end, the Swatantra Party will

- (a) secure the full freedom of the press and promote autonomous non-official organisations for purposes of social welfare, rather than, in the name of welfare, impose official projects for strengthening Statism and the power of the Party in office;
- (b) restore the Fundamental Rights as they were originally embodied in the Constitution;

- (c) restore to the States the constitutional powers, functions and jurisdictions given to them by the Constitution;
- (d) work for the democratisation of the administration in the Union Territories; and
- (e) maintain intact the independence and the powers of the Judiciary as originally conceived in every respect.

47. The Party stands for a reform of the electoral law which would reduce the influence of money power and thus secure a fair chance for the real views of the electorate to prevail. It should be the duty of the State to communicate to each voter the time and place at which he may cast his vote and his number in the electoral roll.

Public Services

48. More than anything else, the Party will give the country a clean administration. It will ensure that there is no interference by politicians either of the ruling or any other party in the day-to-day administration.

49. In order to secure this, the Party will urge that the Union President and the Governors of the States, who should be non-party men, should in their discretion be the appointing authorities of members of the Public Services Commission and that the protection of the members of the Public Services should be made a special responsibility of the President and the Governors.

50. The Party will stop the wasteful expansion of the administrative machinery and reduce unproductive expenditure to the minimum. The extravagant construction of new buildings will be prohibited.

51. The Party stands for a revision of the scales of pensions paid to retired low-grade government servants in line with the sharp rise in the cost of living.

52. In order to check corruption and the arbitrary

infringement of the rights of citizens, the Party will press for the establishment of an independent authority at the Centre and in the States like the Ombudsman in Scandinavian countries to investigate into the grievances of citizens and into administrative vagaries and give due redress.

VII

International Relations and Defence

53. The Swatantra Party believes that, when the country's territorial integrity has been violated by Communist China, abstract concepts of co-existence and non-alignment have lost meaning and that our foreign policy needs to be reviewed and brought into closer relation to the realities of the international situation. The Party stands pledged to a firm and vigilant policy in dealing with China and for active steps to end its aggression at the earliest possible moment.

54. The Party will endeavour to rectify the unfortunate impression created in the world that India has a bias in favour of the Communist *bloc*.

55. The Swatantra Party stands pledged to regain for India its moral influence in the world so that it may work for peace, justice and freedom. The genius of India is tranquillity in the sense that its mission is the conquest of fear by the strength of the spirit within.

Defence Services

56. The Swatantra Party stands

- (a) for removing all political influences which are at present responsible for weakening the morale of the Defence Services; and

- (b) for maintaining the Defence Services in an efficient condition and redressing the legitimate grievances of ex-Service men.

VIII

Culture, Education and Religion

57. The Swatantra Party believes that India is a mixture of racial, religious and linguistic groups in the process of integration and that the needs of national solidarity require that the component States should do nothing to disturb the emerging pattern, but should help the process of synthesis.

58. Despite warnings, the Congress Party, in the face of opposition from outside as well as from the saner elements within its own ranks, has persisted in following policies which have resulted in disintegrating tendencies. Linguism, to which they have surrendered, has become a separatist force and a protective cover for the majority in power in the States to reduce all minorities to the position of permanent aliens and to retard and obstruct a natural synthesis. The Swatantra Party will take steps to halt this deterioration.

Minorities & Backward Classes

59. The Swatantra Party will more faithfully and effectively carry out the provisions in the Constitution for the protection of the rights and interests of all minorities and those who work under handicaps, such as Harijans, Adivasis and other Backward Classes.

60. The Party will not look upon associations for the protection of the rights of any classes or communities as communal organisations to be discouraged or banned.

Education

61. In order to arrest disintegration, the Swatantra Party

- (a) will introduce in education a spiritual element alongside of the humanities and sciences in order to provide an adequate background of human values for the citizens of the future; and
- (b) will provide free scope to voluntary agencies to impart moral and religious education to the young without forcing any such instruction on sections not belonging to the same denomination as those agencies.

62. The Party stands for

- (a) the autonomy of universities and other academic institutions;
- (b) the vindication of the fundamental right of every citizen to educate his children according to his choice in a free atmosphere untrammelled by official directives;
- (c) the rejection of measures like the nationalisation of text books calculated to indoctrinate the younger generation;
- (d) the establishment of central universities for maintaining common academic standards throughout the country; and
- (e) raising the status and remuneration of professors and teachers on a uniform basis, so that their movement from one region to another may not be impeded.

Media of Mass Communication

63. The Party will resist all attempts at the establishment of a monopoly or official control and regulation over the various media of mass communication.

- (a) All India Radio, which is today a State monopoly, should be converted into an autonomous

corporation like the British Broadcasting Corporation and other radio networks should be allowed to enter into competition with it;

- (b) similarly, Information Films of India, which today are the hand-maid of one party's propaganda, should be placed on an autonomous footing as an agency for the dissemination of news and knowledge; and
- (c) the Party will do everything to sustain the Press, which has so far preserved its independence with commendable tenacity, against all attempts, whether through official patronage or fear, to bring it under the influence of any party in office.

Religion

64. The Swatantra Party believes that, while every citizen should be free to choose his religious belief and be entitled to an unrestricted exercise of his right to religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution, religion is of vital concern to the State, as it provides the dynamic force for strengthening moral and spiritual values which furnish the motive and the sanction for right conduct more than any law or regulation of the State.

65. The Swatantra Party will, therefore, do everything possible to restore religion to its legitimate place in life and in particular

- (a) make incomes of, and gifts to, religious institutions and charities tax free;
- (b) secure for each religion the full benefit of its endowed and other properties without interference from government;
- (c) ensure respect for all communities in regard to their religious practices; and
- (d) take steps to create a climate in which every religion can contribute to the general welfare by strengthening the moral and spiritual stability of the respective communities.

66. Our people, who achieved a civilization of the highest type, moral and spiritual, many millennia before other nations reached a comparable state must continue to live a way of life wherein the individual freely gives to the community and is not reduced to the position of a cog in a lifeless machine for the sake of illusory progress in the material sense through state compulsion and under the direction of government officials.

IX

Conclusion

67. During the past few years, through the adoption of so-called socialist and welfare-state policies, the Congress party has been acquiring a stranglehold over every aspect of the citizen's life. The ground is well prepared for the perpetuation of one-party rule as in Communist countries.

68. When this danger to democracy became clear, the Swatantra Party was conceived and started in defence of freedom in the middle of 1959. It has not found its work easy, not only because it is hard to divert people from the traditional attachment to a party that carries the name and flag of the organisation that fought foreign rule, but especially on account of the way in which the Congress Party and ministers have utilised their opportunities to strengthen the power of the party. The inclusion of every kind of social service in the activities of the administration and the enrolment of party men in such services as well as in panchayats and cooperative societies have confused the understanding of common folk who have been thereby led to identify the ruling party with the State itself.

69. In spite of all handicaps, the justice of the cause it has taken up has enabled the Swatantra Party to make headway. The humiliations, harassments and injustices resulting from the permit-licence-

raj have opened the people's eyes. The drift towards totalitarianism has been made obvious to the ablest minds. The alignment of Congress policies with those of the Communists and the indifference displayed about foreign aggression have awakened people to a sense of the danger ahead. The entanglement of the nation in unredemable foreign obligations for financing megalomaniac plans has accentuated public apprehension.

70. The Swatantra Party hopes that the electorate will rise to the occasion and, guided by those who see the dangers implicit in the situation, will refuse to give a fresh lease of untrammelled power to the Congress Party which would be tantamount to perpetuation of one-party rule and will give their support to the Swatantra Party candidates wherever they offer themselves for election so that democracy may be safeguarded.