

Swatantra Party



SASSOON BLDG., 143 MAHATMA GANDHI ROAD, BOMBAY 1

3902 23/10
Rajin.

I am going through my
old papers.

I wonder if there could
be of some use to you.

Leah

Rajasthan Swatantra Party.



DUNGARPUR.

The 1st August 1974.

My dear Shri Manubhai,

This is to inform you that I have preferred not to be present at the Convention when the Party is likely to be liquidated nor do I desire to figure in the controversy between the present and the past Party Presidents. I hope the decision taken by the Convention will be in the best interest of the Country and Democracy.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Lakshman Singh



C O P Y

M.R. Masani

148 Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

June 6, 1974

My dear Piloo,

I had hoped to attend the meeting of the General Council of the Party that you have called on 9th and 10th June in Delhi but I find that I am unable after all to do so.

2. I am therefore dropping you this line to share with you and our colleagues my thoughts on the issue that is coming up before the meeting as to whether or not the Party should be dissolved in order to facilitate the emergence of the proposed new party.

3. While I see no objection in principle to a proposal to dissolve the Party to permit of a consolidation of all non-Marxist parties, including the Congress (O), Jan Sangh, the Akalis and the DMK for the purpose of establishing a two-party system and of counteracting the mischief of the British electoral system from which we suffer or to strengthen the hands of Jayaprakash Narayan in his campaign for developing people's action on a non-party basis, I do not think that the proposed move to form a new party in conjunction with the BKD, the Pragati Dal, the SSP and the Loktantrik Dal provides any justification for such a drastic step as the dissolution of the Party for which we have all worked for nearly fifteen years.

4. I fear the proposed party will be such a purty affair that it is not likely to make any impact on the country as a whole. The only national party that would be called upon to dissolve itself will be the Swatantra Party, as all the others are local groups. I hope it is appreciated that, outside of UP and Orissa, it will only have the effect of a minor ripple and even in these two States it will mean no change in the situation except in name. The major purpose of establishing a two-party system and of avoiding a split vote will not be achieved unless the Congress (O), the Jan Sangh, the DMK and the Akalis also join in. Indeed, it is quite likely that a move of this partial nature may actually come in the way of a more comprehensive consolidation of non-statist and non-Marxist elements a little later.

5. The mere adoption of a platonic statement of principles which may be found possible is not enough. The Swatantra Party's programme provides a clear cut alternative to the policies of those in office for two decades. Anything less than a 'U' turn or a complete reversal of these policies cannot, pull the country out of its present mess or avert the economic collapse that it is facing. Will the proposed new Party have the homogeneity that is necessary and is it likely, in the light of past experience, to present a credible image to the people? Or might it on the other hand reduce the specific appeal of each of the combining elements and only result in strengthening the ruling party? These are questions and doubts that assail one.

6. I would therefore be inclined to suggest that the General Council may, as a first step towards a genuine consolidation, be prepared, while maintaining the Party's individual identity, to agree to our coming together with others on a common programme for Unit in Action. Such a front would, it is hoped, by working together in unison show the path to others and thus pave the way for the emergence of a genuine and principled alternative for the country. That would be the time at which we could consider dissolving our Party in order to merge into something bigger and better.

7. In any event, I understand from Madhu Mehta that you are all agreed that the General Council can at most only recommend dissolution of the Party to a National Convention which alone is competent to dissolve the Party. That is the correct constitutional position. It will also give us all another opportunity to meet again and take a final decision.

With best wishes for a successful meeting,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Minoo Masani)

Mr. Piloo Mody, MP,
President
Swatantra Party,
New Delhi.

June 12, 1974

My dear Minoo,

I received your letter of June 6 with great dismay, which was further compounded by your no-show in Delhi. Just when I needed your support the most, just when we all needed you to reason and argue the case you deserted us, and instead, sent a letter which was profusely quoted by those who had come to the meeting with their minds closed to the idea of the new Party.

There is a basic difference between previous attempts and the current one. While in the past we were seeking "like-minded" partners to augment our strength, in the present effort we are trying to eliminate all non-Congress, non-Communist and non-Marxist parties to create a new party. It is in this context that I find it difficult to answer some of the posers raised in your letter.

1) Will there be homogeneity in the new Party?

Obviously the question of homogeneity will always remain. It has existed in our own party, in alliances we have sought, in any new combination of "like-minded" parties, as indeed, it will remain in the New Party. It must be dealt with.

2) Will the new party present a credible image?

My opinion is that it will not be worse, on the contrary, it will create some hope in the people at large that at last a reverse tread has started. If on the other hand all parties were to get together, would that not create its own hope and credibility. In that case would we be seeking character references of the people concerned? Do the Democrats and Republicans or the Conservatives and Labour Parties compete with each other on purity? What about the despicable Enoch Powell ("If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour")? Credibility is a function of media control, from which we will suffer for quite some time to come.

3) Would the new "combo" reduce the specific appeal of each?

It might; the final appeal may not be the some total of each party, added together. But it will certainly be much larger than the individual appeal of one of the parties.

4) Whether a new party now would inhibit a larger formulation later on?

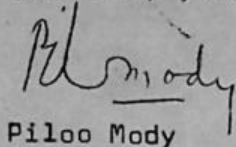
The chances are certainly greater. The present inhibitions in the Cong (O) and the Jan Sangh are all personal (like in our party) and no amount of argument can dispel them. As explained earlier, a two-party system just cannot accommodate those considerations. A man who wishes to be in politics, must join the Congress or the National Alternative or retire. There should be no other parking place. If Indian politics is to be cleansed, it will have to be done by society at large through elections or by education or even by social ostasization.

Now to deal with the last point, leading out of the fourth one - a period of trial, either based on a federal party as recommended by Tamil Nadu and Cong (O) or "a common programme for Unity in Action" as suggested by you. After having gone through all your files of the last 5 years. I am surprised that you can still suggest such action. Anything short of burning your boats, leads to infinite quarrels dissipating 95 per cent of your time in squabbles instead of doing constructive work, a constant tug-of-war over seats and an effort to build ones own party at the expense of the partners. These arrangements combine weaknesses instead of strengths. We have to demonstrate in the new party that this "combo" will work together if we wish to take a step forward from the past.

In the light of these remarks, please reconsider your views and join the fray. Time and Events wait for no one.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,


Piloo Mody

CC. To members of General Council

M. R. MASANI

148 Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 400 001

1st July, 1974

My dear Piloo,

I received your letter of June 12. To my surprise I also received a copy of your letter to me along with the papers circulated by the Party Office after the meeting at Delhi. I must confess I was taken aback when on enquiry I was told that you had circulated it to all members of the General Council. I had sent copies of my letter to you to Delhi only for the benefit of those few who were attending the meeting in order to facilitate discussion but I had not thought of sending copies of my letter except to those few who were in Delhi. Now that you have given your letter this extended measure of publicity, I am forced to send copies of both my letters to those whom you have addressed as they must have been mystified on getting your letter to me without their knowing to what you were replying!

2. You start by saying that you read my letter with 'great dismay'. I fail to understand this because there was nothing in my letter which I had not told you verbally in Bombay in the presence of Madhu Mehta and Viren Shah.

3. I am afraid your letter has not provided any reason whatsoever for those who feel like me to reconsider our position.

4. Your basic fallacy is to be found where in your letter you make the statement that "a man who wishes to be in politics, must join the Congress or the National Alternative or retire. There should be no other parking place". I find this obiter dictum positively hilarious. If one must belong to a political party or retire from public affairs, Rajaji (before the Swatantra Party was formed), Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Kripalani and Nani Palkhivala, to mention just a few, have no 'parking place' and must stay at home! This is where the root of the trouble with your present attempt lies and I think it is therefore necessary to draw attention to it.

5. Another basic fallacy in your letter is to equate the puny effort in which you are engaged with what you call "The National Alternative". Are you seriously telling us that the BKD (a Party confined to U.P.) the Utkal Congress (an Orissa State Party), the SSP (itself divided on this issue), the newly formed Loktantrik Dal, Ram Subhag Singh's Khetibar Sangh (with whatever little influence it has, confined to parts of Bihar) and the Haryana Sangharsh Samiti really constitute a National Alternative? Let me caution you that if and when this Party is formed, it will hardly make a ripple on the national scene.

6. I have gone through the draft statement of policy you have circulated. I am inclined to agree that there is nothing very much one can object to in it, but is that enough? A Statement of Policy as vague and platonic as this is one to which most people would find no difficulty in subscribing, but then their understanding of it will vary considerably. Thus, for instance, if you will kindly refer to the Statesman of June 19, 1974, you will see that the SSP feel happy that between '60 and 70 % of our economic policy' has been accepted and

that "the new party is against capitalism". I fear, therefore, that the draft statement of policy does not help very much.

7. What is more relevant is the record of those with whom you propose to associate. Mr. Biju Patnaik was found guilty of improprieties when in office by a quasi-judicial tribunal appointed by our own Government in Orissa. Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, as you know, was the main obstacle from June 1970 till the end of that year to the formation of a united bloc in Parliament which would have provided an alternative government to the country and perhaps changed the course of subsequent history. Mr. Raj Narain was one of the 'demolition squad' who came to Delhi on January 3, 1971, and turned Rajaji's dream of a grand alliance based on a common programme into an 'Indira Hatao' hotchpotch against which our Party protested. As for Mr. Charan Singh, I have always had great regard for him as a farmer's man and he and I have fought many a battle together in opposition to joint cooperative or collective farming. Unfortunately, he has proved to be an undependable ally. We were badly let down by him when we agreed to join his SVD Government in the UP. What was worse was that during the Presidential Election of 1969 the BKD in UP cooperated in installing Mr. Giri as President. But for this support, Mr. Giri would not have been elected President and for this Mr. Charan Singh bears a heavy responsibility. You might argue that people's past sins should be overlooked. I would agree if they had publicly expressed regret for their behaviour but not one of them has done this so far and one is therefore entitled to judge them by our experience of them.

8. As a result of such a record, I fear the credibility and the public image of the proposed new Party will be a very poor one. This is one more reason why, quite apart from its puny size, the new combination will not be taken seriously by the public as a 'National Alternative'.

9. These are among the reasons why your proposal that the Swatantra Party should be dissolved for this particular purpose is one that many of us cannot accept. As I have already said in my earlier letter, if the purpose had been to facilitate an effective "National Alternative" in which all non-communist opposition parties joined, I certainly would go along with it. Similarly, if the purpose was to strengthen the hands of Jayaprakash in his efforts to mobilise action on a non-party basis, I would cooperate. You will forgive me if I express the view that the specific purpose for which you are seeking the dissolution of the Swatantra Party is an altogether futile one. The principles and policies of the Party constitute the only clear out alternative to the Statist policies which have brought India to disaster during the past twenty-five years, and their disappearance from the scene would be a great blow to our national life.

10. Since you seem to be set on your attempt, despite the widespread opposition to your proposal that was voiced at the Delhi meeting of the General Council, and have turned down the more limited 'Unity in Action' which I had suggested in my earlier letter, let me place before you and our colleagues yet another alternative.

11. When the National Convention meets, let us agree, in the spirit of the advice that Gandhiji gave to the Congress Party on the achievement of independence, to convert the Swatantra Party into a service or constructive work organisation which would under the present dispensation eschew the contesting of elections and dedicate itself to educative work, as Rajaji had consistently pleaded during the last years before he passed away. The word 'Swatantra' should form part of the name of the new organisation and it should adhere to our present principles. Once this is done, those who, like you, wish to join the proposed new Party or indeed some other Party would be free to do so with a good conscience. On the other hand, a large number of members who are still dedicated to the principles of the Party and do not wish them to be diluted will be able through the medium of the new non-party organisation to carry on the educative work which Rajaji had wanted them to do. This is my constructive response to your letter and I earnestly urge you to give it your careful consideration as it appears to me that it may provide the basis for a consensus which might be shared by a large majority of the members of the Party and its State Units. As you are aware, there are several State Units that have already declared that even if the Party at the national level were to decide to dissolve itself, they propose to carry on as State Swatantra Parties. My proposal would make it possible to avert such an unpleasant situation from materialising.

Yours sincerely,

SA/-

M. R. Masani

PILCOO MODY

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

2 LODI ESTATE

CONWALLIS ROAD

NEW DELHI

110 003 Tel. 611658

July 11, 1974

My dear Minoo,

1. I do not understand why you persist in corresponding with me through circular letters to the General Council. You have also implied in your letter that you sent copies of your original letter to me for distribution to those members of the General Council as were present. This is not true. You sent copies of your letter to Arya directly, as I found out, and I had no way of telling whether it had been circulated to the other members or not. The fact is that you need not have done it. I would have read your letter to the General Council members assembled and replied to you directly without circulating my letter. I am also constrained to point out that my reply to you not only tried to reply to your letter, but also stated its contents accurately and therefore could not possibly mystify anyone. I am also baffled to read that my reply gave an "extended measure of publicity" because I circulated it to all members as against the limited publicity intended by you when you had your letter circulated.
2. The reason why I read your letter with 'dismay' is because I received your letter instead of seeing you - a point made amply clear in my reply. I am now regretting the fact that I did not mention in my letter that the meeting of the General Council was called entirely to suit you, even though it inconvenienced others - on a Sunday and Monday - instead of on a Saturday and Sunday. What am I to read in your decision for not attending except that "I am unable after all to do so" ?
3. Although I agree with you that the points mentioned in your letter were discussed by you when we met in the presence of Madhu Mehta, Viren Shah and Bhatia, they did not form the entire scope of our discussion. Several other points were mentioned, in particular regarding securing a programme for the new group which would be acceptable to us. If the idea at that stage was to go back on our decision, what was the purpose of securing a programme ? Was it merely to embarrass me later, or, was it just an intellectual exercise on which the leaders of seven (now ten) parties were to waste a month and half of their precious time ? And now that a programme has been produced which not only embodies the entire Swatantra philosophy, but also spells it out in considerable detail, you should dismiss it as "vague and platonic" lending itself to varying interpretations ! Kindly compare Swatantra's statement of policy and the current document.
4. I am afraid my impression of our meeting was quite different from what you project. I returned to Delhi with the distinct impression that I was to pursue our efforts, enlarge the scope of our group and work out a programme. I have confirmed this opinion from Viren, Madhu and Bhatia, all of whom concur. If on the other hand you had changed your opinion you could have immediately asked me for another discussion, to ponder some more or demand greater safeguards - not absent yourself from the General Council and spring a letter on me instead. After I had spoken to you on April 27, I allowed a month and a half to lapse before I called a General Council meeting. Why didn't you stop me from proceeding during this period ?

5. Your efforts to denigrate our "puny" efforts of getting ten parties together can only compare with your efforts over three years of trying to get together with the BKD alone - "a party confined to UP" as you put it. At the Maharashtra State Council meeting, you contradicted me when I pointed out that you were keen on a merger of Swatantra and BKD into a new Party. I gathered this impression from a note recorded, prepared and sent to me by Raju, our ex-Executive Secretary, who is reputed to know your mind better than anyone else. I quote some extracts :

"The then leadership of the Swatantra Party responded to the Charan Singh initiative and on June 15, Prof. Ranga and Mr. Dandeker met Charan Singh and Mr. Gopal Shastry of the BKD in New Delhi.

At this meeting, both Prof. Ranga and Mr. Dandeker expressed their reluctance to go along with the merger proposal on the ground that the leadership and rank and file of the Swatantra Party in well established States might not take kindly to a merger proposal. Another reason advanced was of ideological incompatibility with the BKD and the PSP both of which believed in socialism while the Swatantra Party did not. We however put two alternative proposals to the BKD : the first alternative was for the BKD to merge into Swatantra. In the event of the BKD accepting this proposal, Prof. Ranga offered to step down in favour of Charan Singh as President of the Swatantra Party and the leader of the BKD's Group in Parliament would become Deputy Leader of the Swatantra Party in Parliament.

The second alternative was for working in close collaboration and forming an alliance on the Orissa pattern in UP.

Charan Singh straightaway rejected the first alternative on the ground that rightly or wrongly the Swatantra Party's public image was bad though he himself personally had no quarrel with the Party's policies and principles. As for the second alternative, Charan Singh was luke warm for the simple reason that he was way ahead of the Party in organisational strength and influence in UP. He did not need us.

Both Rajaji and Masani were disappointed with the outcome particularly our rejection of the Charan Singh's proposal for a merger of the two parties with a new name, flag and symbol.

Much later, Prof. Ranga (in a letter to Rajaji, dated May 27, 1969) added "it is clear that the Jan Sangh is not at all anxious for any merger. They want us to have talks only in terms of a limited Front which neither Masani nor Charan Singh is agreeable to".

From the above-extract, it appears that Rajaji and you were in favour of merger with a new name, flag and symbol and also that you were against a limited front (Unity in Action).

6. As for your comments on the personal character of those associated with the idea of forming the new Party, I will not comment. The reputations of public men in India are too fragile, and no one escapes unscathed. After all, by now you must have read Col. Pasricha's letter regarding our colleagues, particularly me, as indeed you are aware of the innumerable letters written about you. I am not defending anyone

or anything, but as I said in my last letter, these are matters for society at large and the voters to decide, and not for you and me to sit in judgement on them. I might remind you that it was under your presidentship that the Swatantra Party in Orissa formed a coalition Government with Biju Patnaik and there is no point in saying that you were against it, because you ultimately succumbed. Let us assume you are right, but what is the people's verdict? Whereas the Swatantra Party secured 21 seats, Biju Patnaik secured 36 seats. As for any organisation, it can always take appropriate action, within the party, when occasion arises (Ramgarh, UP legislators, Gujarat, CC Desai).

7. Your basic fault and contradiction lies in the fact that you have already come to the conclusion, since 1971, that all political parties have become irrelevant, that elections should not be fought and that a revolution is around the corner, which will save India, and that in the interregnum we must be doing constructive social work. My difference of opinion with you is only on the last point. I believe that we must keep on fighting politically till the last possible moment to avert the destruction of the democratic structure and the abrogation of the Constitution. My efforts do not in any way spoil your plans or thesis. On the other hand, while maintaining that all political parties have become irrelevant, you are against the dissolution. At the same time you say that if all non-Communist parties join together, you will go along with it. How do these gentlemen of whom you do not approve all of a sudden become tolerable? That is why I urge you to continue with your social activities and give some of us one more chance to try and salvage the democratic system.

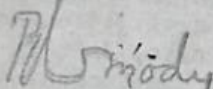
8. Now the main point : Will the new party be a National Alternative? Obviously a National Alternative has to have two distinct characteristics. It must have a clear cut alternative programme, which it now has, and, it must be large enough and strong enough to be taken seriously as the alternative. On the second score I will agree that its size and strength are still small but growing, but certainly much larger than Swatantra by itself. I want to assure you that we do not propose to stop at this. Every effort is being made to enlarge the scope of the new Party to include parties like the Cong(O), Jan Sangh, DMK and the Akalis. How can a National Alternative be created? Surely it cannot be done overnight, but this is just the first, but definite, step in that direction. Your own dream of combining the entire non-Communist opposition can only be realised through bold steps and sacrifice. In our case we sacrifice little - only name, flag and symbol - and preserve all that is precious - principles, policies and programmes.

9. There are a couple of things that puzzle me. In your second letter to me you had suggested that we meet on my next trip to Bombay. However this suggestion did not find its way into your circulated copy. What is more, when we met on the morning of July 6th at your house when Madhu Mehta was present, it was agreed between us that both objectives could be met if we could agree on the mechanics, words and phrasing of a common resolution. You agreed to send me a draft by the evening of Monday the 8th and I agreed to go through it and send it back with my suggestions. Having agreed in the morning, I was more than a little surprised to see, on attending the Maharashtra State Council meeting, that you did not even refer to our morning meeting, let alone inform them of what transpired, and contrary to the very spirit of our discussion, actively helped in passing a resolution, against Madhu Mehta's wishes with which I agree, and thereafter, accepted and insisted that Subramaniam's amendment about continuing the Maharashtra State Party irrespective of the outcome of the National Convention be included in the resolution.

10. When I quietly asked you as to what happens when we reached an agreement on a common resolution? You replied that the Maharashtra Resolution would automatically lapse. It was also agreed by the Maharashtra State Council that the resolution was not to be publicised. Yet I find a press report in several daily papers of July 9 that Mr. Girish Munshi, General Secretary, Maharashtra Unit had given out a Press Statement and publicised the resolution. By way of contrast, the very next day when I attended the Gujarat State Council meeting, when they wanted to pass a resolution overwhelmingly supporting the idea of a new Party, I pleaded with them to merely record their feelings without passing a resolution. I cannot remember in my 15 years of association with the Swatantra Party ever having been a witness to this level of dealing with each other. Today, I really miss Rajaji by my side, who I know would have justified every action I have taken.

11. Finally, I welcome your suggestion of having a totally non-political Swatantra Seva Sangh, eschewing all elections, educating the public on Swatantra ideology and acting as a service organisation. I had also given the matter some thought without formalising the idea. I see no objection to it. However, this issue must not be linked with the main purpose of the National Convention in a manner in which it appears that the one is being accepted and the other is being rejected. Therefore, if you accept this formulation, I am sure we can work out a composite resolution which will meet both points of view without offending the purpose of each other, to achieve near unanimity at the convention. I have just received your draft; whereas the formulation of the proposal needs change only in the matter of transformation, the preamble is too unkind and not at all necessary. I am sending you my draft, separately which factually states the course of events and resolves to do what both of us have in mind.

Sincerely yours,


(P. Mody)

CC : Members of the General Council

C O P Y

July 15, 1974

My dear Piloo,

Your long letter of the 11th. It is so full of diversionary red herrings, unfounded assumptions and half-truths that I frankly feel no purpose would be served in my demolishing the various debating points you make.

We obviously differ about the nature of 'politics' in the present Indian context; so, we must all follow our natural bent in company of our own choice. I have chosen Jayaprakash Narayan and you have chosen Biju Patnaik.

Yours sincerely

(M. R. Masani)

Mr. Piloo Mody, MP,
2 Lodi Estate,
New Delhi 3.

CC: The Executive Secretary,
Swatantra Party National Headquarters,
143, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

H. M. Patel

Draft Resolution for National Convention

Swatantra Party at Delhi

August 4 & 5, 1974

The National Executive meeting in Delhi on April 7 and 8 reviewed the State of the Nation on the basis of which it arrived at certain conclusions and recommended a programme of action, which inter alia stated :

"The Party will continue to explore all possibilities to bring about a two-party system in India with a view to remove the chaos prevailing in our political life and the confusion created in the minds of the electorate. In this connection, the Swatantra Party urges all political parties and politicians to cooperate in this endeavour and to work for the common good."

In furtherance of this the National Executive authorised the President to pursue this objective, consulting any two senior members of the Party that happen to be present in Delhi at the time. Various negotiations were held from time to time in which the President, Mr. Madhu Mehta, Mr. B.N. Singh Deo, Mr. Dandekar, Mr. H.M. Patel, Mr. Loknath Mishra and Mr. D.N. Patodia participated. A proposal was framed and submitted to the General Council on June 9 and 10th. The General Council debated the pros and cons of the issue, and in its wisdom unanimously passed the following resolution.

"The General Council of the Swatantra Party met in Delhi and discussed the proposal of getting together with various parties with a view to creating a National Alternative. It also discussed the draft programme prepared by the leaders of the new group.

The members of the General Council generally agreed that the present political situation in the country demands that an all out effort should be made for the formation of a National Alternative with a well-defined and clearcut alternative capable of fulfilling the urges and aspirations of the people.

In this context, while it welcomes the attempts made by various parties to come together with a view to ultimately provide a National Alternative it feels that in so far as the Swatantra Party is concerned, the final decision can only be taken at the National Convention. This could give a fair opportunity to as many members as possible to study the proposed programme and carefully examine all the pros and cons of the proposal. The General Council therefore has decided that a copy of the draft programme should be circulated to all the members of all the State Councils.

The General Council also authorises the President to fix the date and venue of the National Convention at the earliest, after giving due notice."

In pursuance of this Resolution this National Convention of the Swatantra Party has been called to decide on the future of the Swatantra Party.

The National Convention approves of the idea of the formation of a National Alternative by the coming together of all political parties other than the Congress and the Communists. It welcomes the efforts made in this direction by various parties to come together on a common platform and notes with gratification the fact it has evolved a common programme, acceptable to the Swatantra Party.

In view of this, this National Convention of the Swatantra Party resolves that the Swatantra Party should cease to exist as a political party so that its members may feel free to join the New Party, while leaving it open to such of its members as may wish to retire from active politics to constitute themselves into a Swatantra Forum functioning as a service organisation, which eschews all elections and concentrates on educating the public on Swatantra ideology.

This National Convention of the Swatantra Party requests the Chief Election Commissioner to take note of this resolution and to freeze the symbol of the Swatantra Party so that its goodwill may not be exploited unfairly. This Convention of the Swatantra Party authorises the President and office bearers to implement this resolution and requests them and its National Headquarters to take all necessary steps to help the members through the transitional stage. It also authorises the President to declare the date on which the Swatantra Party, its office bearers and constitution will formally cease to exist.

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The General Council also authorises the President to fix the date and venue of the National Convention at the earliest, after giving due notice."

In pursuance of this Resolution, the National Convention of the Swatantra Party has been called to decide on the future of the Swatantra Party.

The National Convention approves of the idea of the formation of a National Alternative by the coming together of all political parties other than the Congress and the Communists. It welcomes the efforts made in this direction by various parties to come together on a common platform and notes with gratification the fact that it has evolved a common programme, acceptable to the Swatantra Party.

In view of this, the National Convention of the Swatantra Party resolves :

That the National Convention of the Swatantra Party be and hereby approves the formation of a National Alternative by amalgamation of political parties, other than the Congress and the Communist Parties.

RESOLVES that the Swatantra Party ceases to exist, from such day as the President of the Party, Mr. Piloo Mody may declare.

RESOLVES FURTHER that the existing members of the Swatantra Party are urged to join the New Party, or to carry on independently such activities political or non-political as they may deem fit and proper in any name other than the "Swatantra Party".

RESOLVES FURTHER that the National Convention do authorise the President of the Party Mr. Piloo Mody to request the Chief Election Commissioner to freeze the symbol of the Party.

RESOLVES FURTHER that the National Convention do authorise the President of the Party, Mr. Piloo Mody, to take all necessary steps and decisions to implement the aforesaid resolutions, and to render all necessary help to the members till the Party is completely dissolved.

RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE SWATANTRA PARTY, NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4 & 5, 1974

The National Convention of the Swatantra Party has carefully considered the proposal placed before it that the Swatantra Party be dissolved to facilitate the formation of a new party.

While the Convention has noted that of the seven parties that are expected to be dissolved in a similar manner the Swatantra Party alone is a national party, it hopes that the leadership of the proposed new party will continue to make efforts to draw in their fold other major national democratic opposition parties to be able to provide a credible national alternative to the ruling Congress which is really the need of the hour.

The Convention notes the feeling of great disappointment expressed by many delegates about the proposal to dissolve the Swatantra Party on the ground that the principles and policies of the Swatantra Party continue to be as valid today as when they were formulated in 1959-1960 and that, had they been the policies of the Union Government, our country would not be in the present critical situation. However, in keeping with the spirit of the Swatantra Party's principle of providing freedom of choice and expression to various points of view within its ranks and in order to provide opportunities for functioning to those who hold conflicting points of view and to facilitate a decision by consensus, the Convention resolves that the Swatantra Party be and is hereby converted into a non-Party organisation named the Swatantra Sewa Sangh which will be solely devoted to the pursuit of educative and constructive activities in furtherance of the principles of the Swatantra Party and which will eschew electoral and parliamentary activities at both the Union and State levels.

Through Swatantra ceasing to be a political Party and becoming a service organisation, it will be possible both for those who wish to join the proposed new party to do so with a good conscience and for those who wish to continue to educate the people of India about the validity of Swatantra principles and to serve the people of India in a constructive way to do so in their own way.

Proposed by : (sd) M. R. Masani

Seconded by : (sd) K. H. Subramaniam

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION TO BE MOVED AT THE SEVENTH NATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE SWATANTRA PARTY ON AUGUST 4 & 5, 1974
IN NEW DELHI

The Seventh National Convention of the Swatantra Party has carefully considered the proposal placed before it that the Swatantra Party be dissolved along with the similar dissolution of six other parties so as to facilitate the formation of a new Party.

The Convention notes that of the seven parties that are expected to dissolve to enable the formation of the new Party, the Swatantra Party is the only National Party, the others being confined to particular States or parts of a State.

The Convention is firmly convinced that the Party's principles and policies continue to be valid and had the policies of the Government been formulated on the basis of the said principles, our country would not be in the present critical situation.

The Convention is equally convinced that the new Party will mark an advance in the search for a truly national alternative comprising as it does those who, though for the present have consented to get together on a general programme are bound to disagree in regard to the interpretation of a vague and general statement of policy.

Moreover, with opposition parties like the Congress(0) and the Jan Sangh continuing their individual existence, the objective of a two party system and its electoral benefits will continue to elude us. On the other hand, there is real danger of the ruling Congress on the one side and the Jan Sangh on the other being the direct beneficiaries of such a development.

The National Convention of the Swatantra Party does not consider the time or occasion opportune for the disappearance of the Swatantra Party from the Indian political scene and therefore rejects the proposal to dissolve the Party.

Proposed by : Parmanand Kejriwal

Seconded by : Girish Munshi

N. Dandekar
ICS (Retd.)

Telegrams : CRUSADOR

Phone : 212867
"Southlands"
177 Upper Colaba,
Bombay 5.

Ref : SP-P-368

23rd July, 1974

My dear Masani,

Thank you for your letter of 17th July and your proposed Resolution concerning the future of our Party for discussion at the National Convention of the Party in Delhi on 4th and 5th August. I have also seen your earlier correspondence with Piloo Mody.

My reaction, stated quite simply, is that I profoundly disagree with your views.

To convert the Party into a non-political "Swatantra Seva Sangh" is to achieve nothing except only to become the prize laughing stock of every political party in India, both national and provincial. Once it is conceded that the Party as such has "zero" political potential for the future it would be far better simply to wind it up, except that such of the Party's State Units as wish to continue may do so, like little frogs in the pond, at the State level of politics.

On the other hand, if one believes, as I do, that the principles and programme of the Party as still have some potential validity and relevance to influence or mould the affairs of this country at the national level, even though not in its present form, the only course open is to join hands with others who may also have come to the same painful conclusion as respects their own parties. And we must therefore support Piloo in his very difficult endeavour to join with others to present the country with a coherent national alternative to the Ruling Congress. That the Congress(0) will not join in this endeavour is a pity; but not so the refusal of the Jan Sangh.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

N. Dandekar

Mr. M. R. Masani,
Swatantra Party-NH-Qrts.,
148 Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 400 023.

M. R. MASANI

148 M. G. Road,
Bombay 1.

July 17, 1974

My dear Dandekar,

I thought you might care to see a Resolution I have tabled for discussion at the National Convention of our Party in Delhi on August 4 and 5. This is by way of a compromise and way out between the two warring factions led by Piloo Mody on the one side for his new 'hotch-potch' party and a large number of Party members against a dissolution of the Party on the other side. I am hopeful that good sense will prevail on both sides and I really feel that what I have suggested will not only be a dignified way of facing that might otherwise be a split but also in tune with the needs of the country at the present time. I should like to think that you will respond positively to this approach.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(M. R. Masani)

Mr. N. Dandekar,
Southlands,
Bombay 5.