

# Swatantra Party

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## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE CIRCULAR No. 15

Dear friend,

In continuation of National Executive Circular No.14 dated 18th October 1966, I have pleasure in forwarding herewith the text of a draft Election Manifesto which it is proposed should serve as a basis for discussion at the meeting of the National Executive in New Delhi on Sunday, November 6.

2. It may be explained that the National Executive had asked Prof. Ranga, Mr. Dandekar and myself to form a drafting committee for this purpose. Unfortunately, owing to the pressure of other work, it has not been possible for the three of us to meet and settle the draft. Mr. Dandekar and I took longer over it than we had expected and this has unfortunately prevented us from having the benefit of Prof. Ranga's collaboration in this task. For this we owe him and the National Executive an apology.

3. Will you kindly give careful consideration to the matter so that the National Executive may have the benefit of your comments and suggestions when it meets in New Delhi on November 6?

4. Meanwhile, would you kindly treat this draft as strictly confidential and take all steps to see that it does not fall into unauthorised hands or leak to the Press, as at this stage it is only a working paper for purposes of internal discussion.

Yours truly,

*M.R. Masani*  
(M.R. Masani)

General Secretary

SWATANTRA PARTY

DRAFT MANIFESTO

(To Serve As A Basis For Discussion)

After nearly twenty years of Independence, the country is today in a shambles in all spheres of national life:

.. In the Economic Sphere, the tempo of agricultural, industrial and commercial activity is at a low ebb. Taxation is mercilessly high; so are prices and the cost of living. The burden of internal and external debt is crushing. Devaluation, which was proof of insolvency in external finance no less than deficit financing was in internal finance, has made the situation worse because of failure to take the necessary follow-up measures.

.. In the Political Sphere, the Constitution has been repeatedly amended and violated. Fundamental Rights are now no more than merely a Chapter in the Constitution; and democratic institutions have so often been subverted that democracy itself may now be on its last legs.

.. In the Sphere of International Policy, there is no recognition of friends and foes, but only a continuous prattling about non-alignment and co-existence, peace and dis-armament, in collaboration with countries and blocs who are themselves openly committed to aggression to gain their own ends. Regional Collective Security in South-East Asia, so vital to the defence of India against joint aggression by China and Pakistan, is conspicuous by its absence.

.. In the Sphere of National Unity, the country and the people are so divided that national unity, achieved for the first time in 1947, is now fast disappearing. Linguistic controversies, water disputes and territorial claims and counter-claims, on the one hand, and disputes between landlords and tenants, students and teachers, employers and employees in both private and public sectors on the other, present a dismal picture of a country divided against itself.

.. Finally, in the Sphere of Public Morality, bribery and corruption, inefficiency and favouritism, have become an established way of life.



The greed for money and power and the scramble for jobs have become the main motivating forces. The moral decay visible in the older generation is creating a spirit of cynicism and disorder amongst the youth of the country.

2. This is the outcome of two decades of undisputed rule by the Congress Party. The inescapable conclusion must be that the Party has demonstrated beyond doubt its total unfitness to continue in power.

3. There are some who argue, out of despair, that the only solution would be some form of dictatorship; and for the Communist Party, it is of course the preferred solution. The Swatantra Party rejects all suggestions of this kind, whether expressed or camouflaged, with an emphasis that puts its position unequivocally beyond doubt. It believes that a solution lies in the direction, not of Dictatorship or Socialism, whether pink or red, but of Democratic Individualism. Only so, it believes, will the creative potential of individual endeavour and enterprise be released, developed and harnessed for the common good within the restraining framework of democratic necessities. In no other way will significant economic, political, social, moral and material progress be possible for the common man.

4. Against this background of a dismal past and the possibility of a hopeful future, the Swatantra Party presents this Manifesto for public acceptance. The path to recovery from the present chaotic conditions will be hard and narrow, stony and uphill. It will take time to undo the grave mischief caused by the ideological confusions and the extravagant Plans, superimposed upon the desire to monopolise power that have been the hall marks of the misrule by the Congress Party since the attainment of Independence. But it must be attempted.

## II

5. Some ten million people (about 9% of those who voted) supported the candidates of the Swatantra Party for the Lok Sabha in 1962 when the Party was barely 2½ years old.

6. These votes were by no means wasted. The small but gallant band of our MPs have done the work of ten times their number.

and MLAs

7. What has the Swatantra Party already achieved?

-- It delayed for a year, and finally pulled some of the teeth out of, the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution, which sought to subject the peasant's land to arbitrary confiscation by Government.

-- Swatantra resistance has blunted the drive towards "Joint Cooperative Farming" or collectivisation of the land and has left the peasant in possession of his farm.

-- Swatantra advocacy of the abolition of Land Revenue has compelled the Congress Government in some States to echo our Party's call.

-- By opposing Gold Control, Swatantra has helped the goldsmiths to get partial success in their struggle.

-- The warnings given by Swatantra against the ruinous Third Plan and the inflationary policies of Government have proved to be 100 per cent correct and its forecast that Devaluation of the Rupee was the logical upshot of those policies has been vindicated.

-- Swatantra MPs have, in Select Committee, managed to reduce the mischief in various Bills introduced in Parliament.

-- By subjecting each successful year's Budget to a searching scrutiny, Swatantra MPs have helped secure some reliefs in both direct and indirect taxes.

-- The vigilance of our MPs contributed to the removal from their positions for improper behaviour of Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon, Mr. Biju Patnaik, Mr. Biren Mitra, Mr. T.T. Krishnamachari and Dr. Dharma Teja.

8. Double the Swatantra Vote, send a hundred Swatantra MPs to the Lok Sabha next February and we promise you the end of Congress Raj and

A New Government

with

A New Policy

9. So too, send a thousand Swatantra MLAs to the Vidhan Sabhas with a majority in two or three States and it will be seen what Swatantra Governments can do to clean things up at the State level.



10. This is what Governments backed by the Swatantra Party would do:

- Pull the economy out of the ditch in which it has been landed by those in office during the past 20 years.
- Check rising prices and provide a stable and honest Rupee.
- Help the Farmer to grow enough to feed the people.
- Cut taxes, direct and indirect.
- Free agriculture, trade and industry from the fetters of needless Controls.
- Give back to the people what is theirs.
- End Permit-Quota-Licence Raj.
- Scrap the Planning Commission and the disastrous Fourth Plan and concentrate on a process of consolidation and steady growth without internal insolvency.
- End all monopolies, whether in the State or free sector.
- Restore competition in the service of the Consumer.
- Restore respect for India in the eyes of the world by avoiding huge imports of foodgrains and heavy borrowings for wasteful projects.
- Provide a better life to the people here and now.
- Make today's prosperity the foundation of tomorrow's growth.

11. Can all this be done ?

It can.

This is how.

12. Here is the Swatantra Party's Programme of Ordered Progress :

The Common Man Comes First

1. The Swatantra Party stands, first and foremost, for the common man and for provision of his food, clothing and shelter through opportunities of gainful employment as the primary obligation of Government.
2. The Swatantra Party believes in building a property-owning democracy where economic power, as Gandhiji had envisaged, is decentralised and ownership is as widely diffused as possible. In such a society, the self-employed man, whether he is a farmer, artisan, shop-keeper or professional, has the fullest opportunity to thrive.
3. In a free and competitive society, the "consumer is king". It is in his service that all producers, including the State as also the biggest of industrialists, should be engaged.
4. The entire economy has as its foundation the provision of certain essential services, called the infrastructure, which have been badly neglected by the Congress Government during the past 20 years, such as water, electric power, roads, railways, waterways, ports, post, telegraphs and telephones. These objectives are large enough to tax the financial resources of Government to the utmost and to fire the imagination of the most dedicated Administration.

Agriculture

5. This is India's Basic Industry. Our food problem can only be solved through a genuine acceptance of peasant proprietorship, requiring the repeal of the 17th Amendment, the abolition of Land Revenue, the provision of incentives to the farmer and the acceptance of his right to the highest price he can get for his produce in the market.



6. The Swatantra Party stands for the removal of all compulsory levies and all zonal and other barriers to the free movement of food grains and other edible substances.
7. The essential food needs of the poor should be met by the provision of subsidised foodstuffs at cheap prices.
8. Nearly 17 % of India's working population consists of landless agricultural labourers. Unlike industrial workers, they are unorganised and have been the worst sufferers due to low wages, under-employment, rising prices and the heavy incidence of taxation on articles of common consumption. The Swatantra Party stands for their protection by insisting upon --
- .. a fair deal and prosperity for the farmers who employ them
  - .. the growth of the small entrepreneur to provide growing opportunities for alternative employment in the countryside;
  - .. protection of those permanently employed in agriculture and an adequate wage for all agricultural labourers;
  - .. a drastic reduction in the incidence of indirect taxation and arresting the rising cost of living.

#### Industry and Trade

9. The immediate need here is to change the stagnant and deteriorating situation, by restoring vigour to the Investment Market and fostering productive investment by reducing taxation, progressively abolishing controls and providing incentives so that the Investor, Manager and Worker may increase production and productivity and share in the gains.
10. The Swatantra Party stands for a more balanced development in which small and medium labour-intensive industries have priority over capital-consuming industries with low and slow returns which have so far been favoured.
11. Until such time as they are able to give a reasonable return on the people's hard earned savings, there should be no further wasteful investment of the taxpayers' money in the State Sector industries

which have failed to function efficiently.

12. The Swatantra Party is opposed to all Monopoly, whether in the State or free sector, and will seek to re-establish competition, wherever possible, for the benefit of the Consumer. Monopolies, where tolerated, will be subject to essential social control.

#### Labour

13. The Swatantra Party reiterates its support to the Workers' rights of organisation and collective bargaining, increasing association with management and a Fair Deal based on an equitable sharing of the gains of productivity. It is opposed to the political exploitation of the Workers and their organisations.

#### Planning

14. The Swatantra Party believes in the kind of democratic planning that is practised in countries like France, Britain and the Scandinavian countries, but is opposed to the Soviet-type planning which has been tried and which has failed so miserably.

15. The proposed Fourth Plan, which shares all the defects of the Second and Third Plans, which have brought this country to the brink of bankruptcy, should be scrapped.

16. The Swatantra Party would dissolve the Planning Commission which has shown its unfitness for its task and has become a parallel Government unknown to the Constitution and would replace it with genuinely expert and advisory bodies with which Industry, and other interests would be associated. The principal objectives of such planning should be to help Government to plan its own business.

Labour

#### Fiscal and Monetary Policy

17. The Swatantra Party deplures the way in which the sacrifices



and loss imposed on the people by the Congress Government's decision to devalue the national currency have been wasted during the past few months for lack of adequate follow-up action.

18. The primary need is to provide an Honest Rupee and stable prices through:

- a) the abandonment of deficit finance and other inflationary policies and practices;
- b) a drastic cut in the wasteful bureaucratic expenditure of the Union and State Governments; and
- c) a reduction by 50% in the incidence of all direct and indirect taxes.

#### Banks

19. The Swatantra Party is opposed to the nationalisation of banks contemplated by the Congress Party as it is utterly irrelevant to the country's problems and would strike a mortal blow to monetary stability and security by placing the savings of lakhs of small depositors at the mercy of a rapacious Government seeking to lay its hands on all available resources.

#### Foreign Loans

20. The Swatantra Party's warnings against extravagant and wasteful borrowings from foreign Governments have proved thoroughly justified. No more Government-to-Government loans should be taken except for the legitimate purpose of building the infrastructure. The flow of foreign private equity capital coming into the country at its own risk should, however, be encouraged.

#### Gold Control

21. Gold Control should be entirely abolished.

## The Constitution and Public Administration

22. The Swatantra Party deprecates the repeated Amendments to the country's Constitution, which have resulted in an erosion of the Fundamental Rights of the citizen and pledges itself to restore these Rights in the Constitution to their original form at the earliest possible opportunity.
23. The Swatantra Party would end the State of Emergency which has been needlessly prolonged and which has been misused by the Congress Government for political ends. Full civil liberties should be restored immediately.
24. The Party will endeavour to give the country clean administration. It will ensure that there is no interference by politicians, either of the ruling Party or any other Party, in the day-to-day administration, nor any by-passing of the Union and State Public Service Commissions.
25. In order to check corruption and the arbitrary infringement of the rights of the citizens, the Party will continue to 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 administrative vagaries and to give due redress.

### Electoral Reform

26. The Swatantra Party stands for a reform of the electoral system which would
- (a) reduce the influence of money power,
  - (b) entail on the State the duty of communicating to each voter the time and place at which he should cast his vote and his number in the electoral rolls,
  - (c) evolve a system of Proportional Representation such as



would result in fairly representing the will of the electorate in Parliament and State Legislatures and ending the distortion that is to be found in the composition of the present Lok Sabha and many State Assemblies.

International Relations and Defence

27. The Swatantra Party regards enlightened national self interest as the decisive test of any sound foreign policy. Judged by this test the Congress Government's foreign policy has been an utter failure as is clear from the continuing violation of our territorial integrity and our pitiable diplomatic isolation in the world.

28. The Swatantra Party believes that, when the country's territorial integrity has been violated first by Communist China and then by Pakistan, the abstract concept of non-alignment has lost all meaning and our foreign policy needs to be reviewed and brought into closer relation to the realities of the international situation.

29. The Party regards Communist China as the principal menace to freedom in Asia and calls for the building of a system of Regional Collective Security by the countries of South and South East Asia lying between India, Japan and Australasia in which it would like to see India play its proper part in building such a system of collective security. It is in this direction, and not in an attempt at producing nuclear armaments which are entirely beyond the reach of a poor and a backward country such as ours, that security lies.

30. In this context, the Party supports the Government and people of South Viet Nam and their allies in resisting the aggression and expansionism of Communist China and its North Vietnamese satellites and deplores the unprincipled and suicidal attempt of the Congress Government to confuse the issue and, in effect, to give aid and comfort to this country's enemies.

31. The Party stands pledged to a firm and vigilant policy in dealing with Communist China and for active steps to end its aggression at the earliest possible moment. The Party stands for the liberation of Tibet and, as a first step, for the recognition of the Dalai Lama as the Head of the Government of Tibet in exile. While the Swatantra Party believes that normal and friendly relations between India and her neighbours in Pakistan are required in the interest and security of the entire Subcontinent, it is of the view that Pakistani aggression last year has deprived Pakistan of whatever locus standi it might have had in regard to the settlement of the Kashmir problem and that the problem from now on is one between India and the people of Kashmir.

32. The Party considers the failure to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and the Republic of China (Taiwan) to be utterly indefensible.

#### Education

33. In order to arrest the prevailing disintegration and the unfortunate spirit of cynicism and disorder that is sweeping the ranks of students and youth, the Party will:

- a) 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;
- b) provide free scope to voluntary agencies to impart moral and religious education to the young without forcing any such instruction on sections belonging to other denominations.

34. The Party stand for:

- a) the autonomy of Universities and other academic institutions,
- b) the vindication of the Fundamental Right of the citizen to educate his children according to his choice in an atmosphere untrammelled by official directive;
- c) the rejection of measures like the nationalisation of textbooks calculated to indoctrinate the younger generation; and
- d) raising the status and remuneration of professors and teachers.



### Religion

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

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

- a) make tax-free incomes of, and gifts to, religious institutions and charities,
- b) secure for each religion the full benefit of its endowed and other properties without interference from Government, and
- c) ensure respect for all communities in regard to their religious practices.

### Minorities and Backward Classes

37. a) The 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 of those who work under economic and social handicaps such as Harijans, Adivasis and other Backward Classes, irrespective of their religion.

b) The Party will not look upon an association for the protection of the rights of any class or community as a communal organisation to be discouraged or banned.

### Linguism

38. Despite warnings from outside as well as from within its own ranks, the Congress Party has persisted in following policies which have resulted in disintegrating tendencies. Linguism, to which they have surrendered, is becoming a separatist force and a protective cover for those in power in the States to reduce all minorities to the position of second class citizens. The Swatantra Party will take steps to halt this deterioration.

### Media of Mass Communication

39. The Swatantra Party is opposed to all attempts at the establishment of monopoly or official control over the various media of mass communications.

40. The Party supports the recommendations of the Chanda Committee that the operation of Broadcasting and Television services should be entrusted to autonomous corporations like the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Independent Television Authority in the U.K. and is of the view that other radio and television networks should be allowed to enter into competition with these statutory authorities.

41. Similarly, Information Films of India, which today are the hand-maid of the ruling Party's propaganda, should be placed on an autonomous footing as an agency for the dissemination of news and knowledge.

42. The Party will do everything to sustain the Press, which has so far preserved its independence with commendable tenacity against all attempts to bring it under the influence of the party in office.

#### Science & Technology

43. This is the age of Science and Technology. It is therefore essential to make the people science minded and technologically oriented, starting at the very first rung of the educational ladder and going right through to the technological application of science to agriculture and industry. To that end the Swatantra Party would equip schools and educational institutions with adequate laboratory and workshop facilities so as to give a bias in favour of scientific or technological subjects and encourage and subsidise industrial research for the development of new processes and products.

44. The Party is concerned at what is described as the "brain drain" of young men and women who stay abroad in search of a career. There would be no such problem if India offered to the most talented of our people adequate scope and opportunities for earning and retaining the fruits of their labour. The Swatantra Party has already initiated a struggle against the regime of high taxes, rising prices, low salaries and stifling atmosphere which acts as a deterrent to young men and women to return to the country of their birth after training abroad. It is by an attack on these basic causes that the brain drain can be stopped. The Swatantra Party rejects any attempt to coerce young men and women either to return to this country or not to leave it as a solution of this problem.



IV

CONCLUSION

45. This, then is our Manifesto of what the Swatantra Party will do and hopes to achieve.

46. We stand in sharp contrast to the Congress which vies with the Communists in the pursuit of political power by

- handing over economic power to the State and through it to a particular political party; and
- encouraging conflicts and class hatred between different sections of the people such as tenants, industrial workers, territorial chauvinists, and linguistic and cultural pedants.

47. While recklessly pursuing ruinous economic policies, the Congress Party has sought to explain away its failure by hunting for scapegoats, such as the farmer and the goldsmith, the trader and other self-employed persons, the industrialist, businessmen and the banker.

48. The Congress Party has sought to conceal its guilt at having lost national territories by hollow assurances to recover them without recourse to war. And they are now reverting to the well established pattern of seeking to win the next General Elections

- by bribery and corruption;
- by false promise of a promised land to come twenty years hence;
- and by threats of reprisals against the supporters of their opponents.

49. Against all this, the Swatantra Party offers to the free choice of the voters the alternative of a constructive programme harnessed to the basic principle of enlightened self-interest which for centuries has stirred men and women to their highest and noblest effort. Restrained and enlightened self-interest at the individual level and a service purpose at the State level are, we believe, the only sure foundations for progress in all fields.

50. Above all, the Swatantra Party seeks to restore in the body politic the Gandhian principle of giving first priority to Dharma as the true basis for enduring moral progress and material prosperity.