

"CARRY ON," SAID RAJAJI

S. V. Raju

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And, therefore, Rajaji decided that, if no one would try, he would along with those who were willing to join with him, "try". The result was the Swatantra Party. And with Masani he fashioned it as an instrument different from what was available to the people of India.

That was the time when Nehru was striding like a colossus on the Indian political scene. The only party that was talking a slightly different language was the Jana Sangh, but, then, the Jana Sangh's appeal was to communal sentiments. There was very little difference among the other parties who were merely various shades of the Congress. Communism was still monolithic and the Communist Party was critical of Mr. Nehru only to the extent of egging him on towards more 'leftist' policies.

Box of Paints

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called a spade a spade and denounced the confused thinking masquerading in the garb of socialism. To him Swatantra was more than a Party. It was a movement to inject sanity, pragmatism and morality in public life. He wanted members of the Swatantra Party to be like him—above reproach, clear-headed, principled, not interested in the immediate pursuit of power but to educate the people into giving up the false gods propagated by the ruling party.

Today, the Swatantra Party is in difficulties. While partly the situation can be attributed to developments following the Congress split, to a larger extent the Party itself is to blame. As Rajaji would have put in a simile, of which he was so fond: The architects produced a good architectural design but the contractors let the architects down by adulterating the material they used, with the result that while the basic structure has withstood the battering it received in the last couple of years, the walls and the fittings have cracked. No greater tribute can be paid to Rajaji by those whose political heirs the members of the Swatantra Party are, than to go back to the fundamentals that he and Masani so painfully put together when the Party was founded.

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