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SWATANTRA PARTY



General Secretary's Report

Fourth National Convention

New Delhi, December 12 and 13, 1966

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GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

FRIENDS,

This report covers the period since the Third National Convention held in Bangalore on February 1 and 2, 1964. While this Report is largely a factual statement, it will, in the context of the proximity of the General Elections, make an effort to assess the progress made at National, State and Constituency levels in preparing for the challenge of 1967. The responsibility for whatever is contained in this Report is entirely that of the General Secretary.

The Third National Convention

The Third National Convention was held in Bangalore on February 1 and 2, 1964. 541 delegates from 17 States participated. The Convention was significant in more ways than one. From the point of view of Party organisation, the Convention transformed the Party structure from that of a mass party to a cadre party. The organisation of the Convention was itself a model of efficiency coupled with economy and simplicity. The usual appendages to a political Convention were deliberately eschewed. There was no shamiana and no procession. The

Convention was held in the impressive Town Hall. Everything was done in a businesslike manner.

The Convention was divided into three sessions, two of which were open to the Press.

Rajaji's Inaugural Address was short, incisive and a call to the Party to gear itself to fight the war for the preservation of individual liberties. It was a moment charged with emotion when he concluded: "Let's gather more and more strength quickly. I cannot wait for much longer, friends."

Prof. Ranga's Presidential Address was packed with many a sally and thrust against the ruling party. The address was marked by its panoramic sweep of the Indian political scene.

The General Secretary's Report surveyed the Party's development since the Agra Convention in November 1961. The report was debated at length by the delegates and an encouraging feature was the number of trade unionists who mounted the rostrum to speak their minds.

There were 13 Resolutions which were discussed at length and adopted. Among the Resolutions adopted were those on International Relations and Defence, Termination of the Emergency, Electoral Reform and Electoral Understandings, State Monopoly of Banking and the 17th Amendment to the Constitution. Discussions spread over three sessions were characterised by wide participation on the part of the delegates.

An important item of business before the Convention was an amendment to the membership clause in the Party's Constitution. This amendment fundamentally transformed the character of the Party from a mass party to a cadre party. A system of dedicated card-holding workers and pledge-signing members was introduced.

The Press was fair with its coverage of the proceedings, although editorial comment provided a mixed bag.

The man behind the organisation of this Convention who was largely responsible for its success, Mr. V. P. Menon, is, alas, no more with us. It was largely under his expert leadership that

the Mysore Unit of the Party managed to organise such a successful Convention.

Party Elections

Thanks to the new system of active membership, the Party was enabled for the first time successfully and effectively to conduct elections to Party committees from the primary to the national level. The General Council, at its meeting in Bombay on 29th and 30th June, 1964, adopted certain amendments to the Constitution whereby the last date for enrolment of Workers for purposes of Party elections was fixed for July 31, 1964, and elections to Party committees were to conclude by the end of 1964 and thereafter by the end of every alternate year.

The Central Organising Committee, meeting a day earlier, laid down the time-table for Party elections spread over a period of about six months. The time-table was generally adhered to.

The State Councils in various parts of the country elected a General Council with a membership of 160. The newly elected General Council met in Bombay on February 13 and 14, 1965, on the completion of elections at the State level and elected a National Executive which replaced the former Central Organising Committee. In this connection, the total number of Workers on the rolls as of 31st July, 1964, duly certified by the Central Office, stood at 25, 852.

The General Secretary takes this opportunity to thank all those who undertook the tasks of inspecting the Enrolment Registers in the various States and of acting as presiding officers over meetings of the State Councils which elected the State Committees and their representatives on the General Council.

Meetings of Committees

GENERAL COUNCIL

The General Council of the Party met thrice during this period. The first meeting was held in Bombay on June 29 and 30,

1964. The Council adopted Resolutions on the 17th Amendment to the Constitution, Food Scarcity and High Prices, South-East Asia and Relations with Pakistan. As mentioned earlier, it also amended two clauses in the Constitution to facilitate the holding of Party elections.

The second meeting, which was the first meeting of the newly elected General Council, was held in Bombay on February 13 and 14, 1965. The meeting had before it the General Secretary's Statement on Organisation which had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. The Statement, which was primarily a review of the state of the Party's organisation and made certain proposals for gearing it to meet the challenge of 1967, was thoroughly discussed. The General Council then adopted a Resolution endorsing the proposals made in the Statement on Organisation and requested the National Executive to take steps to implement them effectively.

The following Office Bearers and members of the National Executive were elected for a period of two years.

Prof. N. G. Ranga, M.P.	—	<i>President</i>
Dr. K. M. Munshi		
Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy, M.P.	}	— <i>Vice-Presidents</i>
Smt. Gyatri Devi, M.P.		
Jathedar Uham Singh Nagoke		
Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P.	—	<i>General Secretary</i>
Mr. N. Dandekar, MP	—	<i>Joint Secretary</i>
Sir Homi Mody	}	— <i>Hon. Treasurers</i>
Dr. R. C. Cooper		
Mr. Charanjit Rai		

Members

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. Jaideepsingh of Baria, M.L.A.
Mr. Hari Har Das, M.P.
Mr. P. K. Deo
Mr. Mandhata Singh of Geejgarh, M.L.A.
Dr. (Mrs.) Shantabai Gulabchand
Mr. K. B. Jinaraja Hegde

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla
Mr. G. Latchanna, M.L.A.
Mr. Bhailalbhai D. Patel, M.L.A.
Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, M.P.
Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu
Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddy
Sardar Basant Singh
Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, M.L.A.
Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh, M.L.A.
Mr. Inder Singh
Mr. Laxman Singh of Dungarpur, M.L.A.
Sardar Ram Singh, M.P.
Mr. K. Sunderam

To give representation to Workers enrolled in States which had no State Unit, the Council coopted the following members:

Mr. C. R. Irani,
Mr. Parmanand Kejriwal,
Prof. Martin Narayan,
Col. H. R. Pasricha,
Mr. Ram Binod Singh,
Sardar Harihar Prasad Singh,
Mr. Budhan Rai Verma, and
Mr. N. C. Zamindar.

Resolutions were adopted on the following topics: Communist Advance in South-East Asia, the Union Budget for 1965-66, the Food Situation and Nagaland.

Another meeting of the General Council was held in Bombay on May 28 and 29, 1966. On the recommendation of the National Executive, the following were coopted to the Council:

Mr. C. C. Desai,
Mr. N. K. Ganapaiah,
Mr. Y. G. Gowd,
Mr. Man Singh Mahar, MLA,
Mr. Satish Malhotra,
Mr. Vadibhai Lallubhai Mehta,
Mr. H. M. Patel,

Mr. Sundermani Patel,
Mr. C. Rai.

The Council adopted a Resolution for the extension of the term of office of elected committees and office-bearers beyond the end of 1966. In view of the General Elections of 1967 and the desirability of concentrating on them, the General Council resolved, subject to the approval of the National Convention, that the term of office of all elected bodies and Office-Bearers of the Party be extended beyond the end of 1966 by not more than one year.

Fifteen resolutions were adopted including those on the following subjects:

Continuation of the Emergency, Gold Control, Drought Situation in Orissa, Nationalisation of Text-books, Food, Bastar and The Mizo Hills.

An unusual though happy feature of this meeting was the better than average coverage that its deliberations received in the national dailies. The various resolutions came in for much editorial comment. At least one national daily took note of the business-like manner in which the Council meetings were conducted and contrasted it with the "tamasha" that was the AICC Session in Bombay.

The General Council will meet again on the eve of the National Convention.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

There were several meetings of the old Central Organising Committee and the new National Executive. The last meeting of the COC of the Party was held in Bombay on June 29, 1964. It laid down the time-table for Party elections and adopted various draft resolutions for consideration by the General Council.

The first meeting of the newly elected National Executive was held in Bombay on February 14, 1965. The first item of business that it attended to was the setting up of a Central Parliamentary Board consisting of the following members:

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. R. N. Singh Deo
Mr. Laxman Singh of Dungarpur
Mr. Jaideepsinh of Devgad-Baria
Mr. G. Latchanna
Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh.

The following were nominated ex-officio members of the Board:-

The President,
The four Vice-Presidents,
The Senior Treasurer, and
The General Secretary.

The second meeting of the National Executive was held in Madras on June 4 and 5, 1965. Among the significant decisions taken at this meeting was one allowing State Units to participate in the Gram Panchayat elections and put up Party candidates if they desired. Another formulated certain principles in regard to the functioning of the Youth Wing of the Party in the States.

The third meeting of the National Executive was held in New Delhi on October 1 and 2, 1965. The Executive adopted comprehensive resolutions on the economic situation and on foreign policy in the context of the recent hostilities with Pakistan.

The fourth meeting of the National Executive was held in Bombay on May 27 and 29, 1966. The Executive took disciplinary action against the nine members of the UP Legislative Assembly for violating the Party's discipline and expelled five of them. It also expelled for indiscipline a former Joint Secretary of the Rajasthan Unit of the Party and three others from Orissa.

It was decided that the next National Convention of the Party should be held in Delhi. The Executive set up a Drafting Committee consisting of the President, the General Secretary and the Joint Secretary to draft an Election Manifesto for placing before the National Convention.

In the context of the bifurcation of the Punjab into the Punjabi Suba and Hariyana, the Executive replaced the State

Committee by two separate Ad-Hoc Committees — one for the Punjabi Suba and another for Hariyana.

The fifth meeting of the National Executive was held in New Delhi on November 6, 1966. This meeting approved a draft Election Manifesto for placing before the National Convention.

A meeting of the National Executive is scheduled to take place in New Delhi on the eve of the National Convention.

CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD

The Central Parliamentary Board met on ten occasions during this period. Of these, four were meetings of the old Parliamentary Board and six of the new Parliamentary Board constituted by the elected National Executive.

The first meeting was held in Madras on May 16 and 17, 1964, where the major item of discussion was the 17th Amendment to the Constitution. A resolution on Indo-Pakistan relations was adopted, as well as one on the problem of refugees from East Pakistan.

The next meeting of the Board was held in Bombay on June 29, 1964. The meeting took the important decision to begin forthwith the nomination of prospective Parliamentary candidates in order to give a chance both to the prospective candidate and the electorate in the constituency to get to know each other and enable the candidate to identify himself with the problems and aspirations of his constituents. It began by nominating six prospective Parliamentary candidates.

The Board met twice in September, 1964, once on September 6 in Delhi and again on September 30 in Bombay. It approved some more prospective Parliamentary candidates.

The Board next met in New Delhi on March 14, 1965, and considered the problem of the formation of a Government in Kerala and confirmed that President's Rule should be the last resort and that the non-communist Opposition Parties should be given a chance to form a Government and test its viability by facing the new Assembly.

The Board also laid down a detailed procedure to be followed in regard to the selection of prospective Parliamentary Candidates and their work.

At its meeting in Madras on June 4 and 5, 1965, the Board proceeded with nominating some more prospective candidates.

At its meeting on October 31, 1965, the Central Parliamentary Board called on the Party's members in Parliament not to join Government-sponsored delegations in the context of the conflict with Pakistan. It reviewed the progress made in constituencies where prospective Parliamentary candidates had been nominated.

The nomination of the Party's candidates in the Biennial Elections to the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishads engaged the attention of the Central Parliamentary Board at its meeting in Madras on February 26 and 27, 1966.

In an effort to bring about inter-oppositional harmony the Board decided to invite the members of the Parliamentary Boards of other democratic Opposition parties to a joint meeting in New Delhi to discuss the possibilities of promoting an understanding for the next General Elections. It adopted resolutions on the need to terminate the Emergency and the setting up of a caretaker Government prior to the General Elections.

Certain modifications in procedure with a view to securing de-centralisation in connection with the work of preparing for the next General Elections were made at the next meeting of the Board on May 26 and 29, 1966, in Bombay. The modifications resulted in full time Organisers being placed under the direct supervision and control of the candidate and the 3-man Committee in the constituency, subject to the overall supervision of the State and the Central Offices. State Units were asked to suggest, where necessary, the reconstitution of 3-Man Campaign Committees at constituency level. Certain other measures for expeditious consideration by the Parliamentary Board of recommendations of prospective Assembly candidates were also evolved at this meeting. A beginning was made with the nomination of 11 prospective Assembly candidates.

The next meeting of the Board was held in Madras on July 22 and 23, 1966. Apart from adopting some prospective Parliamentary candidates, the Board received a report from the President and the General Secretary of the talk they had had with the Prime Minister on June 22 in regard to Devaluation and the measures by which it should be followed. The Board gave guidance to Members of Parliament in regard to various issues coming up before the Lok Sabha. It also adopted two resolutions calling for free elections and legislation to prohibit the collection of funds by Ministers and those in high office. The meeting decided to publicise as widely as possible Rajaji's Appeal for good candidates to come forth and stand as the Party's nominees on their own resources.

The Board reviewed progress made in bilateral talks with various democratic Opposition parties for an electoral adjustment.

The Board met again in New Delhi on November 5, 1966. It nominated more prospective parliamentary and Assembly candidates, reviewed progress made in constituencies already selected and approved electoral arrangements arrived at with the Jan Sangh in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Orissa.

The Board on Rajaji's advice decided that the General Secretary of the Party should be requested not to seek nomination for election next February so that he may not be pinned down to a constituency but be free to remain in charge of the Party's election campaign and organisation and to tour the country and be of assistance to State Units and the Party's candidates. Mr. Masani agreed to the Board's request.

In so far as the Rajkot Parliamentary Constituency was concerned, the Central Parliamentary Board requested Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, as suggested by Rajaji, to stand for election from Rajkot, and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel agreed to respond to this request. The representatives from Gujarat present at the meeting, Mr. H. M. Patel and Mr. Vadilal Lallubhai, agreed to both the proposals.

Meeting in Jaipur on November 19, 1966, the Board modified its earlier decision in regard to Rajkot Parliamentary Consti-

tuency, and decided, in deference to the wishes of the constituency, to permit Mr. Masani to stand for election from Rajkot provided he finds it possible to arrive at satisfactory arrangements that would enable him to fulfil his obligations to the Party as General Secretary. The final decision was left to be taken by the General Secretary.

The Board will meet next in New Delhi on the eve of the National Convention.

Literature

The Central Office has published the following literature in English. Some literature has also been published in the various regional languages.

1. Report of the 3rd National Convention
2. The Budget and You
3. Taxes, Taxes, Taxes
4. 17th Amendment Vs Farm, Family & Freedom
5. Defence of the Sub-Continent
6. Who Is To Hold That Price Line? (Cartoon Booklet)
7. India's Answer to the Chinese Bomb
8. A Fair Deal for Public Servants
9. Why I Took to Politics
10. The Fraud of Gold Control
11. Voice of the People
12. Can India Escape Bankruptcy?
13. Judgement Reserved
14. Congress Path to National Disaster
15. The Budget Vs The People
16. We Accuse
17. Problems of India's Defence
18. Statism Rejected — Ceylon Shows the Why

"FOR THIS WE STAND" SERIES:

19. Swatantra Speaks to the Poor, I
20. Why This Poor Man Prefers Swatantra, II
21. Why Swatantra Supports the Tashkent Agreement, III

22. Devaluation – The Guilty Men, IV
23. Gold Control Concessions – An Election Stunt – V
24. "For God's Sake, Go" VI

In addition, 21 issues of the *Swatantra Newsletter* have been published since the last Convention.

A new bulletin called *Swatantra In Parliament*, which reports on the contribution of our members to debates in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, was started and eight issues of this journal have so far been published. Academic circles have welcomed this journal as being the first of its kind to be issued by any political party in the country.

Party Organisation

The General Council of the Party, when it met on February 13, 1965, after a prolonged discussion adopted a Statement on Organisation prepared by the General Secretary (Annexure A). The Statement was an effort to streamline the Party's organisation so as to enable it to meet the challenge of the General Elections in February 1967.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the Council's decisions has not been as satisfactory as might have been hoped, the principal reason being inadequate response from State Units. Thus, for instance, requests by the Central Parliamentary Board for lists of Parliamentary Constituencies in order of priority, along with the reasons for such priorities, largely remained unanswered or only partially answered by several State Units.

CONSTITUENCY LEVEL

When the General Council adopted the Statement on Organisation and this was followed by the laying down of a definite procedure by the Central Parliamentary Board, which provided for the early selection of prospective Parliamentary candidates and the provision of assistance to the constituencies concerned in the form of full-time field organisers and otherwise, it was hoped that such a scheme would produce a sufficient

number of worth-while candidates and the Party's efforts to emerge much stronger in the next General Elections would be nearer realisation. Despite the fact, however, that the scheme has been in operation for over twenty-one months, not more than 90 prospective Parliamentary candidates are in the field throughout the country.

Discussions with several of our Party leaders in the States have brought out the point that good candidates are just not available or, to the extent that they are available, we have been unable to locate and attract them. Considering that our Party is the only one in India which has been giving encouragement to the early nomination of good candidates, this is disappointing. In this connection, Rajaji's Independence Day's Appeal in *Swarajya* for good men to come forward and stand as the Party's candidates on a self-supporting basis was widely publicised in the leading Indian dailies.

Similarly, the pace of nominations of candidates at Assembly level has not been very fast either. Until recently, a mere handful of Assembly candidates from U.P. alone had been approved by the Central Parliamentary Board. So far 152 Assembly candidates from various units have been approved. The Central Parliamentary Board has naturally not found it possible to accept each and every nomination of a prospective Parliamentary candidate recommended by State Units. When recommendations had prima facie validity, they were promptly approved. There were cases, however, where reconsideration was found necessary. But for the insistence of the Central Parliamentary Board in processing recommendations, some hasty recommendations made by State Parliamentary Boards would have not merely embarrassed the State Units themselves, but would have resulted in a waste of resources and brought a bad name to the Party in general. The Central Parliamentary Board and Central Office have been most anxious to expedite the process of nomination of prospective candidates. Unfortunately, some State offices have not been geared adequately to the task of preparing a case which would facilitate a quick decision by the Central Parliamentary Board.

STATE LEVEL

The conversion of Party membership from mass membership to active membership, which was decided on by the last National Convention of the Party in Bangalore in February, 1964, in the hope that it would facilitate the building of a cadre of Party workers, has unfortunately not brought about the desired results to an adequate extent. The number of workers and Life workers enrolled as on July 30, 1964, was as follows:

<i>State</i>	<i>Workers</i>	<i>Life Workers</i>	<i>Life Members</i>	<i>Total</i>
Andhra	3,905	6	399	4,310
Bombay	330	20	437	787
Gujarat	6,125	72	157	6,354
Himachal Pradesh	304	—	12	316
Kerala:				
North	85)			
South	189)			316
Central	42)			
Madras	2,614	29	380	3,023
Maharashtra	99	1	69	169
Mysore	767	12	413	1,192
Orissa	971	7	135	1,113
Punjab	1,724	12	21	1,757
Rajasthan	3,418	6	66	3,490
Uttar Pradesh	1,975	4	730	2,709
Total	22,548	169	2,819	25,852

With certain honourable exceptions, State Units have generally failed to submit register entries and the Centre's quota of subscription, while on the other hand they have demonstrated an insatiable appetite for Workers' cards. The honourable exceptions are Kerala and Mysore, who have submitted their entries and the Centre's quota without having to be reminded about it. Some others have submitted their entries after the call went out for the number of workers on the rolls for purposes of determining the allocation of delegates. But these are unverified, and hence this Report does not carry the information received.

What is obvious is that there has been a failure in general to renew membership of existing Workers and to enrol new Workers. Communications received from State Units confess to this failure. These facts have grave implications in regard to the efficient functioning of State, district and local units.

When the National Executive could no longer ignore the fact that many district and local committees of the Party had become moribund and were not functioning satisfactorily, it took a decision on November 1, 1965, authorising State Committees to dissolve a committee at the district, taluka or constituency level which did not function or which was no longer representative of the Party's active membership. A similar decision was taken in regard to office-bearers at district, taluka and constituency level. The fact that, in a particular State, as many as five District Committees had to be dissolved at a single meeting of the State Executive soon after this decision was taken indicates how far the weakness had spread.

This does not mean that State units have been inactive. A perusal of the Party's activities reported elsewhere in this Report provides an encouraging picture. What is sought to be emphasised here is that the importance of strengthening the Party machine and working in a systematic and organised manner has not yet been adequately realised.

CENTRAL OFFICE

Following on the General Council's decisions, among which was one to strengthen the Central Office, additional staff have been employed and the Central Office has temporarily shifted to new premises. At the same time the Office continues to work on a shoe-string. It is still functioning on the basis of a budget drawn up and approved by the Central Organising Committee as far back as March 1960. Indeed the Central Office has not even been provided with the amount contemplated in that budget, which was only Rs. 10,000 per month.

Considering that out of these funds the Central Office is also expected to maintain a Branch Office for the State of Bihar in Patna, it is not a wonder that the Secretariat has had to function

under considerable strain and has not been able to do all that it would have liked to do during this period. Apart from attending to voluminous correspondence, the Central Office issues workers' cards, scrutinises register entries received from State units, prints and distributes literature in English and the regional languages, issues the *Swatantra Newsletter and Swatantra in Parliament*, interviews candidates and field organisers, scrutinises their reports and accounts, arranges for the payment of nursing grants to candidates and remuneration and T.A. to field organisers throughout the country.

By-Elections and Elections to Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Sabha

BY-ELECTIONS

The Party emerged victorious in the Keonjhar by-election to the Orissa Legislative Assembly. The Swatantra candidate, Mr. Karunakar Pradhan, defeated the Congress candidate in a straight fight. The Party did not contest any other by-election during this period.

RAJYA SABHA

The period under review saw two biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha. In the biennial elections of March 1964, 6 out of 7 Swatantra candidates emerged successful. They were:

Mr. S. S. Mariswamy	..	Madras
Sardar Ram Singh	..	Uttar Pradesh
Mr. Devi Singh	..	Rajasthan
Mr. S. P. Singh Deo	..	Orissa
Mr. Dahyabhai Patel	..	Gujarat
Mr. Anand Chand	..	Bihar

Of these, Mr. S. P. Singh Deo passed away and Mr. Anand Chand resigned from the Party.

All three nominees of the Party emerged successful in the biennial elections of March 1966. They were :

Dr. Biharilal Anantani	..	Gujarat
Mr. Loknath Mishra	..	Orissa
Mr. K. Sunderam	..	Madras

VIDHAN PARISHAD

The Andhra Legislative Assembly returned two Vidhan Parishad candidates of the Party. The first was Mr. Pydar Venkatanarayana in June 1964 and the second Mr. Divi Kondiah in May 1966.

Obituary

This period has been a sad one for the Party in the way of the loss of comrades. In March 1965, the Party lost Mr. Raghavendra Pratap Singh, President of the U.P. Unit and Leader of the Party's Group in U.P. Assembly, after a prolonged illness in Lucknow.

Mr. S. P. Singh Deo, a member of the Rajya Sabha from Orissa, passed away in July 1965 after a heart attack in Calcutta.

In October 1965, Mr. A. D. Shroff, a member of the Party's General Council and a pillar of strength to the Party, died of a heart attack in Bombay.

On January 1, 1966, Mr. V. P. Menon, a pillar of the Mysore Unit and architect of the successful 3rd National Convention died in Jabalpur.

A Vice-President of the Party and the President of the Punjab Unit, Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, passed away in Chandigarh on January 11, 1966 after a prolonged illness.

Among others whose demise has left a void in the Party are:

Mr. Ramaswamy Konar, President, Thirunelveli Dist. Unit, Tamilnad.

Mr. S. Hameed, Vice-President, Tamil Nad Swatantra Party.
Thakur Bhanu Pratap Singh of Dadu, President, Jaipur District Unit, Rajasthan, and

Raja Maheshindra Singh of the Punjab Unit.

The Party's grievous sense of loss at the passing away of these leaders of the Party is here by recorded with sorrow.

Work in Parliament & State Assemblies

The Party's members in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, where they are now the leading Opposition group, have continued to give a good account of themselves. There is no doubt that, on all major national and international issues of the day, the Party's parliamentarians have projected its line satisfactorily.

The Swatantra Group in the Lok Sabha has been strengthened by the entry into it of Mr. Tan Singh, till then an Independent member from Barmer, Rajasthan, and yet more recently of Maulana Muzaffar Hussain from Moradabad, U.P.

In so far as the working of the Party's groups in the State Assemblies is concerned, the Central Office regrets that, despite repeated requests, reports of the work done by the Party's members in State Assemblies have not been made available to it except in the case of U.P. which has sent a report.

Party Activity

KISANS

True to its character as a Party of the peasants, the Swatantra Party has been in the forefront of the battle to preserve the rights of the kisans.

The biggest single threat to the peasants of India has been posed by the 17th Amendment to the Constitution. In Parliament and outside, the Party spared no effort to fight this obnoxious measure.

On March 30, 1964, over 5,000 Kisans from various parts of the country responded to the Party's call and participated in the Sammelan in Delhi to protest against the 17th Amendment. It was presided over by a Kisan leader from the Punjab, Chaudhuri Inder Singh, now a member of our National Execu-

tive. A mile-long procession wended its way to Parliament House. Deputations of peasants waited on the President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and presented to them the unanimous resolution of the Kisan Sammelan against the enactment of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution.

The Party achieved the unique feat of getting the 17th Amendment Bill defeated in the Lok Sabha, but the Nehru Government persisted in promoting this pernicious measure and convened a special session of Parliament for the purpose. To resist the re-introduction of the Bill, the Party observed May 24, 1964, as Kisan Day. Meetings, processions, posters and signature campaigns were held throughout the country.

A memorandum signed by Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Prof. Ranga, Mr. M. R. Masani, Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel and Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy was presented to the President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

Similarly the Party took up the cause of the peasants of India in protesting against such measures as enhancement of land levy, zonal restrictions, compulsory levy and organised meetings and demonstrations throughout the country.

GOLDSMITHS

The Party took up the cause of goldsmiths and was largely instrumental in obtaining partial relief for the goldsmiths.

PROTEST DAYS

In a response that exceeded all expectations, the Party's units and members throughout the country responded to the call to observe February 20, 1966, as "Anti-Excessive Taxation Day". From various parts of India, reports came pouring in of meetings, processions, poster campaigns, signature campaigns, demonstrations outside Government secretariats and public meetings. The Central Office issued a cartoon strip entitled "18 years of Socialism" and Talking Points for speakers.

Party units in various parts of the country organised "Demands Day" to demand the resignation of Ministries three

months before the elections to ensure free and fair elections. The "Day" was observed on different dates in different parts of the country.

MEMORANDA

The Party's units in certain States, the Party's group in Parliament and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, M.P. in particular deserve kudos for exposing corruption in high places.

The Orissa Unit of the Party, with the cooperation of other democratic opposition parties in the State, submitted a memorandum to President Radhakrishnan against Mr. Biren Mitra, the then Chief Minister in Orissa. The memorandum was largely instrumental in Mr. Mitra being removed from office.

The Rajasthan unit submitted a memorandum against the doings of Mr. Mohanlal Sukhadia, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, which however was not successful in dislodging him but served to focus the attention of the people of Rajasthan on the misdeeds of the ruling party in the State.

In Parliament, a memorandum submitted against Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari succeeded in getting him out of the cabinet. This was largely due to the incessant campaign conducted by Mr. Dahyabhai Patel.

TRAINING OF PARTY WORKERS

The training of Party workers happily received some more attention during the period under review. The Andhra unit deserves special mention for the numerous summer schools they organised to train the Party's workers and equip them ideologically. Party workers camps were also held in Orissa, Mysore, Bombay, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. The Central Office also organised a camp in Bombay for the Party's full time field organisers. A camp to train volunteer leaders was organised near Hyderabad for thirty days in February-March this year. The camp was organised by the Central Office in collaboration with the Andhra Unit of the Party. The camp resulted in 17 fully trained volunteer leaders being put in the field. Limitations of time and money have prevented the Central Office from orga-

nising a national volunteer force with the help of these seventeen trained persons.

COOPERATION IN DEFENCE EFFORT

During the conflict with Pakistan, the Party's Units extended their wholehearted cooperation to the country's defence effort. A circular to State Units soon after the outbreak of hostilities asked State units to "cooperate actively with the authorities in Civil Defence measures and in all matters connected with the Defence effort." The General Secretary represented the Party on the Kashmir Committee set up by the Citizens' Central Council in Delhi as well as on its Relief Sub-Committee.

The Bombay unit deserves to be commended for the active interest it took not only by way of collecting money and clothes for the relief of distressed people but also by cooperating in Civil Defence measures like persuading the public to donate blood and offering the Party's office as a centre for blood donations and as a Warden's post.

STATE CONVENTIONS

A matter for gratification was the number of State Conventions held during the period under review. Among these were:

- a. Bombay Regional Convention — April 6, 1964.
- b. Tamil Nad Convention — September 26 and 27, 1964.
- c. Kerala State Convention — November 1964 (another is scheduled for December 28 and 29, 1966).
- d. Orissa State Convention — April 1965, and October 3 and 4, 1966.
- e. Andhra State Convention — June 6 and 7, 1965 and October 1 and 2, 1966.
- f. U.P. State Convention — April 1965 (another is scheduled on December 17 & 18, 1966).
- g. Mysore State Convention — June 11 and 12, 1966.
- h. Rajasthan State Convention — November 18 and 19, 1966.

In addition, District Conventions were held in various parts of the country.

Conclusions

In the Statement on Organisation approved by the General Council last year, the following targets had been envisaged:

- (i) Wiping out the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha by carrying a large number of seats for the Swatantra Party,
- (ii) Elimination of the Congress majority and the establishment of Swatantra or Swatantra-led Governments in two or three States,
- (iii) Becoming the principal opposition in some other States.

The order in which these targets were set out in the Statement on Organisation approved by the General Council last year is unquestionably a sound one. The fight against Statism has essentially to be waged at the Centre where not only the Congress Government and the Planning Commission but the deleterious policies by which they have brought the country to its present plight have to be combated. The State Governments, as Rajaji has often put it, have become glorified municipalities and District Boards dependent on the Centre for grants and overdrafts. It is unquestionable, therefore, that the centre of gravity and power in this country lies in New Delhi. It is only if the Swatantra Party multiplies its strength in the Lok Sabha several times over that the Congress Party can be denied a majority and its monopoly of power over the Union Government can be ended. This involves the adoption of a large number of prospective Parliamentary candidates throughout the country.

While, therefore, it would be a spectacular success for the Party to carry a couple of States, as it hopes to do, and the Party has in fact during the past year given priority to the States where we are in the strongest position, any undue diversion of effort and resources to one or two States in the pursuit of the second objective, would not only be unfair to the Party in other parts of the country but would limit the number of Parliamentary

candidates that need to be put up and thus strike a blow at the very first objective of the Party, as also at the third.

It would be fair to conclude from the facts available that, while the broad lines of organisation laid down by the General Council have helped to some extent to galvanise Party activity and to pull it out of the condition in which it was in the beginning of 1965, the progress towards the achievement of these targets has not been as satisfactory as had been envisaged last year. Force of habit and the lethargy which is common to all political parties in India in between General Elections have unfortunately come in the way of the incentives offered for the early nomination of candidates and the effective nursing of constituencies yielding the expected response and results.

More Rapid Advance

The main problem before the Party at this moment appears to be how to move on from the 90 prospective Parliamentary candidates who are now in position to twice that number, along with a correspondingly larger number of Assembly candidates, without diluting the quality of the prospective candidates and thus frustrating the very sound objectives which the General Council, the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board have set before themselves.

It is more than likely that there are a large number of good men in fundamental agreement with the Party's policies who are today either passive members of the Party or not even on the roll of Workers but who may be prepared to consider becoming the Party's standard-bearers at the next General Elections. This may be particularly true of the kind of young and dynamic men and women whom a Party of modern, twentieth-century thought like the Swatantra Party should be able to rally to its ranks but which it has so far failed adequately to do.

In this connection Rajaji's appeal in *Swarajya* for good men to come forward and be the Party's candidates on a self-supporting basis which was widely publicised in the leading national dailies succeeded in bringing forth offers from a few

men who have expressed their willingness to stand for Parliament. Six of them have since been approved by the Central Parliamentary Board and are now in the field as self-supporting candidates.

It is to be hoped that the Election Manifesto of the Party which will emerge from this Convention will provide a rallying cry to a much wider cross-section of public opinion in this country than the Party has yet been able to attract to its ranks.

The Swatantra Party, as Rajaji has so often stressed, wants to see the Congress Government replaced by a good and efficient Government in which the Swatantra Party would be prepared to play its part but which it would have no desire to monopolise. There should be room in such a Government, if we can achieve it, not only for members of other democratic Opposition Parties but also for good citizens outside the field of Party politics, whether from the ranks of professionals, business, peasants, labour or Sarvodaya.

It was in this spirit that the Central Parliamentary Board of the Party invited Acharya Kripalani, a distinguished non-Party Opposition figure, to accept nomination for the Rajya Sabha in the last biennial elections from the U.P. and it is a matter for regret that certain interests in the U.P. Unit of the Party had neither the imagination to see the virtues of this proposal nor the discipline to give effect to it. The fact remains, however, that there was widespread appreciation in the country of this particular step taken by the Party and that it raised the Party's stock among many who were not wedded to its ideology. If, therefore, Rajaji's approach is to be carried out by the Swatantra Party, it would be in the fitness of things that the ranks of the Party's candidates next year, whether for Parliament or Assembly, should include a number of good men and women who need not so far have been identified with the Party's organisation.

Electoral Understandings

Despite the Party's consistent efforts to arrive at an electoral adjustment or agreement with other non-Communist Opposition Parties, it has to be conceded that progress has so far been some-

what limited. In an effort at breaking through this impasse, the Central Parliamentary Board, at its meeting in Madras on February 26 and 27, 1966, decided to take the imaginative step of inviting non-Communist Opposition Parties to a joint meeting in Delhi during the Budget Session of Parliament of members of their Parliamentary Boards for a free exchange of views without any commitments whatsoever in order to explore the maximum amount of cooperation that could be achieved. It is a matter of profound regret that the response, though enthusiastic in certain quarters, was not widespread enough to enable a representative meeting to be held with the result that the meeting proposed to be called on 8th May had reluctantly to be postponed since the only Parties that agreed to send their representatives to participate in the meeting were the Samyukta Socialist Party, the Republican Party, the Hindu Mahasabha and one of the two wings of the Akali Dal.

Notwithstanding this lack of response, efforts to arrive at bilateral electoral understandings which would prevent a distortion of the popular will, such as has taken place in past elections, are being pursued vigorously by our Party. It is a matter for satisfaction, in this connection, to report that the Party has successfully concluded agreements with the Jan Sangh in the States of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Orissa and with the Republican Party in Gujarat. Talks with the Jan Sangh and with other democratic opposition parties are at present proceeding in other States as well. The Party has made it clear that it will have nothing whatsoever to do with two Communist parties. For reasons that Rajaji has explained so clearly in *Swarajya*, it would be very harmful to the Party's image and prospects if it were to allow itself to be drawn into an opportunist electoral understanding with one or the other Communist Party or with communist dominated organisations.

While pursuing these efforts undeterred and with vigour till the end, the Swatantra Party should be careful to ensure, as was well said in the Resolution of the last National Convention in Bangalore in February 1964, that "such efforts should be no

reason for any slackening in building up the Party's own organisation which should enjoy the highest priority among our tasks".

In the last analysis, the success of the Swatantra Party will depend on the efforts of its own members and not on what the ruling Party or others may do to frustrate the pursuit of our objectives. Our future is in our own hands. Senator Dirksen, the American Republican leader, with his extensive and profound experience has seen this point and given expression to it when he said:

"Parties do not defeat each other. Generally speaking, parties defeat themselves. A party becomes a victim of its mistakes and of its blunders."

Bombay,
December 1, 1966

M. R. MASANI

Annexure

THE TASK BEFORE US

(The following is an abridged version of the General Secretary's Statement on Organisation, the Proposals in which (Part II) were endorsed by the General Council of the Party at its meeting in Bombay on February 13, 1965)

I

REVIEW

"Discontent with the policies of the ruling Party is spreading apace. Large numbers of people are getting desperate about the deteriorating economic condition and are looking for relief. There is a widespread feeling that it is time for a change of government. The fact that the Swatantra Party has, since its inception, warned against the results of Government's domestic and foreign policies in a manner that has now been justified by events is securing for the Party's position a clearer understanding and a better response than before. It is lightening to some extent the onerous burden we took on ourselves when we undertook the Herculean task of educating our people on the facts of economic life.

The outlook for our cause is therefore bright. There can be no doubt that, if Indian independence and democracy have to be preserved, the policies of the Swatantra Party will have to become the nation's policies. In such a context, the Party can do big things in the next General Elections to Parliament and State Assemblies in 1967.

We had every reason for gratification at the result of our first effort in 1962, within less than three years after our birth. The position that we have secured as the main Opposition in both Houses of Parliament, the fact that we have more members in the State Assemblies than any other Party and the fact that we

are the official opposition in Orissa, Rajasthan and Gujarat provide a good foundation on which to build for a "take off" at the polls next time. Given the public temper, and dynamism and drive on our part, even a landslide in our favour is possible.

Yet there is a mood of helplessness in the country. Why is this so? Why have objective observers felt despondent about our capacity to provide an alternative Government to the country? A delegate at the Durgapur Session of the Congress Party made the observation: "The Congress Government is continuing only because there is no Opposition worth the name." You cannot beat someone with no one, say others. What are the causes that inspire such pessimism? To find the answer, it became necessary to examine the state of our Party today."

The note then goes on to review the state of the Party and refers to certain weaknesses and inadequacies in the Party's organisation.

"This perhaps explains why the Party's image in the minds of the public is not what it should be. It is a mistake to think that it is some defect or fault in our economic or international policy that is to blame in this connection. It is the absence of dedication, discipline and hard work in the pursuit of our ideals, in sharp contrast to the inspired leadership and tireless activity of Rajaji, by which people judge the rest of us.

In a country which has yet, in large measure, to acquire political experience, organisation counts for a great deal, apart from ideology or policies. Can it be said that the intellectuals in our Party have devoted adequate attention to large sections of our people like the small farmers, industrial and agricultural labour, and shopkeepers? Or to women and youth?

This surely cannot be the way nor the mood in which we can gear ourselves to victory in 1967. Some of us are inclined to explain away our default by blaming the Congress for demoralising the country and its public workers. Some would write off democracy and leave the country to Providence or a military dictatorship.

Such an attitude would not be justified by the facts and would do incalculable harm to the country. We should recall Gandhiji's precept that we should "turn the searchlight inwards" and find out in what way we may remedy the situation.

A review of the past three years tends to show that much better progress could have been made had it not been for a lack of hard work, efficient organisation, discipline and dedication to the Party in so many instances; and a tendency to compromise with weaknesses of various kinds and to attempt to cover them up rather than face those weaknesses.

II

PROPOSALS

With two years left for the next General Elections, the time for decision is now. Can the party be put on the path to success? How can it be done?

The answer lies in an acceptance of the basic fact that, while the Party's policies are correct and meet with little resistance and we have the potentiality of becoming the major national party, what is needed is an efficient "conveyor belt" of articulate and dedicated workers who can spread the Party's message to the remotest village. It is not enough to depend on the striking failures of the ruling party and their growing unpopularity.

Expansion, the Keyword

Expansion should be the keyword, accompanied by a decision to streamline our organisation and work hard.

Hard work will not give the fullest results unless it is within the framework of sound organisational principles and a sound organisational structure. These truths are as valid in political life as elsewhere. Given an acceptance of these truths, there is no doubt that the men and the resources needed would be forthcoming to help in these tasks.

Targets

What should be our targets? Laying aside our bigger hopes and ambitions and pitching our sights nearer, our targets should be:

1. Wiping out the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha by carrying a large number of seats for the Swatantra Party;
2. Elimination of the Congress majority and the establishment of Swatantra or Swatantra-led Governments in Orissa, Rajasthan and Gujarat;
3. Becoming the principal Opposition in some other States, e.g. Andhra.

These may look to be ambitious but, given great effort and dynamism on the part of all of us, these targets are achievable.

Such targets would entail putting up a sufficiently large number of candidates for Parliament and a correspondingly large number for State Assemblies, both in these constituencies and elsewhere. Today, the Party has neither the organisation in many constituencies nor an adequate number of appropriate candidates. Hence the need to develop new organisational strength by evolving new organisational forms to cope with the colossal tasks which face us.

Our Tasks

The tasks for the Party, therefore, involve:

1. A rapid expansion of our work in regions and districts which lie untouched, and intensification of activity elsewhere.
2. Search for, and enlistment of, prospective candidates to act as the Party's standard-bearers in the Parliamentary constituencies, and a larger number in the Assembly constituencies.
3. The recruitment of full-time Organisers at the constituency level.
4. A programme for the education and training of candidates, organisers and Party workers.

5. The raising of material resources to finance the huge effort at all levels.
6. A realisation of the need for self-dependence while always leaving open the door for understandings with other democratic Opposition parties.

It has reluctantly to be conceded that in most States we do not possess the capacity or command the resources to extend our activities in line with these targets.

A National Campaign

Our campaign for 1967 must, therefore, be a National Campaign run on national lines. This should be so in any event, even were we not faced with these limitations. We must realise that there is only one Swatantra Party, and that is *The Swatantra Party*. Our leader, Rajaji, put his finger on this truth as far back as August 1959 in Bombay when he pointed out, in connection with our attitude in regard to a regional controversy then current in Western India, that there could not be one Swatantra Party in Bombay, another in Maharashtra and a third in Gujarat, but that these should all function as branches of a single Party.

This is a fact which is commonplace in Britain where the Conservative, Liberal and Labour Parties are organised with National Headquarters in London, on the one hand and Constituency organisations consisting of the candidate, the Agent (or Organiser), and local branch on the other. The size of our country certainly justifies our interposing an additional tier, namely, the State unit. But that cannot mean that the State unit should claim territorial authority, seek a monopoly of developing the Party in that area, and question "interference" by the Centre. The National Executive of the Party and the Parliamentary Board are there precisely to guide and direct the affairs of the Party throughout the length and breadth of the country, whenever it is necessary in the Party's interests. The freedom of opinion and expression guaranteed to our members cannot be misunderstood to cover up organisational anarchy.

Our *first* decision should therefore be that our campaign for

the General Elections should be conducted throughout the country by the National Executive and a strong and compact Parliamentary Board to be appointed by the National Executive, involving *inter alia* the laying down of the line and strategy to be followed, the allocation of resources, the supervision and control of the activities of Candidates and Organisers, and the preparation and publication in the various languages of Party literature. Naturally, the advice and assistance of State units will be welcomed as necessary in these tasks.

Our *second* decision should be that the candidates that we put up should not only work for their success in elections but should be the Party's standard bearers in their constituencies, help in selecting the Assembly candidates and generally help in building up the Party organisation. This will produce an integration of work that will be helpful. They will be entitled to expect the fullest cooperation from the Central, State and District units of the Party. The candidate, who has the incentive to win, should be made primarily responsible for educating and nursing the constituency and thus carrying the Party to victory.

Our *third* decision should be that the Party's candidates should be GOOD men. Our doors should be open to such men who are in agreement with us but have not come in as yet.

Our *fourth* decision should be that candidates should be placed in the field at the earliest possible moment to enable them to perform their tasks.

Strengthening National Headquarters

In the same spirit of self-criticism, it must be confessed that the functioning of the Central Office has to accept its share of the responsibility. It has not developed into what it should have become, namely, the hub of party activity, an active agency to guide and direct Party effort throughout the country and ensure the emergence of a National Party strong enough to pose a formidable challenge to the ruling party at the polls. So also, it has failed to take the initiative in building Party organisation in States such as Assam and Madhya Pradesh. Towards this inadequacy, several factors have contributed. The General Secretary's

Reports to the last two National Conventions have repeatedly pointed out the difficulties under which the Central Office has had to function.

Despite these handicaps, the Central Office, with the absurdly inadequate strength of six including clerical staff, has gamely tried to keep the ball rolling. The following may give a rough idea of what the Central Office has been doing:

1. Between the period April 1963 and December 1964, the Central Office handled about 5,000 letters and communications of various types.
2. It prepared and distributed the *Swatantra Newsletter*, of which 48 issues have so far been published, with a mailing list of over a thousand persons, both domestic and foreign.
3. It published a total of 29 publications.
4. The Central Office has endeavoured, in an altogether inadequate measure, to develop Party activity in States where there are no units, e.g. West Bengal and, till recently, Kerala.
5. It has taken over charge of State units dissolved for ineffective functioning, e.g. Bihar and Delhi.
6. Since last year, the Central Office has taken on the task of supervising the enrolment of full-time Organisers, the scrutinising and maintaining of Register entries, and the supplying of Workers Cards.
7. It is organising training camps for workers and organisers.
8. A Labour Department with a full-time Organiser has been set up.

If the desire is to go ahead in a big way, it is of the utmost importance that the National Headquarters, which is the executive arm of the National Executive and the Parliamentary Board, should be strengthened considerably. This should involve:

1. The appointment by the General Council, on the recommendation of the General Secretary, of Joint Secretaries who could share his burden;

2. The appointment of full-time honorary and paid personnel.

(i) act as Field Organisers for work at State or Zonal level, and

(ii) to take charge of such department as Women, Youth, Peasants and Publicity on the lines already done in the case of Labour.

It is only by taking the steps outlined above, involving as they would a New Look being given to the Party, that it will be able to shoulder the tasks and responsibilities that face it.