

SWATANTRA PARTY

4800

General Secretary's Report



FIFTH NATIONAL CONVENTION

Bhubaneswar, October 5 & 6, 1968

THE SWATANTRA PARTY

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GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Friends,

This report is largely a factual statement covering the period since the IVth National Convention of the Party on December 12 and 13, 1966, in New Delhi. The responsibility for whatever is contained in this Report is entirely that of the General Secretary since it has not been found possible to place it before the National Executive in view of continued pre-occupation with pressing matters concerning the Party both at the organisational level as also in Parliament.

The Fourth National Convention

The Fourth National Convention was held in New Delhi on December 12 and 13, 1966. It was attended by 642 delegates from 19 States (including Union Territories).

The main business before the Convention was the adoption of the Draft Election Manifesto of the Party for the General Election of 1967. The Draft Manifesto was discussed at great length and finally adopted.

A feature of this Convention was the fact that only one of the four sessions over which it extended was a closed session (for delegates) the remaining three being open sessions to which the public and the press were invited and were present. Another feature was that as in the case of the Third National Convention held in Bangalore, the IVth National Convention eschewed all "tamashas" such as processions and the like that usually go with such political conventions. The Convention was held in the Sapru

House Hall and proceeded in a business-like manner. I would like to take this opportunity to convey the Party's grateful thanks to the efforts of the Chairman of the Convention Committee, Mr. H. P. Nanda, and his team for the excellent arrangements and for the care with which they looked after the essential requirements and comforts of the delegates. •

Rajaji's inaugural address at the Convention was a call to action in the context of the General Elections which was then only two months away. Prof. Ranga's Presidential address, covered a broad spectrum of Indian politics. And the Report of the General Secretary (my predecessor, Mr. Masani) was received with appreciation.

The Convention adopted certain amendments to the Constitution, debated the General Secretary's Report and approved the General Council's Resolution on the impending General Elections. A noteworthy feature was the extensive participation by the delegates in all matters under consideration.

The main business before the Convention was of course, the adoption of the Party's Election Manifesto. The discussion of the Manifesto was spread over two sessions. It was very carefully considered, item by item, by the delegates before it was adopted. The document as it finally emerged, was a Manifesto of which any Party could be proud. In fact, the Press which gave a fair coverage to the Convention had little to be critical about in our Manifesto as it finally emerged.

General Elections

At a meeting of the General Council of the Party held on February 13, 1965, the following targets had been approved for achievement by the Party in the General Elections of 1967:

- (a) To wipe out, in collaboration with other democratic Parties, the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha by carrying a large number of seats for the Swatantra Party.
- (b) To eliminate or drastically to reduce the Congress majorities in the States and to establish Swatantra or Swatantra-led Governments in Orissa, Rajasthan and Gujarat;

- (c) To become the principal Opposition in some States and to increase our strength in others.

But our actual performance fell very considerably short of the targets.

(a) Our collaboration with other democratic Parties was not as comprehensive or successful as we had hoped for. We were able to bring the Congress Party to the brink of defeat, but not enough to push it over. Though we doubled our strength in the Lok Sabha from 22 to 44, we failed to secure those critical nine more seats that would have entitled us to be the Official Opposition in the Lok Sabha. However, a point that ought to be noted here is that although we set up fewer candidates in 1967 than in 1962, we achieved a greater measure of success: as against our 192 candidates in 1962 returning only 22 members, we set up 175 this time returning 44. Another interesting feature of our Lok Sabha results in 1967 was that while the composition of our Group in the last Lok Sabha was confined generally (with the exception of Andhra) to the States above the Vindhyas, this time, however, both Madras and Mysore are well represented. On the other hand, we have been wiped out of Bihar, Punjab and Haryana with just one member returned from U.P.

Of these 44 elected MPs, one member defected recently to the Congress Party. However, our strength continues to be 44 as an Independent Member joined our Group in the Lok Sabha.

(b) While we failed in our endeavour to set up a purely Swatantra Government in any State, we were able to eliminate the Congress majority in Orissa and to form a Swatantra-led Government in coalition with the Jana Congress. In Gujarat, although our increase in strength was spectacular (from just 26 members to 66) we were still not able to deprive the Congress of its majority. However, due to post election defections, (four defected and one unseated in an election petition), our strength in the legislature of the State has reduced to 58. In Rajasthan, where we had come to an understanding with both the Jan Sangh and the Janta Party (dissident Congressmen) we were unable to deprive the Congress of its majority. The increase of our strength in the State Assembly was more modest—from 38 to 48; but post-

election defections have drastically eroded our numbers from 48 to 32. A member resigned from the Assembly, thus reducing our number to 31.

(c) Apart from Gujarat and Rajasthan, Andhra alone achieved the third target by moving into the position of the leading Opposition Group in the State Assembly. As a result of an arrangement with a group of dissident Congressmen, our leader in the Andhra Assembly, Mr. G. Latchanna, is the leader of the Official Opposition.

Our last target was to try and improve our position in the Legislatures of those States where we had little or no strength. Madras and Mysore fulfilled this target by increasing their strength from 6 to 20 and from 9 to 12, respectively. We entered for the first time the State Legislatures of Assam and Bengal with two and one members respectively.

A distressing feature of our over-all performance was the high proportion of our candidates who lost their deposits in the General Elections (see appendix). Of the 175 candidates set up for the Lok Sabha as many as half (86) lost their security deposits; and of the 973 candidates we set up for the State Assemblies, as many as three out of every eight (367) lost their deposits. This is clearly an indication of the undoubted fact that in nominating candidates there was lacking that careful scrutiny of the candidates' merits and prospects which such nominations should have received. The conclusion is inescapable that the mistakes we committed in 1962 appear to have been repeated in 1967 especially in regard to last minute recommendations for candidates which inevitably resulted in hasty and ill-considered nominations.

In reviewing our performance, the National Executive (March 1967) attributed our failure to make a satisfactory showing to the following causes:

- (a) wrong choice of candidates, many of whom were nominated at the last moment;
- (b) failure to reach electoral understandings with other demo-

cratic parties in certain States; and also the unsatisfactory working of such understandings in some other States;

- (c) bad management, especially in certain States where the Party had legitimately hoped to do particularly well;
- (d) the fact that almost every national leader and office bearer of our Party was himself a candidate, thus leaving the campaign leaderless; and
- (e) the absence of disciplined cadre of workers and of a Youth Wing.

The above is rather a sketchy analysis of our undoubtedly poor performance. In fact, it must be confessed that neither at the Centre nor at the State level has any serious attempt been made to analyse and consider the Party's performance. Such an analysis will have to be undertaken before long, *not* for its own sake (as an exercise in fault finding or witch hunting) but as a guide to future course of action. I would like to repeat here a suggestion I had made while referring to this matter in a report to the General Council in November last year, namely, that a sub-committee should be appointed by the National Executive to study the Party's performance in the General Election of 1967, in respect of the elections both to the Lok Sabha and to the State Assemblies.

While on this subject, I would like to give some idea of the nature and extent of the assistance rendered by the Central Office of the Party in connection with the General Election campaign.

Financial Assistance

Considerable expenditure was incurred through as many as 175 Parliamentary candidates for propagating the Party's principles, policies and Manifesto during the weeks immediately preceding the campaign. Many of them were also given "nursing grants" even earlier for nursing their constituencies; some of them received such assistance from April 1964. In addition, state units as such were given financial aid to organise their own State Campaigns.

Publicity and Literature

The National Publicity Campaign organised by the Central Office consisted of the following:

- (a) A series of five Press advertisements in twelve languages were inserted in 75 newspapers and periodicals spread throughout the country.
- (b) A one-minute film in four languages (English, Hindi, Oriya and Gujarati) was exhibited in 450 cinema houses in various parts of the country.
- (c) 15 lakhs of posters in 12 languages were distributed to the Party's 175 parliamentary candidates and through them to the Assembly candidates.
- (d) Pamphlets on the following subjects in English were distributed as Speaking Points for candidates:

Your Questions Answered	20,000 copies
Facts About our Economy	20,000 copies
- (e) 15 lakh copies of the Manifesto were printed in 12 languages and distributed to Party's candidates and State Units throughout the country, in addition to six lakh copies of the Manifesto in Cartoon in five languages.
- (f) Eight Gramophone records with Rajaji's message on the one side and with the script of the one-Minute film on the other, were distributed to each Parliamentary candidate.
- (g) 2,000 kites with the Star symbol and with lettering in English and Hindi were distributed to each Parliamentary candidate as well as to State Units.
- (h) Other publicity material supplied by the Central Office included Flags of various sizes, Megamikes, Poster ink and ink markers.

The Party can legitimately claim to have introduced some innovations in the media and manner of electoral publicity by:

- (i) advertising in newspapers and exhibiting one-minute films, and
- (ii) emphasising the ideological message in all its publicity material, thus departing from the beaten path of emotional appeals and the cult of personality.

Party Elections

Party elections were held successfully in 1967, this being the second such elections since the inception of the Party. Actually, the elections should have been held in 1966; but in view of the General Elections, the IVth National Convention decided to extend the term of office of the Committees and Office Bearers elected in 1964 till the end of 1967.

Compared to 25,536 Workers/Life Workers/Life Members on the rolls as on July 31, 1964, the number as on June 30, 1967 was 47,151. As against 388 Primary Committees and 12 State Executive Committees elected in 1964, this time 561 Primary Committees and 12 State Executive Committees were elected.

Unlike on the last occasion, when a unanimous panel of names for the National Executive and for office-bearers at the national level was recommended from the Chair and accepted by the General Council, there was on this occasion a keen interest especially in respect of the office of the Four Joint Secretaries and membership of the National Executive. The President, Five Vice-Presidents, the General Secretary and Two Treasurers were elected unanimously.

A feature of the Party elections this time has been the welcome appearance of newcomers who make up more than 50% of most of the Committees from the Primary Unit to the National level. The following details in this regard may be of interest:

State Committees

State Presidents	2 out of 11 are new
Vice-Presidents	22 out of 32 are new
General Secretaries	7 out of 11 are new
Joint Secretaries	28 out of 30 are new
Treasurers	10 out of 14 are new

National Executive

Vice-Presidents	2 out of 5 are new
General Secretary	is new

Joint Secretaries

• all four are new

Treasurers

one of the two is new

Members

• nine out of 20 are new

With the exception of Delhi, the States in which no elections could be held in 1964 because of paucity of membership continue to be in the same unfortunate position as in 1967. They are: Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Haryana (a new State).

Before moving on to another topic I must report with sorrow that Mr. Charanjit Rai, who was elected Joint Secretary in November, 1967, passed away on January 1, 1968. This was a grievous loss since it was largely because of his efforts that we were able to secure a foot-hold in Haryana. I have little doubt that had he been alive, we might have had a different story to tell in so far as the mid-term elections in Haryana were concerned. The strength of my team of Joint Secretaries was further depleted when Mr. C. R. Irani, our energetic Joint Secretary based in Calcutta, resigned for personal reasons. It came to light subsequently that Mr. Irani had resigned in view of his then impending appointment as the Managing Director of the *Statesman* in Calcutta and because of this opportunity for him to render more valuable service to the country, I do not regret his resignation even though my own burden has already considerably increased. Thus, of the four Joint Secretaries, only two now remain.

Meetings of the Council and Committees

General Council

The General Council of the Party met twice during this period. The first meeting, which was of the newly elected General Council was in New Delhi on November 25 and 26, 1967. The main business before the Council was the election of the National Executive.

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

Prof. N. G. Ranga

— President

Dr. K. M. Munshi
Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
Smt. Gayatri Devi
Mr. R. N. Singh Deo
Mr. Bhailalbhai D. Patel

— Vice-Presidents

Mr. N. Dandeker

— General Secretary

Mr. Charanjit Rai
Mr. Sundermani Patel
Mr. T. Krishnamma Choudhuary
Mr. Cushrow R. Irani

— Joint Secretaries

Dr. R. C. Cooper
Mr. H. P. Nanda

— Treasurers

Members

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. M. R. Masani
Mr. G. Latchanna
Sardar Basant Singh
Mr. P. K. Deo
Mr. Lakshman Singh of Dungarpur
Mr. S. S. Mariswamy
Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla
Mr. J. Mohammed Imam
Mr. H. M. Patel
Sardar Ram Singh
Mr. G. K. Sunderam
Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh
Mr. G. Hanumantha Rao
Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel
Prof. Martin Narayan Majaw
Mrs. Kailash Rekhi
Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu
Mr. C. C. Desai
Mr. Loknath Misra

To give representation to unrepresented States, the President, Prof. Ranga, nominated the following [under Clause 11(b) of

the Constitution] to represent the unrepresented States on the General Council:

West Bengal	: Mr. Rajendra Singh Singhi
Bihar	: Mr. T. Parmanand
Himachal Pradesh	: Mr. Budhi Prakash
Madhya Pradesh	: Mr. D. M. Paruleker

The Council authorised the National Executive to coopt to the General Council additional members not exceeding 10% of the Council's strength.

The Council discussed the state of the Party organisation including the problem of Centre-State relationship within the Party and the need to evolve a working policy for the Party. Almost half of the members present participated in this discussion.

Among the Resolutions adopted by the Council was one concerning relief for the victims of the Orissa Cyclone, another complimenting the Swatantra-led Government in Orissa for its excellent performance and a third welcoming the dismissal of the "United Front" Ministry in West Bengal.

The Second Meeting of the General Council was held in Madras in June 1 and 2 this year. This meeting was primarily convened in response to a request from a number of members of the Council to discuss the circumstances in connection with the defeat of the Party's candidate in the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat in March 1968 which led to Mr. Masani's resignation from the Central Parliamentary Board and the National Executive of the Party. There was a thorough discussion of the entire issue. Rajaji, who addressed the meeting emphasised that he had received a categorical assurance from the President of the Gujarat State Unit that those who had worked against the Party's candidates and all others concerned were genuinely repentant and therefore the extent of disciplinary action taken against some of them by the National Executive was sufficient. Rajaji conveyed a further reassurance which he accepted from the President of the Gujarat State Unit that there was no intention on the part of the Gujarat Unit to work independently of the Centre and that there was now a firm determination to work together and

strengthen the Party in every way possible. Reassured as he was in this and other ways, Rajaji appealed for unity in the Party and hoped that Mr. Masani would agree to be re-elected to the National Executive.

Mr. Masani, however, declined the General Secretary's proposal that he be re-elected by the General Council to the National Executive, stating that in his view neither the National Executive nor the General Council had done anything to restore the Party's public image and credibility which had suffered so gravely by the failure of the Party in Gujarat to honour the pledge given in regard to the election of Shri Babubhai Vaidya to the Rajya Sabha in March 1968. The Council thereupon decided to leave unfilled the vacancy in the National Executive caused by Mr. Masani's resignation.

The Council adopted a resolution calling upon the National Executive to appoint a committee to go into the causes of the defeat of the Party's candidate in the Dausa Parliamentary by-election. The Council also adopted nine Resolutions on various subjects such as : the Growing Communist Influence in Tamilnad among Peasants and Trade Unions, Lawlessness in Kerala, the Lessons of "United Front" Governments, the Bengal Situation, "Floor-Crossing", Autonomy for the Hills People of Assam, Indians in Kenya, Liberal Trends in Czechoslovakia and the Power Vacuum in South East Asia.

The General Council will meet again on October 4th, preceding the Fifth National Convention.

National Executive

Subsequent to the IVth National Convention in December 1966, there have been several meetings of the National Executive.

The old National Executive (elected in 1964) met four times between March and November 1967. The first of these meetings held on March 15, 1967, reviewed the results of the General Elections. While expressing general satisfaction at the results of the General Elections, the Executive congratulated the electorate on its maturity and its resistance to pressures of various kinds

in the exercise of its franchise, and expressed its shock over the unfortunate misuse of authority by the Ruling Party in denying fair and free elections in Kashmir. The Executive also reviewed the post-election developments in terms of arrangements with other Groups and Parties at the Centre and in the various State Assemblies.

It laid down a time-table for Party elections. At the request of the President of the U.P. Unit, the then State Executive Committee of the Party in that State was dissolved and replaced by an *Ad Hoc* Committee.

The Executive also dealt with matters relating to Parliamentary activity including the Office Bearers of the Party's Group in Parliament, the election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker, the President and Vice-President. A Sub-Committee to advise on the activities of the Youth Wing was also set up.

Mr. Masani requested for and was granted leave of absence in view of the strain of the election campaign on his health and an operation that he had undergone. I agreed to officiate in his absence.

The next meeting of the National Executive was held on May 20, 1967. At this meeting Mr. Masani requested and was granted extension of leave till the expiry of his term as General Secretary, in view of the heavy work involved on his acceptance of nomination as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee as desired by the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Group. I agreed to continue as Officiating General Secretary.

Two more *ad hoc* State Executive Committees were formed, one for Punjab and another for Bihar.

The schedule for Party elections adopted at the earlier meeting of the Executive was modified to enable an extension of date for enrolment of members.

Resolutions were adopted on the following subjects : Gheraos, Congress Working Committee's Resolutions on Economic Policy, Famine and Drought Situation and Mr. Chagla's Statement on South East Asia.

An important issue on which this meeting took an early decision had to do with the unrestrained behaviour of certain members of the Opposition Groups (other than Swatantra) in Parliament. The Executive took the firm view that the plea for "Opposition Unity" should not come in the way of senior members of our Group dissociating themselves from and, when necessary, expressing disapproval of behaviour which brought Parliamentary institutions into discredit and ridicule.

Regarding the so-called "United Front" Governments, the Executive came to the conclusion that

- (a) patchwork governments brought about by "floor crossing" were unworkable in the long run since such Governments, while being unstable, would merely afford opportunities to communists and extreme socialists to entrench themselves in strategic positions and extend their grip on the country;
- (b) that the almost inevitable failure of such governments could only lead either to the Congress being returned to power with greater strength or to the failure of democratic institutions.

The Executive was unanimous in rejecting any proposal to participate in any Government which included Communists. An exception was, however, made at that time in regard to Uttar Pradesh, where under special circumstances a member of the Swatantra Party had been permitted to join the Charan Singh Ministry. It was made expressly clear at the same time that this was being done as a very special case and would not be treated as a precedent. This meeting also discussed matters relating to Party organisation.

The next meeting of the National Executive was held on September 29 and 30. This meeting took a firm decision that the Party should not get unduly involved in the current shifts in power politics but should remain steadfastly loyal to its principles and propagate its philosophy on a wider scale. Specifically, the Executive was of the opinion that

- (a) the Party should concentrate on strengthening its organisa-

tion and in projecting its own image as the only democratic alternative to the Congress, instead of allowing its identity to be submerged into so-called "United Fronts,"

- (b) that the Party should co-operate in efforts to get rid of communists from Governments dominated by them, e.g. West Bengal;
- (c) that State Units should take the initiative in organising Kisan movements to popularise the Party among Kisans and help them secure a fair deal; and
- (d) that the Party should lay stress on developing and training Party cadres.

The National Executive also considered the problem of Language and Education and approved a motion tabled in the Lok Sabha by Mr. Masani and myself.

The last meeting of the outgoing National Executive was held in New Delhi on November 25, on the eve of the first meeting of the newly elected General Council. The main business at this meeting was to lay down the procedure to be followed in the election of Office Bearers and members of the National Executive.

The newly elected National Executive met on five occasions, the first meeting being held immediately after its election on November 26. It then constituted the Central Parliamentary Board consisting of the following:

Members

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari

Mr. M. R. Masani

Mr. Laxman Singh of Dungarpur

Mr. H. M. Patel

Mr. B. P. Singh

Mr. G. Latchanna

Ex-Officio Members

President and Vice-Presidents

Prof. N. G. Ranga
Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur
Dr. K. M. Munshi
Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel
Mr. R. N. Singh Deo

Senior Treasurer and General Secretary

Dr. R. C. Cooper
Mr. N. Dandekar

The following members were co-opted to the General Council: Mr. Murarji J. Vaidya, Col. Leslie Sawhny, Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, MP. And a new *Ad Hoc* Executive Committee was constituted for Assam.

The next meeting of the National Executive was held at Cochin on January 28, 1968. It reviewed the Party's relations with the Jan Sangh and came to the conclusion in the light of a report on the subject by Mr. Masani and myself that the Swatantra Party could no longer hope for success in continuing its efforts to seek a closer relationship with the Jan Sangh.

The following Resolutions on the following Subjects were adopted: Pre-Conditions to Nationalisation, Call to Policy holders, Depositors and Share-holders, Removal of Zonal Barriers, Prohibition of the use of firearms and other lethal weapons by private organisations, and People's Committees in Kerala.

The third meeting of the National Executive was held in New Delhi on April 14. The two important and inter-connected issues before this meeting were:

- (a) the circumstances leading to the defeat of the Party's official candidate in the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha from the Gujarat State Assembly, and

- (b) Mr. Masani's resignation from the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board "in atonement" for failure by the Party's M.L.A. in Gujarat to honour the Party's pledge resulting in the above defeat.

The Executive decided to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the five MLAs who had sponsored the rebel candidate, Mr. U. N. Mahida, and it also approved the disciplinary action already initiated by the President against Mr. Mahida himself. Regarding Mr. Masani's letter of resignation, the Executive unanimously requested him to withdraw his resignation.

The Executive decided that the Party's Legislators whether in Parliament or State Assemblies or Councils who defect from the Party should be expelled from the Party, the question of subsequently readmitting them being treated on merits whenever such a situation arose.

It considered the situation in West Bengal and Punjab, and adopted Resolutions on the Food Situation and the Plight of Handloom Weavers.

The next meeting of the National Executive was held on May 31, in Madras preceding the General Council meeting the following day. The Executive coopted the following members to the General Council: Mr. Y. G. Gowd, Mr. Beharilal Kannaialal, Mr. Johnson Vallikappen, Mr. K. B. Jinaraja Hegde, Mr. Rajaballabh Mishra, Mr. Hansraj Pahwa and Mr. Kashinath Bahadur Pal.

In pursuance of the disciplinary action initiated at the previous meeting against Mr. Mahida and five MLAs of Gujarat, the Executive decided to expel Mr. Mahida from the Party and of the five MLAs concerned the Executive decided to drop further action against Mr. Jamubhai Bhat and Mr. Chunilal Vasave while the remaining three viz., Thakoresaheb Chandrasinhji Jadeja of Dhrol, Mr. Natvarsinh Solanki and Mr. Chandrakant Parikh, were debarred from holding any Party office whatsoever whether in the Party's Group in the State Legislature or otherwise, for a period of three years.

In another disciplinary matter involving the charge of work-

ing against the Party's candidate in the Rajkot Parliamentary constituency in the last General Elections, the Executive decided to debar Mr. Bhagwanjibhai Patel from holding any office whatsoever in the Party for a period of two years.

Mr. Masani's resignation from the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board was accepted with regret.

The last meeting of the National Executive covered by this report was held in New Delhi on September 1. It was then resolved not to proceed further with the inquiry (through a Committee) into the defeat of the Party's candidate in the Dausa Parliamentary election and to report to the General Council that the President, Prof. Ranga, would himself go into the matter.

The President, Prof. Ranga and I reported to the Executive on our abortive talks with Chowdhury Charan Singh, the leader of the B.K.D. concerning his suggestion for the formation of a new Party comprising all non-Communist and non-Communal democratic opposition parties.

On the question of active participation by Party workers in other parallel but non-political activities, the Executive agreed that it was necessary for Swatantra Party Workers to organise and occupy key positions in organisations of farmers, women, youth etc.

Various proposals for amendments to the Party's constitution were considered for placing before the next meeting of the General Council.

Mr. Irani's resignation from the Party was accepted. And Mr. C. R. Narsimhan and Mr. Martin Narayan Majaw were coopted to the General Council.

The National Executive decided to observe October 24 (United Nations Day) as "Czechoslovakia Day" and November 2 as "Fundamental Rights Day" to protest against Mr. Nath Pai's Bill so to amend the Indian Constitution as to nullify the Supreme Court's Judgement on the inviolability of the Fundamental Rights embodied in the Constitution.

The following Resolutions on National and International Affairs were adopted:

National Affairs—Floods, Drought, Reorganisation of Assam, Newspaper Employees Strike, The Andhra Pradesh Special Powers (Press) Bill, 1968.

International Affairs—Czechoslovakia, Tibet, Soviet Arms for Pakistan.

Central Parliamentary Board

The Central Parliamentary Board of the Party was reconstituted on November 26, 1967, by the newly elected National Executive. The old Central Parliamentary Board and the new Board met on several occasions since the last National Convention. The first of these meetings was held on March 1, 1967, to review the results of the General Elections and to discuss the post-election strategy and arrangements with other democratic Parties and Groups. The Board gave guidance to the Party's Groups in the various State Assemblies and in Parliament, both in regard to policy vis-a-vis other Opposition Parties and Groups and the election of Office Bearers of their respective Groups.

The next meeting was held in New Delhi on May 20. The Board reviewed the results of the by-elections and went on to consider developments in the various State Legislatures. It complimented the Orissa Government for abolishing Land Revenue.

The Board reviewed the functioning of the Party's Group in Parliament and commended its performance, particularly because it had been able to bring about a measure of operational unity among Opposition Parties along with the tacit acceptance by them of Mr. Masani's leadership.

Thereafter, the Board met in Madras on July 23. It deplored the attempt on the part of the Government to undo the decision of the Supreme Court on Fundamental Rights, and decided that such attempts to subvert the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court should be opposed. The Board also condemn-

ed the move to abolish Privy Purses and deplored the decision of the Government of India to flout the recommendation of the Administrative Reforms Commission that the Planning Commission should be an Advisory body of experts, of which neither the Prime Minister nor any other member of the Central Cabinet should be the Chairman or a member.

Developments in West Bengal were reviewed, especially "Naxalbari" and "Gheraos" in West Bengal.

The Central Parliamentary Board met again in Madras on September 29. It decided that the Party should oppose Government's measure for so-called Social Control of Commercial Banks. It condemned the move to nationalise General Insurance; and in regard to the Monopolies Bill, while reiterating the Party's opposition to monopolies and monopolistic practices as much in the State sector as in the free sector of the economy, it called upon the Party's Group in Parliament to study the provisions of the Bill closely and to deal with them on merits in the light of the Party's policy on the subject.

The Board recorded its warm appreciation of the excellent work done by the Swatantra-led Orissa Government during the short period of its existence in office.

The newly-constituted Central Parliamentary Board held its first meeting in Cochin on January 27. The main business before it was to consider the candidatures for the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishads. Similarly, it considered the forthcoming mid-term elections in Haryana, and appointed Sub-Committees to deal with both these matters.

It adopted resolutions on the Banking Laws Amendment Bill and the Monopoly and Restrictive Trade Practices Bill.

The Board met again in New Delhi on April 13. It reviewed the results of the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha which had resulted in an increase in the strength of the Party's Group in that House from 13 to 15. At the same time, it noted with concern the defeat of the Party's candidate in Gujarat. Those elected in the biennial elections were Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy and

Mr. Sundermani Patel (Retiring Members), Mr. J. Chandramouli and Mr. K. C. Panda.

It adopted a resolution on the Insurance Amendment Bill.

The next meeting of the Board was held in Madras on May 31. It reviewed the Party's poor performance in the Haryana mid-term elections where we secured only two seats out of the 31 we contested. The Board also viewed with concern the defeat of the Party's candidates in the by-elections to Parliament from Bijapur and Dausa, particularly as both these by-elections were caused by the passing away of sitting Swatantra M.P.s.

On reviewing the problems arising out of by-elections the Board decided that:

- (a) wherever a by-election to Parliament or Legislative Assembly was likely to take place, it was for the State Units to take an early decision as to whether they wished to contest at all, having due regard to all the circumstances including especially the fact that the Centre would not be able to extend any financial or other assistance;
- (b) candidates whose names were suggested by the State Parliamentary Board for approval by the Central Parliamentary Board, should (save in exceptional cases) be already members of the Swatantra Party; and
- (c) the Party's MLAs and its workers and vehicles in all Primary and District Units from all parts of the State concerned should be mobilised to assist in the by-elections.

The last meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board was held in New Delhi on August 31. It considered the objectives, strategy and campaign regarding the mid-term poll in Bengal, U.P., Bihar and Punjab and appointed various sub-committees to deal with and decide upon all aspects relating to the mid-term elections in these States.

The Party's performance in Parliament was reviewed.

The Party's Opposition to a Private Member's Bill introduced by Mr. Nath Pai to undo the Supreme Court's Judgement on Fundamental Rights was reaffirmed.

The Board decided that the Party should oppose certain aspects of the Company Law Amendment Bill. And it endorsed the Parliamentary Group's decision not to accept the Planning Commission's invitation to participate in discussions on the Fourth Plan in the light of the Party's fundamental opposition to the present pattern and machinery of planning.

The next meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board will be held on the eve of the National Convention.

Literature

The Central Office has published the following literature in English*:

1. Fourth National Convention—Souvenir
2. The Missed Opportunity—Central Budget (1967-68)
3. Naxalbari—A Report.
4. The Lokpal
5. A Reckless Gamble—Union Budget-1968-69
6. Orissa 1967 to Haryana 1968
7. The Expected Betrayal—Soviet Arms for Pakistan

"FOR THIS WE STAND" series

8. The People Have Won—VII
9. Preparedness for Defence—VIII
10. The People are Sovereign—IX
11. The Newspaper Employees Strike—Is it Justified—x

In addition, 4 issues of the *Swatantra Newsletter* and 6 issues of *Swatantra In Parliament* have been published since the last General Elections.

* This excludes the literature and publicity material put out in connection with the Party's General Election Campaign; these are referred to under the item "General Elections" elsewhere in this Report.

Party Organisation and Activity

Party membership has certainly leaped from 25,852 in July 1964 to 47,151 in June 1967. The following is the State-wise breakup:

Andhra	..	..	..	6565
Bombay	..	..	..	2253
Delhi	..	..	..	771
Gujarat	..	..	..	11645
Kerala	..	..	..	1022
Madras	..	..	..	5916
Maharashtra	..	..	..	395
Mysore	..	..	..	1593
Orissa	..	..	..	3926
Punjab	..	..	..	1476
Rajasthan	..	..	..	5059
Uttar Pradesh	..	..	..	6530
				47151

I wish I could also say that this impressive increase in membership has been followed by increased activity. Unfortunately, this has not happened. The enthusiasm generated during the General Election Campaign and by the successful entry of an increasing number of Swatantra legislators into Parliament and State Assemblies has been dissipated. Most State Units have been rather inactive. And the hope that the newly elected committees in the various States would settle down quickly to lively political activity and concrete organisational work has been belied.

This is not to state that there has been no activity. Whenever there have been specific occasions such as the Additional Land Revenue Agitation in Andhra or the Case of Father Ferrer in Bombay, the recent floods in Surat and other parts of the country, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and so on, the Party's units have taken active part and played a leading role. But this is not enough. What is required is purposive Party activity, especially for the development of unorganised areas in the organised states

and the establishment of active organisations in the unorganised States. I must regretfully state that as of today, the Party still remains unorganised in large tracts of the country where, due to poor enrolment or none at all, we were unable to hold even Party elections. These are the States of Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

As for resources, the Central Office continues to be as poor as a churchmouse; and I must continue the refrain of my predecessor who, in report after report, bitterly complained of the shoe-string budget on which the Central Office has been functioning. For a brief period of a year, before the General Elections and to meet the needs of the National Campaign, the Central Office staff was expanded by a modest half-a-dozen. Unfortunately, even before the dust had settled on the General Elections, we had to terminate the services of those who had been recruited and to shrink back to our usual inadequate size because of the paucity of funds. We were unable even to retain the somewhat more spacious accommodation which we had temporarily acquired. The present office is so woefully inadequate that I am unable to find any spot in the office where I could place a table and chair for me to work.

The Central Office continues to work on a budget drawn up and approved by the Central Organising Committee as far back as March 1960. I cannot do better than to repeat what Mr. Masani, the then General Secretary stated in his report to the Fourth National Convention: "Indeed, the Central Office has not even been provided with the amount contemplated in the budget which was only Rs. 10,000 per month".

By-elections and Elections to the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishads

By-Elections

There have been three by-elections to State Assemblies and three to the Lok Sabha where we put up candidates since the last General Elections. The results were as follows:

State Assemblies

Dhrangadhra Assembly Constituency (Gujarat)	— won
Thirumangalam Assembly Constituency (Madras)	— won
Chomu Assembly Constituency (Rajasthan)	— lost

Parliamentary Constituencies

Srikakulam Parliamentary Constituency (Andhra)	— lost
Bijapur Parliamentary Constituency (Mysore)	— lost
Dausa Parliamentary Constituency (Rajasthan)	— lost

Rajya Sabha

By-elections

Mr. B. K. Deo (Orissa)—returned unopposed
Prof. Martin Narayan (Assam)—defeated

Biennial Elections

Andhra	.. Mr. J. Chandramouli	— elected
Gujarat	.. Mr. Babubhai Vaidya	— defeated
Madras	.. Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy	— elected
Mysore	.. Mr. H. Mahantaswamy	— defeated
Orissa	.. Mr. Sundermani Patel	— elected
	.. Mr. Krishna Chandra Panda	— elected

Vidhan Parishads

Biennial Elections

Andhra	.. Mr. K. Rosaiah	— elected
Madras	.. Mr. G. Swaminathan	— elected
	(Graduates Constituency)	
	.. Mr. Saw Ganesan	— elected
Uttar Pradesh	.. Mr. B. P. Singh	— defeated

Haryana Mid-Term Elections

In the General Elections, the Party had set up 12 candidates and returned only three to the Haryana Assembly. However, as a consequence of certain post-election developments followed by the dissolution of the State Legislative Assembly, the Party in

that State achieved what was, described by the *Statesman* (Calcutta) of December 19, as a "major breakthrough" with the entry into the Party of the following leading figures of Haryana, among others:

Mr. Hardwari Lal (former Education Minister)
Mr. Manphool Singh (former Deputy Speaker)
Mr. Phool Chand (former Minister of State)
Mr. Jaswant Singh (former Deputy Minister)

It was widely talked about in Haryana that overnight the Swatantra Party had emerged as a powerful contender in the mid-term poll. Unfortunately our effort in the State suffered a tragic set-back with the demise of the architect of the breakthrough, Mr. Charanjit Rai, then Joint Secretary of the Party. I stepped in and tried to fill in the vacuum as best as I could, handicapped by inexperience and numerous other pre-occupations. In the mid-term poll, after careful selection, we set up 31 candidates (in a house of 81), but were able to return only two!

In eleven constituencies we secured second place, losing to the winning candidate by margins ranging from 12 votes to 3000 votes.

In ten other constituencies, we secured third place. Only five of our candidates lost their security deposits; and as a consolation prize, we improved our percentage of votes polled from 4% in the General Election of 1967 to 8.13% in the mid-term poll.

However, the success or failure of our performance must necessarily be judged by the number of MLAs we are able to present on the floor of the Assembly; and so judged, it was a debacle. Let me admit it, we lost badly.

In my report to the Central Parliamentary Board on May 31, I gave the following reasons for our defeat in Haryana:

- (i) The absence of an established Party organisation;
- (ii) Inadequate resources in men, money and vehicles;
- (iii) The fact that most candidates depended excessively on local, communal and caste appeals, with little or no reliance placed on Party literature, propaganda or principles;

- (iv) The fact that many Senior Ministers of the Central Government (including the Prime Minister) participated in a whirl-wind campaign for the Congress Party, their main theme being the ouster of their own "defectors" and the capacity of the Congress to provide a stable government which no "United Front" of Opposition Parties could possibly offer;
- (v) The unhappy experience of the "understanding" we thought we had achieved with the Jan Sangh;
- (vi) The heavy influx of jeeps and workers of the Congress Party in Rajasthan, fresh from their victory in the Dausa Parliamentary and Chomu Assembly by-elections;
- (vii) The pinning down of our leader (Ch. Hardwari Lal) to his constituency as a result of the powerful campaign especially mounted against him by the Congress Party; and
- (viii) The peculiar and inexplicable phenomenon of almost every other Party singling out the Swatantra Party for attack.

Obituary

The period under review has not been without its tragedies through the loss of Party comrades.

On November 1, 1967, we lost Mr. G. D. Patil, Member of Parliament from Bijapur who died of a heart attack. He was only 45.

On December 6, 1967, we lost Col. L. Sawhny who also died of a heart attack. He was 52. Col. Sawhney was a pillar of strength to the Swatantra Party and it was in recognition of this that he was coopted as a member of the General Council, just a mere fortnight earlier.

On January 1, 1968, we lost our Joint Secretary, Mr. Charanjit Rai.

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

Work in Parliament and State Assemblies

The Party's members in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, where they constitute the leading Opposition Groups, continue to give a good account of themselves. The Parliamentary Board has in its various meetings recorded with appreciation the work done by the Party Groups in the Lok Sabha and in the Rajya Sabha.

In the Souvenir that is being published on the occasion of this Fifth National Convention of the Party, we have reported in detail on our work in Parliament. I shall not therefore elaborate on this subject, apart from recording our appreciation of the work done.

About our work in the State Assemblies, while our members must doubtless have been putting their best foot forward, I am unfortunately not in a position to say much since, despite repeated requests from the Central Office for reports of the activities of our Groups in the various State Assemblies, it is regretted that except for one or two State Units, others have not cared to respond to our request. Recently, in order to get reports of our work in the various State Assemblies for incorporation in the Souvenir the Central Office had requested for reports from State Legislature Groups. Barring Mysore and Tamilnad, no other Group responded to our request. Further comment is needless.

Conclusions

I wish I could conclude on a happy note and say that on examining our Party's health it could be pronounced as buoyant. There are many things that have happened since the last National Convention and, particularly, after the General Elections of which we cannot be very proud. I have been putting down my thoughts on such matters from time to time in the *Swatantra Newsletter*, which, I presume, most of you do take the trouble to read.

The most important and unfortunate development was the resignation of Mr. Masani from the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board arising out of the defeat of the

Party's candidate in the biennial election to the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat. I do not wish to revive that controversy all over again. Whatever I felt, I have stated in my letter "From the General Secretary's Desk" printed in the *Svatantra Newsletter* (No. 64 of February/July). Here, I would only say this, that by resigning in atonement for what was plainly a breach of faith, Mr. Masani did much to restore the Party's prestige which had received a grievous blow as a result of the thoughtless action on the part of some of our colleagues in the Gujarat Legislature.

At the General Council meeting in Madras, I sought Mr. Masani's consent to a proposal that he be re-elected to the National Executive. To my great regret, he declined. He, along with Rajaji and Prof. Ranga, have been the founders of the Party; and whatever strength the Party has developed today is in no small measure due to his tireless work undertaken at considerable personal inconvenience and sacrifice.

In the course of the next six months there will be mid-term elections in Bengal, Bihar, UP and the Punjab. In regard to these, at its meeting in New Delhi on September 1, the Central Parliamentary Board laid down the following salutary objectives in the light of the experience gained in Haryana, viz.,

that the Party's effort in these mid-term polls should be a limited one based on our performance in the General Elections of 1967; and that in regard to the selection of constituencies, the priorities should be as follows:

- (i) where our candidates had won or had come second,
- (ii) where our candidates had secured half of the votes of the winning candidates or at least 7,000 whichever was less.
- (iii) where, in exceptional constituencies—
 - (a) popular candidates came forward to contest, provided such candidates were wholly self-supporting and fulfilling all the conditions that may be laid down, and
 - (b) the organisation has now improved so greatly as to hold out prospects of success.

In regard to electoral adjustments with other Parties, the policy is largely to depend on ourselves and not to hanker after mutual adjustments. However, even here the Board has laid down that our strategy, in so far as electoral adjustments are concerned, should be:

that we should have no truck with communists and extreme socialist parties; and that in so far as other democratic Parties and Groups are concerned, we shall be willing to have understandings with them, provided such Parties or Groups are not a part of United Fronts which include the Communists.

The mid-term elections have brought into sharp focus the need for us to develop our organisation. It has also brought in its wake the problem of financial assistance, vehicles, and, even more important, political cadres. We are woefully lacking in all these. I do not mind admitting that it has become increasingly difficult to keep the Central Office in funds. Our effort to collect some funds through the National Convention Souvenir has not succeeded to the extent that I had hoped. Our Party Units in the States where the mid-term polls will commence between now and next February are clamouring for financial help; and to every one of them I have had to regretfully reply that we have no cash reserves and that whatever funds they need should be collected locally. It is not a very pleasant answer to give, nor an encouraging one. But there is nothing you or I can do about it. Even sympathisers of the Party who have normally been generous with their contributions have had to severely curtail their assistance thanks, to the decrepit state of the economy today.

All this means that we have to stand on our own feet and collect smaller contributions from ordinary people, shopkeepers, traders, small businessmen etc. And, of course, we must depend less on money and more on personal effort, fortified by the righteousness of our cause, to win elections.

This in turn, involves a large band of trained Field Workers, or Cadres. Mr. Masani always quotes Lenin as saying "Cadres Decide Everything." Very true; and I am happy to say that Mr. Masani has taken the initiative and organised the "Leslie Sawhney Programme of Training for Democracy" for training

cadres who will fight for the liberal philosophy. The Swatantra Party has taken advantage of this non-party organisation and it has already held Camps in Orissa, Kerala and Delhi. Training Camps for Workers will also be held in the near future in U.P. and Rajasthan.

Thus, our success will depend on how the Swatantra Party is able to develop its organisational strength. Even more will depend on its capacity to develop the kind and quality of organisation which is needed to sustain the people's faith. In the context of the politics of opportunism that has been so marked a feature since the last General Elections and the people's growing disillusionment with politics, politicians and political parties, it is very necessary for us to project an image of an organisation wedded to its ideals and very discriminating about its means and methods. The instances in the last few months which have caused us much unhappiness should teach us that if we are to fulfil our role as a democratic alternative to the Party in power in Delhi, we should prove ourselves worthy of such a role by refusing to compromise our principles for opportunism and expediency. We must remain steadfast to our goal, to make it possible for our country to enjoy Prosperity Through Freedom.

Appendix
HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

STATE	No. of Seats Contested	Number Elected	No. Forfeited Security Deposit	Votes Polled	Percentage
Andhra Pradesh	19	3	7	1,865,892	13.75
Assam	1	0	1	28,711	0.96
Bihar	25	0	24	465,501	3.41
Gujarat	21	12	1	2,586,300	39.92
Haryana	2	0	1	170,251	5.60
Jammu & Kashmir	1	0	1	12,693	1.51
Kerala	3	0	2	147,005	2.34
Madhya Pradesh	2	1	1	253,939	2.74
Madras	8	6	0	1,414,208	9.16
Maharashtra	4	0	4	137,900	1.01
Mysore	11	5	2	1,094,458	14.29
Orissa	17	8	2	1,253,893	30.87
Punjab	6	0	5	199,401	4.65
Rajasthan	14	8	0	1,842,705	27.04
Uttar Pradesh	38	1	32	1,038,968	4.77
West Bengal	3	0	3	98,590	0.77
	175	44	86		

Figures from the "Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, 1967" published by the Election Commission

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

STATE	No. of Seats Contested	Number Elected	No. Forfeited Security Deposit	Votes Polled	Percentage
Andhra Pradesh	90	29	29	1,363,382	9.84
Assam	13	2	7	46,187	1.49
Bihar	126	3	114	315,184	2.33
Gujarat	147	66	5	2,436,901	38.91
Haryana	12	3	7	96,410	3.18
Jammu & Kashmir	—	—	—	—	—
Kerala	6	0	6	13,105	0.21
Madhya Pradesh	21	7	11	232,099	2.55
Madras	27	20	2	811,232	5.30
Maharashtra	40	0	36	150,101	1.12
Mysore	45	16	12	497,055	6.62
Orissa	101	49	17	909,421	22.58
Punjab	10	0	9	21,509	0.51
Rajasthan	107	48	19	1,439,018	22.10
Uttar Pradesh	207	12	78	1,016,284	4.73
West Bengal	21	1	15	102,567	0.81
	978	256	367		

Figures from the "Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, 1967" published by the Election Commission