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SWATANTRA PARTY

CONVENTION

MADRAS CITY

Address by the Chairman Reception Committee

DR. M. SANTOSHAM



31-10-1959

SWATANTRA PARTY, Madras City

CONVENTION 31st Oct. '59

Sri M. R. Masani, Sri V. P. Menon, Rangaji, Rajaji, and fellow delegates: To-day is one of the happiest days of my life. I say this because I stand here not merely as the representative of the members of the reception committee and the delegates to this convention but as the representative of the large section of the people of this City whose thought and argument are free, unfettered and unbound by consideration of political, social and financial profit. I welcome you sirs, Sri Masani, Sri N. G. Ranga, and Sri V. P. Menon among our midst to join in the jubilations of the multitudes of this city who welcome this party and share your thoughts.

And
The number of delegates you see here is but a small fraction of the people who have pledged their support to the principles of the Swatantra Party. It is only a month and a half since the membership forms for this Party were printed and the preparation for this convention had been less than 100 days. It is not an exaggeration, sir, if I say that the heart of every man who is free to think fearlessly is with us here. I can dare say that among those who believe in a united India, only a small minority are not with us in heart still, and these few, are those who have to pretend to be with the ruling party, either in consideration of mercies received in the past or expected to be received in the future. Fear of repression and retaliation from the ruling party, holds back the Vested interests. It will be good for the Congress chiefs who have dared to call us a party of vested interests, to know, that public opinion has completely deserted them and only vested interests still remain in their camps.

Although, we are a group opposed to-day to the congress, we should confess that the Congress comes of very noble tradition which is still remembered with gratitude by the people. The people therefore, felt reluctant to be unkindly towards that party. To-day's congress, the offspring, of the congress of the pre-independence days, should realise therefore, that their responsibility to better the lot of the people, is all the greater. To-day the congress knows and its spokesmen confess, that in the matter of raising living standards of the people they have failed to achieve in their twelve long years of administration, what the country most reasonably expected of them in five years. As a party coming of noble traditions of selfless service, they should accept their defeat and surrender the reigns of office to some other party. I used to believe that as selfless workers they will be most inclined to do so, but were reluctant, only because, there was no other party in India which was above parochial prejudices and extra territorial obligations.

After the birth of the Swathanthra Party the Congress is showing out its true colours. The vehement utterances of theirs against this party, prove that they are feeling the pangs of true opposition in their flesh only now and they are sensing the fright of dethronement with great panic. Their speeches are just like the yells of a doomed one in a disaster, making his last effort to save himself. An individual in such a catastrophic state, can never make thoughtful appeals or reasoned out protests.

Ministers of the state and super ministers of the centre have expressed their concern for themselves, when they chose to speak about this party. Their speeches reveal that they are capable of anger and not argument, and every statement of theirs is a confession of the fact that either they do not think or cannot think. We the members of the swathanthra party know that their case is weak but we cannot but pity them because, through their advocacy, their case becomes weaker every day. More than a dozen times in their public meetings they have expressed that Rajaji is jealous and is trying to over throw Sri K. Kamaraj. Some of them with a little greater sense of proportion say that Rajaji is jealous of Pandit Nehru. And yet their chief weapon seems to be the 'jealousy' of the under privileged for the better privileged. Closing their minds completely to a frank examination of our principles they have been making use of this weapon of fanning the jealousy of one class for another, to the extreme limits of meanness. To their selfish minds, it may seem to be very clever political strategy, but the thinking public are watching with dismay and displeasure the degradation to which the custodians of law order of the land are descending to. In our magnanimity we of the swathanthra party shall pardon them because they are in the position of a cornered man in self defence.

The oft thrown slander on the Swathanthra Party is that we are seeking to protect the interests of the rich.

This slander I am sure the people will not accept. For every one man in luxury in this country, there are atleast one thousand persons in want. Will a group of intelligent men join deliberately as a party to collect one vote for every thousand? I am sure the people are not going to take us that stupid. This party declares now, once again, as we have done many times before, that our first concern is to find for every man, woman and child of this country, his basic needs and what is more to keep the gates open for him to become rich, free to possess, free to make profit legitimately and free to indulge in extravagance, when he can afford to.

The Congress men want to make it appear to the country that the swathanthra party is a reactionary party which is sworn to obstruct the progress of the middle classes and lower classes of the land, to-wards prosperity and happiness. This is absolutely a mischievous and malicious propaganda.

The Swathanthra Party's stand is that the poor man should be able to find a comfortable living without having to wait for mercies at the door of Government Officials. By developing a system that will compel the poor man to wait on the benevolence of the Government petty Official who has no personal interest or concern for him, we will be submitting the illiterate and underfed millions of this land, to many difficulties and serfdom. Eradication of unemployment, under employment, insufficient wages and insecure service conditions will be the first duty of the Swathanthra Party, and in achieving these we have to be rather fast, to make up for the time lost during the congress maladministration.

We are addressing, particularly the poor from this platform, sir, to tell them that the Congress party is to be judged by what they have done and not what they promise to do. By applying ceilings to holdings, and larger direct taxations, the Congress promises to re-distribute the wealth of the well-to-do classes to the classes that live in want. Judging from the conduct of these men in the past, these are but vain platitudes and promises, aimed to catch votes. The rich perfectly understand the Congress, and the Congress have pacts with the rich. The selfish rich are least perturbed. They know that the Congress will keep the masses poor and make the rich richer because their election strategy is to keep the voter poor and make the candidate rich. I am sure every poor man will agree with me when I say this. Let not the poor be led away by the crocodile tears of the congress strategists. Let not the poor peasant be carried away into the nets of the congress by believing that the rich land holder is going to be stripped off his wealth by the congress ceilings.

The ranks of the congress are filled with such land lords and so before they bring in ceilings on land holdings they have given enough time for the congress land lords to have ready the blue prints of their plans for evasion of this law. If the plans of the Madras Congress men are to be believed sincere they should have accomplished some thing for the poor in the past. I charge them of having connived with the rich at all stages, wearing the cloak of hatred for the rich. We mean to tell no lies and we do not want to be cheats and humbugs.

The congress men think that they are very modern and are fashionable when they preach the philosophy of socialism. The pioneers in the field of socialism in this country are Mr. Masani and Mr. Ranga. To them socialism is no more fashionable. The experiment of the Congress with socialism has been in progress for sometime. We have all been watching and suffering the experiment of the congress with socialism in the test tube. The test tube is in the point of bursting and so we cry a halt to it.

Between the years 1950-51 to 1953-54 public sector investments rose by 68 per cent and the private sector rose only by 16 per cent (Report of the

Taxation Enquiry Commission) Socialism therefore has been on the trial and it has done no good. These are just hard facts of economics facing us.

The welfare of the people of a country will depend upon how much capital is available for investment, the amount of employment potential, production capacity and the amount of profit that can be made. By bringing in socialism in a democratic set up, the amount of capital that can be drawn by the Government will be greatly reduced as a result of evasion. Either democracy will have to be surrendered or the large part of the available capital will have to be surrendered. The first requisite for prosperity of the working classes namely capital will be substantially reduced. On the other hand if the state encourages the investments of private capitalists on production projects instead of trying to draw it into their hands, more capital will become available. Secondly competition among many private concerns undertaking the same industry will create better service conditions for the labour, lesser production cost and greater profits. The factor of individual incentive to make maximum profit will be lost when the Government undertake industries. This again will reduce the welfare of the people. So when the swathanthra party pleads for rights of possession and profit making it is saying so to give the poor more employment and more profit and not to woo the rich. While drawing the capital from the private capitalists to the government, if no reduction in the available capital is to be ensured, then much force will have to be used. Democracy will cease to be and communism will reign in full force.

The Congress which has a lot of lip sympathy for the poor has no time to sit and think as to what they have done to the poor through their so called guided economy, another word for controls. The congress should take the blame of the rise in prices and the reduction in the living standards.

Another criticism that is thrown on the Swathanthra Party is that we are trying to bring back the old way of life which will perpetuate all the old ills. Poverty existed in pre-socialistic days and if the swathanthra party is to go back on socialism and leave the prosperity of the nation in the hands of the private sector all the old ills will remain. The old system allowed private enterprise but never encouraged it. If private capital and enterprise encouraged a great deal of employment potential and out put of products and profits will result.

The Congress preaches exploitation of the poor by the rich and to end which they are planning a system where in, there will be untold exploitation by the bureaucracy. A capitalist is one who is not in want but the petty government official is one who is perpetually in want. How much more exploitation would result out of piling up power in the hands of one in want is a matter to be considered.

I have perhaps dealt with the principles of the swathanthra party more than necessary. I am sure you are about to have an intellectual feast from Mr. Ranga and Mr. Masani and Mr. V. P. Menon. I can conclude now by saying that the interests of the poor are safer in the hands of the private enterprises than in the hands of the beauracracy. We insist on encouragement of private capital and private enterprise to ensure the march of the hither to poor towards prosperity and happiness.

I am confident that this convention will remove all the doubts in the minds of the people, concerning the positive programme of the Swathanthra Party to build an economy for the country, which will bring about the welfare of the unemployed, under employed and ill employed in the shortest possible space of time:

I welcome you delegates to part take of the intellectual feast that has been laid before you so that you may be filled with strength and vigour to serve the cause of the common man of this country.

"LONG LIVE SWATHANTRA"

Prayer

Chairman reception Committee.

Inauguration -

Secretary's report

President's address

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