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INTERVIEW WITH MR. M.R. MASANI - OCTOBER 5, 1966.

Question: Will it be correct to describe the Swatantra Party as India's Conservative Party?

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Answer: The answer is 'yes' and 'no'. There is no doubt that there are genuinely conservative elements in the Swatantra party. Perhaps Rajaji and Dr. Munshi might be examples of that trend. On the other hand, there are others in the Swatantra party like myself who would object to being called conservatives and who are liberals. Prof. Ranga and myself ~~probably~~ belong to that trend. Prof. Ranga has been a member of the ~~International of Peasants' Parties in Europe~~, most of whose members are now in exile from communist oppression. I have been a patron of the Liberal International for over a decade now, having been elected to that position in recognition of what were described as my services to the liberal cause in this part of the world. My colleagues there are the liberal leaders of Europe. So, you will see that we are a mixed party which I would describe as a liberal-conservative-peasants' party. The last part comes in because we are predominantly a party of the small landed peasants in India. That is from where most of our votes come and all our elected M.Ps and M.L.As derive their strength. Basically, I would say we are the liberal-conservative-peasants' party of India.

Q: If the Swatantra party comes to power, will it hand over the existing public sector to the private industrialists or reduce its scope and operations?

A: Our party's manifesto in 1962 said that wherever we found a state monopoly, we would throw the field open to competition while not disturbing the existing institutions. Thus, for instance if we find that the LIC or the IAC is not doing badly, we would not disturb the structure of those organizations, but we would certainly throw the field of life insurance and civil aviation open to competition to any one who wish to enter the field on equal terms. Wherever we find State organizations making big losses or unable to deliver the goods on the basis of efficient profit-making, we would then certainly think of privatization as has been done in Germany, Japan and other countries. We might put shares of that company on the market and invite the public to take over the company to make it a profit-making enterprise. We thus see that we are flexible. We do not wish to disturb or nationalize State enterprises unless (a) they are monopolies and (b) the management is incompetent and losing money for the public.

Q: That is about the status quo. Would you like to see the public sector to go in for more heavy industry etc.

A: We would not, in view of the present situation of this country with what is called the public sector. We would refuse to allow the public sector to take on taxation or foreign loans to carry out. For instance, we oppose the Bhilai steel project. If it is not profitable, we have no objection to a Bokaro steel plant.

Q: The question of nationalisation or denationalisation depends on, as you said, whether it is run efficiently. What about the Indian Railways - can we say that it is run very efficiently?

A: The Indian Railways are a most inefficient monopoly. If it was not for the fact that they have used this monopoly to throttle and hold back road transport, they would have been out of business by now. They have used in a most cruel and reactionary manner their lobbying power with the Government to stop road competition from developing. Therefore, I do not consider them to be a well-run State enterprise. To start with, I would like to convert the Railway Board into a statutory corporation free from day-to-day Governmental interference and give them a chance to put their house in order. I believe that what India needs is a Dr. Beaching who will rationalise the Railways and throw the field open to enterprising road development.

Q: Can an underdeveloped country like India progress quickly if the State does not undertake development projects in a big way?

A: It can progress more quickly if the State keeps out from mucking up the position. We believe that the more underdeveloped a country is, the more it needs private initiative and enterprise on the part of the people. Prof. Galbraith, a great planner and socialist, accepts this in his book "The Affluent Society." While asking for more public enterprise in a highly developed country like America, he at the same time says in a paragraph that in an underdeveloped country or backward country, such as India, with the possible exception of law and order, everything else should be left to popular enterprise and not to State enterprise. So, I would say that it is just because India is underdeveloped that she cannot afford the luxury of wasteful State enterprise and must rely on the dynamism of the people to increase production.

Q: But if the dynamism is lacking in the people, what will you do?

A: I don't agree that the dynamism is lacking. I think the Indian people are intelligent and dynamic and the very fact that they have survived 18 years of the most reactionary, strangulating state capitalist pattern and that they have not gone under like Indonesia or Ghana, proves that they have got the vitality which can overcome even these reactionary policies.

Q: Do you visualise some co-ordination between the State and private enterprise?

A: I do not understand the word co-ordination. The State has a role to play and the entrepreneurs have a role to play. The role of the entrepreneurs is to produce goods and services that the people of India require, of good quality at a cheap price at a profit. The role of the State is to provide the infrastructure. That means they have to provide water for drinking and irrigation, electric power for both agriculture and industry, transportation of various kinds including the provision of good roads, telecommunication, and technical training. If the State provides these elements of the foundations on which the whole economic structure can be reared then it can safely leave the rest to the people. The sad thing is

that the State, while dabbling in making things from ice cream machines to steel, is neglecting its fundamental obligations in every respect. Look at the disgraceful road system; the lack of electric power; the lack of drinking water; and for irrigation we have to depend on the monsoon. So, the default of the State in performing its primary function is so tragic that for the time being at least it should concentrate on performing its own task and leave others to perform their tasks.

Q: What are ^h those tasks, Sir?

A: The tasks for others, as I told you, is to produce the goods and services that the people of India require, the consumer's requirements, at low cost with good quality and maximum profit.

Q: Just now you said that a backward country can progress only with the help of private enterprise. In that case, how would you account for the progress of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia?

A: I question the progress of the Soviet Union. It is a miserable failure. The Soviet Union has been a success only in armaments, space programme and steel. In everything else it has failed to deliver the goods to the people. And there is nothing better to prove our point than the miserable failure of the Soviet Union to satisfy any of the objectives with which Lenin and Trotsky started. Lenin and Trotsky started with the objective of prosperity and a higher standard of life for the people and a free and equal society. In all these respects, whether you take agriculture - they cannot even produce enough food for their people inspite of the advantages of ample land and a small agricultural population and mechanisation; whether you take housing which is a scandal in Moscow and other cities of the Soviet Union; whether you look at the vast inequalities between the classes, which exceed those in the United States and other capitalist countries; whether you regard the secret police and the terror which prevails though in a modified form now - it is quite clear that the Soviet experiment is a failure. And that is exactly what we are relying on to show that there is no known example of a State capitalist pattern giving a rising standard of life comparable to what has in fact been achieved during the same period - since the October Revolution - in the United States, in Scandinavia, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Japan, Australia and New Zealand with peoples' enterprise and a limited role for the State.

Q: Do you think there is need for ceiling on all incomes and statutory curbs on the expansion of what is called monopoly business in the country?

A: Now there are two elements mixed up in it. So far as monopoly is concerned, there is no opponent more staunch than the Swatantra Party. That is because we place a very high value on competition in our national life. We would, therefore, be very happy to join in passing legislation on German or American lines against cartels and monopolies whether in the State or in the private sector. The other question of ceilings is entirely unrelated to monopolies. Monopoly has nothing to do with size.

It is to do with the absence of competition. Therefore, the whole question of ceilings is misconceived. We do not want ceilings of any kind. The sky should be the limit. What we want is a floor. What we want is a minimum subsistence level which this wretched socialist pattern has failed to provide after 20 long years. We would, therefore, establish a floor for the income of rural workers (the landless labourers), the urban workers, (the industrial workers), and then leave the ceiling as high as we can so that the people may try to reach for the stars. That is how nations are made, by aiming high. In other words, as somebody has said, "It is not failure but low aim that is a crime." The crime of the Congress regime has been a low aim.

Q: To ensure such a floor level in income, will not the State have to intervene in economic matters?

A: Not much. The floor has been raised the highest in the United States, where workers own shares and stock, where almost every working class family now has two cars and all the comforts and luxuries of life. There was no State intervention worth mentioning in attaining that floor. I am not saying that there should be no regulation. Of course, there must be. There must be minimum regulation and control to stop anti-social practices. The Swatantra Party manifesto says clearly that the role of the State is to step in when there is anti-social activity, profiteering, exploitation of labour and things of that kind. So please don't misunderstand - we are for regulation by the community and the State, but it must be minimum and maximum regulation as at present.

Q: The Prime Minister was reported to have said soon after assumption of power that only a Left-oriented Government would have the support of the masses in India. What is your view of this proposition?

A: I hold exactly the reverse view. That is, if the masses were left to themselves, they would want a conservative liberal orientation. It is the upper class, "the new class" which Mrs. Gandhi represents, the class of exploiters of the peasants and workers, who want a so-called Left-oriented government. We should turn here to Djilas and his book "The New Class." Just as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have a new class of commissars who talk of communism and exploit the masses, according to the communist leader Djilas himself (for saying which he is serving a ten-year sentence), so in India we have a new class of Congress politicians and officials who are corrupt and businessmen who are prepared to play ball with these two. The Malaviya-Serajuddin model is one; Biju Patnaik-Mitra and their wives is another; Pratap Singh Kairon and his sons is the third; Bakhshi Gulam Mohammed and his brothers is another. This is the "new class" of people in office and people in business joining hands to exploit the consumers and the peasants. ~~Mrs. Gandhi is an embodiment of this class.~~ It is the elite, the new ruling class, a section of the intelligentsia that is in power that will not agree to anything but a so-called Left-oriented government. Our greatest support is among the peasants; our weakest support is in the cities and that is proved by the '62 elections. The Swatantra Party could carry only rural seats and not a single urban seat either for Parliament or in State Assemblies.

All our representatives were elected by peasant votes and frankly I do not think the pattern will be very different next year. We hope to make considerable gains, but I think you will find that the big cities are not with us - we shall do poorly there - because the new class, their newspapers and other organs of propaganda are all concentrated there; in the countryside we hope to find the biggest support.

Q: May we know the basis of the alliance between the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party in Rajasthan?

A: There is no alliance whatsoever between the Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh in any place in India. This is a tragic misunderstanding, although I have tried to correct this a hundred times publicly and privately. All that the Swatantra Party is trying to do is to limit the distortions of the electoral and party system. As you are aware, the majority in the Lok Sabha is entirely fraudulent. It was elected by people only 44.72 per cent of whom voted for the Congress Party. But the result was that the Congress Party got 73 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha, and they have abused this to carry Constitutional amendments which they had no right to do. Now the Jana Sangh is not the only party with which we have an understanding; we are trying to develop similar understandings with the DMK, Akali Dal, the Republican Party, the Jana Congress in Orissa and the Kerala Congress in Kerala, and so on. We are trying to develop these understandings or adjustments with all democratic Opposition parties, so that by getting out of each other's way and allocating constituencies we may get a somewhat fairer Lok Sabha which represents a little less inaccurately the wishes of the people. In other words, this is a device to get rough proportional representation or what is called in France "the second ballot". We are trying to hold the second ballot in advance to find out who should get out of the way in favour of whom. That is all that is contemplated. There will be no alliance, no common campaigning between us and the Jana Sangh. Each party will campaign on its own platform and support its own manifesto. So, the very assumption which you have is completely unfounded.

Q: Sir, you say the Swatantra Party gets the bulk of its support from the peasants. Is the Swatantra Party also working among the working class and does it also aspire to be a working class party?

A: Yes, in the long run. That is a long process. We are trying to serve industrial labour while refusing to join the race to capture them and exploit them. Whatever the Communists, the Congress and the Socialists may do, each with its own trade union - the AITUC, INTUC, and the HMS - we consider these to be party organizations and not genuinely working class ~~labour~~ organizations. We have asked our workers not to try to capture trade unions, not to become their presidents and general secretaries as workers of other political parties do, but to offer their services to the workers in helping their economic cause. We are beginning to get appreciation and response from an increasing number of honest-to-good trade union functionaries and elements, but this is a long term approach. Since we do not want to cash in on our labour support, we may have to accept a self-denying ordinance, may be for another five or ten years. There are indications that more and more trade unions have realised we are their best friends and I should imagine both in this election and in future

elections we shall get more and more trade union support inspite of the so-called central organizations who are plugging the line of their own respective parties.

Q: How can India achieve self-sufficiency in food in the quickest possible time? Are you in favour of joint stock companies entering the farming field?

A: Our understanding is that the most efficient form of agricultural production is peasant proprietorship. We believe that a man and his family farming a reasonably-sized plot of land have proved to be the most productive source of cultivation. Now this is not based on any a priori preference on our part. It is based on the facts of life. If you will kindly refer to the published literature of the Food and Agricultural Organization, you will find the comparative statistics of foodgrains production throughout the world. You will find that the highest crop of rice per acre in the world is in Formosa, Taiwan. The second highest in the world is Japan. The farms there are small. In Japan the average, I believe, is two acres per land and yet out of two acres or less of wet land the Japanese farmer is able to produce so much as to live a comfortably middle-class life. In Formosa also there is a ceiling of seven acres and inspite of that the output is the highest. Then you go a little lower in the scale, Denmark and other smaller countries of Europe including Britain. On the lower part of the scale you go to the capitalist, large-scale mechanised farms in the United States where cultivation is done efficiently on joint stock company lines. Towards the end there is the ~~wretched~~ Soviet Union with its collective farms, which is being forced to sell gold to get food for its starving people. And ~~among the lowest lies India and of course the lowest of the low is Communist China.~~ Now from this you will find that the established ratio of productivity in agriculture is more or less in inverse proportion to the size of the farm and this is true whether it is capitalism or communist. Iams have nothing to do with it. It is a question of function. This is ~~hax~~ because agriculture is an operation that requires love and careful tending of the soil. Only family farming peasant proprietorship seems to meet the needs. Therefore, the quickest way for India to achieve self-sufficiency in food is to stop mucking up the small land-ownership. Wherever absentee landlordism has been abolished as in Zamindari areas, there is no case for any further land reform. Similarly in the Miotwari areas in Bombay, Madras, Maharashtra and Gujarat there has never been any need to meddle with the agrarian set-up. What is required is encouragement to the small farmer: give him incentive, give him credit, give him water and make it possible as in Japan and Formosa and elsewhere to double his crop. It can be done. Everything else is irrelevant and only a retarding factor. About joint stock cultivation I am pretty neutral. Yes, in the case of jute, sugarcane, tea, coffee, rubber, cotton - cash crops and plantations - it may be that modern joint stock enterprise on a big scale will produce better results. But I would draw the line and I would oppose any attempt to take away foodgrain farms from the small peasant to joint stock corporations. I would oppose it on the grounds of productivity and also on social grounds because we in the Swatantra Party believe in Gandhiji's thinking in regard to decentralised ownership and control over means of production. We want economic power to be decentralised as widely as possible. Peasant proprietorship has also social value apart from productivity. Therefore, we would be against any aggregations of economic power on the land.

Q: Sir, you have just mentioned Gandhiji's thinking. We should like to know how close the Swatantra Party is to Gandhiji's thinking?

A: I would say in this respect, except for Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narain and some of these Sarvodaya colleagues to whom we bow, Swatantra is the political party in India, which is nearest to Gandhiji's thinking. This is because many of us including myself have been deeply touched by association with and learning from Gandhiji. I was a young socialist when I came in touch with him, but by the time a decade had passed I had turned against socialism and accepted Gandhi as my master. This is to be found in my book "Socialism Reconsidered" which was published as far back as 1945 where you find an anticipation of the programme of the Swatantra Party which was actually established 15 years later. I rejected Marx and accepted Gandhiji. This is true of Prof. Ranga and Mr. Rajagopalachari and many others who basically are liberals with the Gandhian slant. So, I would describe the philosophy of the Swatantra Party as a fusion of Gandhiji's thinking with modern liberal principles and ideas.

Q: Do you accept Gandhiji's standard of austerity and non-violence?

A: I am afraid, no. There are certain parts of Gandhiji's thinking which I do not go along with. Population or birth control would be one. I speak for myself because the Swatantra Party has no plank on the population control problem. Similarly, in regard to absolute pacifism or non-violence we draw a line. We are inclined to be in favour of non-violence. We are for world peace and international order. We are a constitutional party which certainly eschews violence in regard to our own political programmes. But when the country is attacked, we do not propose to resort to non-violence. If China or Pakistan or anyone else for that matter attacks India, we certainly would use armed force to defend our territory and the sovereignty and integrity of our country. Therefore, there are things like austerity and other things that we do not accept. We are an upward-looking party. I have said earlier that the sky should be the limit. Simplicity - yes, austerity - no, would be my answer.

Q: Sir, you have said that if the Congress Party again comes to power by minority votes, the danger of parliamentary system breaking into pieces is there. How do you analyse this?

A: I think I have explained this in Parliament in my last major speech which was on devaluation. I said then that I did not expect the Congress Party to poll more than 40 per cent of the votes cast and I think most Congressmen privately agree with that view. If this is so, this will mean that 60 per cent of those who vote will have rejected the Congress. Now imagine what would happen if a party which 60 per cent of the people have rejected after 15 or 17 or 19 years of experience, comes again and sits on the Treasury Benches because of the archaic electoral system we have taken from the British and the party system which we have taken from the Latins whose temperament is somewhat like ours! We are a Latin people and not an Anglo-Saxon people in our political process of splitting and splintering and not compromising in big parties. We are emotional.

So, this combination of an Anglo-Saxon electoral system and a Latin party system is disastrous. Now, if this were to result in another bogus majority for the Congress in the Lok Sabha - let us say they get 60 per cent of the seats and those who poll 60 per cent of the votes get only 40 per cent of the seats - there will be hell to pay after all that has happened owing to the lack of moral acceptance of the Congress Party's bona fides which we find in the country today. The fact is that though there are some honest people in the Congress, most of them are thought to be people who are lining their own pockets, which is largely true unfortunately. Now the question is what will happen if such a party after 20 years in office is rejected by the people and then again comes to power. Well, I may - as a good democrat - be prepared to play the parliamentary game for another five years; I have patience now; I am 60 and I understand that you have to educate your masters. You have to put up with this Government for another five years. But whether the young people and the not so sophisticated people in India are going to be that patient with democratic processes, I wonder. Student unrest, the Bundhs, the scenes in Parliament and Assemblies - all these are ugly symptoms of what is coming. I frankly shudder to think what will happen if this disaster lands on us. I do not mind the Congress party getting a majority and being in office. If we are defeated and the will of the people prevails, it is all right. But if the electoral system frustrates the will of the people, then it is going to be extremely difficult to tell the people: "Don't do anything extra-constitutional," I mean Dr. Lohia's case will be very much strengthened and our case will be very much weakened. Therefore, I fear this possibility and I do hope it won't happen.

Q: If it does?

A: If it does, nature will take its own course. Nothing I can do about it. I will do my best, but it may fail. People may not listen to me.

Q: Sir, do you favour a radical change in the electoral system?

A: Yes, we stand for proportional representation. It will form a part of our manifesto this time. But unfortunately whether in England or in India one has never known a Government changing the electoral system that gives it unfair representation. The Liberal Party in Britain suffers the same way as we do and they of course have also realised what they are up against.

Q: But if the Congress is in the Opposition, then they may revise their stand?

A: I would say this: If we come to office or have a part or share in Government, we would certainly introduce an electoral law for establishing some kind of proportional representation so that we cannot get this anomaly of 45% getting 72% of the seats, which has already weakened democracy and will destroy it again if it is repeated.

Q: What should be India's stand - in your opinion - in regard to the Vietnam conflict? Do you think India should come out openly on the side of one party or the other?

A: I think the formulation of the question is a little defective, but I shall answer it. I do not know what you mean by one party or the other. There are two parties in Vietnam. The people and the Government of Vietnam defending their country against aggression are one. In that context certainly we believe that we must come out on the side of the people of Vietnam. They have shown in the recent election that 80% of them are behind the regime even if they may or may not support the Government actually in office. That is what the results of the election to the Constituent Assembly show. In spite of the terror that the Vietcong resorted to, 80% of the electorate voted, which is a higher polling rate than what we have in India. This shows that the people of Vietnam certainly do not want to give in to Communist aggression.

Now we regard what is happening in Vietnam as Chinese Communist aggression by proxy. We believe that the Vietnam Government and its gallant allies, the United States, Australia, Korea, the Philippines and New Zealand, are fighting for the cause of democracy and national independence. In other words they are fighting our cause, they are fighting our enemy at other frontiers. We believe that the river Mekong and its valley are the national frontiers of this country. Now that the Himalayas have been outflanked, we cannot simply afford to allow the countries of Southeast Asia to come under the control of China. If we do that, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia will fall. If they fall, Malaysia will become unsustainable. China and her friends and satellites would encircle us all the way from Karachi at one end to Singapore at the other. Just as the frontiers of Britain lay in Belgium, so our frontiers lie in Vietnam. Any Government that has any guntion would have therefore sent a squadron of airforce planes or a detachment of troops to fight alongside those who are defending Vietnam in our interests. But of course we cannot expect anything from this pro-Communist Government. Unfortunately, the deadhand of the past is still on its shoulders.

Q: If you think the South Vietnamese people really support the Government and if it is all free election, how do you account for the fact that the biggest burden in the fighting is borne by the United States while Dr. Ho Chi Minh's troops are fighting hard, fighting better?

A: If Belgium is attacked by Germany, then the brunt of the fighting in Belgium has been known to fall on the shoulders of the French and the British armies. Does it mean that the Belgian people are not behind their own Government? In other words, if a small or weak military country is attacked by a strong aggressive military neighbour, it is natural that the allies who are bigger and who have more resources will take on the bigger part of the defence. But I have not yet heard that it proves that the Belgian people wanted Hitler or the Kaiser to attack their country. So, I would say that that balance of strength used has nothing to do with the popular support in defence of their own country. I have no doubt at all that it is predominantly a war of aggression from outside. Whole battalions and now divisions of the North Vietnam army are fighting on South Vietnam soil and the guerilla part of the warfare has now become a very incidental and minor part. Therefore, I regard the war as primarily a war of aggression by the North on the South. Lakhs of men have crossed the military frontier there. I would have thought that ~~6666-India, who quite rightly took the infill~~

have crossed the military frontier there. I would have thought that we in India, who quite rightly took the infiltration of a few hundred Mujahids last year into Kashmir as armed aggression by Pakistan, would find no difficulty in understanding the parallel or the analogy.

Q: Sir, what is your proposition for stopping the escalation of war or preventing further escalation?

A: The best way to stop the war escalating is to attack and invade North Vietnam and finish the war in eight days. I understand that this can be done. That is the best way to stop the war and to stop all escalation. While I support President Lyndon Johnson's present policy as against the appeasers, I do not think it is good enough. I think that this wobbling, this privileged sanctuary in North Vietnam is ridiculous. When you fight a war, you fight to win, not to stop the enemy only from attacking your territory. After all, did we not do it last year? When our troops attacked across the frontier from Amritsar to Lahore, my party supported it on the ground that if the Pakistani army had aggressed in Kashmir we should not fight a purely defensive war and that once an attack has come we have every right to counter attack on the enemy's territory. I don't understand the weakness of the American Government in not occupying Hanoi and winning the war which I understand the American military leaders are prepared to undertake.

Q: It is because of public opinion in the United States?

A: I don't think so. If you read the latest news from the United States, the majority of the American people want Lyndon Johnson to ^{go} much faster with the war. But I think the United States Government probably has a wrong idea that Communist China or even Soviet Russia might enter the war if they attack North Vietnam. I believe this to be a fallacy. I think there is not the slightest chance of either of these powers coming into the war if North Vietnam is overwhelmed. Communist China is a paper tiger or a paper dragon. It has always run away with its tail between its legs whenever faced with a strong opposition. It is in no condition to fight a major war because fighting North Vietnam would mean fighting the United States and fighting the Nationalist Chinese troops who may land and liberate the South west coast of China where they will be warmly received. This, Mao tse-Tung's tyrannical regime with its Red Guards is in no condition to face. Similarly, I don't think the Soviet Union would risk a war with the United States and allow Moscow to be destroyed for the sake of Vietnam. Therefore, I am quite clear that the war can be stopped and there will be no danger of escalation if it is fought to a finish and to victory.

Q: Do you suggest some negotiated settlement?

A: The only negotiated settlement with any Communist power is one that is achieved after military victory and that is enforced with military sanctions. The Communist powers like individual Communists and Communist parties, believe in breaking their treaties. The Soviet Union has broken at least 26 treaties or more at the end of World War II in Europe. The Chinese Communists are a bandit regime; I would refuse to negotiate with them, but win on the field of battle and then allow them to stay wherever I want them to stay.

Q: Sir, do you visualise the public opinion in the world in that case?

A: Public opinion is not made by the New York Times, the London Times or the Times of India. This is what is called "world opinion" and it should not be listened to. It has always proved wrong, whether in regard to Hitler or Stalin or Mao tse-Tung.

Q: There is an impression that the Swatantra Party is in favour of making some concessions to Pakistan in regard to Kashmir while it is for an uncompromising stand against China. Is that impression correct?

A: Entirely incorrect. We are against appeasement. We are certainly against appeasement of the Chinese Communist regime for the reason that it is a bandit regime with the blood of Tibet, Korea, Vietnam and our own already on its hand and for the reason that it has occupied our territory. We are also against appeasement of Pakistan. After the Pakistani aggression last summer our party changed its position. Till then it was prepared - in view of the Nehru Government's obligations in the U.N. and elsewhere - to accept the role of Pakistan as one of the parties to the settlement of the Kashmir dispute. But after that aggression we passed a resolution in November 1947 which stands and will stand - that by its aggression the Government of Pakistan had lost whatever locus standi the Nehru Government might have given it and that it is not necessary for us to negotiate with them about Kashmir. In our opinion the Kashmir problem is now one solely between the people and the Government of India and the People of Kashmir. And we believe that it should be solved by conciliation between these two parties. There is no third party to this dispute. You will see from this that we are not only against making concessions to Pakistan in regard to Kashmir but we do not even accept their right to have any locus standi in regard to Kashmir.

Q: Sir, who has inspired you in your life, most?

A: When I was in my younger days a socialist, I would imagine that H.G. Wells and Bernard Shaw were among those who influenced my thinking. When I was cured of this state capitalist fallacy - although I still believe in a free and equal society as an objective - I turned to Mahatma Gandhi. It was he who showed me how shallow was our conception of the methods of socialism which we had accepted in the Congress Socialist Party. And both my friend J.P. and I were greatly influenced by this corrective. We then realised that Gandhiji was 50 years ahead of his time as a socialist if you like, that is, as a mechanic of those who wanted to take society towards the free and equal direction. We were also influenced by Gandhiji's thinking in regard to the ends and means. His thinking is that ends and means are linked and cannot be compartmentalised. In other words, the end does not justify the means. The example he used to give most was that nothing good could come out of the Soviet Union because it was founded on fraud and force, and he has proved a hundred per cent right. You cannot get a fraternal society by butchering people and liquidating millions of them. I think Gandhiji proved so right in this that I still am very much an idealist - many of my colleagues in my party consider me an incurable idealist - because I refuse to accept wrong methods even for the success of

my Party. I believe that I am right, however, believing that no party can really in the end thrive by questionable methods and that when there is an evil in your own body, the best thing is to recognise it and deal with it even if it costs you a momentary loss. We proved this when we threw out the Raja of Ramgarh and more recently some of our colleagues in U.P. when we found that they were corruptible and that they were acting with questionable motives. Wherever we find that the people are really misbehaving in our party, we do not hesitate to throw them out even if it means a loss of several seats in Assemblies and Parliament. We think that the loss is worth taking. Again Gandhiji's words come to us: "Amputate the diseased limb."

Q: Sir, who is your favourite author?

A: I have several favourite authors and I don't think I can choose one out of them.

Q: Some of us have been taught the rudiments of socialism by you and leaders like Jayaprakash and others. Now we find that most of them have left. Is it actually because of the weakness or the failure of the Indian socialist movement or have you found that the doctrine of socialism itself is wrong?

A: Yes, J.P. and I are trying to undo some of the mischief that we did. I would say basically that our re-thinking is due to greater awareness of human nature and the facts of life, our understanding of our own people, of what makes the worker or peasant tick was wrong. Today if you ask me I would say that all human beings are a mixture of selfishness and altruism, and that while one should appeal to altruism as much as possible, to try and to pretend that they have no selfishness would be to ride for a fall. In other words, we have now accepted the validity of certain laws of human nature and economics which the State Socialist pattern refuses to face. I still accept the "free and equal" society of Lenin as the ultimate objective. But I find that the progress towards a free and equal society is the fastest where the State plays a minimum role and slowest where the State capitalist or the State socialist pattern is tried out. Now faced with this what would you expect me to do? Either I stick to my methodology or give up my objective, which is what the Communists and socialists do logically as in Russia or China, where equality has been long since forgotten and is termed a "petty bourgeois deviation." Stalin's words were: "Equality is a petty bourgeois deviation worthy of a primitive society. It has nothing to do with socialism." Stalin said this in 1932. Even if you want equality, maximum production, maximum return on enterprise and effort and risk is the way that raises the floor. Today in the United States the difference between the most skilled worker and the most unskilled worker whom in India we call "a coolie" is 2.5:1. In India the differential in most places is let us say 25:1 - 10 times as wide. In the Soviet Union I understand it is worse. Now if I believe in moving towards equality, I find that the so-called capitalist method which I call competitive free enterprise, which Dr. Erhard calls

"social enterprise" - free enterprise with a social objective or purpose, gives the best results. This seems to give the fastest movement towards the socialist objective. So I cling to my objective because I really want a free and equal society. I reject the path of Lenin, Stalin and of the State capitalism and I turn to the direction of decentralized competitive enterprise, which seems to give the quickest speed towards the socialist objective. So, I am sorry some of you feel that we have turned away from leading you in that direction, but it is not so. We want to lead you towards the same objective. We are essentially consistent. We may appear to be inconsistent because the word "socialism" has been misappropriated today by the enemies of social justice. We have in India today that position: socialism versus social justice. And those who believe in social justice like the Sarvodaya people cannot go along with the State capitalist pattern because it is the most inequitable and most exploitative pattern where Malaviyas and Serrajuddins flourish and others languish.

Q: How will you check the evils of an acquisitive society?

A: There are two ways of doing it. One is internal and the other is external. I have already said earlier that naturally we as liberals or Swatantra people believe in minimum Governmental regulation and control. There is also the internal check and that is to make people feel less acquisitive, feel more fraternal. Now, this is where Gandhiji comes in. Gandhiji's idea of Trusteeship is in our manifesto. We want those with the means to share them or to use them if you like with a social objective. That is what Erhard calls social enterprise. We held seminars in Delhi and elsewhere, where I co-operated with Jayaprakash, for discussing the social obligations of business. Management has a right to make a profit. Without profit there is nothing; there is not even efficiency. Loss-making is nothing wonderful. But you cannot be altogether devoid of social obligations. Now there are two ways of doing this. One is by regulation and the other is by internal restraint. Just to give an example, I am a 'Sampatidan'. J.P. came to me ten years ago in Bombay and said I might practise a little bit of the trusteeship which he espouses. He got me to agree to give one-tenth of my net income to the Sarva Seva Sangh every year for giving the farmer and the landless man, land, a couple of ploughs and a little capital to tend the land; and I have been doing this for the last ten years and I propose to do it for the rest of my life so long as the Sarva Seva Sangh want it. This is called 'Sampatidan' i.e. you share a little of what you have - more than a fair share perhaps - with others who need it and who, you think, will put it to the best use. Now this is the spirit in which a trustee should begin to work.

Q: But the people do not know about your sacrifice of 10 per cent of your income as Sampatidan.

A: It is for the public to come to know. It is ^{not} for me to shout from the housetop.

Q: Gandhiji has said that according to his concept of trusteeship, if the trustees don't behave and if they do not fulfil their obligations, he would resist them with non-violent non-cooperation. Would you support that stand?

A: Yes, of course. What does that mean now? If a company exploits the consumer, you should meet it by consumers' resistance. As you know, in the West there are consumers associations which will publish in their magazines something which will stop the consumers buying from goods from such concerns. Therefore, this is the non-violent resistance of the consumer. Similarly, if the employers are being exploited, the weapon of the strike is always there. The Swatantra Party is wedded to the weapon of the strike. It says very categorically that there can be no denial of the right to withhold labour which is the essence of a free society. Therefore, in Parliament when Pandit Nehru was trying to take away the right to strike of the Central Government employees, I opposed him; I said no, even the government employees should have the right to strike unless you go to arbitration! And when he said no arbitration and no strike, I said "this is authoritarianism; this is Stalinism and we will fight it", and the Communist Party voted for my amendments against Nehru. So, funny things happen in this context. I would say yes, I agree with Gandhiji's approach. But that does not mean you liquidate them (erring trustees). If some officials are corrupt, you sack them but you do not abolish ^{this} service and create anarchy in the country. So, I agree with Gandhiji. If the trustee misbehaves he must be curbed and if he misbehaves very badly he may be even removed in individual cases; but you don't abolish the institution of private enterprise just because some trustees misbehave.

Q: What will be your policy towards Communism and the Communist Party if you come to power?

A: Our understanding of the Communist Party is that it is a fifth-column, the Right Communist Party, of Moscow, and the Left Communist Party, of Peking. Now we also believe that enemies of democracy have no right to use the processes of democracy for their destruction. You find this principle elaborated in the book called "Politics of Democracy" by Mr. Durbin, the British Labour theorist. There is a whole chapter on it which I enjoyed reading very much. But that does not mean that you automatically ban the Communist Party at any given moment of time. I have said this in Parliament that if the Communist Party in any country including ours becomes "a clear and present danger" to our democracy, I would not have the slightest compunction in passing a law outlawing them outright. If, however, there is no clear and present danger, I would tolerate them and fight them politically. The other day I held a Press Conference in Bombay where I disclosed documentary proof that material put up out by the New Age News Service was in fact stencilled and typed in the premises of the Soviet Embassy in Delhi and I am quite prepared to be sued for libel either by the Communist Party or by the Soviet Embassy. Neither of them, I am convinced, will do anything of that kind because it is true. Now this is the way to destroy this Communist evil - educate the people. But if the danger is clear and present, as during the Chinese invasion, my party would demand the immediate outlawing of the Communist Party because, if a Communist power attacks your country, that is no time to worry about keeping the climate of civil liberties. So, I would be slow in banning, not because of any regard for the Communists but because, if you set in motion an unhealthy habit of not tolerating people, you don't know where somebody will go. I would not like to trust anyone including my own party with exercising the right to ban, because

once you ban 'A' you may ban 'B' and next you may ban the leading democratic Opposition parties as you see happening in some countries of Asia and Africa and Latin America. So, as a liberal, I would go slow; but not out of regard for the rights of the Communists, of which they have none, being fifth-columnists or traitors, but out of the desire to keep the climate of free discussion which is of high value and which must be zealously guarded.

I would take a certain amount of risk tolerating the Communist Parties rather than ban them cheerfully, but my right to ban I would assert. I am against preventive detention of individuals without trial, which is absolutely foul, even if they are Communists. But I would resort to the German, Brazilian and other ways by which by Act of Parliament you first outlaw the party; then the matter goes to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court upholds the law on the ground that there is a risk of fifth column and treacherous elements which cannot be tolerated. After that I would arrest anyone who is in that organization. This, I believe, to be the rule of law or the way to deal with the evil, not this primitive weapon of DIR or Preventive Detention, which as I pointed out earlier may extend from Communists to non-Communists. Patriots then get arrested as was done with those ~~xxx~~ three young men during the Chinese attack. So, you see there is a danger. Therefore, I would go about it in a principled way and not in an unprincipled way.

Q: Would you like to comment on the Left in the Congress?
What is this phenomenon?

A: It is a very well-known phenomenon. Communist infiltration of democratic organizations is well-known throughout the world. Mr. Ziliacus for instance in the British Labour Party - and some others whom I would not name - is a prototype of Krishna Menon and K.D. Malaviya in our country. So, you have these democratic parties often with a fringe of secret communists masquerading as non-Communists. I believe Mr. Malaviya and Mr. Krishna Menon to be essentially Communists; whether they hold a card or not is irrelevant. Sometimes non-cardholding Communists are much more dangerous than cardholding Communists, who are honest idealists, who are being misled by bad leadership.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. M.R. MASANI - OCTOBER 5, 1966.

Question: Will it be correct to describe the Swatantra Party as India's Conservative Party?

Answer: The answer is 'yes' and 'no'. There is no doubt that there are genuinely conservative elements in the Swatantra party. Perhaps Rajaji and Dr. Munshi might be examples of that trend. On the other hand, there are others in the Swatantra party like myself who would object to being called conservatives and who are liberals. Prof. Ranga and myself ~~probably~~ belong to that trend. Prof. Ranga has been a member of the Green International of Peasants' Parties in Europe, most of whose members are now in exile from communist oppression. I have been a patron of the Liberal International for over a decade now, having been elected to that position in recognition of what were described as my services to the liberal cause in this part of the world. My colleagues there are the liberal leaders of Europe. So, you will see that we are a mixed party which I would describe as a liberal-conservative-peasants' party. The last part comes in because we are predominantly a party of the small landed peasants in India. That is from where most of our votes come and all our elected M.Ps and M.L.As derive their strength. Basically, I would say we are the liberal-conservative-peasants' party of India.

Q: If the Swatantra party comes to power, will it hand over the existing public sector to the private industrialists or reduce its scope and operations?

A: Our party's manifesto in 1962 said that wherever we found a state monopoly, we would throw the field open to competition while not disturbing the existing institutions. Thus, for instance if we find that the LIC or the IAC is not doing badly, we would not disturb the structure of those organizations, but we would certainly throw the field of life insurance and civil aviation open to competition to any others who wish to enter the field on equal terms. Wherever we find State organizations making big losses or unable to deliver the goods on a basis of efficient profit-making, we would then certainly think of privatization as has been done in Germany, Japan and other countries, i.e. we might put shares of that company on the market and invite entrepreneurs to take over the company to make it a profit-making enterprise. You will thus see that we are flexible. We do not wish to disturb or destroy State enterprises unless (A) they are monopolies and (B) they are incompetent and losing money for the public.

Q: That is about the status quo. Would you like the public sector to go in for more heavy industry etc. in the future?

A: We would not, in view of the most disastrous experience in this country with what is called the public - but I would call the State - sector. We would refuse to allow a single more rupee from the national taxation or foreign loans to be invested in these white elephants. For instance, we oppose Bokaro because we think it will be another wasteful project, but as and when Hindustan Steel Limited makes a profit, we have no objection to that profit being ploughed back into a Bokaro Steel project in the State sector. So, our opposition is not to State enterprise but to wasteful and inefficient State enterprise.

Q: The question of nationalisation or denationalisation depends on, as you said, whether it is run efficiently. What about the Indian Railways - can we say that it is run very efficiently?

A: The Indian Railways are a most inefficient monopoly. If it was not for the fact that they have used this monopoly to throttle and hold back road transport, they would have been out of business by now. They have used in a most cruel and reactionary manner their lobbying power with the Government to stop road competition from developing. Therefore, I do not consider them to be a well-run State enterprise. To start with, I would like to convert the Railway Board into a statutory corporation free from day-to-day Governmental interference and give them a chance to put their house in order. I believe that what India needs is a Dr. Beaching who will rationalise the Railways and throw the field open to enterprising road development.

Q: Can an underdeveloped country like India progress quickly if the State does not undertake development projects in a big way?

A: It can progress more quickly if the State keeps out from mucking up the position. We believe that the more underdeveloped a country is, the more it needs private initiative and enterprise on the part of the people. Prof. Galbraith, a great planner and socialist, accepts this in his book "The Affluent Society." While asking for more public enterprise in a highly developed country like America, he at the same time says in a paragraph that in an underdeveloped country or backward country, such as India, with the possible exception of law and order, everything else should be left to popular enterprise and not to State enterprise. So, I would say that it is just because India is underdeveloped that she cannot afford the luxury of wasteful State enterprise and must rely on the dynamism of the people to increase production.

Q: But if the dynamism is lacking in the people, what will you do?

A: I don't agree that the dynamism is lacking. I think the Indian people are intelligent and dynamic and the very fact that they have survived 18 years of the most reactionary, strangulating state capitalist pattern and that they have not gone under like Indonesia or Ghana, proves that they have got the vitality which can overcome even these reactionary policies.

Q: Do you visualise some co-ordination between the State and private enterprise?

A: I do not understand the word co-ordination. The State has a role to play and the entrepreneurs have a role to play. The role of the entrepreneurs is to produce goods and services that the people of India require, of good quality at a cheap price at a profit. The role of the State is to provide the infrastructure. That means they have to provide water for drinking and irrigation, electric power for both agriculture and industry, transportation of various kinds including the provision of good roads, telecommunication, and technical training. If the State provides these elements of the foundations on which the whole economic structure can be reared then it can safely leave the rest to the people. The sad thing is

that the State, while dabbling in making things from ice cream machines to steel, is neglecting its fundamental obligations in every respect. Look at the disgraceful road system; the lack of electric power; the lack of drinking water; and for irrigation we have to depend on the monsoon. So, the default of the State in performing its primary function is so tragic that for the time being at least it should concentrate on performing its own task and leave others to perform their tasks.

Q: What are ^h those tasks, Sir?

A: The tasks for others, as I told you, is to produce the goods and services that the people of India require, the consumer's requirements, at low cost with good quality and maximum profit.

Q: Just now you said that a backward country can progress only with the help of private enterprise. In that case, how would you account for the progress of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia?

A: I question the progress of the Soviet Union. It is a miserable failure. The Soviet Union has been a success only in armaments, space programme and steel. In everything else it has failed to deliver the goods to the people. And there is nothing better to prove our point than the miserable failure of the Soviet Union to satisfy any of the objectives with which Lenin and Trotsky started. Lenin and Trotsky started with the objective of prosperity and a higher standard of life for the people and a free and equal society. In all these respects, whether you take agriculture - they cannot even produce enough food for their people in spite of the advantages of ample land and a small agricultural population and mechanisation; whether you take housing which is a scandal in Moscow and other cities of the Soviet Union; whether you look at the vast inequalities between the classes, which exceed those in the United States and other capitalist countries; whether you regard the secret police and the terror which prevails though in a modified form now - it is quite clear that the Soviet experiment is a failure. And that is exactly what we are relying on to show that there is no known example of a State capitalist pattern giving a rising standard of life comparable to what has in fact been achieved during the same period - since the October Revolution - in the United States, in Scandinavia, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Japan, Australia and New Zealand with peoples' enterprise and a limited role for the State.

Q: Do you think there is need for ceiling on all incomes and statutory curbs on the expansion of what is called monopoly business in the country?

A: Now there are two elements mixed up in it. So far as monopoly is concerned, there is no opponent more staunch than the Swatantra Party. That is because we place a very high value on competition in our national life. We would, therefore, be very happy to join in passing legislation on German or American lines against cartels and monopolies whether in the State or in the private sector. The other question of ceilings is entirely unrelated to monopolies. Monopoly has nothing to do with size.

It is to do with the absence of competition. Therefore, the whole question of ceiling is misconceived. We do not want ceilings of any kind. The sky should be the limit. What we want is a floor. What we want is a minimum subsistence level which this wretched socialist pattern has failed to provide after 20 long years. We would, therefore, establish a floor for the income of rural workers (the landless labourers), the urban workers (the industrial workers), and then leave the ceiling as high as we can so that the people may try to reach for the stars. That is how nations are made, by aiming high. In other words, as somebody has said, "It is not failure but low aim that is a crime." The crime of the Congress regime has been a low aim.

Q: To ensure such a floor level in income, will not the State have to intervene in economic matters?

A: Not much. The floor has been raised the highest in the United States, where workers own shares and stock, where almost every working class family now has two cars and all the comforts and luxuries of life. There was no State intervention worth mentioning in attaining that floor. I am not saying that there should be no regulation. Of course, there must be. There must be minimum regulation and control to stop anti-social practices. The Swatantra Party manifesto says clearly that the role of the State is to step in when there is anti-social activity, profiteering, exploitation of labour and things of that kind. So please don't misunderstand - we are for regulation by the community and the State, but it must be minimum and maximum regulation as at present.

Q: The Prime Minister was reported to have said soon after assumption of power that only a Left-oriented Government would have the support of the masses in India. What is your view of this proposition?

A: I hold exactly the reverse view. That is, if the masses were left to themselves, they would want a conservative liberal orientation. It is the upper class, "the new class" which Mrs. Gandhi represents, the class of exploiters of the peasants and workers, who want a so-called Left-oriented government. We should turn here to Djilas and his book "The New Class." Just as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have a new class of commissars who talk of communism and exploit the masses, according to the communist leader Djilas himself (for saying which he is serving a ten-year sentence), so in India we have a new class of Congress politicians and officials who are corrupt and businessmen who are prepared to play ball with these two. The Malaviya-Serajuddin model is one; Biju Patnaik-Mitra and their wives is another; Pratap Singh Kairon and his sons is the third; Bakhshi Gulam Mohammed and his brothers is another. This is the "new class" of people in office and people in business joining hands to exploit the consumers and the peasants. ~~Mrs. Gandhi is an embodiment of this class.~~ It is the elite, the new ruling class, a section of the intelligentsia that is in power that will not agree to anything but a so-called Left-oriented government. Our greatest support is among the peasants; our weakest support is in the cities and that is proved by the '62 elections. The Swatantra Party could carry only rural seats and not a single urban seat either for Parliament or in State Assemblies.

All our representatives were elected by peasant votes and frankly I do not think the pattern will be very different next year. We hope to make considerable gains, but I think you will find that the big cities are not with us - we shall do poorly there - because the new class, their newspapers and other organs of propaganda are all concentrated there; in the countryside we hope to find the biggest support.

Q: May we know the basis of the alliance between the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party in Rajasthan?

A: There is no alliance whatsoever between the Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh in any place in India. This is a tragic misunderstanding, although I have tried to correct this a hundred times publicly and privately. All that the Swatantra Party is trying to do is to limit the distortions of the electoral and party system. As you are aware, the majority in the Lok Sabha is entirely fraudulent. It was elected by people only 44.72 per cent of whom voted for the Congress Party. But the result was that the Congress Party got 73 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha, and they have abused this to carry Constitutional amendments which they had no right to do. Now Jana Sangh is not the only party with which we have an understanding; we are trying to develop similar understandings with the DMK, Akali Dal, the Republican Party, the Jana Congress in Orissa and the Kerala Congress in Kerala, and so on. We are trying to develop these understandings or adjustments with all democratic Opposition parties, so that by getting out of each other's way and allocating constituencies we may get a somewhat fairer Lok Sabha which represents a little less inaccurately the wishes of the people. In other words, this is a device to get rough proportional representation or what is called in France "the second ballot". We are trying to hold the second ballot in advance to find out who should get out of the way in favour of whom. That is all that is contemplated. There will be no alliance, no common campaigning between us and the Jana Sangh. Each party will campaign on its own platform and support its own manifesto. So, the very assumption which you have is completely unfounded.

Q: Sir, you say the Swatantra Party gets the bulk of its support from the peasants. Is the Swatantra Party also working among the working class and does it also aspire to be a working class party?

A: Yes, in the long run. That is a long process. We are trying to serve industrial labour while refusing to join the race to capture them and exploit them. Whatever the Communists, the Congress and the Socialists may do, each with its own trade union - the AITUC, INTUC, and the HMS - we consider these to be party organizations and not genuinely working class labour organizations. We have asked our workers not to try to capture trade unions, not to become their presidents and general secretaries as workers of other political parties do, but to offer their services to the workers in helping their economic cause. We are beginning to get appreciation and response from an increasing number of honest-to-good trade union functionaries and elements, but this is a long term approach. Since we do not want to cash in on our labour support, we may have to accept a self-denying ordinance, may be for another five or ten years. There are indications that more and more trade unions have realised we are their best friends and I should imagine both in this election and in future

elections we shall get more and more trade union support inspite of the so-called central organizations who are plugging the line of their own respective parties.

Q: How can India achieve self-sufficiency in food in the quickest possible time? Are you in favour of joint stock companies entering the farming field?

A: Our understanding is that the most efficient form of agricultural production is peasant proprietorship. We believe that a man and his family farming a reasonably-sized plot of land have proved to be the most productive source of cultivation. Now this is not based on any *a priori* preference on our part. It is based on the facts of life. If you will kindly refer to the published literature of the Food and Agricultural Organization, you will find the comparative statistics of foodgrains production throughout the world. You will find that the highest crop of rice per acre in the world is in Formosa, Taiwan. The second highest in the world is Japan. The farms there are small. In Japan the average, I believe, is two acres per land and yet out of two acres or less of wet land the Japanese farmer is able to produce so much as to live a comfortably middle-class life. In Formosa also there is a ceiling of seven acres and inspite of that the output is the highest. Then you go a little lower in the scale, Denmark and other smaller countries of Europe including Britain. On the lower part of the scale you go to the capitalist, large-scale mechanised farms in the United States where cultivation is done efficiently on joint stock company lines. Towards the end there is the wretched Soviet Union with its collective farms, which is being forced to sell gold to get food for its starving people. And ~~among the lowest lies India and of course the lowest of the~~ low is Communist China. Now from this you will find that the established ratio of productivity in agriculture is more or less in inverse proportion to the size of the farm and this is true whether it is capitalism or communist. Isms have nothing to do with it. It is a question of function. This is ~~how~~ because agriculture is an operation that requires love and careful tending of the soil. Only family farming peasant proprietorship seems to meet the need. Therefore, the quickest way for India to achieve self-sufficiency in food is to stop mucking up the small land-ownership. Wherever absentee landlordism has been abolished as in Zamindari areas, there is no case for any further land reform. Similarly in the Miotwari areas in Bombay, Madras, Maharashtra and Gujarat there has never been any need to meddle with the agrarian set-up. What is required is encouragement to the small farmer: give him incentive, give him credit, give him water and make it possible as in Japan and Formosa and elsewhere to double his crop. It can be done. Everything else is irrelevant and only a retarding factor. About joint stock cultivation I am pretty neutral. Yes, in the case of jute, sugarcane, tea, coffee, rubber, cotton - cash crops and plantations - it may be that modern joint stock enterprise on a big scale will produce better results. But I would draw the line and I would oppose any attempt to take away foodgrain farms from the small peasant to joint stock corporations. I would oppose it on the grounds of productivity and also on social grounds because we in the Swatantra Party believe in Gandhiji's thinking in regard to decentralised ownership and control over means of production. We want economic power to be decentralised as widely as possible. Peasant proprietorship has also social value apart from productivity. Therefore, we would be against any aggregations of economic power on the land.

Q: Sir, you have just mentioned Gandhiji's thinking. We should like to know how close the Swatantra Party is to Gandhiji's thinking?

A: I would say in this respect, except for Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narain and some of these Sarvodaya colleagues to whom we bow, Swatantra is the political party in India, which is nearest to Gandhiji's thinking. This is because many of us including myself have been deeply touched by association with and learning from Gandhiji. I was a young socialist when I came in touch with him, but by the time a decade had passed I had turned against socialism and accepted Gandhi as my master. This is to be found in my book "Socialism Reconsidered" which was published as far back as 1945 where you find an anticipation of the programme of the Swatantra Party which was actually established 15 years later. I rejected Marx and accepted Gandhiji. This is true of Prof. Ranga and Mr. Rajagopalachari and many others who basically are liberals with the Gandhian slant. So, I would describe the philosophy of the Swatantra Party as a fusion of Gandhiji's thinking with modern liberal principles and ideas.

Q: Do you accept Gandhiji's standard of austerity and non-violence?

A: I am afraid, no. There are certain parts of Gandhiji's thinking which I do not go along with. Population or birth control would be one. I speak for myself because the Swatantra Party has no plank on the population control problem. Similarly, in regard to absolute pacifism or non-violence we draw a line. We are inclined ~~to be~~ in favour of non-violence. We are for world peace and international order. We are a constitutional party which certainly eschews violence in regard to our own political programmes. But when the country is attacked, we do not propose to resort to non-violence. If China or Pakistan or anyone else for that matter attacks India, we certainly would use armed force to defend our territory and the sovereignty and integrity of our country. Therefore, there are things like austerity and other things that we do not accept. We are an upward-looking party. I have said earlier that the sky should be the limit. Simplicity - yes, austerity - no, would be my answer.

Q: Sir, you have said that if the Congress Party again comes to power by minority votes, the danger of parliamentary system breaking into pieces is there. How do you analyse this?

A: I think I have explained this in Parliament in my last major speech which was on devaluation. I said then that I did not expect the Congress Party to poll more than 40 per cent of the votes cast and I think most Congressmen privately agree with that view. If this is so, this will mean that 60 per cent of those who vote will have rejected the Congress. Now imagine what would happen if a party which 60 per cent of the people have rejected after 15 or 17 or 19 years of experience, comes again and sits on the Treasury Benches because of the archaic electoral system we have taken from the British and the party system which we have taken from the Latins whose temperament is somewhat like ours! We are a Latin people and not an Anglo-Saxon people in our political process of splitting and splintering and not compromising in big parties. We are emotional.

So, this combination of an Anglo-Saxon electoral system and a Latin party system is disastrous. Now, if this were to result in another bogus majority for the Congress in the Lok Sabha - let us say they get 60 per cent of the seats and those who poll 60 per cent of the votes get only 40 per cent of the seats - there will be hell to pay after all that has happened owing to the lack of moral acceptance of the Congress Party's bona fides which we find in the country today. The fact is that though there are some honest people in the Congress, most of them are thought to be people who are lining their own pockets, which is largely true unfortunately. Now the question is what will happen if such a party after 20 years in office is rejected by the people and then again comes to power. Well, I may - as a good democrat - be prepared to play the parliamentary game for another five years; I have patience now; I am 60 and I understand that you have to educate your masters. You have to put up with this Government for another five years. But whether the young people and the not so sophisticated people in India are going to be that patient with democratic processes, I wonder. Student unrest, the Bundhs, the scenes in Parliament and Assemblies - all these are ugly symptoms of what is coming. I frankly shudder to think what will happen if this disaster lands on us. I do not mind the Congress party getting a majority and being in office. If we are defeated and the will of the people prevails, it is all right. But if the electoral system frustrates the will of the people, then it is going to be extremely difficult to tell the people: "Don't do anything extra-constitutional," I mean Dr. Lohia's case will be very much strengthened and our case will be very much weakened. Therefore, I fear this possibility and I do hope it won't happen.

Q: If it does?

A: If it does, nature will take its own course. Nothing I can do about it. I will do my best, but it may fail. People may not listen to me.

Q: Sir, do you favour a radical change in the electoral system?

A: Yes, we stand for proportional representation. It will form a part of our manifesto this time. But unfortunately whether in England or in India one has never known a Government changing the electoral system that gives it unfair representation. The Liberal Party in Britain suffers the same way as we do and they of course have also realised what they are up against.

Q: But if the Congress is in the Opposition, then they may revise their stand?

A: I would say this: If we come to office or have a part or share in Government, we would certainly introduce an electoral law for establishing some kind of proportional representation so that we cannot get this anomaly of 45% getting 72% of the seats, which has already weakened democracy and will destroy it again if it is repeated.

Q: What should be India's stand - in your opinion - in regard to the Vietnam conflict? Do you think India should come out openly on the side of one party or the other?

A: I think the formulation of the question is a little defective, but I shall answer it. I do not know what you mean by one party or the other. There are two parties in Vietnam. The people and the Government of Vietnam defending their country against aggression are one. In that context certainly we believe that we must come out on the side of the people of Vietnam. They have shown in the recent election that 80% of them are behind the regime even if they may or may not support the Government actually in office. That is what the results of the election to the Constituent Assembly show. In spite of the terror that the Vietcong resorted to, 80% of the electorate voted, which is a higher polling rate than what we have in India. This shows that the people of Vietnam certainly do not want to give in to Communist aggression.

Now we regard what is happening in Vietnam as Chinese Communist aggression by proxy. We believe that the Vietnam Government and its gallant allies, the United States, Australia, Korea, the Philippines and New Zealand, are fighting for the cause of democracy and national independence. In other words they are fighting our cause, they are fighting our enemy at other frontiers. We believe that the river Mekong and its valley are the national frontiers of this country. Now that the Himalayas have been outflanked, we cannot simply afford to allow the the countries of Southeast Asia to come under the control of China. If we do that, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia will fall. If they fall, Malaysia will become unsustainable. China and her friends and satellites would encircle us all the way from Karachi at one end to Singapore at the other. Just as the frontiers of Britain lay in Belgium, so our frontiers lie in Vietnam. Any Government that has any gumption would have therefore sent a squadron of airforce planes or a detachment of troops to fight alongside those who are defending Vietnam in our interests. But of course we cannot expect anything from this pro-Communist Government. Unfortunately, the deadhand of the past is still on its shoulders.

Q: If you think the South Vietnamese people really support the Government and if it is all free election, how do you account for the fact that the biggest burden in the fighting is borne by the United States while Dr. Ho Chi Minh's troops are fighting hard, fighting better?

A: If Belgium is attacked by Germany, then the brunt of the fighting in Belgium has been known to fall on the shoulders of the French and the British armies. Does it mean that the Belgian people are not behind their own Government? In other words, if a small or weak military country is attacked by a strong aggressive military neighbour, it is natural that the allies who are bigger and who have more resources will take on the bigger part of the defence. But I have not yet heard that it proves that the Belgian people wanted Hitler or the Kaiser to attack their country. So, I would say that that balance of strength used has nothing to do with the popular support in defence of their own country. I have no doubt at all that it is predominantly a war of aggression from outside. Whole battalions and now divisions of the North Vietnam army are fighting on South Vietnam soil and the guerilla part of the warfare has now become a very incidental and minor part. Therefore, I regard the war as primarily a war of aggression by the North on the South. Lakhs of men have crossed the military frontier there. I would have thought that
~~6666n-India-who-quite-rightly-took-the-infil-----~~

have crossed the military frontier there. I would have thought that we in India, who quite rightly took the infiltration of a few hundred Mujahids last year into Kashmir as armed aggression by Pakistan, would find no difficulty in understanding the parallel or the analogy.

Q: Sir, what is your proposition for stopping the escalation of war or preventing further escalation?

A: The best way to stop the war escalating is to attack and invade North Vietnam and finish the war in eight days. I understand that this can be done. That is the best way to stop the war and to stop all escalation. While I support President Lyndon Johnson's present policy as against the appeasers, I do not think it is good enough. I think that this wobbling, this privileged sanctuary in North Vietnam is ridiculous. When you fight a war, you fight to win, not to stop the enemy only from attacking your territory. After all, did we not do it last year? When our troops attacked across the frontier from Amritsar to Lahore, my party supported it on the ground that if the Pakistani army had aggressed in Kashmir we should not fight a purely defensive war and that once an attack has come we have every right to counter attack on the enemy's territory. I don't understand the weakness of the American Government in not occupying Hanoi and winning the war which I understand the American military leaders are prepared to undertake.

Q: It is because of public opinion in the United States?

A: I don't think so. If you read the latest news from the United States, the majority of the American people want Lyndon Johnson to go much faster with the war. But I think the United States Government probably has a wrong idea that Communist China or even Soviet Russia might enter the war if they attack North Vietnam. I believe this to be a fallacy. I think there is not the slightest chance of either of these powers coming into the war if North Vietnam is overwhelmed. Communist China is a paper tiger or a paper dragon. It has always run away with its tail between its legs whenever faced with a strong opposition. It is in no condition to fight a major war because fighting North Vietnam would mean fighting the United States and fighting the Nationalist Chinese troops who may land and liberate the South west coast of China where they will be warmly received. This, Mao tse-Tung's tyrannical regime with its Red Guards is in no condition to face. Similarly, I don't think the Soviet Union would risk a war with the United States and allow Moscow to be destroyed for the sake of Vietnam. Therefore, I am quite clear that the war can be stopped and there will be no danger of escalation if it is fought to a finish and to victory.

Q: Do you suggest some negotiated settlement?

A: The only negotiated settlement with any Communist power is one that is achieved after military victory and that is enforced with military sanctions. The Communist powers, like individual Communists and Communist parties, believe in breaking their treaties. The Soviet Union has broken at least 20 treaties or more at the end of World War II in Europe. The Chinese Communists are a bandit regime; I would refuse to negotiate with them, but win on the field of battle and then allow them to stay wherever I want them to stay.

Q: Sir, do you visualise the public opinion in the world in that case?

A: Public opinion is not made by the New York Times, the London Times or the Times of India. This is what is called "world opinion" and it should not be listened to. It has always proved wrong, whether in regard to Hitler or Stalin or Mao tse-Tung.

Q: There is an impression that the Swatantra Party is in favour of making some concessions to Pakistan in regard to Kashmir while it is for an uncompromising stand against China. Is that impression correct?

A: Entirely incorrect. We are against appeasement. We are certainly against appeasement of the Chinese Communist regime for the reason that it is a bandit regime with the blood of Tibet, Korea, Vietnam and our own already on its hand and for the reason that it has occupied our territory. We are also against appeasement of Pakistan. After the Pakistani aggression last summer our party changed its position. Till then it was prepared - in view of the Nehru Government's obligations in the U.N. and elsewhere - to accept the role of Pakistan as one of the parties to the settlement of the Kashmir dispute. But after that aggression we passed a resolution in November¹⁹⁴⁷ which stands and will stand - that by its aggression the Government of Pakistan had lost whatever locus standi the Nehru Government might have given it and that it is not necessary for us to negotiate with them about Kashmir. In our opinion the Kashmir problem is now one solely between the people and the Government of India and the People of Kashmir. And we believe that it should be solved by conciliation between these two parties. There is no third party to this dispute. You will see from this that we are not only against making concessions to Pakistan in regard to Kashmir but we do not even accept their right to have any locus standi in regard to Kashmir.

Q: Sir, who has inspired you in your life, most?

A: When I was in my younger days a socialist, I would imagine that H.G. Wells and Bernard Shaw were among those who influenced my thinking. When I was cured of this state capitalist fallacy - although I still believe in a free and equal society as an objective - I turned to Mahatma Gandhi. It was he who showed me how shallow was our conception of the methods of socialism which we had accepted in the Congress Socialist Party. And both my friend J.P. and I were greatly influenced by this corrective. We then realised that Gandhiji was 50 years ahead of his time as a socialist if you like, that is, as a mechanic of those who wanted to take society towards the free and equal direction. We were also influenced by Gandhiji's thinking in regard to the ends and means. His thinking is that ends and means are linked and cannot be compartmentalised. In other words, the end does not justify the means. The example he used to give most was that nothing good could come out of the Soviet Union because it was founded on fraud and force, and he has proved a hundred per cent right. You cannot get a fraternal society by butchering people and liquidating millions of them. I think Gandhiji proved so right in this that I still am very much an idealist - many of my colleagues in my party consider me an incurable idealist - because I refuse to accept wrong methods even for the success of

my Party. I believe that I am right, however, ⁱⁿ believing that no party can really in the end thrive by questionable methods and that, when there is an evil in your own body, the best thing is to recognise it and deal with it even if it costs you a momentary loss. We proved this when we threw out the Raja of Ramgarh and more recently some of our colleagues in U.P. when we found that they were corruptible and that they were acting with questionable motives. Wherever we find that the people are really misbehaving in our party, we do not hesitate to throw them out even if it means a loss of several seats in Assemblies and Parliament. We think that the loss is worth taking. Again Gandhiji's words come to us: "Amputate the diseased limb."

Q: Sir, who is your favourite author?

A: I have several favourite authors and I don't think I can choose one out of them.

Q: Some of us have been taught the rudiments of socialism by you and leaders like Jayaprakash and others. Now we find that most of them have left. Is it actually because of the weakness or the failure of the Indian socialist movement or have you found that the doctrine of socialism itself is wrong?

A: Yes, J.P. and I are trying to undo some of the mischief that we did. I would say basically that our re-thinking is due to greater awareness of human nature and the facts of life, our understanding of our own people, of what makes the worker or peasant tick ~~was~~ ~~wrong~~. Today if you ask me I would say that all human beings are a mixture of selfishness and altruism, and that while one should appeal to altruism as much as possible, to try and to pretend that they have no selfishness would be to ride for a fall. In other words, we have now accepted the validity of certain laws of human nature and economics which the State Socialist pattern refuses to face. I still accept the "free and equal" society of Lenin as the ultimate objective. But I find that the progress towards a free and equal society is the fastest where the State plays a minimum role and slowest where the State capitalist or the State socialist pattern is tried out. Now, faced with this what would you expect me to do? Either I stick to my methodology or give up my objective, which is what the Communists and socialists do logically as in Russia or China, where equality has been long since forgotten and is termed a "petty bourgeois deviation." Stalin's words were: "Equality is a petty bourgeois deviation worthy of a primitive society. It has nothing to do with socialism". Stalin said this in 1932. Even if you want equality, maximum production, maximum return on enterprise and effort and risk is the way that raises the floor. Today in the United States the difference between the most skilled worker and the most unskilled worker whom in India we call "a coolie" is 2.5:1. In India the differential in most places is let us say 25:1 - 10 times as wide. In the Soviet Union I understand it is worse. Now if I believe in moving towards equality, I find that the so-called capitalist method, which I call competitive free enterprise, which Dr. Erhard calls

"social enterprise" - free enterprise with a social objective or purpose, gives the best results. This seems to give the fastest movement towards the socialist objective. So I cling to my objective because I really want a free and equal society. I reject the path of Lenin, Stalin and of the State capitalism and I turn to ^{the} direction of decentralized competitive enterprise, which seems to give the quickest speed towards the socialist objective. So, I am sorry some of you feel that we have turned away from leading you in that direction, but it is not so. We want to lead you towards the same objective. We are essentially consistent. We may appear to be inconsistent because the word "socialism" has been misappropriated today by the enemies of social justice. We have in India today that position: socialism versus social justice. And those who believe in social justice like the Sarvodaya people cannot go along with the State capitalist pattern because it is the most inequitable and most exploitative pattern where Malaviyas and Serrajuddins flourish and others languish.

Q: How will you check the evils of an acquisitive society?

A: There are two ways of doing it. One is internal and the other is external. I have already said earlier that naturally we as liberals or Swatantra people believe in minimum Governmental regulation and control. There is also the internal check and that is to make people feel less acquisitive, feel more fraternal. Now, this is where Gandhiji comes in. Gandhiji's idea of Trusteeship is in our manifesto. We want those with the means to share them or to use them if you like with a social objective. That is what Erhard calls social enterprise. We held seminars in Delhi and elsewhere, where I co-operated with Jayaprakash, for discussing the social obligations of business. Management has a right to make a profit. Without profit there is nothing; there is not even efficiency. Loss-making is nothing wonderful. But you cannot be altogether devoid of social obligations. Now there are two ways of doing this. One is by regulation and the other is by internal restraint. Just to give an example, I am a 'Sampatkidan'. J.P. came to me ten years ago in Bombay and said I might practise a little bit of the trusteeship which he espouses. He got me to agree to give one-tenth of my net income to the Sarva Seva Sangh every year for giving ~~the farmer and the landless man, land, a couple of ploughs~~ and a little capital to tend the land; and I have been doing this for the last ten years and I propose to do it for the rest of my life so long as the Sarva Seva Sangh want it. This is called 'Sampatidan' i.e. you share a little of what you have - more than a fair share perhaps - with others who need it and who, you think, will put it to the best use. Now this is the spirit in which a trustee should begin to work.

Q: But the people do not know about your sacrifice of 10 per cent of your income as Sampatidan.

A: It is for the public to come to know. It is ^{not} for me to shout from the housetop.

Q: Gandhiji has said that according to his concept of trusteeship, if the trustees don't behave and if they do not fulfil their obligations, he would resist them with non-violent non-cooperation. Would you support that stand?

A: Yes, of course. What does that mean now? If a company exploits the consumer, you should meet it by consumers' resistance. As you know, in the West there are consumers associations which will publish in their magazines something which will stop the consumers buying ~~from~~ goods from such concerns. Therefore, this is the non-violent resistance of the consumer. Similarly, if the employers are being exploited, the weapon of the strike is always there. The Swatantra Party is wedded to the weapon of the strike. It says very categorically that there can be no denial of the right to withhold labour which is the essence of a free society. Therefore, in Parliament when Pandit Nehru was trying to take away the right to strike of the Central Government employees, I opposed him; I said no, even the government employees should have the right to strike unless you go to arbitration. And when he said no arbitration and no strike, I said "this is authoritarianism; this is Stalinism and we will fight it", and the Communist Party voted for my amendments against Nehru. So, funny things happen in this context. I would say yes, I agree with Gandhiji's approach. But that does not mean you liquidate them (erring trustees). If some officials are corrupt, you sack them but you do not abolish ^{this} service and create anarchy in the country. So, I agree with Gandhiji. If the trustee misbehaves he must be curbed and if he misbehaves very badly he may be even removed in individual cases; but you don't abolish the institution of private enterprise just because some trustees misbehave.

Q: What will be your policy towards Communism and the Communist Party if you come to power?

A: Our understanding of the Communist Party is that it is a fifth-column, the Right Communist Party, of Moscow, and the Left Communist Party, of Peking. Now we also believe that enemies of democracy have no right to use the processes of democracy for their destruction. You find this principle elaborated in the book called "Politics of Democracy" by Mr. Durbin, the British Labour theorist. There is a whole chapter on it which I enjoyed reading very much. But that does not mean that you automatically ban the Communist Party at any given moment of time. I have said this in Parliament that if the Communist Party in any country including ours becomes "a clear and present danger" to our democracy, I would not have the slightest compunction in passing a law outlawing them outright. If, however, there is no clear and present danger, I would tolerate them and fight them politically. The other day I held a Press Conference in Bombay where I disclosed documentary proof that material put up out by the New Age News Service was in fact stencilled and typed in the premises of the Soviet Embassy in Delhi and I am quite prepared to be sued for libel either by the Communist Party or by the Soviet Embassy. Neither of them, I am convinced, will do anything of that kind because it is true. Now this is the way to destroy this Communist evil - educate the people. But if the danger ^{is} clear and present, as during the Chinese invasion, my party would demand the immediate outlawing of the Communist Party because, if a Communist power attacks your country, that is no time to worry about keeping the climate of civil liberties. So, I would be slow in banning, not because of any regard for the Communists but because, if you set in motion an unhealthy habit of not tolerating people, you don't know where somebody will go. I would not like to trust anyone including my own party with exercising the right to ban, because

once you ban 'A' you may ban 'B' and next you may ban the leading democratic Opposition parties as you see happening in some countries of Asia and Africa and Latin America. So, as a liberal, I would go slow; but not out of regard for the rights of the Communists, of which they have none, being fifth-columnists or traitors, but out of the desire to keep the climate of free discussion which is of high value and which must be zealously guarded.

I would take a certain amount of risk tolerating the Communist Parties rather than ban them cheerfully, but my right to ban I would assert. I am against preventive detention of individuals without trial, which is absolutely foul, even if they are Communists. But I would resort to the German, Brazilian and other ways by which by Act of Parliament you first outlaw the party; then the matter goes to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court upholds the law on the ground that there is a risk of fifth column and treacherous elements which cannot be tolerated. After that I would arrest anyone who is in that organization. This, I believe, to be the rule of law or the way to deal with the evil, not this primitive weapon of DIR or Preventive Detention, which as I pointed out earlier may extend from Communists to non-Communists. Patriots then get arrested as was done with those ~~xxx~~ three young men during the Chinese attack. So, you see there is a danger. Therefore, I would go about it in a principled way and not in an unprincipled way.

Q: Would you like to comment on the Left in the Congress?
What is this phenomenon?

A: It is a very well-known phenomenon. Communist infiltration of democratic organizations is well-known throughout the world. Mr. Ziliacuss for instance in the British Labour Party - and some others whom I would not name - is a prototype of Krishna Menon and K.D. Malaviya in our country. So, you have these democratic parties often with a fringe of secret communists masquerading as non-Communists. I believe Mr. Malaviya and Mr. Krishna Menon to be essentially Communists; whether they hold a card or not is irrelevant. Sometimes non-cardholding Communists are much more dangerous than cardholding Communists, who are honest idealists, who are being misled by bad leadership.