

Swatantra Party

CENTRAL OFFICE

PHONE: 29687

GRAMS: SURAJYAM



SASSOON BUILDING,
143, MAHATMA GANDHI ROAD,
BOMBAY 1.

For favour of publication

Bombay, September 15.

"With the publication of the Congress Election Manifesto, it is now clear that, far from learning from past mistakes, the Congress Party and Government have every intention of extending their predatory operations to banking and the distributing trades and continuing along the path to complete economic ruin," observed Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P., General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, while explaining his Party's election strategy and objectives at a subscription dinner organised by the Swatantra Party here this evening.

Mr. Masani said a reading of the Congress Election Manifesto reminded one of the words in Hamlet's well-known soliloquy: "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable."

According to the Swatantra leader, the people were sick and tired of Congress misgovernment but the change they desired could only be brought about if in the General Elections next February a Second Party emerged which could provide the nucleus of an alternative government.

According to Mr. Masani, there were three reasons indicating that the only party that satisfied the requirements of such a Second Party was the Swatantra Party. First, it was the only Party which offered a clear-cut alternative to the economic and international policies of the present Government. Secondly, its National Democratic and non-denominational character made it possible for every Indian, whatever his religion, community or location, to have an equal voice in the councils of the Party. Thirdly, it was the only Party which had the capability of challenging the Congress Party by reason of the quality of its leadership and its far-flung national character.

The objectives of the Swatantra Party in the coming General Elections would be two-fold. First, to get enough seats in the Lok Sabha to deny the Congress Party a majority and thus to end its disastrous monopoly of power for the last twenty years. Secondly, to carry a couple of States and to show what a Swatantra or Swatantra-led Government could do. While he admitted that these were ambitious objectives, he claimed that they were within the reach of the Party provided the electorate showed the requisite awareness of the country's needs. "After all", said Mr. Masani, "if the people of Ceylon in 1965 could show the patriotism and the intelligence to throw out the Congress-type Government of Mrs. Bandaranaike and to instal a liberal, Swatantra-type Government like that of Mr. Dudley Senanayake, why should the Indian people in 1967 not be able to do this?" The main danger came from the inertia, cynicism and defeatism of a large section of the intelligentsia. If they did not shed these, India might drift the way of Indonesia and Ghana and go through all the horrors that the unfortunate peoples of those countries had been through during the last few years before turning in the right direction.

The Swatantra leader described the Congress Party as "a paper tiger" which had never once secured a popular majority in the elections to Parliament every since Independence. It had only polled 44.72 per cent of the votes in the 1962 elections and enjoyed its present bogus majority in the Lok Sabha thanks to the archaic electoral system and the absence of a Second Party which could offer an alternative government. A recent poll carried out by the Indian Institute of Public Opinion in metropolitan cities had shown that the Congress vote had slumped from 60 per cent in January-February 1966 to 41 per cent in May. Mr. Masani shuddered to think what would happen if the Congress Party, which would certainly not get 40 per cent of the popular vote in the General Elections next February, were to get a fluke majority in the next Lok Sabha. According to him, the very process of parliamentary democracy embodied in the Constitution would then be in danger.

"Now that the Congress Party is disintegrating and is on its way out, the

basic choice before the country lies between communist dictatorship and the free way of life embodied in the principles of the Swatantra Party," said Mr. Masani.

In this context, Mr. Masani described the policy of the Swatantra Party as one of "double rejection" of the Congress Party on the one hand and the two Communist parties on the other. Those who advocated preferring the communists to the Congress were playing with fire. The Communist Party was a fifth column of either Moscow or Peking and would destroy democracy the moment it had the chance.

On the other hand, he criticised those who professed to believe that the Congress Party was changing its basic policies and moving in the right direction. Communism had three faces in India and the third was that represented by the Statist policies of the Congress Party which were all the more dangerous because of their insidious nature.

Many people had hoped for big things from the new Prime Minister and he himself had welcomed her earlier statements. Recent events, however, had belied those hopes. The Prime Minister had come down on the side of a "Big" Plan which would be ruinous to the country and her surrender to Mr. Kosygin over Vietnam when in Moscow showed that she was a broken reed on whom to rely. Now came the threat in the Congress Election Manifesto to impose a ceiling on urban incomes and to nationalise Banking and trading activities.

The Swatantra Party, according to Mr. Masani, was primarily a Peasants' Party and gave first place to the interests of the rural people. All the seats it had carried in the 1962 elections and most of the ten million votes cast for it were the votes of the farmers. At the same time, because it believed that Free Enterprise was an essential part of a free society, it stood for competitive free enterprise against State Capitalist Monopoly.

Mr. Masani was critical about the pusillanimity and betrayal of their way of life by a large section of Big Business in India who had got on the Congress bandwagon in order to make a "quick rupee" by reaping the fruits of permit-licence-quota Raj. Such people appeared to suffer from a suicidal mania. He appealed to the younger businessmen to take the initiative and turn away from the false path along which a large part of Indian business had hitherto been led and to enter the field of active politics undeterred by false fears.

Mr. Masani described the principles and policies of the Swatantra Party as a blend of Gandhiji's thinking and Western Liberalism. Describing his Party as a modern, twentieth century Party in tune with the latest trends in world thought, he appealed to young and progressive people to rally round it and join its ranks. The Swatantra Party was not a closed corporation. It wanted no monopoly of power but wished to see a Government of all the talents replace the present Government. The Party's doors were wide open to all those who were in basic agreement with its policies and he appealed to his hearers to join in the "Open Conspiracy" to defeat the Congress Government and to open a new chapter in the country's history.

Mr. Masani and Mr. N. Dandekar then invited and answered questions from those present in regard to the policies and principles of the Swatantra Party and its prospects in the coming General Elections.

M. R. Masani
(M. R. Masani)
General Secretary

and pro-
fessional
men

Most people agree that it is time for a change, that this country needs a break with what has gone before and that, unless this change comes, the future of this country does not look very bright.

From this it follows that what is wanted is a Second Party - a party that can challenge the present government and in due course of time replace it in office. This is essential because, as we saw in the case of Ceylon last year, such a change was possible democratically and constitutionally because there was in existence already a second party to which the people turned when they had enough of the last government. The vacuum in our democracy is that today there is no such second party ready to take over.

Now, two questions arise: One is whether the Swatantra Party has the right idea. I frankly will not waste any time on that topic as I would like to think that almost all intelligent people basically agree with what the Swatantra Party stands for.

There is, however, another question which I would like to answer and that is: Granted you have the right idea, can you make the grade? Have you got what it takes to defeat the Congress Party and take its place? Now this question or this doubt is, I think, much more widespread than any doubt about our policies. There are many people who share this feeling: "You are on the right track, we agree with your policies, but frankly we don't think you will get anywhere." And this doubt is based on a very patronising contempt for the poor dear masses of our country. We of the intelligentsia like to think that we understand politics, that we appreciate a good idea or a good principle but that the peasants of our country, the big mass of our people, are not capable of responding to these ideas. So the question is put to us: "How can you hope to get away with a liberal policy in a backward, illiterate country like India? In this country only 'leftism' will pay, only communism will pay. This kind of sophisticated progressive policy will not pay in this country. Therefore, you won't get anywhere. So why should we stick our necks out? Therefore, let us sit and grumble, moan and groan, and do nothing."

This is the thinking of a large number of so-called intellectuals in this country. Now I would like to suggest that this cynicism or defeatism is not based on fact and I would like to put before you certain facts which I think would give you a somewhat more encouraging and optimistic picture.

Our objectives in this election are twofold. The first is to end the Congress monopoly of power in Delhi which has now lasted to our cost for twenty long years. The second objective is to carry a couple of States so that we can show what Swatantra-led governments can do. These are undoubtedly ambitious objectives, but we think they are capable of being achieved next February.

We would like to think that we are the only Opposition party qualified to emerge as the alternative and for three reasons. First, that we are the only

party that poses a clear-cut alternative to the domestic and foreign policies of the present government. Most of the other parties are satellites, whether they are communist or socialist, who like to push the Congress down into the gutter a little faster than they are already going! The second reason why we claim that we alone can replace the Congress is that we are the only other non-denominational National Democratic party. We are rooted in democracy. We come out of the national movement for freedom in which we all took our place along with many in the Congress Party today. We are a party in which men or women of any religion, community or location, North, South, East or West, can feel equally at home. The third reason why we feel that we have what it takes is that we alone have the capability, thanks to the quality of our leadership and our potential resources, to make the grade.

Another fact I would like to place before you is that we are a rural party. We are not an urban party. If anyone thinks that we depend on the support of the class to which you here and I belong, then I must confess we would have to wind up our Party if that was all the support we depended on! We are based on the peasants of India and depend on the peasants of India primarily for our support. Then you will ask: why are we here today? I would say you are here because we assume that you believe in a free economy and a free society. In a free economy and a free society, free enterprise is an essential part. In fact, we go so far as to believe that you cannot have a free society unless you have free enterprise. Therefore, free enterprise, along with peasant proprietorship and free trade unions, is an essential element in a democracy. It is because free enterprise is a part of a free society that we stand for it, not because we believe in furthering the interests of those who practice that way of life. But we do expect ~~that~~ those who live by that way of life to recognise it, to be prepared to stand up and be counted for that way of life. It is on that basis that we expect support from the class to which you belong.

Unfortunately, the results show that we have not got that support as yet. It may be news to you that in the last elections, in 1962, every single seat that the Swatantra Party carried whether for Parliament or for any State Assembly - we carried 206 for various State Assemblies - was a rural seat. As of today the Swatantra Party has not carried a single purely urban constituency in the whole country. This should show you how wide of the mark are those who believe that we are based on the industrial class in the cities and have no roots among the masses. We polled nine million votes or nearly a crore of votes and most of them came from the villagers of our country. When I stood for Rajkot in 1963 in a by-election, I had the support of every trade union in Rajkot city, of the Khedut Samaj and its leaders, of the whole of the shopkeeping class, of the goldsmiths. I am sorry to inform you that there was one class in Rajkot that was against me. That was the Chamber of Commerce and its members. The leaders of the Chamber of Commerce issued a statement on behalf of my Congress rival. They gave their cars and their money to the Congress candidate. This is the reality, which is completely at variance with what nine out of ten of our intelligentsia believe.

So what we lack is not peasant support. Whenever we talk to the peasant, he is on our side, because we speak to him of the values of Farm, Family and Freedom, as Rajaji put it. He understands them very easily - the right to his land, the right to his home, the right to freedom of worship. The peasant is a conservative. He is not a radical or a communist. But the fact is that we have not got enough members of the intelligentsia to carry the message to the peasant. To use an industrial metaphor, we have not got the "conveyor belt" on which we can carry the message to the people in large enough numbers. We lack men who can talk, we lack jeeps to move about in, we want printed literature to distribute. All of this means men and money. Here, the role of the intelligentsia has not

been terribly encouraging. Thanks to the intellectual fog that was spread over this country during the past fifteen years by the previous national leadership of the country since Independence, most of the intelligentsia are unable to distinguish what is right from what is wrong, what is progressive from what is reactionary. Until this fog clears and it is clearing, in the last three years it has cleared and it will clear more in the years to come, it is very difficult to get most of the people of our class to see things straight.

But of all elements in the intelligentsia, the business class has been the worst. With the exception of an enlightened fringe, which I am happy to say, is mostly based in our City of Bombay, though there are a few people outside also, the bulk of Big Business has been on the Congress bandwagon. They have been supporting the "socialist" policies of this government. Till about two years ago, this was true broadly of the organised institutions representing Big Business. But here, I would like to pay a tribute to the last two Presidents of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mr. S.L. Kriposkar and now Mr. Ramanbhai Amin. These two gentlemen for the first time have talked in a self-respecting, honest-to-god way.

When businessmen tell us "we cannot help you" or "we cannot give you money because we are frightened of retaliation", I think they are misleading themselves and others. Let me say frankly that we do not have a Fascist government in this country. It is a bad government. It is a government that should be thrown out as fast as we can throw it out, but it is not a Fascist government. We know from our experience and our business friends who have stood for us, who have worked with us, know that nothing has happened to them. The other day, when I mentioned this to a group of businessmen in Delhi, a leading industrialist got up and said: "I agree with Mr. Masani. I have paid money to the Swatantra Party, it has been published in my balance sheet, nobody has hurt me. I am doing very well."

Then why this fear? Partly it is a genuine fear, but partly I fear it is an alibi. It is an alibi for not wanting to help. The desire to help is not there because the Swatantra Party cannot give a quick return. In other words, the pursuit of the quick rupee in the next twelve months seems to be a more determining factor than genuine, honest to god fear! Now, if this is true, it means that a section of Indian business is suffering from a suicidal mania ~~system~~ to destroy itself by helping those who are out to destroy it.

There are others who think that the Congress is so strong that it can never be defeated. I do not think so at all. The Congress is a "paper tiger" today. It looks much bigger than it really is. The Congress Party is not a majority party. The Congress Party never has been a majority party in this country since Independence. The highest vote it could poll for Parliament under Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, a great personality himself, was 48 per cent of the votes polled. Nehru was always a minority leader in India. In the last elections, that vote fell to 44.72 per cent. Let us call it 45 per cent. 55 per cent of the electorate voted against the Congress Party in 1962, but it got 72 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha. Now, this is a fluke which is based on the archaic electoral system that we took from the British. We took the Anglo-Saxon voting system but we have a Latin temperament! By this I mean we have six or eight parties while the British have only two or three. When you have the British system of election with eight parties, you get the very peculiar result that 45 per cent of the electorate get 72 per cent of the seats. We are trying to undo the effect of this anomaly by trying to work out electoral adjustments with other democratic, non-communist Opposition parties.

If you were to ask me what vote I expect the Congress Party to have next year,

I would without hesitation say that they will not get more than 40 per cent of the vote. They may get between 35 and 40 per cent. This would mean that 60 per cent of the electorate will vote against them. The only question is how splintered or divided will this sixty per cent be. If it is only reasonably divided, the Congress government may be defeated. But if it is splintered as in the past, then it is possible that even with 35 per cent of the vote, the Congress party might get a fluke or bogus majority in the Lok Sabha.

Now I would like you to consider what would happen then. If that happens, if the Swatantra Party does not make the grade, then will democracy survive? Will the people of India, already starving, miserable, depressed, overtaxed, with rising prices, will they put up for five more years with a government that is as bad as it is today on the ground that it got only 40 per cent of the vote but it has got a majority in the Lok Sabha? I think, after what we have seen in the streets of our cities, on the floor of Parliament, it is very clear that, if a 35 per cent party gets a majority in the next Parliament, then the future of Indian democracy is very very dark and bleak indeed. Therefore, the case for the building up of a Second Party to stop this unhealthy drift is very clear.

One final point before I conclude. We are sometimes told: "Do you prefer the Communists to the Congress or the Congress to the Communists? Isn't the Congress a 'lesser evil' to the communists." We regard both as poison, and we follow a policy of what we call double rejection. We refuse to choose between the Congress and Communist parties. I do not have to argue here that the Communists are bad. They are poison to our freedom and democracy. But there may be some of you who think we must cling to the Congress in order to prevent India going Communist. Do you think that the Congress Party led by Mr. Kamaraj Nadar is the kind of Party that will stop Indo from being taken over by the Communists? Mr. Kamaraj Nadar has said quite clearly that he wants Communists who have left the Congress to return to the Congress where he thinks they will make very valuable members! Mr. Kamaraj Nadar has praised the Soviet Dictatorship in every respect. He could think of including even housing and agriculture where we all know they are miserable flops. He has even gone so far as to say that our own national movement for freedom was modelled on the Soviet Communist model! Is this the Party which is going to stop the country from drifting to Communism?

Mrs. Indira Gandhi certainly made a very good start when she became Prime Minister. I myself have complimented her in Parliament and outside on her earlier performance. But in the last three months, I am afraid she has shown that she is drifting back to the bad old ways. Her surrender to Kosygin in Moscow on Vietnam shows that she cannot stand up to the Soviets. Her support of the Fourth Plan will seal the doom of this country because, if the Fourth Plan which she has supported ~~was~~ were ever to be put into operation, this country will be utterly ruined. She said something intelligent once to Look Magazine. It quoted her as saying two or three months ago: "If India's future demands it, I shall not hesitate to deviate from Nehru's policies." Within twentyfour hours, an official spokesman denied that she had said anything of the kind! If the Prime Minister of India denies that she said that if the country's interests demand it, she should deviate from her father's policies, then it means that whether the country's interests demand it or not, she will cling to those policies. If that is what she believes, I would suggest that she is not fit to remain Prime Minister even for a day.

Recently, we have had the Manifesto of the Congress Party. There were people

who thought that the Congress Party was moving in the right direction, that they were learning the lessons of the mistakes they had made. Please read the Manifesto. It is very hard to read; I have tried very hard to read it from one end to the other. I do not know honestly how many of you were able to wade through it. When I got half-way through it, I was reminded of the words of Hamlet in his well known soliloquy: "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable"! But apart from how it reads, it goes in for the nationalisation of Banking, for a ceiling on urban incomes, and it preaches all the values of communism without communist jargon. This Manifesto is a document of class war and class struggle. It bases itself on envy. It tries to incite those who have not against those who have. I am not particularly concerned with preserving those who have. But, as I said earlier, if we do not preserve the rights of enterprise, of those who take risks, then this country is not going to thrive. Without competition, without free enterprise, we do not believe this country can go places.

Therefore, if anyone thinks that by supporting the Congress he is fighting the Communists, I do appeal to him to consider whether he is doing the right thing. The real problem was posed before us by Rajaji when he said that he smelt the coming storm and rain, and pointed out that the Congress Party had all the money and the Swatantra Party hasn't got what it takes to put up enough candidates. He therefore appealed to people to come forward and say: "I will find the money, put me up, give me a constituency." This was his appeal on Independence Day. There are three things that those who agree with us can do. Either they can come forward and say they will stand for Parliament or Assembly. If they do so, our doors are wide open. If he or she is in agreement with the principles of the Party, we shall be glad to put up anyone who wants to get to Parliament or Assembly provided we can find a constituency. If someone does not want to stand, he or she can work actively for us; and contribute to the funds that will make it possible for others to stand.

We are an Open Conspiracy. We do not hide the fact that we want to turn this Government out of office. Either one agrees with us or one doesn't. If one does not agree with us and wants five more years of Congress government, we have nothing to say. But if one agrees that the Government needs to be changed, then may I suggest that just thinking so, just saying so, ~~justing~~ just wishing it is not enough. Some effort is required from each one of us. It is in that spirit that I would request everyone to join with us in the Swatantra Party in this Open Conspiracy to give this country a new, clean and efficient government.

Most people agree that it is time for a change, that this country needs a break with what has gone before and that, unless this change comes, the future of this country does not look very bright.

From this it follows that what is wanted is a Second Party - a party that can challenge the present government and in due course of time replace it in office. This is essential because, as we saw in the case of Ceylon last year, such a change was possible democratically and constitutionally because there was in existence already a second party to which the people turned when they had enough of the last government. The vacuum in our democracy is that today there is no such second party ready to take over.

Now, two questions arise: One is whether the Swatantra Party has the right idea. I frankly will not waste any time on that topic as I would like to think that almost all intelligent people basically agree with what the Swatantra Party stands for.

There is, however, another question which I would like to answer and that is: Granted you have the right idea, can you make the grade? Have you got what it takes to defeat the Congress Party and take its place? Now this question or this doubt is, I think, much more widespread than any doubt about our policies. There are many people who share this feeling: "You are on the right track, we agree with your policies, but frankly we don't think you will get anywhere." And this doubt is based on a very patronising contempt for the poor dear masses of our country. We of the intelligentsia like to think that we understand politics, that we appreciate a good idea or a good principle but that the peasants of our country, the big mass of our people, are not capable of responding to these ideas. So the question is put to us: "How can you hope to get away with a liberal policy in a backward, illiterate country like India? In this country only 'leftism' will pay, only communism will pay. This kind of sophisticated progressive policy will not pay in this country. Therefore, you won't get anywhere. So why should we stick our necks out? Therefore, let us sit and grumble, moan and groan, and do nothing."

This is the thinking of a large number of so-called intellectuals in this country. Now I would like to suggest that this cynicism or defeatism is not based on fact and I would like to put before you certain facts which I think would give you a somewhat more encouraging and optimistic picture.

Our objectives in this election are twofold. The first is to end the Congress monopoly of power in Delhi which has now lasted to our cost for twenty long years. The second objective is to carry a couple of States so that we can show what Swatantra-led governments can do. These are undoubtedly ambitious objectives, but we think they are capable of being achieved next February.

We would like to think that we are the only Opposition party qualified to emerge as the alternative and for three reasons. First, that we are the only

party that poses a clear-cut alternative to the domestic and foreign policies of the present government. Most of the other parties are satellites, whether they are communist or socialist, who like to push the Congress down into the gutter a little faster than they are already going! The second reason why we claim that we alone can replace the Congress is that we are the only other non-denominational National Democratic party. We are rooted in democracy. We come out of the national movement for freedom in which we all took our place along with many in the Congress Party today. We are a party in which men or women of any religion, community or location, North, South, East or West, can feel equally at home. The third reason why we feel that we have what it takes is that we alone have the capability, thanks to the quality of our leadership and our potential resources, to make the grade.

Another fact I would like to place before you is that we are a rural party. We are not an urban party. If anyone thinks that we depend on the support of the class to which you here and I belong, then I must confess we would have to wind up our Party if that was all the support we depended on! We are based on the peasants of India and depend on the peasants of India primarily for our support. Then you will ask: why are we here today? I would say you are here because we assume that you believe in a free economy and a free society. In a free economy and a free society, free enterprise is an essential part. In fact, we go so far as to believe that you cannot have a free society unless you have free enterprise. Therefore, free enterprise, along with peasant proprietorship and free trade unions, is an essential element in a democracy. It is because free enterprise is a part of a free society that we stand for it, not because we believe in furthering the interests of those who practice that way of life. But we do expect ~~that~~ those who live by that way of life to recognise it, to be prepared to stand up and be counted for that way of life. It is on that basis that we expect support from the class to which you belong.

Unfortunately, the results show that we have not got that support as yet. It may be news to you that in the last elections, in 1962, every single seat that the Swatantra Party carried whether for Parliament or for any State Assembly - we carried 206 for various State Assemblies - was a rural seat. As of today the Swatantra Party has not carried a single purely urban constituency in the whole country. This should show you how wide of the mark are those who believe that we are based on the industrial class in the cities and have no roots among the masses. We polled nine million votes or nearly a crore of votes and most of them came from the villagers of our country. When I stood for Rajkot in 1963 in a by-election, I had the support of every trade union in Rajkot city, of the Khedut Samaj and its leaders, of the whole of the shopkeeping class, of the goldsmiths. I am sorry to inform you that there was one class in Rajkot that was against me. That was the Chamber of Commerce and its members. The leaders of the Chamber of Commerce issued a statement on behalf of my Congress rival. They gave their cars and their money to the Congress candidate. This is the reality, which is completely at variance with what nine out of ten of our intelligentsia believe.

So what we lack is not peasant support. Whenever we talk to the peasant, he is on our side, because we speak to him of the values of Farm, Family and Freedom, as Rajaji put it. He understands them very easily - the right to his land, the right to his home, the right to freedom of worship. The peasant is a conservative. He is not a radical or a communist. But the fact is that we have not got enough members of the intelligentsia to carry the message to the peasant. To use an industrial metaphor, we have not got the "conveyor belt" on which we can carry the message to the people in large enough numbers. We lack men who can talk, we lack jeeps to move about in, we want printed literature to distribute. All of this means men and money. Here, the role of the intelligentsia has not

been terribly encouraging. Thanks to the intellectual fog that was spread over this country during the past fifteen years by the previous national leadership of the country since Independence, most of the intelligentsia are unable to distinguish what is right from what is wrong, what is progressive from what is reactionary. Until this fog clears and it is clearing, in the last three years it has cleared and it will clear more in the years to come, it is very difficult to get most of the people of our class to see things straight.

But of all elements in the intelligentsia, the business class has been the worst. With the exception of an enlightened fringe, which I am happy to say, is mostly based in our City of Bombay, though there are a few people outside also, the bulk of Big Business has been on the Congress bandwagon. They have been supporting the "socialist" policies of this government. Till about two years ago, this was true broadly of the organised institutions representing Big Business. But here, I would like to pay a tribute to the last two Presidents of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mr. S.L. Krlonkar and now Mr. Ramanbhai Amin. These two gentlemen for the first time have talked in a self-respecting, honest-to-god way.

When businessmen tell us "we cannot help you" or "we cannot give you money because we are frightened of retaliation", I think they are misleading themselves and others. Let me say frankly that we do not have a Fascist government in this country. It is a bad government. It is a government that should be thrown out as fast as we can throw it out, but it is not a Fascist government. We know from our experience and our business friends who have stood for us, who have worked with us, know that nothing has happened to them. The other day, when I mentioned this to a group of businessmen in Delhi, a leading industrialist got up and said: "I agree with Mr. Masani. I have paid money to the Swatantra Party, it has been published in my balance sheet, nobody has hurt me. I am doing very well."

Then why this fear? Partly it is a genuine fear, but partly I fear it is an alibi. It is an alibi for not wanting to help. The desire to help is not there because the Swatantra Party cannot give a quick return. In other words, the pursuit of the quick rupee in the next twelve months seems to be a more determining factor than genuine, honest to god fear! Now, if this is true, it means that a section of Indian business is suffering from a suicidal mania ~~to~~ to destroy itself by helping those who are out to destroy it.

There are others who think that the Congress is so strong that it can never be defeated. I do not think so at all. The Congress is a "paper tiger" today. It looks much bigger than it really is. The Congress Party is not a majority party. The Congress Party never has been a majority party in this country since Independence. The highest vote it could poll for Parliament under Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, a great personality himself, was 48 per cent of the votes polled. Nehru was always a minority leader in India. In the last elections, that vote fell to 44.72 per cent. Let us call it 45 per cent. 55 per cent of the electorate voted against the Congress Party in 1962, but it got 72 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha. Now, this is a fluke which is based on the archaic electoral system that we took from the British. We took the Anglo-Saxon voting system but we have a Latin temperament! By this I mean we have six or eight parties while the British have only two or three. When you have the British system of election with eight parties, you get the very peculiar result that 45 per cent of the electorate get 72 per cent of the seats. We are trying to undo the effect of this anomaly by trying to work out electoral adjustments with other democratic, non-communist Opposition parties.

If you were to ask me what vote I expect the Congress Party to have next year,

I would without hesitation say that they will not get more than 40 per cent of the vote. They may get between 35 and 40 per cent. This would mean that 60 per cent of the electorate will vote against them. The only question is how splintered or divided will this sixty per cent be. If it is only reasonably divided, the Congress government may be defeated. But if it is splintered as in the past, then it is possible that even with 35 per cent of the vote, the Congress party might get a fluke or bogus majority in the Lok Sabha.

Now I would like you to consider what would happen then. If that happens, if the Swatantra Party does not make the grade, then will democracy survive? Will the people of India, already starving, miserable, depressed, overtaxed, with rising prices, will they put up for five more years with a government that is as bad as it is today on the ground that it got only 40 per cent of the vote but it has got a majority in the Lok Sabha? I think, after what we have seen in the streets of our cities, on the floor of Parliament, it is very clear that, if a 35 per cent party gets a majority in the next Parliament, then the future of Indian democracy is very very dark and bleak indeed. Therefore, the case for the building up of a Second Party to stop this unhealthy drift is very clear.

One final point before I conclude. We are sometimes told: "Do you prefer the Communists to the Congress or the Congress to the Communists? Isn't the Congress a 'lesser evil' to the communists." We regard both as poison, and we follow a policy of what we call double rejection. We refuse to choose between the Congress and Communist parties. I do not have to argue here that the Communists are bad. They are poison to our freedom and democracy. But there may be some of you who think we must cling to the Congress in order to prevent India going Communist. Do you think that the Congress Party led by Mr. Kamaraj Nadar is the kind of Party that will stop India from being taken over by the Communists? Mr. Kamaraj Nadar has said quite clearly that he wants Communists who have left the Congress to return to the Congress where he thinks they will make very valuable members! Mr. Kamaraj Nadar has praised the Soviet Dictatorship in every respect. He could think of including even housing and agriculture where we all know they are miserable flops. He has even gone so far as to say that our own national movement for freedom was modelled on the Soviet Communist model! Is this the Party which is going to stop the country from drifting to Communism?

Mrs. Indira Gandhi certainly made a very good start when she became Prime Minister. I myself have complimented her in Parliament and outside on her earlier performance. But in the last three months, I am afraid she has shown that she is drifting back to the bad old ways. Her surrender to Kossygin in Moscow on Vietnam shows that she cannot stand up to the Soviets. Her support of the Fourth Plan will seal the doom of this country because, if the Fourth Plan which she has supported ~~was~~ were ever to be put into operation, this country will be utterly ruined. She said something intelligent once to Look Magazine. It quoted her as saying two or three months ago: "If India's future demands it, I shall not hesitate to deviate from Nehru's policies." Within twentyfour hours, an official spokesman denied that she had said anything of the kind! If the Prime Minister of India denies that she said that if the country's interests demand it, she should deviate from her father's policies, then it means that whether the country's interests demand it or not, she will cling to these policies. If that is what she believes, I would suggest that she is not fit to remain Prime Minister even for a day.

Recently, we have had the Manifesto of the Congress Party. There were people

who thought that the Congress Party was moving in the right direction, that they were learning the lessons of the mistakes they had made. Please read the Manifesto. It is very hard to read; I have tried very hard to read it from one end to the other. I do not know honestly how many of you were able to wade through it. When I got half-way through it, I was reminded of the words of Hamlet in his well known soliloquy: "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable"! But apart from how it reads, it goes in for the nationalisation of Banking, for a ceiling on urban incomes, and it preaches all the values of communism without communist jargon. This Manifesto is a document of class war and class struggle. It bases itself on envy. It tries to incite those who have not against those who have. I am not particularly concerned with preserving those who have. But, as I said earlier, if we do not preserve the rights of enterprise, of those who take risks, then this country is not going to thrive. Without competition, without free enterprise, we do not believe this country can go places.

Therefore, if anyone thinks that by supporting the Congress he is fighting the Communists, I do appeal to him to consider whether he is doing the right thing. The real problem was posed before us by Rajaji when he said that he smelt the coming storm and rain, and pointed out that the Congress Party had all the money and the Swatantra Party hasn't got what it takes to put up enough candidates. He therefore appealed to people to come forward and say: "I will find the money, put me up, give me a constituency." This was his appeal on Independence Day. There are three things that those who agree with us can do. Either they can come forward and say they will stand for Parliament or Assembly. If they do so, our doors are wide open. If he or she is in agreement with the principles of the Party, we shall be glad to put up anyone who wants to get to Parliament or Assembly provided we can find a constituency. If someone does not want to stand, he or she can work actively for us; and contribute to the funds that will make it possible for others to stand.

We are an Open Conspiracy. We do not hide the fact that we want to turn this Government out of office. Either one agrees with us or one doesn't. If one does not agree with us and wants five more years of Congress government, we have nothing to say. But if one agrees that the Government needs to be changed, then may I suggest that just thinking so, just saying so, ~~just~~ just wishing it is not enough. Some effort is required from each one of us. It is in that spirit that I would request everyone to join with us in the Swatantra Party in this Open Conspiracy to give this country a new, clean and efficient government.
