

SWATANTRA SERIES-4

LABOUR'S
FRIEND -
'CONGRESS
OR
SWATANTRA?



A SWATANTRA PARTY PUBLICATION

LABOUR

The Swatantra Party will insist on securing for the labouring classes a voice in the determination of national policies. The Swatantra Party will strive for the economic progress, social betterment and cultural advance of agricultural, industrial and office workers. The Swatantra Party will pay particular attention to a programme of workers' education which will instil in them a wider outlook, make them conscious of their responsibilities as well as their rights and help them to realise that they are interested not only in questions of wages and allowances, but in all matters affecting the well-being of society.

The Swatantra Party accepts the workers' right to organise themselves and through these organisations to improve the conditions of their life and work. Strong and responsible trade unions are an integral part of a democratic industrial order. Workers must be encouraged and helped to build their own unions and through them to bargain collectively with their employers regarding the terms and conditions of their employment. The Swatantra Party is not satisfied with the present position of trade unions. Most of them are managed by outsiders and many of them are playthings in the hands of political parties. The Party is keen that trade unions should grow as independent organisations of workers controlled and managed by themselves. Being opposed to the domination of trade unions by political parties, the Swatantra Party will not join the race to establish control over trade unions, though its members will be always ready to help in all possible ways.

The Swatantra Party stands for consultation and closer association between the workers and the management of industrial concerns. The Party believes that what is important in this matter is the spirit of mutual trust and cooperation and not any particular machinery. What needs to be developed is the spirit of partnership between workers and employers.

The Swatantra Party will lay emphasis on the internal settlement of disputes and will seek to reduce external interference to the barest minimum. The State should not normally interfere in industrial disputes, but should develop and keep ready machinery for conciliation and mediation to which parties in a dispute can turn in case of need. The State may also, whenever necessary, appoint courts of inquiry into the facts and merits of any dispute so that informed public opinion may exert its influence on the parties to the dispute.

Collective bargaining connotes the right to strike; if bargaining does not end in settlement, both parties should be free within the law to adopt any course of action that they think is necessary and desirable. In a free society, workers cannot be compelled to work for employers on terms and conditions that are not acceptable to them. They must have the right of individual as well as collective withdrawal of labour. It is, however,

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LABOUR'S FRIEND—

CONGRESS OR SWATANTRA?

INTRODUCTION

The recent strike of Central Government employees has many lessons to teach us. It brought to the fore a number of fundamental issues affecting not merely the future of trade unionism in our country but the philosophy in regard to labour of various parties and groups. It helped for the first time to indicate who is labour's true friend and unmasked the pious proclamations of those who have time and again called themselves champions of Labour and the Working Class. Mr. Nehru's speech in the Lok Sabha on August 8, 1960* during the debate on the Central Government employees' strike was significant. It revealed the ideological values championed by Mr. Nehru and the Ruling Party. In sharp contrast was the earlier speech of Mr. M. R. Masani, the General Secretary of the Swatantra Party.*

In this booklet we reproduce for the reader's benefit the full text of both these speeches as well as the Swatantra Party's policy on Labour as enunciated in its Statement of Policy and a resolution passed by the recent meeting of the General Council of the Party on the Central Government Employees' Strike. It is for the reader to draw his conclusions as to which Party is the genuine friend of Labour.

The strike itself and its subsequent failure indicated the weak moorings of the Indian Trade Union movement. It showed that unless the labour movement in India cleansed

* Reproduced from the Lok Sabha Debates on 8th and 9th August, 1960, with the permission of the Honourable Speaker.

August 1960¹

itself of certain unhealthy practices, it would never succeed in developing into an effective and responsible force in the life of our country.

On the other hand the responsibility of the Ruling Party in bringing matters to such a head as to make the strike inevitable cannot be denied. Their policy towards Labour, especially towards those in the public sector, was thrown into sharp focus. Had they encouraged the formation of unions on healthier lines, had they insisted on certain basic and healthy norms such as recognising only those unions which are run by workers themselves and accepting collective bargaining as a valid approach, such a situation would not have come to pass. On the other hand, Government encouraged the formation of unions controlled by outsiders and politicians. They preferred to deal with these intellectual proxies of labour, rather than with their employee-directly.

Has the strike brought home to the Ruling Party a realisation of these mistaken policies? Apparently not, if Mr. Nehru's speech is any indication. On the contrary, his speech gives definite indication of a trend of mind which is becoming increasingly impatient with anything that might interfere with what he has set out to do.

Another fundamental issue that has been clarified by the strike appears to be the incapacity of Government to distinguish between its two separate identities, namely, as an employer and as the Government. In other words, on an issue raised by its employees, the Government's approach is not that of an employer but that of a Government, for it replied to the strike by issuing an Ordinance prohibiting the strike. This at once indicates the difference between a Government employer and a private employer. While a employer in the free sector cannot have such facilities to stop a strike, the employer in the State sector, namely the Government, uses

with impunity all the authority it has as the government to put down a strike. This distinction is important. For, the more the Government deals with its employees as a Government and less as an employer, the greater is the danger of the State going the totalitarian way. The burden of Mr. Nehru's speech in the Lok Sabha was that the strike of Central Government employees was a General Strike; that a General Strike by its very nature is political; therefore, this strike was a political strike; it was aimed at overthrowing the Government; it was an attempt at "civil rebellion", and if it had succeeded, even Parliament would not have been there. Mr. Nehru was perhaps trying to justify the Ordinance which the Government clamped down to put down the strike.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Prime Minister's speech is his implicit acceptance of the communist concept of the role of trade unions and the worker's right to strike in a socialist or communist society. At a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party on August 7, 1960, Mr. Nehru was reported in the daily papers next morning to have observed that "he never denounced communist countries for banning strikes". When he was given an opportunity in the course of the debate to resile from this shocking statement, Mr. Nehru, on the contrary, reiterated his stand by declaring that strikes are "out-moded" in current society, even while conceding "the enormous value that labour attaches to the strike weapon because that has saved them for the last hundred years from being drowned, sat upon and crushed." Mr. Nehru added that strikes are "an inevitable concomitant of the capitalist system" but that, on the other hand, "the socialist structure of society has no room for strikes—in theory." What is the implication of these statements? Do they not imply that while strikes may be permitted under capitalism, by which Mr. Nehru probably means the free sector of the economy, their occurrence under socialism, presumably the State sector,

is "out-moded" and therefore not to be permitted? And does it not follow that as the State sector grows more and more Indian workers would lose the right of collective bargaining?

The ruling Party has been imitating Communist countries on many issues. They have drawn the inspiration for their five-year plans from the Soviet Union and in a Communist country everything is subservient to the Plan. The Communist Party arrogates to itself the will of the people and considers its will to be the people's will. Whatever does not suit the powers that be is promptly labelled by a variety of adjectives.

The Committee on Freedom of Association of the Governing Body of the ILO in a report on Free Trade Unions in the U.S.S.R. noted, among other things, the complete lack of independent unions in the U.S.S.R. Although the 1958 Soviet Penal Code contains stricture against strikes, a strike would be dubbed as "mass disorder" and strikers, if any, penalized for organising such "mass disorders." Soviet propaganda, however, argues that no Russian workers has cause to strike because, if they did so, they would only be striking against themselves.

While copying the Soviet method of planning, we have tried to follow the democratic form of government and thus are in danger of "falling between two stools". But Mr. Nehru's speech in Parliament, if one were to take it seriously, would indicate that if planning on the Soviet model on the one hand and democracy on the other cannot go hand in hand, then it is democracy that is to be the casualty. That is why Mr. Nehru sounded frustrated when talking about the Central Government Employees' Strike. He thought of all manner of accusations and irrelevant excuses possible. But nowhere do we find in Mr. Nehru's speech an objective assessment of the situation and of the reasons which caused the strike.

On the other hand, the Swatantra Party which has been often characterized as a "rich men's party", has adopted a policy on Labour which is genuinely interested in helping to build a strong and healthy trade-union movement. Mr. Masani made amply clear in his speech during the same debate his and the Party's opposition to a ban on strikes. In his speech he agreed that there may be certain sectors of Government employment where strikes should not be permitted in the interests of the community. But where such ban is proposed, there should be a compensation for the loss of the right by machinery to redress the grievances of the employees in that sector including a reference to arbitration binding on both sides.

The Swatantra Party has clearly laid down in its Statement of Policy that it accepts the right of workers to strike and to organise themselves into Unions and that such Unions should be free from political and outside control. It accepts collective bargaining and the right of the worker to deny his labour. Mr. Masani made this point in his speech and called upon the Government to recognize only those unions which are run by the workers themselves. He said that Government had every right to say that membership and leadership should be limited to the actual employees and that outsiders, whatever their political affiliation, should not be allowed to lead unions of government employees. While accepting the necessity of putting some reasonable restrictions on the right of certain sectors of Civil Servants to strike, Mr. Masani said, "you cannot deny a man the right to deny his labour unless you give him the right to judicial redress." It is the emphatic opinion of the Swatantra Party that where the right to strike is denied, workers must be provided with the alternative remedy of arbitration. Mr. Nehru and the ruling Party want to ban strikes but are not at the same time prepared to accept unreservedly the principle of arbitration. The Swatantra Party would like to see the growth of a strong and a healthy trade

union movement and does not want to do away with the fundamental right of workers to deny their labour, in sharp contrast to the attitude displayed by the so-called champions of socialism who, even while chanting that slogan, are gradually curbing basic freedoms. The Swatantra Party believes that in a really free society, sometimes even wrong and unjustified strikes have to be put up with.

The way to industrial peace is not through such governmental action as imposing a legal ban on strikes but the realisation on the part of the Government of its dual role—as Government responsible to the people and as employers of large undertakings, and an awareness that in the latter role they have to adopt standards of behaviour which they prescribe for employers in the private sector. On the part of the workers the only way towards the building up of a strong trade union movement that would draw the respect of both the Government and other employer while at the same time responsible to the community, is for them to build up their organisations free from political affiliations, outside domination and with a belief in collective bargaining as the most effective instrument to solve labour disputes.

In spite of Mr. Nehru's over-simplifications, the issue before workers is not that of a "Capitalist" or "Socialist" society. The issue is: Irrespective of the character of the employer, private or State, are the fundamental freedoms going to be preserved? The issue for the workers is: Will they live in a free society or a totalitarian one?

F. K. KARAKA

President, Investa Machine Tools
& Engineering Workers' Union

Mr. M. R. MASANI:

Mr. Chairman, I thought that, after the speech of Shri Asoka Mehta which set a very good tone for our discussion, we should go out of our way to avoid recrimination and, as far as possible, ascertainment of the guilt of various parties. I would, therefore, like to start by considering the fundamental principles which bear on an occasion like this.

It appears to me that the tragedy which we are discussing is, like all real tragedies, not a clash between right and wrong, but between right and right. There are two kinds of right principles or logic which have come into collision on an occasion like this. On the one side, the Fundamental Rights in our Constitution give every citizen the right of freedom of association and the right to deny his labour. These are very sacred rights and any attempt to deny them must be very carefully considered and very carefully limited.

Pandit K. C. Sharma (Hapur): Not to apply to Government.

Shri M. R. Masani: I will come to that. Let the hon. Member be a little patient.

Similarly, the Directive Principles of our Constitution lay down certain economic policies like giving everyone a living wage; and certainly, as Shri Asoka Mehta argued, the erosion of the real wages of low-paid employees is something that we should do everything possible to avert. These are the principles — the right of freedom of association and the right to strike, which distinguish a free man from a bonded slave, and also the right to certain minimum standards.

On the other hand, there is another equally valid principle, and that principle is that of the normal functioning of a community. The

British phrase has it: 'The King's Government must be carried on', and in our own country, the President's Government must proceed, and anything that disrupts the normal, ordered life of the community or of society has to be eschewed. From this the corollary follows that our civil services and State employees — I am talking of the civil services proper, the Secretariat establishment, and not of industrial workers — must be immune from political influence or political affiliation. From that also follows a corollary that their associations and unions, when recognised, should be confined to those who belong to these vocations.

So here there are two principles or two logics coming on this occasion into violent conflict. We should try to understand each point of view and find out how much merit there is in those who espouse these respective points of view.

Now, there is one party in this country, one body of people in this country, about whom, we are all unanimous, there can be no criticism, and that is the common people of our country. The common people of our country have, as everyone has said so far, rallied in defence of the normal functioning of the community and the carrying on of the President's Government. It does not mean that the public condemned the strikers' economic demands or that they did not find justice in them. But it did mean this — that on this particular occasion, public opinion asserted itself overwhelmingly behind those whose duty it was, for the time being, to maintain the ordered existence and the survival of the community. So at least there is one party who are the real victors, to whom our congratulations go and they are the common people of India.

Now, so far as the protagonists to the dispute are concerned, the Government and their employees, as I said the other day, each had a principle which they followed; but they were

not able to check these from coming to a collision.

So far as the employees are concerned, their case is that their real incomes had been eroded by a constant process of a rise in prices. Shri Asoka Mehta has made out that case clearly and I will not cover that ground. It cannot be denied that they had a valid claim to compensation to maintain their real incomes, not to ask for more money but at least to be safeguarded that what they got in 1947 would be the real wages they would continue to get. What is the root cause of this difficulty?

The rise in prices followed from governmental policy. It followed from the pattern of planning to which this country has been led during the past decade. This pattern of planning has built in it, has inherent in it, inflation. This has been pointed out from the very beginning of the Second Plan by a number of people like Prof. Shenoy who dissented from his colleagues in the Panel of Economists to point out that if this Plan was sought to be put through there would be a rise in prices and inflation. This warning was ignored by Government. This warning was repeated on the floor of this House by many of us from 1957 onwards. By deficit financing, by excessive taxation, by the imposition of excise duties on the necessities of life, by obsession with capital incentive projects like steel plants to the neglect of the wants of the community, this Government has almost deliberately set in motion a process of inflation.

The employees who are low paid come before the Government and ask for compensation. Is it fair, the employees say, to ask others to be generous rather than those who like Government themselves are rich and powerful? There is no denial that the employees' basic demand of 100 per cent compensation is justified in principle.

Similarly, who has created this enormous class of underpaid civil servants? It is alleged

that three clerks today do the work one clerk could do perfectly satisfactorily in our Secretariat. On whom does the burden lie of creating this huge army of under-paid and under-worked people? If one clerk had been there he could have been paid much more. You have today three under-paid and under-worked clerks. The entire responsibility for this enormous loss in civil expenditure, which one Finance Minister after another has been unable to control, this expansion of bureaucracy which far exceeds anything that Prof. Parkinson ever dreamt about, is again the responsibility of the Government of the day. So, this is the economic root cause of the strike and this responsibility must lie squarely on the shoulders of the Government.

Then, we come to the immediate crisis. Faced with this demand, Government appointed a Pay Commission. The Pay Commission made its report and, as the Home Minister has pointed out, with some modifications, the recommendations were accepted. But, the Pay Commission, if I may point out, is not a judicial tribunal. The Pay Commission was an advisory body. Its terms of reference asked it to take into account not only the justice of the employees' claims but all the political and economic factors that go into the making of governmental policy. And, like men of affairs, like practical men, although they saw the justice of what the employees were entitled to, they also saw the practical difficulties in the way of those demands being met. And so they tried to reconcile the conflicting points of view.

The point I am making is that reference to the Pay Commission which the Home Minister rightly called "a highpower body" was not a reference to a judicial tribunal whose award would be binding. There is a very big difference between these two things.

I am making this point because I was very happy to hear from the Home Minister this morning that, at long last, Government have

agreed that in their disputes with their employees, where necessary, they will bow to the rule of law. Hitherto they were arrogant enough to behave like Louis the XIV and say 'L'etat C'est moi', I am the State. I have heard Ministers of this Government say that they would not go to arbitration because government itself is the law. That is perfectly all right when the Government is a judicial body. Certainly, it has the sovereignty of law. But, when Government becomes an employer, when the Government opens factories and runs railways, then, it ceases to be sovereign and it becomes like any other employer: somebody whose duty it is to conform to the norms of civilised society. I am very happy that, at long last, three years too late, they have bowed to this principle after this very hard knock which all of us had had to suffer.

In this very House, three years ago, on behalf of the Independent Parliamentary Group, to which I then belonged, I moved an amendment, a simple amendment, saying that before a strike is declared unlawful, Government should agree to refer it to arbitration or adjudication. To my regret the hon. Minister of State, who is sitting opposite, refused to accept that amendment on the plea that Government could not accept arbitration. Everything must be left to their discretion, to their wisdom as to what they would do in the end. This is what led to the strike. If, in that Bill, a clause for arbitration had been put in, I make bold to say that there would not have been the strike in the last few weeks. However, let us be glad that, as Shri Asoka Mehta put it, faced with a major catastrophe, the consciousness of the rightness of what Gandhiji used to call the rule of law, has been at long last accepted by Government in their disputes with their employees. It is a great advance for Government and the employees and for our country as a whole.

Now, this is the position. I have said what needed to be considered from the employees'

point of view. Now, let me say a word from the other side. I think that, on the eve of the strike when certain concessions were made which amounted, as far as I understand, to the linking of wages with prices in principle, 50 per cent neutralisation of the rise in the cost of living and an agreement to go to arbitration, as I understand it, in respect of the balance, I think, at that point, any strike became unjustifiable. And I am very sorry that my hon. friends who led that strike did not at that moment reconsider the position and realise that the interests of the workers of the country would not benefit by imposing a strike on the country when so much had been gained and so little remained to be obtained. I believe, therefore, that the strike was ill-advised and unjustified. I do feel this—that those who led that strike did not give enough weight, as the Home Minister put it this morning, to the enormity of the peril to the country and the problems it would create. I think, at that point, statesmanship and good leadership would have lain in resiling from the strike and progressing further with negotiations. After all, leadership consists in guiding followers right and not in doing what, at the moment, might be popular with them. I do feel that the leaders of the strike, at that moment, resorted to that very well-known Leftist weakness of tailism, they followed the followers without correcting them and giving them a proper lead.

When the Ordinance was passed—and I agree that Ordinance is a lawless law; we have been brought up on that phrase when the British Government passed its Ordinances—we had to bow to the rule of law. We did always say that they are lawless laws. When Parliament was not in session and the law which had been passed had lapsed, they had to bring up this Bill in the form of an Ordinance. Assuming all that, and that an Ordinance goes against the spirit of the rule of law because Parliament had no chance to sit over it, I still say that the duty of the strikers and their leaders at that point was to have called

off the strike. In a democracy we have to bow to the law whether we like it or not, whether for the moment we believe it is fair or not. I do feel that the leaders of the strike failed in their duty at that point of time in not bowing to it, accepting it for the time being and trying to argue against it and trying to change it when Parliament met. Then, I think their position today would have been immensely superior before the House and the country, in appealing to Parliament to reject this Ordinance and give them justice. I think the fact that they went on strike and that Shri Bharucha's motion has come at the end of a strike that was called off a strike that had failed because the people of this country would not go along with them, has done their cause no good.

I would like to conclude by stating what appear to be certain valid conclusions that follow. We were told by the Home Minister this morning that Government propose to ban strikes of government employees. Or, did he say civil services? (Interruption). It is very important—the word he used—and the category of servants. I would like to make a respectful suggestion that before we put in this word in the Bill that is to come before us, we should examine it carefully on merits. It is an important thing to distinguish between different classes of government employees. One rule or one yardstick will not serve for different categories of government employees. I am sure the Labour Minister is aware of the international legislation on this subject. There are civil servants proper who work in the Secretariat; they are one category. There are workers in essential enterprises, who are another. And, then, there are the normal, common industrial employees of Government and particularly of a Government that barges unnecessarily into producing things. These employees, the third category, are no different from any other private employees and no attempt should be made to distinguish between the ordinary industrial employees of government and those who work in other factories.

But in the case of the first two, civil servants and the essential services, I think the Government would be entitled to come before us with a set of proposals distinguishing them from normal employees and limiting their right but also defining the procedures by which alternative remedies could be given to them.

Shri Naushir Bharucha: You do not want to ban strikes?

Shri M. R. Masani: I do not want the banning of strikes. I would come to it later. In regard to the recognition of associations or unions of the first two categories of people, Government would have every right to say that membership and leadership should be limited to the actual employees and that outsiders, whatever their political affiliation—even Shri Kashinath Pandey—should not be allowed to lead them. That follows from what I said earlier—that civil servants must be immune from political affiliation or interference.

Thirdly, in regard to the banning of strikes, about which Shri Bharucha is anxious, I would like, in the spirit of what Shri Jayaprakash Narayan has said, to try to avoid a resort to such a ban. I believe it is legitimate in a democracy to ban strikes in a very limited sphere like the essential services.

In this connection, may I say that I hope the Prime Minister was misquoted this morning when it was reported—I hope wrongly or inaccurately reported—that he told a Congress Party meeting that he for one had never criticised the Soviet dictatorship for banning all strikes by all workers? Once we ban strike by all the workers we become a totalitarian dictatorship and cease to be a free society. I do believe the Government have no such intention. Therefore, let us limit the truncating of the right to strike to essential services and civil servants proper. In regard to these, I would prefer Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's approach—trying to get an agreed

formula for arbitration, if you like compulsory arbitration as in Australia, because we know compulsory arbitration automatically prevents a strike. There could no longer be a strike once compulsory arbitration or voluntary arbitration is agreed to. I would suggest to all concerned, including those who led the Government employees, to agree to the principle that all disputes between them and the Government should be justiciable and should go to a tribunal of some kind chosen with the consent of both parties. Once it is done, it is obvious that the right to strike has been forsworn and abjured and therefore, a legal ban may or may not be necessary. If it is, let it be a formality but let it follow rather than precede the other remedies. I advanced the proposition three years ago and I am glad it is being accepted. You cannot deny a man the right to deny his labour unless you give him the right to a judicial recourse. Once this has been accepted, you can illegalise strikes in these limited spheres of activity.

Lastly, may I say that I think what we need now is the healing touch. We do not need a war of vindictiveness. I am glad to see from the speech of the hon. Home Minister that that spirit is completely lacking. The same spirit should be shown on this side because the losers quite often are more vindictive than the winners and therefore what Shri Asoka Mehta said to those benches applies as much to those who sit on this side of the House. In the larger interest of the country we should consider the proposals which the Government bring before us to see that there is no repetition of this kind of incident, but I say that this incident is one which could have been avoided if three years earlier the same spirit that now animates the Government benches had been available.

Mr. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU:

In the course of the debate yesterday, many subjects were touched upon, the labour policy of Government, prices etc., and I suppose they were all relevant because almost anything can be brought within the scope of this discussion. I do not complain, but I think it will be better for us,—at any rate, I should endeavour to do so,—to confine ourselves to the specific points at issue in this debate. What are they? They are: consideration of the general strike, that is to say, broadly speaking, whether it was a desirable or a permissible act, and the steps Government took, and the Ordinance, and whether that also was permissible or desirable or not.

Now, in considering the question of the general strike, hon. Members went rather far afield, discussing labour policy and saying how one thing led to another, how it was the failure of Government, may be five years ago or ten years ago, or a year ago or six months ago, that led to a certain state of affairs, which led to certain persons feeling that 'We should do something', which led to the sponsors of the strike to think that there should be a strike, which led to their forming a Council of Action. Of course, the stream of time goes on, and one thing leads to another. Nothing is isolated. It is rather difficult to consider anything in a completely isolated way. It is true that they are determining factors. But what we have to consider are not all those previous determining factors from the time when British rule was here, and for the last hundred years, which has resulted in the economy coming to the state which it was in when they left, and so on and so forth.

We have to consider in the existing circumstances, as they existed two months ago, or

three months ago or four months ago or whatever the period may be; when this call for a strike was given, in those existing circumstances, was that desirable, justified or permissible? Nothing more, nothing less; one may go into the other questions to consider the magnitude of the offence, and whether there were any extenuating circumstances. If there is a murder, there is a murder, there the matter ends. But, in passing sentence, you will consider extenuating circumstances, no doubt. That is the first point.

So, forgetting everything that happened previously, was that general strike desirable or permissible, when the call for it was given and when it took place? And the second point is whether in view of that general strike call being given and coming, it was proper for Government to issue that Ordinance. These are two relatively simple points, although they are connected with many difficult circumstances.

The hon. Member, Shri Asoka Mehta, warmly repudiated the idea that this was a political strike and expressed his sorrow that I had used the words 'civil rebellion' in connection with it. Without going into facts, I want to make a submission, and that is that every general strike is a political strike and no general strike can be a general strike without being a political strike and without having far-reaching political consequences, apart from economic consequences and all that; in the nature of things, it must have that, regardless of what the sponsors may think or may not think. The sponsors of it may, in their naivety and simplicity, not see the consequences of something. That is a different matter, but I do say, and I say it with all the strength at my command, that a general strike of the kind called for must essentially have wide, far-reaching political consequences, and therefore, it is a political strike in that respect. And you cannot escape from that conclusion. If that succeeds, it has tremendous political consequences; if it fails, it has not that type

of political consequences, but still political consequences and far-reaching economic consequences, causing loss to the nation and to the very unhappy persons who have been incited to go in for that strike.

That is the proposition that I would venture to ask this House to consider, this broad principle, regardless of the facts; and I submit that there can be no answer to this, to this fact that a general strike has very far-reaching political consequences, upsetting consequences and, in effect, subversive consequences. Whether they are meant or not is a matter for persons' minds and I cannot probe into those minds, because my difficulty is this.

Shri Asoka Mehta spoke about the desirability of workers and labour generally becoming mature; true; what I am concerned with is the desirability of people who call for strikes becoming mature and considering questions with some maturity and not in this light-hearted way and not realising what the consequences are and then trying to ride a tiger when they cannot ride a donkey. (Interruption) It is amazing; the irresponsibility of this whole thing is astounding. I am not going into the facts. The broad facts are there. Apart from the facts, the general principle I have laid down that a general strike is inevitably in its very character, in its very consequences, a subversive act, is there. It may be justified or not; that is a different matter. But the justification of it must lead you to think and carry out a subversive act, with all its consequences.

Secondly, look at the nature of this strike. A call on the railways not to function. In other words, the vast organisation supplying food to various parts of the country to stop; the vast organisation supplying coal to our major factories, steel plants to stop; industry to wind up, to stop. And I would venture to suggest also that we are making special efforts for the defence of the country, whether it is

in our ordnance factories or whether it is on the border. It is true that some Members of this House make fun of this; some Members of this House imagine that all this is just bunkum; some members of this House and some members of a Party in this House write and talk in the most light-hearted manner about the defence of this country, about the dangers to this country. I am amazed at the way they are carrying on intensive and continuous propaganda which does not befit any person who calls himself an Indian.

But the question is: Did those other gentlemen who sponsored the strike and who perhaps presumably do not have that outlook that the country should go to pieces, if necessary, did they think of the consequences, whether it is in the ordnance depots or whether it is on the frontier where every little bit has to be flown, food supplies etc? Every twig has to be flown there. Did they think of the consequences of the strike on that? I ventured with great deliberation to point this out to some extent in the broadcast I made prior to the strike and I would beg of the House to consider, apart from the general principle, the actual consequences, which could only be disastrous, to the food situation, to the industrial situation and to the defence situation.

One may say — as Shri Asoka Mehta said — ‘You see, it was only a 25 per cent strike; therefore, it could not have such bad consequences’. I wonder if the sponsors of the strike had clearly thought out that it should be 25 per cent, no more and no less!

Shri Asoka Mehta (Muzaffarpur): Only 25 per cent of the employees had served notice of strike. This is the figure given by Government.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: True, I am accepting that. Did the sponsors of the strike want only 25 per cent of the government employees to serve notice?

Shri Asoka Mehta: That is obvious.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It is not obvious. The obvious thing is that in spite of every effort of the sponsors of the strike, 75 per cent did not fall into line. I am pointing out the amazing and astounding irresponsibility of those persons who took up the strike. I say this regardless of the economic conditions; I say this regardless of the fact that the government employees may have hardships—let us deal with the hardships—regardless of the fact that they may have a valid point to raise; I say that in spite of all that, this action was a fundamentally wrong and vicious action.

What amazes me is that after this, after even seeing the failure of it, the collapse of it, even then, some of them have brazenly praised the strike and said: 'What good boys we are? We asked for the strike'. There is no element of repentance or even of intelligent discussion of any event. The least they could have done was to perform *prayashchit* for all the sins that they have committed. No, there is no evidence of doing that. There lies the danger.

All of us in our excitement — Government and the Opposition — err, but the test of a person is not that he does not err — only angels in heaven or saints may not, if there are such things; the test of a person is not that he does not err, but that he recognises his error when it takes place and tries to correct it. But among our friends on the opposite side, I have yet to find it out. I am not referring to everybody in the Opposition; but the sponsors of the strike. I have yet to discover the least element of repentance, of an admission of error, although the error of all this stands out like a pikestaff for the whole world to see.

What is more — regardless of my views or other people's views — even they should know one basic fact, that the people of India as a whole were opposed to it. They disliked it, stood up against it and that put it down. No gleam of intelligence has entered into the

heads or brains, or whatever it is, of those people.

Let us look at this. My first proposition — I repeat — is this, that a general strike must inevitably be a political strike, whatever you call it, whatever you think of it; there is no other way; it can be none else, because it has those large-scale consequences. Secondly, this particular strike, in the manner in which it was called, and everything, was inevitably to injure us and hurt basically the economy of the country, the food position of the country, the industrial position of the country and the defence position of the country. To what extent and what degree is another matter. That depended; the greater the failure of the strike, the lesser the effect on the country. That is true, but surely people who ask for a strike normally do not work for its failure. It comes in spite of them, in spite of all their efforts.

Therefore, I say it was an astonishingly irresponsible thing, a thing which could not possibly bring any benefit to those who had asked for the strike. I say 'could not', because if it fails — as any person who had thought about it would have realised that it was bound to fail — if it fails, it brings a sense of frustration on people who struck work. It always does. It brings material losses. I am not talking about the persons who misbehaved and might be punished — they, of course, suffer more — but I am talking of the general run of them, more or less innocent people who have been pushed either by hopes or fears or whatever it is, into it. They suffer.

On the other hand, let us conceive of the strike succeeding in some measure — it is difficult to conceive it, it is not a strike that succeeds. Then certain political consequences flow from it, obviously. If this Parliament continued then, which it may or may not, somebody else would be sitting here in these Benches and we — this Government — would

be somewhere else. All kinds of consequences flow from that and this whole process of success, if it came, would have done, for the time being, very very heavy economic damage.

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. Prime Minister sure that there will be Parliament then?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I said so. I said, I do not know if there will be a Parliament if a strike like this succeeds. I am not at all sure that the Parliament will function after that, or what form of Parliament, I do not know; because it is not the parliamentary way of making changes. Once you adopt the course of direct action in a general strike — not a small strike — if you adopt general strike in that way, you hit at the roots of parliamentary and democratic government.

Therefore, I venture to say that this was an act — and I am putting it at the highest — of utterly irresponsible, immature persons who somehow got on the back of this tiger and did not know what to do. They could not get off it, and there they were. That was very difficult. It is always a difficult thing for immature people who do not know riding to get at the backs of animals. That is true.

As I have said, this strike was a wrong thing; I say, whatever the provocation for it, I put it at the highest, it was a wrong thing. And yet, what was the provocation? The provocation was that the Pay Commission had not done justice to certain claims. That was the provocation. Now, at the utmost it may be said that there can be two opinions about it.

After all the Pay Commission was not a Commission of politicians of this party or that party. It consisted of, broadly speaking, people outside party politics and all the rest, very eminent people, a very eminent judge who spent two or three years over this matter. Now, that does not necessarily mean that the Pay Commission and the Supreme Court

Judge were right. But it does create a very strong presumption that they are likely to be right. I would not dare say 'No' to them. I have not that knowledge; I have not spent two years of consideration. And, I may not even venture to say, disagree, if you like. But, after all, the least that can be done is to show respect to them. You may not wholly agree.

Now, where there is on this question — if you like, a very important and vital matter — some difference of opinion, on the one side, you put this Pay Commission and the Supreme Court and all that, and, on the other, state your own view. I say, your view may, perhaps, be right. But, is it right to the extent of your upsetting the country, is it right to the extent of your calling for some action like a general strike, which has all these grave consequences and which, at the same time, puts an end practically to any future procedure of Pay Commissions and the like, because no decent man is going to serve on such Commissions after that, if peace is to be thrown overboard like this. So, I put it to you, how, whether on grounds of principle or on grounds of common sense, one is to justify it. I should like to know that. In justification, all the people will tell you, as Shri Asoka Mehta partly did, and others may do, Oh, this happened in 1955, this happened in 1956 and this happened in 1958. I say, I accept all that and say, in spite of all that and taking them into consideration, it was a very wrong and a very irresponsible thing to do. I am not for the moment going into arguments about that.

Let us discuss the labour policy fully; let us discuss the price policy fully and let us discuss any policy fully. But, what has all that got to do with a general strike which upsets the country and ruins the country? And, what time did they choose for this? Just when, after a great effort, after years or months of labour, we produced the draft of the Third Five Year Plan. That is the time chosen — may be not deliberately chosen, may be accidentally chosen, whatever it is — that was the time,

when all effort is being made for the country's mind to be directed into constructive channels of hard work, etc. Here was a heavy burden to carry. And they have come out to have a general strike. Is that the idea of the future of India? Is that how they are going to build up the future of India?

I have the greatest respect for hon. Members of the Opposition, but that respect does not lead me to the belief that they always think before they act, or, perhaps, that they think at all about these serious matters. It is easy for me, and I know it is easy for hon. Members to deliver speeches here. I can talk fluently and Shri Asoka Mehta can talk with his usual eloquence and vigour. That is true. I know that is a separate problem. After all, behind the speeches there are problems or behind the speeches there are conditions in this country which cannot be swept away by speeches. I put it to the House: are they going to meet or are they going to solve any one of these questions by this method of the general strike just when we are struggling hard to get out of this morass of poverty? How? By hard work, by capital accumulation, by savings and all that; and things are suggested which practically cannot be done, unless, of course, you decide to put an end to planning. No doubt, that would please Shri Masani. That does not matter. (Interruption). Because, then, we shall arrive at that paradise of private enterprise where there are no checks and the private entrepreneur flourishes like the green bay tree. (Interruptions).

Shri M. R. Masani (Ranchi East): Nobody advocates that at all, and you know it.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Unfortunately, this is our misfortune that even private enterprise which shows some intelligence in other countries, even capitalism which has become to some extent, a modernised form of the old type of capitalists, even in countries like America or England or France or elsewhere,

even that degree of modernity has not come to our capitalism.

Shri M. R. Masani; Nor to your socialism.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: And so I find with an ever-increasing amazement the type of stuff that is doled out here in the name of capitalism and private enterprise, and the type of stuff that is doled out against planning etc. which nobody in the wide world, except some persons with hardly any intelligence, can accept in any way.

Again, as I mentioned, after all when you take big steps where you have to act in a big way you have to look in a big way. I have talked about the Indian situation, about the Five Year Plan, about our frontier situation. I do not mean to say that war is breaking out on the frontier. But, it should be realised—I hope the Members of the Communist Party will also realise in spite of the various coloured goggles that they wear which prevents them from seeing straight—that these are serious matters which this country is dealing with and we are exercising ourselves to the utmost, that there are burdens ~~that~~ we have to carry because of other things. We do not always shout about them. The fact remains that these are grave and graver burdens and graver situations we will have to face from day to day, not situations in which we can play about with general strike and the like because we find we have a game to play.

Apart from all this, look at the larger world situation. Everyone knows or everyone ought to know that in the last three months or so, the world situation has deteriorated greatly. Ever since the U-2 episode and failure of the summit and some other things, it goes on deteriorating. It is a dangerous situation and no man knows where the war may break out, whether it is in Africa or in Europe or in Asia. Do people realise all this when they play about with words in this House and play

about with strike notices and constitute what is called a 'Council of Action'?

This is a most remarkable development in Indian life. I do not know when the Councils of Action started. I have a vague idea that they started in the student world. And, the student mentality may be excused. But, surely, after a certain age, it functions more maturely. (Interruptions). And, curiously enough, the Council of Action was constituted for this strike. The strike is for a period but the Council of Action continues, and meets.

Therefore, I say we have to consider these matters. I have no doubt at all that in the circumstances that arose here, that is, appeal to the strike, any government, whatever its complexion, would inevitably have had to take up that challenge. There is no choice about it.

Seth Govind Das talks about my *udar nit* and all this. I am glad if I function in an *udar* way, in a soft way. However, the point is that any Government faced with that situation inevitably had to take up the challenge. Not to take it up meant that they should resign, retire or leave it to others. It had to be done. If it had to be done, it was quite inevitable to have some legal apparatus to deal with this situation—that is, the Ordinance. It is the most extraordinary thing to indulge in all kinds of aggressive or even violent activities and then complaining: Oh!, we have been shown harshness; we have been put in prison; this has happened or that has happened. Nobody likes harshness. But if you take up some activity which leads to war, war follows. It is no good expecting a one-sided war in which one party hits out and damages and does everything and the other meekly submitting. True, that is undoubtedly the policy which the great men, the great saints have advocated and I have no doubt that Acharya Kripalani who is a great student of saints and others may advocate it. But I am not aware of a Government, anywhere, of any comple-

xion that puts up with this: to be hit and broken and for action to take place in front of the Government and ruining the Government and the country which seeks to govern and then to be told: do not hit out and do not do anything as this is against this or that. In a situation like this, the Government is not only justified but it is incumbent upon it to take every step, whatever the step may be, to protect the country's interests.

Raja Mahendra Pratap (Mathura): One word only. You are the successful Commander in this case. Ridicule not your defeated Generals.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: There is one other relatively small matter. After the Pay Commission report and after the Government's major decisions on it were announced—I do not remember the dates—I can very well understand that among the Government employees and others concerned, there was a measure of disappointment. They expected more. Maybe, if I had been in their position, I would have expected more. That is natural and I have no grievance against their feeling that way because, after all, conditions in India being what they are, most people live under strains, pressures and difficulties. It may be that Government employees are better off than many. But nevertheless we do not normally go about comparing our case with others and feel that we are better and therefore, we should be happy. I admit that and it is a matter which should be separately dealt with in other ways. Anyhow, there was no talk and no mention of the strike for several months. Oddly enough, the question that was raised and to which objection was taken was that of Saturday holidays—not, I venture to say—a major question. It may be a question to object to or not, it was not—I venture to say—a question on which to have strike. I do not wish to express any opinion for or against Saturday holidays except that, broadly, I believe that there are far too many holidays in this country and

far too little work done at all stages and ranks and unless we work much harder than we do, we do not want to produce the results we aim at. However, my point is that it was on the basis of Saturday holiday that a demonstration was made—not on anything else—and that too, months afterwards. It may be—I venture to guess—that seeing that the Saturday holiday itself had brought quite a large number of people to demonstrate, they thought: why not add something else to it and have bigger demonstrations and even bigger strikes? So, gradually, the idea of a strike came months after this originated. It is not a sudden reaction. It was coldly thought out, months after the reaction should have taken place. Then this came about.

Now, I should like to say a few words about the real thing that should concern us. The strike is over with all the harm it did and the good it did—good in the sense of making people think about these problems and discuss these problems in this way and the popular response that came about because they thought about it. That was good. But it did harm. But the main good that it had done, I hope, is that it has made us think about the future. What of the future? That is really the important thing because this business of settling things by strikes and lockouts is not the logical or a reasonable way. I have been connected enough with labour. I do not pretend to be an expert like our friends on that side but I have been connected enough with labour to realise the enormous value that labour attaches to the strike weapon because that has saved them for the last hundred years or so from being drowned, sat upon and crushed — organisation and ultimately sometimes strikes. I am not belittling that. Nevertheless, I think the way of settling things by strike is an outmoded way. I do not, for a moment, refer to the ordinary industrial strikes. I am not suggesting that the strikes should be banned or forbidden because the fact of the matter is that strike is an inevitable concomitant of the

capitalist system. If you have capitalists and have employer-employee relations, then you have to have something to protect the employee from the employers, pressures and other things.

Shri M. R. Masani: In that case how was there a strike by the steel workers at Poznan in communist Poland?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do repeat — strikes may occur and do occur, I believe, in communist system.

Shri Ranga (Tenali): Do they?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: But not in that big way, because they are suppressed. There too something happens which they dislike or whatever the reason may be. But I say: in theory, the socialist structure of society has no room for strikes — in theory. In practice, it may fail. It may not be perfect. But the capitalist structure is based on strikes — I say the theory of it — although in modern capitalism an attempt is being made to get out of this. But it has not gone far but in some cases it has succeeded remarkably even in America* or U.K. or elsewhere. That is because people realise that the whole method of settling disputes by strike or lockouts is completely out of date and it is a foolish method. If you take up the wider international sphere, in the old days people thought that war should settle questions between nations. In spite of its folly and the terrible damage, it was in human nature to fight and to bring about a new equilibrium.

Well, the question of war has proceeded so far that now we think in terms of nuclear war, hydrogen bombs and the like, with the result that nobody, barring a very few persons, wants big-scale war. Most people do not want even small-scale war because small-scale wars will lead to big-scale wars, that is to say, people have been forced by circumstances to this conclusion that national and international

problems must not be settled by war because war does not settle, there is no victory, there is no defeat, there is just extinction, probably today.

Now, we think about that, but somehow or the other we are still caught up in, may I use the word, our past *karma*. We cannot get out. Nations cannot get out of their past misdeeds. And while we talk and we realise logically that war must be ended, still we arm, still we go on arming and spying at each other, living on the brink of war all the time and any day it may break out. Anyhow, it is realised that it is bad.

Now, I submit to you that this kind of industrial war is also out of date. But it is no good my saying that and no good my banning this kind of thing unless we can produce an adequate substitute for the settlement of such disputes, controversies that might arise. Therefore, it becomes of the greatest importance, this constructive approach, people talking about banning this or that. I do think and I agree with my colleague the Home Minister that in regard to essential activities, essential services, strikes should particularly be avoided and should not take place because of their far-reaching consequences. In regard to Government employees the position is still more serious, it takes you still further, because they are the very structure in a Government which looks after its people. If that steel structure breaks down, then the result is likely to be chaotic. So that is all right. But it is essential to devise means which can progressively, as a question or a difficulty arises, solve that. That is quite essential.

The procedure may vary. For instance, for the Government employees in the Secretariat etc., there may be one procedure. Sometimes it is referred to, particularly, as the Whitely procedure. It is practised in England and adapted in India, not copied as it is, and we must take the consequences of it, the full

consequences. In other places it may be in some other way.

The point is that the world has grown so much, changed so much that these old conceptions, whether capitalist or any other or, if I may venture to say so, even the old socialist approach or the old capitalist approach, both are out of date and you have to think in terms of this new world, a world in which there is plenty or potential plenty. In our case it is potential plenty and in the case of America, England or Russia it is plenty today; whatever the other ills may be it is plenty in a way, whether they proceeded by the capitalist way or the socialist way or the communist way, they have achieved plenty and they will go on adding to that plenty because, ultimately, whatever their arguments may be, they are using modern science, modern technology and the rest. I am not for a moment defending anything or attacking it, I am merely stating a fact, that they have achieved plenty by the adoption of these methods.

Acharya Kripalani: Even shoes are not available in Russia.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I have no doubt that in India we can also and will also achieve plenty by adopting not exactly their methods but by adopting the methods of science which is a common factor of communism, socialism, capitalism and all that. All these are rather superficial arguments behind the fact of modern science and technology and the human mind. That is the real thing. If we have that we shall proceed and progress; plus labour because without hard work nothing can be done. All this has led to a completely different way of thinking in many places and a new sense of social responsibility has grown everywhere, whether it is in the capitalist country or elsewhere. There is a sense of social responsibility growing together with the anarchism of capitalism. The sense of social responsibility is growing and eating into the old-styled capitalist method. And, of course, the whole

of socialism is based on a sense of social responsibility, otherwise it has no meaning. The form it should take, again, depends on circumstances, it is not for me to lay down. Anyhow, as I said, in this new world this old-world approach of strikes, of breaking up, of breaking up in order perhaps to construct later, is not good enough, it is not logical, it is not sensible, it is not reasonable and, certainly, it is not democratic.

Shri Masani referred to democracy in a particular sense. Apparently, and that is a curious factor which has always surprised me, the leaders of private enterprise conceive of democracy in terms only of private enterprise, in terms of a capitalist structure of society, a remarkable thing because nothing can be more opposed to democracy than this chaotic private enterprise, a system which creates ups and downs and all that. It is essentially opposed to democracy. Political democracy they have got and have managed to carry on because of various reasons, science and technology and all that with an absence of democracy in industry.

Shri M. R. Masani: You must be talking of People's Democracy.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: But the normal growth is economic democracy also. The normal growth is ultimately a stage where there is no employer, no employee, they are partners in a common concern and playing their equal parts (Interruption).

Therefore, it is up to us, in discussing these matters, not to lose ourselves in past disputes. We have to have post-mortems whenever deaths take place. A major death has taken place and we have the corpse of the general strike. We have to have a post mortem of it. But the real thing is the future. The major thing is how to evolve a system both for our general industry and the government employees but, for the moment, more

particularly, I would like to concentrate on government employees.

Government employees, again, are of two types. There are the Secretariat type of employees, the office type, and there are the industrial employees. There are slight differences. They may be treated somewhat differently depending on circumstances. The second is the broad industrial employment which is growing in India. We have to devise methods, we have to devise a machinery, not even this Pay Commission machinery, which is useful enough, but which is rather a slow-moving machine, which after many years it should be. One cannot change pays, but there are so many other things. I do believe that the real thing that the Government should pay first attention to is not so much pay and salaries but to the amenities that are offered to its employees, whether it is education, whether it is health, whether it is housing and so on. These things are more important than a little rise in salary, certainly. Amenities perhaps are more easy to give. So, that, I submit, should be the approach to this problem.

So far as this particular debate is concerned, I do submit, with all humility, that any person who would care to think about it can arrive at only one conclusion, namely, that general strikes are unreasonable in the modern day; they are bad; and this particular general strike was vicious and so foolish as to pass comprehension. It has occurred, and it is over. Let us realise that it was a bad thing and let us atone for it and perform *prayashchita*.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES STRIKE

Resolution adopted by the General Council of the Swatantra Party on July 31, 1960.

1. The General Council of the Swatantra Party congratulates the people of India on keeping calm and preserving the normal life of the community during the course of the recent strike of Central Government employees. The Council also expresses satisfaction at the fact that a large number of Government employees did not associate themselves with this ill-advised and unnecessary stoppage of work, which caused great financial loss to the nation, and thus helped in bringing the strike to an early conclusion and minimising distress and inconvenience to the public.

2. The Council disapproves of the action of those employees in the administrative and essential services of Government who went on strike and sought to hold the community to ransom. It deplores the action of the leaders of the strike. It is of the view that the situation was aggravated by the domination of the Government Employees' Unions by outsiders from the ranks of political parties who attempted to exploit the genuine discontent of the employees for personal or party ends. These developments have confirmed the correctness of the Swatantra Party's approach, as set out in the Statement of Policy adopted at the Patna Convention in March last, that outsiders should not be allowed to dominate and exploit workers' organisations and that the Swatantra Party would not enter the race whatever other parties may do.

3. On the other hand, the Council is unhappy at the indiscriminate use in a number of cases of the extraordinary powers under

the Ordinance and the Preventive Detention Act.

4. In the opinion of the Party, the root cause of the strike was the continuing rise in the cost of living due to the inflation that is inherent in the Congress Government's Five-Year Plans. The reckless resort to deficit finance, the imposition of excessive tax burdens, direct and indirect, and in particular the levying of excise duties on the necessities of life, have all contributed to setting in motion the vicious spiral of rising costs and wages. The refusal of the Union Government to compensate their employees for the rise in living costs created by its own policies is inconsistent with the concept of removing disparities that they themselves put forward in other fields.

5. The attempt to utilise the threat of Chinese Communist aggression against this country as a reason why justice should not be done to low paid employees is ridiculous particularly when it is remembered that this grave threat has been sought to be played down by the Prime Minister and his Government in an attempt to conceal the utter failure of their foreign and defence policies.

6. In this context, the Indian people have become aware of the peculiar contrast in the attitude of the Congress Government towards its own employees as compared with its attitude towards those in the service of other employers. While encouraging labour, for political purposes, to make demands on private industries which are not always capable of being met, the Congress Government has disclosed itself to be far from being a model employer. It is to be hoped that this experience of what happens in State employment and nationalised enterprises will open the eyes of the public in general and the working class in particular to the soundness of the Swatantra Party's thesis that State Capitalism and Free Trade Unionism cannot co-exist for long.

7. The General Council is of the view that a sound policy of dealing with Government employees needs to be evolved and should be based on the following considerations:

- (a) The drawing of a distinction between civil servants, those in essential services and those employed in industrial or other establishments managed by Government, with appropriate procedures applicable in each case;
- (b) The establishment of appropriate machinery for negotiation and conciliation in order to facilitate collective bargaining, including the establishment of suitable Joint Councils;
- (c) The acceptance of the principle that, whenever civil servants and those employed in essential services are denied the right to strike, there should be an opportunity for the matter in dispute to be referred to arbitration; and
- (d) The recognition of Unions and Associations of Government employees being made conditional on their office-bearers and executives being drawn from the ranks of the employees and not from those of outsiders.

8. The Council expresses the hope that Government will adopt a humane attitude in dealing with strikers who were misguided or intimidated. The Council notes that a large number of workers is facing prosecution under the Ordinance and other laws and a much larger number is facing disciplinary proceedings. The Council requests the Public Aid Committee of the Party to look into this matter and render whatever legal help may be possible and necessary.

desirable in the larger interests of society to minimise, as far as possible, the resort to strikes by workers and to lockouts by employers. That objective can be achieved through the development of collective bargaining and through the acceptance of the method of voluntary arbitration for the settlement of disputes. The Swatantra Party will strive for the acceptance of these procedures by employers and employees.

The Swatantra Party stands for a good wage for a good day's work. Both the wage as well as the work should be rightly determined and provision should be made for the increase of the wage along with the increase of productivity and the prosperity of industry. Workers must be also assured safe, sanitary and pleasant conditions of work and an adequate measure of social security through provision for sickness, unemployment and old age. It is also necessary to attend to the workers' need for housing.

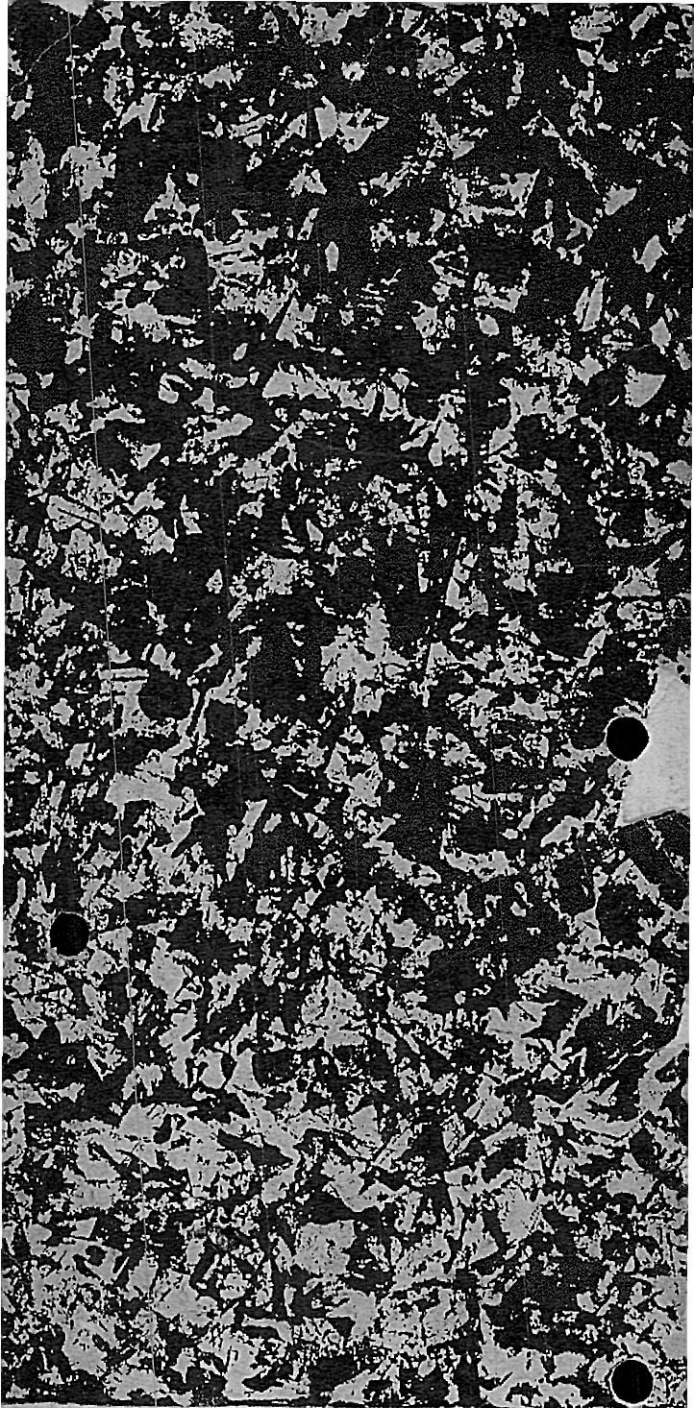
One of the fundamental problems before the country is that of unemployment. The Swatantra Party will devote particular attention to the opening up of new avenues of employment. The Party will endeavour to find work for all unemployed and able-bodied persons seeking it in State projects of road-making, afforestation and construc-

of buildings and reservoirs, as well as in private projects of housing and small industries subsidised to the extent necessary to facilitate absorption of unemployed manpower. The Party does not favour the use of machines where time is not of the essence and human labour can be employed instead.

The Party is particularly concerned about the conditions of agricultural labourers which are deplorable and it will strive to improve their conditions. The Party believes that cultivable land still in the possession of the government awaiting development should not be reserved for joint farming but should be allotted in sizeable holdings to as many agricultural workers as possible to enable them to become self-employed peasant proprietors. The problem of the landless labourer is in many cases an aspect of the problem of unemployment. The Swatantra Party will try to help the opening of new avenues of employment.

In accordance with the economic policies for which the Swatantra Party stands, namely, the employment of the bulk of the available resources in agriculture and light industries, in both of which vast scope for expansion exists, the Indian national income should increase at a much faster rate. Maximisation of output would overcome both poverty and unemployment simultaneously. It is the Party's conviction that, if the economic policies it put forward are accepted and vigorously pursued, they will bring prosperity and employment as no other policies can. In the last analysis, the welfare and advancement of workers are dependent upon the progress and prosperity of society as a whole.

→ -Extract from the Swatantra Party's Statement of Policy: **To Prosperity Through Freedom**



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