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Magnifying Glass

Having decided to relinquish the Presidentship of the Party, was not easy I found it ~~difficult~~ to get out of the driver's seat. I had to carry the senior members of the Party with me. Rajaji was frankly unconvinced. To him carrying on the fight for 'Indira Hatao' was still the objective and my withdrawal would weaken it. I tried to convince him unsuccessfully that the objective was not a practical one in the near future and that anything in that direction had been eroded by the Party's inability to follow the policy which I had urged in January 1971. Many of my colleagues shared Rajaji's view, while others saw some glimpse of sense in what I was urging. It was an unpleasant task ^{and} I had to see it through.

I therefore called a meeting of the General Council of the Swatantra Party before which my resignation should be placed.

On the previous day, the National Executive of the Party met to consider the situation. In my report dated April 2 ¹⁹⁷¹ which I had addressed to my colleagues, I had reported the developments since June 1970 when the General Council had ~~met~~ ^{met} ~~last~~. In my report, I had said -

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During the painful discussion that took place in the National Executive, I was reproached by ^{some} ~~several~~ of my colleagues for deserting them. Col. Pasricha, a senior member of our Party, said that we had only lost a battle and that no General retired half way through a war. My answer to this was that the war was over and it was self-deceptive to talk of other battles to follow for a long time to come. Other members pointed out that I was the least responsible for the mistakes of the Party and the responsibility was that of the National Executive as a whole.

That was on April 16, On the following day, the General Council met in Bombay. I opened the proceedings with an address.

(Text of speech with marked portions attached)

Mr. M.R. Masani's Speech from the Chair to the General Council in Bombay on Saturday, 17th April, 1971.

Members of the General Council,

a) ① There is no doubt that we meet at a time when we have come through a crisis for the Party and, if I say that we have gone through a grievous setback to our cause, I do not think I will be overstating the facts of the case. At a time like this we will have to muster certain qualities which I believe we have. The first of these obviously is courage. Now, courage can be of two kinds and will be needed of both kinds. There will first be the need for courage to withstand the blow, to rededicate ourselves to our principles and our fundamentals; and the second kind of courage, which is equally important, is to face the facts, not to behave like ostriches who bury their head in the sand because they don't want to face unpleasant realities, but to face the facts and draw the correct conclusions and learn the lessons, however bitter and unpalatable those lessons may be.

b) ② Secondly, we shall need faith - faith particularly in the people which sometimes we are apt to lose when people behave in a way that we consider unfair or unwise.

③ And thirdly, I think we shall have to develop a capacity for innovation, for flexibility, for adaptability to changed conditions while adhering to our fundamentals. I think if we are a Party which can show these qualities, whether it is our Party or some other Party, it will be able to ride the storm and come out on top and a Party that cannot develop these qualities will, I am afraid, fall by the wayside.

There have been some peculiar reactions to the results of the elections. One of these takes the form of defections. That has happened in many parties including, I am sorry to say, some of our Assembly members in Gujarat, in Mysore, may be elsewhere. They have defected and left the Party simply because we were badly defeated. This I say is peculiar because in England, for instance, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party alternately get defeated just as badly as we have been defeated but nobody resigns and becomes a socialist or a conservative because the majority had voted for socialism or conservatism! And Secondly, there has been the peculiar reaction of the business community, not that they have ever been very brave or very courageous but it seems that, judging from the proceedings of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, whatever fight they had in them has been knocked out of them and they have promised to be good boys and stop criticising the government and try and see the beauties of whatever is happening.

② Let us now consider the nature of our set back. We put up only fifty nine candidates for the parliamentary elections out of whom only eight got elected while as many as eighteen, I am sorry to say, forfeited their security deposits. The percentage of votes polled by our Party in 1967 was 8.68%. This dropped this time to 3.08% -- less than half. Here I must say that this is due to the smaller number of candidates we put up partly because of our membership of the Front, partly for other reasons. So the comparison is not altogether fair. Similarly, the number of seats that we carried dropped from 44 in 1967 to 8 this time. This again is not altogether fair because this comes of the British system of elections which in India particularly distorts very badly the will of the electorate. If there had been any system of Proportional Representation we would have got 14 seats instead of 8, but even then, you will agree, to drop from 44 to 14 is no minor set back.

I have mentioned the distortion of the electoral will. Let me say one word by way of consolation - that the victory of our opponents is not as sweeping

as is often made out. I have explained that in newspaper articles and speeches. The ruling Party only got 43% of the votes polled, and the votes polled were only 54% of the electorate. Therefore the ruling Party only got the support of 23.9% of the electorate or, to put it very simply, one out of four Indian men and women voted for the ruling Party, one voted for other parties and two did not vote at all. This is by no means the sweeping victory that is sought to be made out. Actually it is a rather routine kind of performance.

(3) What is more important perhaps is the reasons or the causes of our defeat. Here I would refer you to the Report I have submitted to you, ladies and gentlemen, on the mandate you gave me in July last year in Madras. That mandate was that, as President, I was authorised to try and bring into existence a consolidation or union of nationalist and democratic forces in the country. That was the mandate that was given to me and Rajaji quite rightly said that I would be judged by my success or failure in bringing about the desired result. I want you to recall his words when he said: "I shall judge Masani and commend or condemn him by whether or not he succeeds in the task we have allotted to him." In my report I have explained why I failed because, let us face it, we failed to carry out the task that was entrusted to me. In that report I have explained to you how we tried to carry it out - not only I but my valued colleagues like Mr. Dandekar, Dr. Cooper and other office bearers who co-operated with me throughout in trying to do what we did. I have explained how for six months we were kept dangling by Mr. Nijalingappa and the Congress (O). This was due to the fact that Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, particularly, obstructed the coming into existence of a bloc in Parliament and he was ably supported by the Ministers of the Congress Party in Mysore and Gujarat. Between the three of them they successfully managed to sabotage something that was very important, that is, the initiative being taken by us to form an alternative to drive Mrs. Gandhi on the defensive and ultimately out of office.

We waited for six months quite patiently. You might perhaps say: why were you so patient? I think it is a legitimate question. Well, I wasn't very patient! My correspondence with Rajaji, which was quite voluminous, will show this. He constantly advised patience to me and Prof. Ranga who was in Delhi with me also advised me not to be so impatient. Even so, by the end of November, my patience had come to an end. I began to foresee what was coming and on the 2nd of December I wrote a letter to Mr. Nijalingappa which was in the nature of an ultimatum. I said very clearly in the last paragraph that if by the 31st of December you have not entered into an alliance with us we shall break off all relations with you, we shall take it that you are not serious and we shall go our own way. This perhaps had some effect because after that there was a little more progress and by the end of the month an agreement was reached (in fact 15 days after my letter an agreement was reached) that, by the end of the month or in the next few days we would announce the formation of a three party Electoral Front with a common programme based on the AICC Resolution of June 28 and this draft announcement was actually prepared on the 20th of December. I remember I sent a copy of it to Rajaji (it is in my files) saying: "Thank God, at last we have agreed", and he congratulated me. The question was whether the next day or the day after or the day after this an announcement would be made by Mr. Nijalingappa, Mr. Vajpayee and myself. Again there was delay. Every day some reason was found for postponing the announcement. Ultimately, I sent a telegram from Bombay saying: "for God's sake, announce it before Mrs. Gandhi dissolves Parliament and takes the initiative finally from us and drives us against the wall." Even this was not done. Mrs. Gandhi announced the dissolution. Again we met and at last it was decided that on the 3rd of January this step would finally be taken.

Unfortunately, on the 3rd of January some very amazing events took place -- a kind of coup d'etat took place in Delhi by which the SSP captured Mr. Nijalingappa and Mr. Vajpayee, got us thrown out of the Front, captured the Front, scrapped the programme and destroyed the work of six months. It was an amazing thing to watch happening from lunch time to dinner time but it happened and as one of the Delhi newspapers put it: "In about four hours of work the SSP leaders worked like a demolition squad and the grand castle of the Grand Alliance was in the dust".

When I found that this was happening I sent for two senior colleagues who happened to be in Delhi that day - Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, our Vice-President and Mr. H.P. Nanda, our Treasurer. This was about 5 or 6 O'clock in the evening and I told them that I was afraid something horrible was going to happen. These people were going to back out, force us either to sign an alliance without a programme or to stay out. What should we do? We all three agreed that there can be no succumbing to this kind of intimidation and we should refuse to join Mr. Nijalingappa in surrendering like this. We should stay out. I should ask for time to consult the National Executive of the Party and refuse to sign any such statement without an agreement on programme. I mention this to you because the newspapers, who love to dramatize things, published the fact that I walked out in a huff. There was no huff because my draft statement to the press made about midnight had already been drafted with the help of Mr. Nanda and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel at 5 or 6 O'clock that afternoon. Mine was a cold-blooded decision of a political nature which I thought was in the interests of the country and the Party.

Well, you know what happened. The Presidents of the other two Parties agreed to the demands made by the SSP and Ram Subhag Singh, the Front was scuttled and what was perhaps even more sinister than the taking away of the programme was the removal of the word "democratic". The SSP spokesman said in their eyes the word "democratic" was as objectionable as the word "communist". They wanted to be equi-distant from the two Fronts - the Communist Front and the Democratic Front ! The word "democratic" should be removed from the statement wherever it appeared three times. I am sorry to say that even that was done by our partners in the Front. I met the press that night and I told them what had happened, that I had asked for time.

Now, we were to have met in Madras in the middle of January but I felt that we must meet quickly because this was a new situation which called for the wisdom of the Party to be mobilised. So we called the meeting on the 8th of January in Madras when members of the National Executive were present. Now, at that time my feeling was that if we went into this Front without a programme we would lose the elections - that in fact the elections had been lost by the Front by their action on the 3rd of January. At the same time, it was very difficult to keep out altogether and to go it alone for reasons that I shall discuss in a couple of minutes. And so Mr. Dandekar, Dr. Cooper and I put our heads together and drafted a resolution for the National Executive which did three things - first, it expressed its deep disappointment at what had happened in Delhi; secondly, it approved of my action in not going along with it; and thirdly, it authorised me to negotiate with the Front for an adjustment of constituencies - that meant that we would have negotiated for the Party with the Front of three Parties as a whole without joining the Front, tried to get the best terms we could and then either made a deal with them or stayed out altogether and gone it alone. We felt that this was the best middle path that we could follow in the peculiar circumstances with which we were faced.

Unfortunately, that third proposal was not accepted. Prof. Ranga moved an amendment removing this formula saying "we hereby join the Front unconditionally" and although Mr. Dandekar made a very valiant speech, which I remember, arguing against it, Rajaji and the big majority of the National Executive decided, no doubt with the best of motives, that at that particular stage there was no alternative but to go back to the Front after making our protest. So we gave in and the resolution was amended and it was published that we were joining the Front.

Faced with this, I was called upon either to join the Coordinating Committee or to get someone to represent us and I requested Mr. Dandekar, our Vice-President, and Dr. Cooper to represent the Party at the meetings of the Coordinating Committee which were to start in Delhi on the 15th until all constituencies were adjusted. I knew from my dealings with the other gentlemen that the kind of hope that they had that, in three or four days

time, the whole thing would be amicably settled and we would all go home to fight the elections was not likely to materialise, that there would be long drawn squabbles, constant arguments and delay and I felt that I could not serve on it for three good reasons - one, that I was a candidate myself and would not be able to stay out; two, that it was more important for me to stay out and collect some money for the Party because at that time, on the 8th of January, we had practically nothing to fight the elections with; and thirdly I had had enough dealings with the leaders of the other two parties and had no stomach for any more. For these three reasons, I requested our two senior colleagues to take over and I would like to compliment them on the very fine job they did in the highest spirit of patriotism and decency. I don't see any harm in saying that out of all the parties represented ours were the only people who kept the interests of the country and the objectives in view, subordinated the interests of our own party, made serious sacrifices for the larger good. We can blame them for being too decent, I would not, for our whole tradition has been to do what we say and to say what we mean and I am glad that we did the honourable thing but the result of course has been, and some people have criticised them in the National Executive, that we should have got more seats. May be. Whether that would have done us any good I don't know. We had other problems also of finance and so on, but anyway they took their work seriously, they took their task seriously, they did their bit and I must tell you that the other people were full of compliments for Mr. Dandekar and Dr. Cooper for being so reasonable. It is a great pity that the others could not be equally reasonable instead of just showing their appreciation.

(H) Now what happened during the elections we also know. The Front did not function in all constituencies. In some constituencies it did function. I think we owe the return of some of our eight members to loyal cooperation by one or other partner of the Front. On the other hand, we owe the defeat of many of our candidates also to the lack of loyalty and the sabotage by members of the Front. I am one of the victims, so I ought to know! We got the worst of both worlds. We lost the Muslim vote but the Jan Sangh scuttled us. We lost the protest vote against the Ahmedabad Establishment, but the Congress scuttled us. So we lost both ways. We didn't get anything in return for the sacrifices that we had to make. It may be that we would have done better if we had not joined the Front but this is hind sight. It is very difficult to say now what would have happened. I see that Mr. Lobo Prabhu has told a similar story in his article in Insight as to what happened in his constituency.

The important question arises - did we make a mistake in joining the Front on the 8th of January and if so, why did we do it? I think we did it out of very good motives and reasons. We felt first of all that public opinion would blame us very strongly if, because of this so-called theoretical insistence on a programme, we had kept out of the Front, gone it alone. Then we would have been blamed for the defeat that would have come on the ground that if we had only joined the Front everything would have been beautiful. I think if we had not joined the Front and the same result had happened, a lot of people would have blamed us for having let down the Front and the country. They would have been wrong, but they would have done it. We did not desire to divide the opposition vote.

But I think there was a much deeper reason also which we must be honest enough to face. We did not have the guts or the courage to go it alone. We did not feel that we had the organisational strength, the cadre of workers, the good candidates and the money to be able to say: "all right, we are on our own, we'll put up as many candidates as we like and we shall fight under our own banner". I think we must face it that we of the National Executive did not feel collectively that we could go it alone and so we bowed partly to what we thought would be pressure of public opinion and partly to what we thought were the realities of the case. It was too late by then. We had been kept dangling for six months and by the time we faced the realities it was too late to collect the money, to put our candidates in the field and to build up the organisation. I think this was a very basic thing.

It is very important to face this because that brings us to our major failure and that is not that we joined the Front or we made mistakes in strategy, but that we were not prepared. This I think goes back four years to 1967, but in particular the responsibility falls on those of us who were at the head of the Party in the twelve or fifteen months prior to the elections. I became President of the Party on the 1st of January 1970. I was elected in Madras on the last days of the previous year and as it happened in November 1969 you ladies and gentlemen of the General Council had passed an excellent document called the Mid-Term Report. It is very good. I also had a hand in drafting it along with others. We had analysed there our weaknesses for the past two and half years and we had laid down a concrete programme of action to revive the Party for the next two and a half years. I hope you read it before coming here because it was sent to you.

Let me just remind you that, after striking a balance sheet, which was a deficit, we laid down certain guidelines to build up units of the Party, to spread the Party's message, to train Party cadres, and so on. Above all, we said that certain re-orientation of our work was required and we would have to do certain things. These were listed as follows :-

- * the need for change, to educate the people that we were not a Party of the status quo
- * secondly, a concern for the underprivileged, the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, the poorer sections of society by actual concern in their problems, and not by just saying so, to carry conviction to them.
- * thirdly, to bridge the generation gap by approaching youth to come close to us and carry them with us.
- * fourthly, putting agriculture first,
- * fifthly, putting the consumer in the picture - the forgotten factor as we called him.
- * Lastly, to cultivate the Minorities.

Now, I think you will agree that if this had been carried out, even 50% of what we should have done, we would not have been in the plight that we were on the eve of the elections. We could have gone it alone, our whole bargaining posture would have been one of strength and not one of weakness. So the real failure of the Party leadership, at the top of which I find myself, throughout the year 1970 was that we were not able to perform this task and for that the leadership and particularly the man at the top has to take full responsibility.

Now what is to be done? I think it is for you, ladies and gentlemen, today and tomorrow, now that the discussion is going to be a free for all - political and organisational - and I agree it is very difficult to divide it into water-tight compartments, it is for you to give your leadership a new direction. This afternoon and the whole of tomorrow please tell the National Executive, the present one and the one that is to follow, what exactly you think should be done to put things right.

I can only share with you a few thoughts before I conclude. One thing is that the leadership of all the old parties including ours, though we are only eleven years old, have lost credibility. I do not think the people are going to accept the present leadership of the old Congress, the Jana Sangh, the Swatantra Party, the PSP and the SSP in any future election or in any future trial of strength. Let us put it this way. We have been found out. May be it is a fair or unfair verdict. We have been found to be missing or lacking and I do not think that we should be at the top of a Party which is trying to regain lost ground. We are, let me put it like this, like

generals who have lost a war. Now my military friend Col. Pasricha yesterday in the National Executive (I know he has great regard for me and I appreciate the points he tried to make) made the point that we had not lost a war, we had only lost a battle and if a battle is lost we should all prepare for the next battle which will be round the corner.

I fundamentally disagree with this analysis. I think we have lost the war. That does not mean there will not be another war after a few years. There is always another war which undoes the mischief of the last war. There was not one Franco-German war, there were three. There has already been one Indo-Pakistan war. Goodness knows how many there will be in the next fifty years and so on. I think the war has been lost. We have come to a stage where we are now in a post-war situation. There is nothing we can do about it. There is no battle to fight, as far as I can see, in the next six months or year. Yes, skirmishes, guerilla warfare perhaps, but no battles. We have lost the war. We are a beaten party, a beaten Front, if you like and our opponents are going to be on top for several years to come. Let us hope it will not be more than five years.

This calls for a post-war attitude and posture and certainly when the war is lost nobody asks the General at the head of the Army to prepare for the next war. He is automatically and immediately retired, however good a General he might have been. Let me remind you what happened when we lost the little war with China in 1962. The day it finished General Kaul was removed from office, asked to put in his resignation and General Manekshaw who had not been anywhere near the fighting line was put in charge in his place immediately. A correct thing to do because morale and credibility have to be revived and they can only be revived under a new symbol and a new spokesman. It is only parties which are capable of this kind of thing which will survive.

Let me also say there is nothing wrong with our principles. I am not one of those who wants to lower our flag. Rajaji has sent you a message, where he deplores any idea of "me-tooism" which means that because Indira Gandhi has won the elections, we should start apeing her policies, mouthing her slogans, trying to compete with her as the Congress (O) tried to do last year unsuccessfully or the SSP has tried to do also unsuccessfully. I am glad Rajaji has given that warning, because it is sometimes difficult to resist to lower the flag and go along and lick the boots of the winner.

I do not think this is called for at all. Our principles are 100 per cent right. Everything we say has proved right and will prove right. We have only got to wait a little for the facts to be established. The wheels of God grind slow but they grind exceedingly small, and those who are talking tall today are going to be humbled in the dust. It may take two years or it may take ten years, but it is going to happen. Therefore, when I talk of a change of leadership, I am not talking of a change of principles or of policies. It is our performance that has to be changed. In other words the personnel and the conduct have to change, not our principles. Our principles were good, but we were unworthy of our principles. We were lazy. We were insincere. We were lacking in seriousness. We did not convince the people that we were dedicated to our principles as, let us say, the Communists are dedicated to theirs or the RSS are dedicated to theirs.

For all these reasons, after considerable heart-searching, I came to the conclusion that the Party must have a new leadership and that the first thing that has to be done to start that process and to symbolise it publicly is for me to step down from the Presidentship. So I wrote to you to that effect and I am glad I did so because whatever little has happened since then has completely vindicated that step. Naturally, I have received a lot of correspondence from very valued and esteemed colleagues asking me to reconsider, although I had requested that this should not be done. It is only human. I appreciate the concern and the regard that you ladies and gentlemen have shown, but each of the letters quite clearly said that what I was doing was right but that I should not do it. Mr. Ganapathiah, for

whom I have the highest regard, said "it is a healthy gesture of yours which is worthy of copying by other institutions and parties." Then he goes on to say: "but you must stay." Now, you can't ask others to copy your example and not do it yourself! (Interruptions --- "till we find another"---). MRM: "good, I am glad you said that) Rajaji also said: "Your letter to the General Council members is quite right, but I have thought over and over again as to who can take your place. I am not able to spot anyone." So please carry on. Now, with all respect to Rajaji and Ganapiah, may I say that this is not a good enough reason not to do the right thing. If the thing I am doing is right, then you should not say that because you cannot locate anyone just now to take my place, I should carry on, undo a good act for the sake of convenience. Let me tell you we may be badly off, but we are not that badly off. I don't think the Party is so bankrupt that it can't replace a retiring President. We have got four or five very good Vice-Presidents who can immediately step into the breach and we have got younger people in the Party, a lot of them who are quite capable of taking responsibility if they made up their minds to. I don't think they will do any worse than we have. They might do a good deal better, so I don't think the problem of replacement really arises. We are in a post-war period. Nothing very much is going to happen in the next few months. We have to recuperate, as a patient does after an illness. No early battles are going to be fought by us, let us be quite clear. Therefore I would say that even those who have argued with me have really conceded the principle and argued from a human point of view because nobody likes a parting of this kind.

On the other hand, look at the reaction outside. The Akali Dal of the Pheruman group - he was our colleague, Darshan Singh Peruman, a member of our Party and he was the head of a group in the Akali Dal. They met the other day and called upon Sant Fateh Singh to follow my example and put pressure on him by saying: "why can't you do what Masani is doing?" The Hindustan Times wrote an editorial in which it said: "In the highly permissive and self-regarding milieu that India has witnessed in the recent past, Mr. Masani's vicarious atonement for his Party's debacle will stand out as an exemplary gesture." I am glad to see yesterday's Himmat, which came to me this morning, an editorial which says that: "At a time when holding on to office has become a major preoccupation with many, the reasons behind the resignation of Swatantra President Masani are refreshing."

Now I think what I am doing is going to redound to the benefit of the Party itself. After all, whatever good or bad your spokesman do affects the image of the Party also. I have an idea that, if you would kindly cooperate tomorrow when this matter will come up before you concretely, you will really be doing something for the benefit of the country and the Party, not only by setting a good example but also by creating conditions where our Party will thrive. The National Executive discussed this matter yesterday and I am glad to tell you that, after some discussion, as Maharaja R.N. Singh Deo put it, I am not have convinced them intellectually but they were good enough to feel the strength of my conviction and to bow to it and not to press me any further, for which I am very grateful to them. I hope you, ladies and gentlemen, will be equally cooperative tomorrow.

We also discussed what should be done and we took some important decisions and that was that we should advance the elections of our Party machinery in order to bring a new Executive into existence earlier than would normally have been the case. Normally, we would have brought our New President and Executive into office on January 1, 1972. We have decided to cut this period in half. You will see that we are trying at almost breakneck speed to complete the formalities and processes of elections from the bottom to the top by 18th September, so that by then you will have a new President, new office bearers and a new Executive altogether. Meanwhile the National Executive has advised you - it is for you to take the decisions - that one of the Vice Presidents should officiate as President from now till September and I am glad to tell you that, if that is your wish, Mr. Dandekar has agreed

to shoulder the burden strictly on the basis that he will be relieved in September and not one day later. That is for you to consider but I have mentioned to you the consensus that emerged out of a discussion in the National Executive yesterday.

5 Looking forward two or three years, let me say the real crisis will come two or three years from now, not two or three months from now, and that is when the chickens come home to roost, when the promises made are not fulfilled, as they cannot be fulfilled by anyone, not even by us even if we tried honestly so long as we tried to carry out Mrs. Gandhi's programme. If we carried out our own programme, we could fulfil the promises she has made. But since she will not accept our programme and will carry on with the status quo of State Capitalist policies for another five years, as she and her father have carried on for twenty years, I think failure is almost inevitable. Now, if that takes place and the chickens come home to roost, the real crisis will come at that time.

The other day I met a gentleman in a plane who described to me the remarks made by Confucius about a ruler of his time. I thought I would take them down immediately, which I have done, because they seem to apply so appropriately to our own conditions today in India. Confucius described the problem of his time in the following words: "A weak character coupled with an honoured place, meagre knowledge with large plans, and limited resources with heavy responsibilities will seldom escape disaster".

I think that will overtake the Emperors or Empresses of our times in a few years from now depending on their follies and our patience or the patience of the Indian people. It is for that time that we will have to prepare from now. You may say that is fine. As soon as people are disillusioned, they will all come to us and say: "Oh, how wise you gentlemen were. We didn't listen to you, now we are going to vote for you". May I sound a word of warning? It is not at all proved that this is what the people of India will do. The people of India may do something quite different. The people of India may turn against Mrs. Gandhi and turn to the Naxalites and Mao Tse Tung. This is equally possible. If we do not do our task, that is more likely than the other thing we don't have to theorise about it.

It has happened, it has happened in very similar circumstances to another woman Prime Minister next door to us. I am talking about Ceylon. This is exactly what happened. Our counterparts, the United National Party of Dudley Senanayake and Jayawardane, who are good friends of mine, who think like us, lost. A little over a year passed. Mrs. Bandaranaike could not carry out her promises and it would appear that Dudley Senanayake and his Party could not regain the lost ground. They were not able to get the people back to the path of sanity and being practical. The result is that China is imported from Cuba and a Civil war where India and other countries have to send pilots and troops to help Mrs. Bandaranaike to survive. It would not be altogether fanciful to say that similar conditions could easily arise in India within the next few years if, God help us, we have failed in our task, we may have to watch a similar confrontation to that which is taking place in Ceylon.

Therefore, it appears to me that we shall have to fight at many levels. We have a Parliamentary Opposition and we wish Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, Mr. P.K. Deo, Rajmata, all success in their efforts, more power to their elbows. But there has also got to be an extra-parliamentary opposition. Countries where parliamentary opposition weakens very much or fades out turn to extra-parliamentary opposition. That takes many forms. It takes the form of a vigilant and a vocal press; it can take the form of agitation and street fighting. Now, we believe in democratic methods and our extra-constitutional opposition must be a process of educating the people. The British politician who said: "Educate our Masters" is the person we have to remember today.

~~No~~ failed to educate our masters and they kicked us out.

(6) This will require work at many levels - the party level, extra-party levels, educational levels and so on. I think the people expect three things from us and other political parties :

1. A quick reappraisal, and
2. New tactics and strategy;
3. A rededication to our objectives

I hope that your deliberations today and tomorrow will lead us to perform these three tasks and to face the people of India with our heads held high and our flag flying.

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My resignation came up for discussion in the General Council of the Party on April 18. I pleaded that the step I was taking would give the Party a chance to develop a new look since, in my view, the present leadership had lost credibility as indeed was the case with other opposition parties. In the discussion that followed, most members made a plea to me to reconsider the matter. When winding up the discussion, I mentioned I was deeply touched by the warmth and concern shown by the members. I reassured my colleagues that I would continue to be associated with the Party's work, and both by word and deed would cater to the Party's principles, to the best of my ability. The following resolution was then unanimously adopted:

"This meeting of the General Council of the Swatantra Party, having tried its best to persuade Mr. Masani to withdraw his resignation from the Presidentship of the Swatantra Party and failed, regretfully accepts his resignation.

"The General Council records its deep sense of gratitude to Mr. Masani for his services to the Party first from December 1959 to the end of 1967 as its General Secretary, and subsequently, as its President from January 1970 till today. The Council is gratified to have Mr. Masani's assurance that he will continue to give the Party the ~~best~~ benefit of his advice and counsel and propagate the Party's principles and policies."

Thus ended eleven years of this particular effort.

Naturally, Rajaji was not happy when I insisted in April 1971 on stepping down from the Presidentship of the Swatantra Party. I was sorry I could not respond to his plea to continue as President, but I felt that the principle that a man who leads an army to defeat must step down at the end of the war was so clear that I could not bow to his wishes. It made me sad to disappoint him.

Recently, however, while going through some old papers, I came across a letter to me from Rajaji from his Cabinet Minister's residence at 1 York Place, New Delhi, dated ^{as early as} 5th August, 1950. He wrote it after receiving a copy of my book for children - Our Growing Human Family. I had started the book with a jingle

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which ran as follows :

" Oh why do we gather in herds
Like a lot of excitable birds
And chatter and bawl
About nothing at all
In wholly inaudible words? "

Rajaji's letter to me ran as follows :

My dear Masani,

Your beautiful book. Why don't you settle down as a schoolmaster instead of all this waste of valuable talent in a crowd that chatters in inaudible and unintelligible words about nothing at all?

Of course I wish you were a teacher but I must then wish our children all spoke English as their mother tongue. Your language is so good, it is a pity it is some one else's language."

I wonder if Rajaji would ^{have} not ^{also} concede that, by keeping out of active politics and speaking and writing on public affairs with a view to educating public opinion, I am ~~not~~ in some way rather belatedly following the advice which he himself gave me some twenty years ago? I at least would like to think so.

*Just to let you know
- Ratan Varma*