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Summary of discussions at the meeting of the General Council
held in Bombay on Saturday and Sunday 8 and 9, April 1972

Saturday, April 8

Mr. H.M. Patel : The President welcomed members to the meeting. He referred to the performance of the Party in the recent elections to the Assembly and said that one might describe it as very poor performance. We should ask ourselves why we failed in 1971 and again this time? He referred to certain papers that had been circulated to members and in particular to Dr. Cooper's letter which had raised certain basic issues.

Dr. Cooper had posed three alternatives before the Council, viz;

- (a) Continuing the Party as it is,
- (b) merging it with like-minded parties, and
- (c) dissolving the party and allowing its members to work either in non-party organisations or if they so desired to join the Ruling Congress.

Mr. Patel said that the object of the General Council meeting was to review the results and discuss at some length the situation facing the Party arising from our performance. He said that no final decisions need be taken at this meeting but hoped that the discussions would take us a step forward.

Mr. J.M. Lobo Prabhu : Mr. Lobo Prabhu was not depressed himself. (Mysore) On the other hand he thought that the Party was doing better than before. He referred in this connection to the Wanchoo Report which was a vindication of the Party's policies and a condemnation of the economic policies of the Ruling Party. Mrs. Gandhi was actually trying in a quiet way to implement Swatantra programme and policies.

It was not merely a defeat of Swatantra but of all opposition parties. The real issue was not why we lost but why the Congress won. Such an examination would help us evolve a proper strategy for the next four or five years.

Dr. Cooper's note served as a frame work for the Council's discussion. He had given three alternatives. Mr. Lobo Prabhu suggested a fourth as well.

The first alternative was whether the Party should continue as it is. Mr. Lobo Prabhu agreed that the Party as it is did not deserve to exist, as it had ceased to do anything effective for some time past for various reasons.

The second alternative was the possibility of joining like-minded parties. Unfortunately there no longer were any like-minded parties. The Swatantra Party alone stood in conflict with the New Congress. The third alternative suggested by Dr. Cooper was to dissolve and join the New Congress. This was not acceptable.

Mr. Lobo Prabhu had a fourth alternative, viz., that there should be a new party with new ideas, modalities and methods.

Why did the Congress win ? They realised whatever is done should be with reference to the good it does to the largest number of voters. Bank nationalisation for instance. It was frankly to acquire control over the economy. But the Ruling Congress put it over as a means of giving loans to the underprivileged and the agriculturists. Abolition of Privy Purses. The real intention was to destroy a class that was tending to be troublesome. The amount involved was small but it was projected as a measure to throw out the privileged princes. Though there is no connection between General Insurance and the people, they were told that it was being nationalised. Whom do land reforms really benefit ? Tenants comprise only 11% and landless 12%, yet it has been a big ploy that land reforms are projected as a revolution.

What about us ? We say we must be honest. We say promote industry but we don't say that industrial production must be made available to the poor at a reasonable price and abundantly. We merely say abolish controls. What we must say is that we are a party committed to giving people cheap articles plentifully. Therefore we do not want controls. Take our other slogan - Free Enterprise. We must say that we want everyone to compete so that prices are lowered. Our ploy should be that our policies favour the under-privileged. Regarding the Constitution we should tell the common man that as a result of the amendments it will no longer be rule of law but rule of those having power. When we defend private property, we give the impression we are talking of large buildings or large cultivated lands. We should say we stand for creating private property, giving the tenant the right to sell or mortgage his tenancy, giving him under-proprietory rights; that we stand for the property of the tenant in the land. Our orientation has to change. Unless we do something for the under-privileged, we do not deserve to exist as a political party. Mrs Gandhi understood what the voters wanted. Another reason is Mrs. Gandhi's use of money. We should attempt to knock out the use of all money. Election Commission has prescribed use of vehicles to carry voters. I suggest we demand that employment of volunteers who can be paid Rs 5 or Rs 1,000/- should be prohibited. We should bring a Bill in Parliament to amend the People's Representation Act on these lines. We should also demand the separation of elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies as it is making it impossible for men with ordinary means to contest parliamentary or assembly elections we should therefore switch back to the old system. We should also oppose the mixing up of votes as it covers up all sorts of malpractices.

Then there is the use of official power which begins many months before the elections. The Press is captive. The Radio is a monopoly. We must press for a Bill to make them autonomous bodies. The Press Council must be given authority of Government to give press advertisements and distribute newsprint.

Finally there is the question of leadership. Mrs. Gandhi is a lady with charisma. But no one is unperishable. She will also lose popularity when she fails to fulfil her promises.

What are we going to do ? We have neither funds nor friends. People whom we are serving do not take notice of us. What methods do we adopt which will take us somewhere.

1. We must become a grievance body at the Taluka, District and constituency levels. We should hold public meetings and ask people to come forward with their grievances concerning their village area etc. We must become a Post Box for the people and forward to authorities concerned like District Development councils etc. the peoples grievances and publicise our work in the Press, and write to the Ministers concerned. This will have some effect. A Committee to attend to the needs of different classes of people of roads, minor irrigation, drinking water wells, bus routes is another aspect.
2. We must make use of the Press by writing letters focussing grievances. Mr. V.T. Sreenivasan never stopped writing to the Press about grievances. Copies of letters we write to the Press should be sent to the Party and they should be asked to follow them up. We will thus register in the consciousness of the people as a party which takes up the cause of the people.
3. Publicity and meetings in our districts and areas. We have no funds to hold big meetings. Each district should be furnished with a loudspeaker equipment and a tape recorder to record speeches and songs purchased from its own funds or with the help of affluent friends and go round every village.

Mr. Parmanand Kejriwal : The talk of continuing the Party or not (Bombay) is not new. When Mr. Masani thought of starting the Party in 1959, he called some 35 leading citizens of Bombay to consider whether the party should be started or not, whether those in business and others engaged in productive work should have a political wing or not. I was present at the meeting. Out of 35, 30 were not in favour of a new party. It was Mr. Masani's courage that brought this Party into being. Swatantra's emergence put courage in businessmen's heart. Look up any speech of the FICCI President or the IIC from 1960 to 1971 and you will find a lot of difference from what they talked in 1957, '58 or '59.

The question of disbanding our party should arise only if we feel that there is no need for it, or if someone else has taken up the job. No one has come forward. The need for the Party is even greater now. We should discuss how to revitalise the Party. Even if Party does not win elections, even if it is confined to Sassoon Building, Congressmen will think a hundred times before hurting a businessman or a prince because they are afraid there is somebody to take up the cause of the independent citizen.

We failed to do what should have been done. Take the case of large number of retailers, wholesalers and merchants. They are not with us. Why ? Because we have done nothing for them. Ludwig Erhard went to the Legislatures and wanted that manufacturers should be asked to sell their goods only to the old dealers and not to their patrons. The result was that the entire trade supported Ludwig's Party. The Opposition's role is to take up the cause of those who are affected by the ruling party. Take the rich or

prosperous farmer. His land is being cut down. A big prince in Rajasthan allowed only 50 acres whereas his counterpart in the city is allowed to have millions. On the other hand, we are taking up the cause of big business and industry which is already in league with the Congress Party. Our friends should be traders, small industries and farmers. We must cultivate them.

German Chancellor Adenauer did not join Hitler. He tended his roses for 12 years. When Hitler fell, Adenauer was invited to preside over German Republic. We too must not be discouraged. Even if confined to a very few, we should keep the party going.

President's remarks : We are in effect discussing Party performance and are taking these questions together. The question of the Party's future arises from the fact that our performance in the last election was of a certain nature. As I said in my opening remarks, one can ask why we failed in 1971 and now. What should we do hereafter? This is the basis of the discussion. Dr. Cooper has shown great courage in setting out precisely the kind of points to be considered. He has rendered service by speaking out openly that which some of us have been thinking. One of the alternatives that have been suggested is dissolution. If you are satisfied that we should not be dissolved, I am very happy. But let us not say it is not a subject for discussion. Every member has a right to give expression to his views frankly and fearlessly.

Maharawal Lakman Singh of Dungarpur (Rajasthan) : The holding of these elections separately has made a tremendous amount of difference. It has benefited the ruling Congress which is more equipped and has money power behind it. That explains why the lesser opposition parties suffered hardly. If the elections continue to be held separately we will continue to suffer to a greater degree.

The tendency of the Ruling Party is gradually to wipe out the Opposition. They want one-Party and one leader and no opposition. Unfortunately most parties think likewise. Swatantra is the only exception. The Swatantra Party believes in democratic values. On that plea alone it justifies its existence.

There is no need to feel frustrated or discouraged. But we should learn from our mistakes and shortcomings and try to put our house in order as best as we can. The next five years are going to be crucial for the existence of the so-called opposition. And during this period we must hang on and try to survive. The best way of survival is to have some sort of adjustment, may be with the Jan Sangh. My colleagues might not favour this. But in the present circumstances the two parties cannot co-exist. If there is no partial adjustment between the two the chances are that at least in the central and northern parts of the country, it is Swatantra and not Jan Sangh that will be the loser though the Jan Sangh will lose ground considerably. Let by-gones be by-gones. What has happened is for the best. It has taught the Jan Sangh also a lesson that without adjustment of any sort with the Swatantra Party it would be hazardous for the Jan Sangh to exist.

If Swatantra Party is to exist as an all India Party we must have certain objectives. If Swatantra Party can't have even a hundred MLAs or 15 to 18 M.Ps in the whole country it does not deserve to exist as an all India Party.

Finance is an important factor. It is nonsense to say we can achieve results without finance. The ruling party has plenty of money. Without finance they can't exist. But where the Ruling Party spends 50,000 we must be in a position to spend at least 10,000. If we can do that we will be in a position to vindicate our honour and not forfeit our deposits.

If we put in the field just at random 100 or 120 candidates without the means to finance them and without investigating the suitability of the candidates in each constituency it is not planning but muddle headed thinking. We would cut the coat according to the cloth. 50 candidates if properly financed, screened and fielded at the right time and if the promised amount reach the candidate 10 days before poll the result will be much better. If this can't be done the Central Party's existence is not worth it.

In Rajasthan it was more a clash of personalities. The Maharana of Udaipur was not properly advised by the Jan Sangh. The result was both the Jan Sangh and Swatantra lost. The Swatantra Party leadership came in for criticism. But the Swatantra Party cannot be accused to the extent of the Jan Sangh, who thought they would carry the day and root out the Swatantra Party lock stock and barrel. They now realise this was not so and the recent elections have taught them a lesson.

Regarding changing the Party's name, it would be calamity. If the Party is to exist let us lay down our objectives. Let us give the Party a 5-year lease and see what happens.

President's Remarks : The Maharawal's speech was interesting but ~~somewhat~~ somewhat contradictory. He said the Swatantra Party alone stands for democratic values and for that reason alone it must continue. But at the same time he said if we can't win a hundred seats we have no business to exist.

Mr. D.N. Patodia (Rajasthan) : The results of the elections were a culmination of a process which started with Congress split. The subsequent sequence of events and the behaviour of the Opposition parties gave an advantage to the Ruling Congress and they reaped the fruit. I agree with Mr. Lobo Prabhu we should examine more the Congress victory and less the Opposition defeat.

One reason for Opposition defeat was that we could not project ourselves properly. The Grand Alliance never worked. The damage it did could not be eradicated during the Assembly elections. It created confusion and was responsible for distorting of our image. In these circumstances how can any alliance in any form be useful to our Party? All future attempts at alliances should take care to see that they do not damage the Party's image. There are no elections for the next four years. So there is no need to think of alliances with other parties in the immediate future. However

I favour working arrangement with the opposition parties within Assemblies and Parliament or adjustments during by-elections to avoid contesting against each other.

The victory of Congress - might have been due to malpractices and misuse of power etc. But by and large it represented the verdict of the people who at this moment consider it to be the only party which can be depended upon. We must therefore devise our strategy so as not to rub public opinion on the wrong side. We must convert public in our favour which is a gradual process. Direct action, raising slogans against the ruling Congress in a way as if they are out to destroy the country, and the economy may not be worthwhile in the immediate context and may even prove to be counter productive. Therefore we must decide carefully before embarking on direct action.

The idea propounded by the ruling Congress that Swatantra Party stands for a particular class of the rich and the princes is false. The Swatantra Party stands for certain ideals and basic democratic values. Those who fit in with those ideas and values are with us. And if we feel that by the victory of the Ruling Congress in the Assembly elections there is need to dissolve Swatantra Party - a thought generated by Dr. R.C. Cooper - does it not imply that the philosophy and ideas of the Congress are the right one? If we believe in our ideas and philosophy then there is the greatest need for us to stay and not dissolve thereby giving a free hand to the ruling Congress. Even if we are only one in Parliament or Assembly, so long as we are there to save the values of democracy, and what we say is in the people's interest there is no need to feel pessimistic. In the life of every political party there is always a time for lying low and sit and watch. We should use every available forum to propound our thoughts and it is would be doing service to the country and to democratic values of life.

A.R. Deshpande : We were hoping to form a coalition government (Maharashtra) in Rajasthan and Gujarat and become the major opposition in Andhra. The results are before you. The Ruling Congress' use of power was not the only cause of the defeat of the opposition but the fact the elected MLAs in the last Assemblies had failed to keep public contact and were therefore rejected by the voters.

In certain Constituencies rebel Congress leaders were elected. The image of the Prime Minister and the Ruling Congress could not influence the public because these rebel Congress leaders were constantly in contact with the masses. People will come to us only if we serve them. If we talk and propound any ideology without doing any constructive work we can never represent people in the Assemblies and Lok Sabha.

Mr. Mewaram Arya (Delhi) : We met in this hall last year to conduct a post mortem on our debacle in the 1971 General Elections. Dr. Cooper was then the General Secretary. To reactivate the Party, he brought forward a 9 - Point Programme. This time, Dr. Cooper has brought forward a 3-point programme which I think will not find favour with a single member of the General Council. Perhaps, his idea is to provoke the members of the General Council and the leadership. Though our policies are good, the leadership whether at the Central or at the State level had failed to convey them to the people.

The Party's policies have not been directly related to national and state problems. In the last 12 years, except for the Kisan demonstration in 1964, the Party has not held any demonstration or launched any struggle. The demonstration in 1964, which was to protect the Kisans' rights, bore fruit as was seen from the results of the 1967 elections.

Whatever lessons we learnt from our performance in 1971, have not been made use of in the Assembly elections.

The Delhi Unit set up six candidates. But the Centre supplied only about 300 to 400 posters per candidate. This was in contrast to the thousands of posters that were received by candidates of other parties. The material we received was not enough even to last a part of the campaign. Central leaders were not available for addressing campaign meetings whereas other parties had the benefit of visits by their senior leaders. If our leaders will not go before the people nor meet our workers, our Party will continue to be what it is.

The Jan Sangh and the Congress had plenty of resources. It is reported that each candidate of this party spent a lakh of rupees for each metropolitan seat. They had enough vehicles. The amount we had with us was a fraction of what candidates of the Jan Sangh and the Congress received. Our candidates were threatened with physical violence and had to seek police protection.

Rather than speak in general terms, I would suggest that the General Secretaries of the State Units who are present here, give us an idea of the experience in their states, and particularly the problems they encountered in their campaign.

So far as Delhi is concerned, for the first time, since I became General Secretary, our defeated candidates far from losing courage are determined to increase membership enrolment.

We had a demonstration outside the FICCI meeting recently. Each Primary Unit in Delhi sent five or six members to take part in the demonstration. This was the first time that the Delhi Unit carried out such a demonstration. This has boosted the morale of our workers.

Two of our candidates collected money for their security deposits by selling Re. 1/- coupons supplied by the National Headquarters and are now getting ready for the Delhi Corporation elections.

The Maharawal Sahab wanted an alliance with the Jan Sangh. I spoke to some Jan Sangh leaders after the elections and they told me that the Jan Sangh had wanted to wipe out the Swatantra Party in Rajasthan and had succeeded. The Jan Sangh is simply not interested in any alliance or understanding with the Swatantra Party. They say the Swatantra Party is finished that there is no need to talk with them.

We have passed plenty of Resolutions and they are reported in the press and get filed. The only way is to attend to the grievances of the people. We demonstrated for the first time in Delhi and are planning similar demonstrations in a couple of months and our workers are very much enthused, particularly the Youth. We must give the younger generation a lead. The Party has no specific programme for Youth. Last April, we had a meeting of Swatantra Youth. Nothing has been heard from them after that.

We must present to the Government and to the various authorities, our charter of demands.

The Rajasthan Swatantra Party recently submitted a memorandum to the State Government that the procurement price of wheat should not be lowered. This is a good issue because when Kisans have a good harvest, the price falls but when they go to purchase other articles of daily use they have to pay a higher price.

Issues that effect the Kisans, the unemployed and small industries, some should be taken up by the Swatantra Party. We should agitate, organise morchas and demonstrate and even be prepared to go to jail.

In the present situation, no political party can stay alive if it does not resort to direct action. Unless you go to the streets, and shout slogans in support of the people's grievances, people will never come with you. There is no doubt that the policies of the Swatantra Party alone can bring prosperity to the people of this country. But our policies have to be translated into action-oriented programmes. Our office bearers at the State and Central level confine themselves to their offices, it is even difficult to meet them. They should devote some time, say four hours a day for Party's work, and constantly visit the States at the district levels.

There was an effort to form Trade Unions but that appears to be still born. There is another matter that has not been attended to during the last few years and that is the training of our Office Bearers in the Party's programme and policies. Such camps should be organised now, as many of them are ignorant of what the Party stands for and are thus unable to explain to the people the Party's policies. This should be followed by similar camps at the State level and down to the district and primary levels so that our field workers are well briefed.

The Swatantra Party has a great role to play and a bright future, if only our leaders will leave their offices and go to the field and mingle with the people.

Mr. Yashwant Kumar Choudhary (Bihar) : Dr. Cooper has raised the fundamental question as to whether the Party should continue or be dissolved.

The Swatantra Party was founded because Pandit Nehru was by his Nagpur resolution dragging the country towards communism. Today, when the whole country is in danger of going communist the need for

the Swatantra Party is all the greater. Indira Gandhi wants one party and one leader. The Congress Party is neither Socialist nor a political Party. It is a kind of Mafia organisation.

Do you think that the money from nationalised banks is being given to the poor in the villages or to the panwallas and rikshawallas? I move around considerably in Bihar and I have found that no poor man is under any illusion that Mrs. Gandhi is distributing money to the poor. Bangla Desh had no impact in Bihar. The entire organisation of the Congress in Bihar is made up of criminals. It is an assemblage of dacoits, smugglers, corrupt officials and corrupt politicians. The Congress does not admit people on the basis of ideology because what they are interested in is organising a goonda gang. Gaija smugglers and opium smugglers are donors to the Congress Party in Bihar.

Mr. L.N. Mishra who is the Union Minister spent Seventy five lakhs in the Darbhanga by-election. In the flood affected areas which I visited from door to door, only fifteen lakhs were spent which worked to Rs.10/- per every poor person to rebuild his house, though it was announced that each person rendered homeless would get Rs. 500/-.

In 1937 and 1945, the zamindars forfeited their security deposits showing how fairly the elections were conducted by the Britishers. The English permitted fair elections and enabled us to secure freedom but this Mafia Congress did not permit 80% of the poor people to even go near polling booths.

The Congress is destroying the younger generation. From the Darbhanga by-election to the Assembly elections, University students were exploited. They were supplied with drinks. They were given bombs and unlicensed revolvers and control polling booths.

When the country is being destroyed, when the younger generation is being destroyed, it is the duty of the Swatantra Party to channelise the people's anger. There will no more be elections but a mass upsurge as a reaction to the ways of the Ruling Congress. All parties excepting ours, are socialist. We believe in democracy, not in socialism. The Jan Sangh has no ideology. Sometimes they favour bank nationalisation, sometimes they oppose it. All they do is to run wherever there is a crowd is, put themselves in front, and call themselves leaders! I welcome the Rajmata's speech criticising the Jan Sangh. If there is a party which pretends to be our friend, but is really our enemy, it is the Jan Sangh.

The State leader of the Jan Sangh in Bihar told me that he would not set up an candidate against me. They claim to be a disciplined party and yet it is surprising that most of the Jan Sangh workers I saw were shouting slogans in favour of the Ruling Congress and worked against me.

Though we were only two we did good work in the Assembly and during the land grab movement. Mr. L.N. Mishra was determined to defeat us, though the people elected me he manipulated my defeat. You don't have booth control in Rajasthan, but in Bihar the opposition resorted to booth control, hence the Congress got only a slender majority of seven. The Opposition has day polling and the Congress has night polling.

We shall have to organise a Swatantra Bahini Sona to meet the Congress Mafia organisation. My life has been threatened. Even today I have bodyguards with me. The Congress organised the killing of a Communist candidate. They shot the brother of Ram Lakhan Yadav who was planning to leave the Congress Party.

If they are going to organise violence it should be met with violence. There is no other way.

I am planning in Bihar an agitation against the tax on agricultural goods and the increase in the price of kerosene. Such agitations should be organised by the Swatantra Party throughout the country. But field work alone will not now deliver the goods.

The Congress candidate in my constituency was a police informant. He is hated by the people and yet he won by 28,000 votes.

A person like Ramanand Tiwari who was a police inspector and who secured jobs for hundreds of field workers lost by 4000 votes. There was a calculated attempt to pick on certain leaders and insure that they were not elected.

There is a constituency called Manigachi. The total votes there were one lakh ten thousand and the ballot papers found in the boxes totalled one lakh six thousand ! The congress candidate here won in the last elections by 1000 votes. He became a Minister and therefore a rich person. He won this time by 30,000 votes and the Swatantra Party candidate got 21,000 votes. Our candidate's votes were genuine and the Congressmen's were manipulated votes. The mixing of ballot papers is not for maintaining secrecy of the ballot but the secrecy of manipulation.

We should organise a movement to expose all this.

President's Remarks : We know now what kind of direct action Rajaji must have had in mind. What Mr. Chaudhary has said is borne out by what Mr. Jagjivan Ram said in the Central Hall of Parliament. He was told that there was a lot of rigging in these elections and he said of course, in Bihar what happens is the capture of booths; that is a new technique that has been adopted. When Mr. K.C. Pant who was there said that it does not happen in Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Jagjivan Ram replied: "You have not advanced yet." !

Mr. Shantilal Thar (Bombay)

The frustration caused by the defeat of the Opposition in 1971 and in 1972 is echoed in Dr. Cooper's letter. What earlier speakers have ignored is the second thoughts that Dr. Cooper appears to have had between 28th March and 5th April. It is the latter letter which gives a 7-point programme that deserves attention.

The National Executive should consider these points and formulate a policy of direct action for the future.

The opposition parties cannot get any funds because all the money goes to Mrs. Gandhi collected by her either through pressure, or fear, or a quid pro quo. We in the Opposition cannot do this. We should not depend or expect any money.

Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement failed in 1931 but he had enough to do in the next ten years by spending his energies in constructive work. In the process he kept courage alive in the minds of our people.

We should not get discouraged if we have met with failure. If our methods are correct, if our ideology is right, we cannot lose in the end.

Though emphasising political activity, our Party should also branch out into social activity.. For example, the very excellent work being done by Dr. Deshmukh regarding functional literacy. He has issued a pamphlet which states that an investment of 30 crores can make the people functionally literate. This means that you take to the people in the villages that kind of literacy which will enable them to read and write and which will be useful in their day to day work. Other subjects include farming, nutrition, hygiene, family planning and medical attention. When we have no money we should spend at least our physical energies and intellect and gather together a band of workers who will go to the villages and work on these lines. All this should be studied by the National Executive and see in what way the party can contribute. We are bound to get support if we do this for the next few years.

Maharawal Saheb wanted working arrangements with the Jan Sangh. But the Swatantra Party's enemy Number 1 is the Jan Sangh. Like the communists, they are out to destroy parties that join them in united fronts. When I went to collect some money for our Party I was told by my friends that they were told by the Jan Sangh that the Swatantra Party had no chances and therefore it was a waste of money giving funds to the Swatantra Party. Therefore any reapproachment or coming to a working arrangement with the Jan Sangh is simple out of the question. Victory only comes to the strong. Let us therefore make ourselves strong and let us work at the grass roots. When we are strong, they (the Jan Sangh) will come crawling to us.

We must develop a cadre of good leaders who are not part-timers. Some of our leaders are admirable people but they cannot devote full time to the Party. We must develop leaders who are available to the Party all the time.

Defeats come and go but we should not lose heart. This euphoria will die. Mrs. Gandhi can never hope to hatao garibi, in the next fifty years. The more she fails, the more she will nationalise and the more she nationalises, the more will there be unemployment. When that happens, there should not be a vacuum. Let's get ready to fill the vacuum otherwise the communists will take our place whether it is five or ten years later.

Mr. T.R. Ramakrishnan (Bombay-Special Invitee)

The formation of the Swatantra Party in August 1959 was preceded by years of hard-thinking, consultation and gathering the opinion of hundreds of people. This resulted in the formation of the Swatantra Party. We are now going into what went wrong. It is in this connection, as a member of the younger generation, that I say that three things went wrong and I am not prepared to give a clear chit to my leaders.

1. The path of deviation followed by my leaders from the fundamental principles of our Party.

2. The continued existence of intellectual dictatorship
3. Utter indiscipline at the top.

I joined the Swatantra Party for three reasons. I heard Mr. Masani condense the message of the Swatantra Party in one sentence at a meeting at Chowpatty in 1959 in one sentence viz., : our mission is to bring India back to Gandhi from Nehru. The 20th principle of the Party states that the Party shall in all matters keep before itself the cardinal teachings of Gandhiji maintaining faith in the people, and in the efficacy of truth and non-violence. What have they done to translate this principle into action? Have they included any programme of Gandhiji in the Manifesto? Gandhiji termed his social economic programme as Gram Swaraj. If we are to survive as a political party, we have to follow Gram Swaraj as advocated by Gandhiji. 80% of our population is in the countryside. We cannot afford to have a programme meant for the urban centres particularly when our base has always been in the villages.

Regarding intellectual leadership, I would like to draw attention to the Grand Alliance. Our cadres were not even given a chance to express their opinion on this fundamental issue. I asked the then General Secretary whether he would allow an opinion poll on this issue and he replied no - it should not be spoilt as the leaders had all agreed to this alliance. This kind of intellectual dictatorship continues on every issue. People like me who want to play a constructive role are prevented from doing so and if we are prevented from expressing our views, the Party will have no future. The Party's future depends on the thousands of people like me who have joined it out of conviction.

The third point is utter indiscipline at the top. I am a field worker of the Party and we have fought four elections in Matunga and were defeated in all of them. We have been made the laughing stock. For instance, take the Indo-Soviet treaty. One leader says he supports the treaty. Another leader says that we oppose the treaty. What are we as Party workers to say when asked what is the Party's stand? We are criticised that we do not have a programme, a mind of our own and that we are utterly indisciplined at the top level. Everywhere we have been defeated. We have been let down by our leaders badly and I will say without any hesitation - let us fight together, let the Party accept Gram Swaraj as its sole objective. Let us either be disciplined or scrap the 21st Principle

President's Remarks: Mr. Ramakrishnan will realise that the 21st Principle generates the kind of indiscipline that he refers to. The 21st principle says that leaving aside the 20 principles and whatever is not mentioned in them the members of the Swatantra Party are free to have opinions of their own.

Mr. Ramakrishnan's points were most interesting, concerning indiscipline at the top and intellectual dictatorship. But in regard to deviation from the Party's policies I don't fully follow where we have deviated.

Mr. Babu Joseph:

I can understand differences on the Indo-Soviet Treaty. But what about the Constitution 24th and 25th amendments. Can our Party members take shelter under the 21st principle and be allowed to support the amendments though we have passed resolutions opposing them?

President's Remarks: Our opposition to the Constitutional amendments is covered by Principle No. 6 which says inter alia:

The Party holds that a sense of stability and incentive for individual effort can be restored only by strict adherence to the Fundamental Rights and Guarantees specified in the Constitution as originally adopted in respect of freedom of property, trade and occupation, and just compensation for any property compulsorily acquired by the State for public purposes.

Therefore the 24th and 25th amendments to the Constitution would in the sense which we would read the principles be opposed by us.

Mr. H.K. Srivastava (U.P.) :

I am in the Party since it was founded.

When a person who joins the Party at considerable personal sacrifice and enrolls a large number of workers and works actively for the Party gets hurt by the leadership how can such a party run? I totally oppose the suggestion to dissolve the Party. We are the only ideologically different party. All other parties talk of socialism. Swatantra Party alone says that the path to prosperity lies through freedom, peoples' initiative and enterprise as in America, Germany, etc.

Talking about agitation, none of us have undertaken that much of direct action like the Communists and Socialists but even they have not been able to make any impression on the electorate. Therefore we should not lose our morale by our defeat, for these elections were not won by fair means.

No opposition party that shouts slogans of socialism will survive and we alone will continue if we hold steadfast to our policies and principles. You must remember that these very opposition parties that talk of socialism supported V.V. Giri during the Presidential elections and they are all now regretting they did so. Whoever supports Mrs. Indira Gandhi's policies will be swallowed by her and will be eliminated from the scene. 75% of those M.P.s who are now with Mrs Gandhi and who praise her publicly are very bitter about her in private. She will remain a leader of the country only for a short time and the Swatantra Party will be remembered as the Party which saved India from the Communist threat.

We are now going through a severe trial.

You might wind up the Party at Sassoon Building, but we are field workers with a sense of mission. Whether your office is open or not we shall continue to fight for democracy, for Swatantra ideals and for the country's welfare under some other flag. Let the leaders start listening to the workers of the Party, otherwise only workers will remain and the leaders will disappear

President's Remarks: Mr. Srivastava said one thing which surprised me. He said that you should not think of the Party as a limited company, that they would as workers continue to work even if the Party is dissolved, may be under another flag. I had hoped that he would say that he would continue to work under the same flag.

Mr. K.R. Koshti (Maharashtra - Special Invitee):

Whether to continue the Party or dissolve it is really not in our hands. It is the people, the voters who have the final decision whether this party should be supported or not. Therefore instead of talking about closing down or continuing we should find out how we should continue.

When we were formed in 1959 we had readymade organisations, we had good workers at the top and we had very fine workers and that is how we came up. But we failed to create a mass base. We did not work for the people. We should take up peoples' causes.

If we are to continue and serve the people, we must first look at our Party organisation. We should amend our constitution to ensure good internal administration. We promise the people clean administration but our own hands are not clean. For example when our Party elections are held, I could produce evidence to show that it is all based on bogus membership, bogus organisation. Elections are manipulated. We charge the government with manipulated elections but we do so similarly within our own organisation. Even after these bogus elections are held if a member prefers to appeal against a certain election to the Election Tribunal, the decision of the tribunal which is ex-parte comes after the next election is held. Is this the rule of law within the Party? We are entitled to get an immediate decision because there is further provision for appeal to the National Tribunal. How do you expect good people to come to a Party like this? How can work go on when it is based on fictitious reports and bogus membership and there is no enquiry by our leaders. Unless we improve this, the Party has no future. But on the other hand we are driving away good and dedicated people. If we want to work we must put our own house in order.

After our defeat in the '71 /72 our Party has no future, unless it goes to the masses and work for them, even if our ideologies and principles are the finest and the best. This we are unable to do because we are essentially a party of white collar workers and arm-chair politicians. One can hardly see our leaders going around to help our primary units in propagating the Party's principles. Therefore arm-chair politicians must leave and trained young and new people should take their place. We should take up the cause of exposing corruption in public life, particularly among corrupt officials in government.

Another issue is to campaign against high prices. Rather than ask for increase in wages of labour, we should demand that prices be brought down.

President's Remarks: Basing himself on the experience in Maharashtra Mr. Koshti took a pessimistic view of the Party's future throughout the country which he is not entitled to do unless he has any knowledge of how things are working in the rest of the country. He talks about going to the people. I hope he is practising what he preaches because nothing prevents any member of the party from working among the people.

When Mr. Arya said various things about leaders I was fully appreciative of his work because he works exactly in the way in which he wants the leaders to work.

Mr. R.V. Murthy (Bombay - Special Invitee):

Since I happened to be the Tribunal for Maharashtra and went into the case of irregularities pointed out by Mr. Koshti (who by the way was an interested party) I should like to say a few words. As any one who is entrusted with a responsibility like this, I called for all the

relevant papers and on the basis of the record I was clearly of the opinion that there was no case and I made that clear. There was of course some delay and the delay was not avoidable at all. I am saying this to set the record straight that nobody got away with the impression that the Maharashtra Unit has not conducted its affairs without respecting law and procedure. Whenever any reference was made to me or any enquiry was conducted by me I have strictly observed the rule of the law and given my verdict accordingly.

We may have lost the elections but have done a wonderful job of educating the people, a job that needs to be continued vigorously, particularly because the opposition today is negligible. However intelligent might have been the speeches and observations of our leaders they were blacked out by the Press.

Once it is decided that the Pa-rty should continue, why should it ally itself with any other party? If it was 1967 I would have gone whole-heartedly with Maharawal of Dungarpur and made common cause with the Jan Sangh. People like us have lost all respect for the Jan Sangh because it has watered down its principles. The latest is the way in which they tried to cash in on the Bihari-Muslim question.

I say this to emphasise that the Swatantra Party must continue with its policies and not consider alliances with other parties and particularly with the Jan Sangh constituted as it is today.

If we have decided to continue to function should we function in the manner we have been doing all along or learn our lessons from our shortcomings and mistakes these last few years despite the excellent leadership and guidance that we have had ?

There are certain times when some people appeal and some don't. In other words this leadership may not appeal to some people. If this leadership does not appeal to some people then it is up to these people to call for a re-overhauling of the leadership. How do we overhaul ? We should think in terms of having a person whose image is very much respected all over the country and particularly by the younger generation. It is the younger generation to whom we have got to appeal and to the extent to which we are able to appeal to the younger generation we will be able to make head-way and to make head-way and appeal to the younger generation we must have a relatively young man at the helm of affairs who is prepared to take the counsel of the experience of the elders and not forget altogether. We must make it possible for the new leader to think in terms of reorganising the entire structure in the way in which he wants, but without totally abolishing lock, stock and barrel the existing framework (if he does that we are going to go no where). We are the only party who have not cared to water down our principles come what may and that goes to the credit of our Party alone. Therefore we need not be ashamed of belonging to a Party even if we have got one or two members in the Assembly or Parliament. So long as the voice of dissent continues to be there I think we will have served our purpose.

Sunday, April 9

N.K. Ganapiah (Mysore) : In each constituency, 20 workers should be enrolled in a polling booth area. This would result in 2,500 workers per constituency. If this cannot be done in the next five years, then we might as well disband the Party.

We have been drifting since 1967; those living in urban areas if they cannot go to the villages, can at least contribute funds or go to the districts to guide our workers.

I would advise the National Executive to appoint small Committees to study agricultural, industrial, trade, labour and women's problems.

We in Mysore, have called a meeting of our candidates in Bangalore on the 16th to discuss ways to strengthen the Party in Mysore.

Farmers are going to be hard hit when ceilings are lowered further. The Mysore Chief Minister says that the ceiling should be ten acres. In the next five to ten years, there will be further fragmentation. And the agriculturist class will become a third-rate citizen. Farmers will therefore have to be organised to prevent their being destroyed.

There is also a talk of Urban ceilings and the introduction of Agricultural Income-Tax. These measures must be resisted.

For all this, we should have a membership of at least one lakh in each State having 20 districts. Otherwise, we will not have any strength.

Kalyansingh Kalvi (Rajasthan) : Congress always holds election when the atmosphere is favourable to them. 20 days before the 1971 elections, Mrs. Gandhi went on saying that there would be no elections. This time also it was the same. After saying elections would be postponed by a year, she suddenly said that elections would be held as scheduled. Because of this Opposition Parties were caught unprepared and suffered.

Congress is not an ideological party but an assemblage of corrupt businessmen corrupt industrialists, corrupt traders, corrupt officials and corrupt politicians.

It is wrong to say that the Congress wins because its ideology is accepted, or because of a Indira wave or because of Bangla Desh. Congress Ministers and workers appeal to the selfish instinct of the voters. People have become so morally degraded, that they support them for personal and selfish gain. This is the biggest cause for Congress victory. Those industrialists and big businessmen who supported us, withdrew their support, refused to give us funds and helped the Congress which gives them protection and promises of patronage in their business and industry. Government machinery is utilised by the ruling party and they have plenty of money. Whereas the Opposition Parties have very little scope for collecting funds. All media of mass communication are fully utilised by the Congress and hence the people's mind is conditioned in favour of the Congress.

Another factor is the spreading of elections over three days. This enables the Congress to shift their election machinery from one constituency where polling is over to another. Opposition Parties should demand that in each State, elections must be held on one day.

Swatantra's defeat is also due to internal weaknesses. Our ideology appeals to the middle class and the intellectuals who are mentally and economically slaves of the Government. They are good arm-chair politicians but they won't publicly oppose the Government.

Therefore whatever programme we have for attracting the middle classes and the intellectuals will be ineffective.

There is some truth in the charge that the Swatantra Party is a party of leaders without followers. Our leaders have failed to make their impact on the rank and file. Nor do they keep in touch with the Party's workers.

Our leaders are not professional politicians as in the Congress and other opposition parties. We are part-time politicians, attending to our personal business matters. Whoever wishes to be in politics will have to give full time to politics.

In 1967 a number of outsiders stood from Rajasthan as Party candidates. They became life members for this purpose. But not one of them after getting elected devoted their time to help the Party in any way. How do you expect a party to run this way? This is the hard truth.

The Party's workers need to be taken care of like plants in a nursery. Without guidance, workers will not develop and work actively. If leaders don't give active guidance, the workers become demoralised. If a leader sits regularly with five workers, it is like addressing a 5,000-strong meeting. He has to come down from his pedestal and be among the workers.

Our Party only reacts when Government takes action. For instance, we oppose and agitate against Constitution amendments, land ceilings, increased taxation etc. But we should launch an offensive by spelling out our policies clearly and giving the people of positive programme of action. Until then none will be attracted by us.

Before the Congress brings any legislation like urban ceilings, it prepares the ground and creates an atmosphere among the people in favour of its proposed measure. When the Swatantra Party opposes such a measure it is misunderstood as opposing a progressive measure. Therefore before such measures are brought forward by Government, the party should spell out unambiguously its policies regarding property etc. We should act and not merely react.

These are matters which the Party should consider seriously.

We keep talking of aligning with various parties from time to time. If this is the attitude where is the need to have a separate party. Such alignments are sought on grounds of expediency and not on an identity of principles. If we are to stick to our principles, we should give up this search for alignments. We must create a feeling among our workers that those who are not with us are against us.

We need three things to run an organisation : good leadership, good team of workers, and resources. If we have these three things there is no need to talk of dissolving the Party or merging it with others. I am convinced we have all these three with us if only we have the will to work.

Our Party's leaders should have the capacity to stand by the workers at all times. If we are facing a difficult situation, then there should be unity of command with a strong personality given full powers. There is nothing wrong in doing so.

Workers are not created by making speeches and literature but only by going into the field. And this is possible only if we have a programme of agitating on local issues. Programmes should not only be prepared by our leaders, they should also lead the workers in implementing such programmes.

In Rajasthan, the biggest problem is that faced by the farmer. Industrialists are with the ruling Party. The workers have been captured by the Communists and Congress. They will not come to us. The farmers are also supporting Congress because of legislation like the Tenancy Act that has favoured them. But where it concerns questions like electric power, water or fertiliser, the Rajasthan Kisan is unhappy. When Swatantra Party takes up the cause of Kisans, there is a flutter in the Congress.

In Rajasthan we started a movement for a remunerative price for agricultural products. The Congress controlled Kisan Sangh immediately took up our demand and started an agitation led by a Minister. The Congress Party first creates difficulties for the farmers and then itself launches agitation against their own policies ! This is because we do not act in time and the Congress seizes the initiative and reaps the benefit.

We must activate Swatantra Youth. We must raise our resources from amongst ourselves. If we depend on outside support for funds, we shall get only promises which will not be kept and the Party is left in the lurch. The Party's workers should contribute to conduct its activities. It will also have the effect of ensuring that the workers develop a vested interest in the Party. A worker giving Rs 10/- per month is more useful to the Party than an outsider contributing a lakh of rupees.

President's Remarks : This has been one of the most useful and constructive contributions.

Col. Pasricha(Delhi) : Summing up the discussions so far I would say that the raison d'être of the Party is its creed. And it is the only democratic alternative to the dictatorial quasi-communist policies of the Government. You eliminate it and you leave behind only pink and red on various hues and you leave behind a huge pall of suffocating smoke that has threatened and continues to threaten democracy in India and that is the Jan Sangh.

There is no greater anti-opposition party than the Jan Sangh. It is their fundamental creed. They will join with the opposition only to destroy them. It has not yet entered the mediocre Jan Sangh mind that the determining factor in elections in our country are the minorities. The Congress knows this. The more strongly the Jan Sangh projects itself and its revivalist policies the greater the unity and determination of the minorities to combine behind the Congress which always represents itself as the only champions of minorities. The Muslim vote is the solid basis on which the Congress depends. In 1967 there was a partial revulsion of the Muslim vote and Congress Governments fell like nine pins producing a sense of euphoria among the opposition.

There is nothing wrong with our gospel. But we have not had enough dynamic, dedicated apostles to publicise our creed. And it is to that function that has been to seriously and regretfully neglected that we must address ourselves. That is the only sound basis on which the party can be built. Since 1970 I have been trying to say that our effort to concentrate all our resources mental and financial on Parliamentary elections is putting the cart before the horse. If the public have confidence in you the seats in Parliament will follow. But without it the seats will not come. But I have not been able to inject this basic fact into the Party despite all my efforts. I am not suggesting that this is a panacea. But it is an essential first step. The worker must be trained properly and he must feel that in his leader he has a comrade.

I feel the Party should have from the beginning a separate organisation wing under the charge of a whole-time organising secretary whose job it will be to travel all the time and make liaison with his corresponding members in each State and get them to do something. And if he finds that there are people in the Party, as there are many, who will not shift from their chairs, they must be removed.

Let us be practical. You cannot expect the few people sitting in Bombay or at the provincial headquarters to go and make contact with every man in the street or the village. The common man has to be approached through the common man. And it is a body of common men that we need.

It is that task we should have in the past seriously addressed ourselves. We shall have to work hard but lie low because the circumstances in which we are placed now are extremely adverse. Such things happen in the lives of political parties. It is not to be taken with very great regret or remorse. And meanwhile if we are prepared to organise ourselves in a systematic scientific manner I think we will probably ride the storm.

Mr. H.L. Jatav (Delhi) : Every time we meet we draw up programmes and when we return to our constituencies and cities we do nothing further. Every Party has periods of hopelessness and despair. Even the Congress has faced it. But they kept courage and worked. I am a worker in Delhi. I am a poor man. Why did I join the Party? People call it the Party of rajas and richmen. I say this is wrong. Our Party is a democratic Party and has been born to fight for democracy and oppose communism. The Rajmata of Jaipur once addressed an election meeting when I was contesting the Delhi Corporation election. She said at that meeting that the Jan Sangh could never become an all-India Party because Swatantra Party

alone can give the country a sense of direction as advocated by Gandhiji, Tilak and others.

Under the slogan of Garibi Hatao, the Congress is destroying the poor people and they are being denied democratic rights and communism is being introduced.

We in Delhi recently demonstrated outside the FICCI meeting in Delhi. We must launch similar struggles and workers will come. But we should not depend for funds on the Centre. Every worker must consider himself a leader.

Mr. B.U. Trivedi (M.P. Invitee) : I have two suggestions to offer. The first is in regard to the changed system of voting. I have thought out a new system which will not only save the government incurring huge expenditure but reduce the expenditure incurred by the candidates and parties.

Under this new system each candidate should deposit Rs 1000/- with the government treasury. The election propaganda will be conducted by the government machinery and not by the Party. All parties will be given equal treatment for 7 days. Voters slips and manifestoes of Parties and candidates will be published by the government. An assembly election will cost Rs 1000/- and Parliament election Rs 5000/-. No independent campaigning will be necessary and if any candidate or Party does so it will be disqualification.

The other scheme is to prevent manipulation of ballot papers. The Swatantra Party should propagate this scheme as the only way to ensure free and fair elections.

A machine should be manufactured with a number of push buttons. These buttons should carry the symbols of the various parties. The voter will go inside the booth and push the button bearing the symbol of his choice. The machine will automatically record his vote. Once the voter presses the button, the light will flicker outside to indicate that the voter has cast his vote. Once the voter comes out, the light will be switched off to enable the next voter to come in and cast his vote. If a voter does not press the button, the light will not come on outside and this indicate that the voter has not cast his vote. This will eliminate the need for ballot papers and with it the tampering of ballot boxes will not be possible. The ruling party has been manipulating successive elections with the strategy of defeating specific parties by employing a variety of fraudulent methods.

Any political party to survive must have a strong cadre of workers who will tour the various villages and do work. I am willing to take on 6 to 7 districts in Madhya Pradesh. I will build up such a strong organisation that in the next election the Swatantra Party can annex all the Parliamentary seats in these districts. We must take up local issues, we must fight Panchayat, municipal and corporation elections and elections to cooperative societies. First fight the smaller elections which will enable us to do work for the people or we will never be able to do well in Assembly and Parliamentary elections.

Mr. P. Sundaresan (Tamil Nadu) : Hitherto, our publicity has been aimed at urban people forgetting our village voters despite the fact that 80% of the voters are in the villages and half of them are ladies. So far, we have only explained our policies through newspapers and public meetings. Most of these public meetings are held in urban areas and most of the newspaper readers are also in the urban areas. Ladies generally do not attend meetings or read newspapers.

We should produce at least five or six five minutes- films which should be screened continuously not in A or B class theatres but in C class touring cinemas in the villages. Public meetings if at all held in villages will cost an average of Rs 100/- and even then the audience will be few and even they will be sympathisers of the Party.

By exhibiting five-minute films through the touring cinemas, we shall be educating 15,000 voters whether they are sympathisers of the Party or not. It should not be difficult to find the money for this purpose which will cost an average of Rs 125 per touring cinema. Local and State Units should contribute and enable the film to be screened in their areas.

President's Remarks : This is a good suggestion and should be considered.

Mr. Piloo Mody (Gujarat) : To begin with, the Party is basically made up, not of its principles, but of its people and therefore it is necessary to think a little about the type of people who have gravitated into our Party. There was a large bulk of honest and decent people who had been feeling for many years, the need for a democratic alternative to the Congress which they visualised as a party that was taking the country to a totalitarian or communist form of government. It is these people who originally gravitated into the Swatantra Party and formed a Party under the inspired leadership of Rajaji. But something went wrong along the line. We got people coming into our Party whose faith in a greater India, in democratic principles, in an economic alternative to communism, was not as firm, not as abiding with the result that in a spurt of opportunism and as far as the Party is concerned in a spurt of expediency, we started dishing out the favours of the Party such as they were, and particularly after the quite considerable initial successes that it had achieved, to all manner of people to the detriment of the original dedicated people who had started and joined the Party.

I am saying it purely to point out how we went wrong. With the result that when ill luck started knocking at our door, we found a great many people leaving. Not those with an abiding faith and concern for the country but those who had jumped in for an easy ride. As they started leaving a certain demoralisation started creeping into even the staunchest hearts. This is basically what has happened. At this meeting, we have made tired speeches because although we are unwilling to accept that the Party is in bad straits; that the Party faces extinction, nevertheless, there is a certain sentimentality in us which has kept us going. But as we keep going, we get more and more tired.

The principles of our Party are unexceptionable because they have been brought together and framed by people who have the most incisive brains that the country can produce. But we do not make use of their intelligence to its fullest extent. Take for instance, the resolutions of the Party which have been drafted by the people of the eminence and calibre of Mr. Dasani, Mr. Dandekar, Mr. Cooper, Mr. H.M. Patel and Mr. Lobo Prabhu and so many others and then finally revised with the acute insight of no less a person than Shri Rajaji. But when these resolutions are translated into any Indian language they become understandable. There is nothing wrong with the resolutions. But take them to any village in India and the villagers do not know what you are talking about. Therefore what Mr. Lobo Prabhu said makes very sound sense. He said that the principles of the Party have to be translated and reversed from the point of view of the consumer, (to me, the consumer is the only scientific definition of the common man) from the landless labourers, from the small farmer, from the industrial worker, from the small shopkeeper and from the small businessman. What's in it for him? This is the basic requirement. This is not our resolutions should appear. And if some industrialist or some company director does not understand or cannot translate our consumer-oriented resolutions into high policy and principles, I don't think we should care about it. There is no need for us to change our policies and principles. It is only necessary to change what we say in order to do more faithful service to the principles that we have maintained.

I have heard the same thing being said for the last twelve years - that we must have a grass roots organisation. What is this grass roots organisation? I once made a very rough and conservative calculation that in order to start a grass roots organisation, we must have a minimum requirement of two and a half crores of rupees per annum. If this is the way we are going to organise our politics, then I would say that the best political party in this country is Brooke Bond Tea because it has the finest sales organisation in India. It is quite obvious that we are not going to be able to function at that level and therefore we have to innovate some other ways and means by which we can put together a political party with a credibility. Then we talk about the future in the context of Indian politics. Whatever faith I may have had in democratic principles; and the electoral process prior to 1971 has been shattered. From what I saw in 1971 and 1972 I think it is absurd for us to plan our strategy and think in terms of fighting elections assuming all the time that elections are fair and free. Prior to 1971 I would say that the margin of error, the margin of cheating in elections was in manageable proportions. Since 1971 and 1972 they have become totally unmanageable.

There has been a heightened level of violence which has tended to keep a lot of people away from the poll, which has tended to take a lot of people to the poll from sheer mortal fear. This has made substantial difference in the voting pattern. We have always known that money has been used to bribe and purchase votes and for every conceivable purpose. But what happened in 1971 and 1972 was that money was used in a very much more massive manner, that the original equation that remained between the use of money and the use of hard work became unbalanced.

We have known all these years that official machinery has been used but not to the extent that it was used in 1971 or 1972. Not only official money, but official vehicles, all manner of mass media, air force planes not one but eight air force planes 24 hours a day for two months have been at the beck and call of the Prime Minister. All-India Radio which even though it was a departmental function all these years, used to give a certain balance in the news. Today, it is all handouts which are corrected, censored and angled to help the Ruling Party. Even the Press Information Bureau which hands out official information from day to day is slanted in favour of certain personalities and policies of government.

I would like to give you the instance of my own constituency. There was nothing in my constituency to suggest that Mrs. Gandhi should win the elections. There was no campaign and no workers. No evidence of any malpractice. I cannot even suspect that the Government machinery worked against me, yet the result was disastrous. We conducted an intelligent campaign. There was plenty of literature. None of my candidates starved from any finances. They had all the wherewithals with which to fight a clean, democratic election.

I was there personally for five weeks, worked harder than I had in 1971 or in 1972. But the result was a clean sweep against us - I lost five deposits out of seven. I have no explanation. And I am not prepared to accept that there was any Indira wave because if there was any wave in my constituency, it was a Piloo Mody wave. I just cannot understand it and therefore I have instituted all manner of searches to find out why or how it could happen.

It is amazing but the day the results were known, we started enrolling members. Before the end of the month, we had 400 members in our constituency. And within three months, I am expecting to have a thousand members.

So we have a situation in which the ruling party has ensured for itself that it can win any election at will. It is in this context that we have to think about how we should organise the Swatantra Party to counter this. What are we going to do then? Is it suggested that the principles of the Swatantra Party and what it stands for will become obsolete the moment elections stop in this country? Therefore we have to think not in terms of a political party trying to get a few seats in legislatures but as people who have been entrusted, who have accepted for themselves not only the right, but also the duty and responsibility for preserving a particular point of view, a particular thought, a particular form of Government, a particular concept of society. This we can only do if we also carry with us a certain abiding concern for the country itself. In other words, we may deride the nationalism of the Jan Sangh as being ultra-nationalist. But there must be a deep strain of patriotism and concern for this country if we are going to be able to do what we have been charged to do either by providence or by ourselves.

How we are going to organise should follow a study of what has happened to the electoral process, the system and method of electioneering. Electoral reform can only be suggested by us if there is a deep study of the subject. Election law will have to be changed. But the movement must continue and it can only continue through people who have a certain recklessness, a certain irreverence and youth to

back it up and the energy levels necessary to back it up.

In the ruminations that I have been doing since the 1971 elections, I have come to the conclusion that we have in this country a great deal of evil which can only be fought with an equivalent amount of good. Therefore we must go and mobilise the youth of this country. The only thing is that we do not have the right method of approach but I am absolutely convinced in my mind that the youth of this country are neither socialist nor communist but Swatantra. And tell them that they have to go and fight injustice, not for free enterprise, or constitutional amendments but you try and inculcate in them a desire to fight injustice wherever they see it and most of all in their own homes. We must fire them up with this sort of indignation, to oppose wrong and evil singly or collectively to fight evil whenever they see it. I have been experimenting with this and find that certain soils are more fertile than others and the most fertile soil I have found is the thousands of unemployed engineers - students who are out of colleges who find that they do not have the necessary influence to secure a job. This is our most fertile soil of activity. Therefore, instead of thinking in terms of recruiting people to the Party, go to these youth. In the villages, go to the man who has decided to stay on his farms and not go to the city looking for a job. Because he is of the earth, he will help you and remain loyal with you. He will serve you.

Therefore if we are to reorganise the Party, there is no question of changing its principles but only its orientation. Any advertising campaign is aimed at a particular audience - our campaign should be aimed at the youth of the country. Because the older we get, we start making compromises of life. What we want in our party are uncompromising people.

Mr. P.K. Deo (Orissa) : Like in the life of a nation so also in the life of a party there are ups and downs. To win an election or be in government is not an end in itself but only a means to an end. The purpose is to fight against injustice, tyranny, despotism, autocracy and totalitarianism. This struggle will continue irrespective of the Swatantra Party. Whatever decision we may take regarding the Party's future, posterity will carry forward the flag of freedom for which the Swatantra Party stands.

There is nothing wrong with the Swatantra Party. We joined the Swatantra Party out of conviction and we shall continue to be in this party by whatever name you may choose to call it. I do not see any reason for a change in the name of the Party.

As the Swatantra Party happens to be in government in a particular state you might be expecting that it is the touchstone of the Party's principles. But I would like to say as the President of that State Unit that there are various limitations. We work under various stresses and strains. Our coalition partners though not socialists by conviction do not lose any opportunity to proclaim that they are more socialist than Mrs. Gandhi. Therefore even though we opposed in principle the Constitution 24th and 25th Amendments we did take the opportunity to record our protest in the Orissa legislature though we could not stop it being passed. Even if the Orissa Legislature had obstructed its passage these amendment bills were sure to be endorsed by more than half the legislatures in the country. We therefore did not feel it necessary to bring matters to a head and break up the coalition on this account.

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With other parties are concerned it is too early to remember when I was, for a brief period leader of the Lok Sabha and Mr. U.M. Trivedi was the leader of the party, we tried to formulate a joint Swatantra-Jan Sangh Parliamentary group. We referred the matter to Rajaji and Rajaji with his foresight thought

So far as our alignment with other parties are concerned it is too early to rule such things out. I remember when I was, for a brief period leader of the Swatantra Party in the Lok Sabha and Mr. U.M. Trivedi was the leader of the Jan Sangh, we tried to formulate a joint Swatantra-Jan Sangh Parliamentary Group. We referred the matter to Rajaji and Rajaji with his foresight thought that Mr. Trivedi's voice was the lone voice in the Jan Sangh and he restrained me from going ahead. Today I find that Mr. Trivedi is completely disillusioned and he has joined the Swatantra Party and I heartily welcome him.

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I know the days ahead are very difficult for the Party. We lost the Koraput by-election the other day. It is a Naxalite infested area bordering Andhra Pradesh. Two of our workers were killed the night before polling. You all know of the Sixty-lakh State Bank of India episode. In spite of our apprehension and protest in the Lok Sabha regarding the safety of Nagarwala, he is no more as also the Inspecting Officer. All these things indicate that this country is heading towards totalitarianism and we will have to face the music so long the people do not realise this danger. We must educate people about these facts. As Mr. Piloo Mody said the ground is fertile but we will have to make efforts. For that, my first suggestion is that the National Headquarters of the Swatantra Party be shifted from Bombay to Delhi. Delhi is the hub of Indian politics and we cannot remain far away. Even for sending election material, such delay from the Central Office could have been avoided if the Central Office had been located at a central place.

Secondly as the Bhagwat Geeta says let us do our duty and not be worried about the fruits thereof. It is our duty to keep the flag flying irrespective of the consequences.

Mr. U.M. Trivedi (Special Invitee - Madhya Pradesh) : The present position after the elections seems to have brought us to the cross roads, but I agree with all of you that we need not lose heart but carry on the fight for democracy in the same manner as we have been doing so far.

The Swatantra Party alone has an alternative to the policies of the Party in power. All other parties are trying to become leftists. Many of you might remember the speech of Mr. Hume when the Congress was first started. Today, all of you here are intelligent enough to know that it is our duty as the cream of society to do our bit for the country and to guide our people to the aim which we see and which ought to be the aim of every democratic party.

The Congress from the time it started, until the framing of the Constitution had the tail of the cow in its hands and was positively a Party leaning towards Hindus. It kicked the Hindus and kicked the cow as soon as it came to power. The Jan Sangh started with the same game, catching hold of the tail of the cow and the Hindus. It has kicked both. Today the Jan Sangh is out herding Herod. Nobody wants the Bihar Muslims to come back and settle down in India, but Jan Sangh wants it. The Congress wants to impose a ceiling on property of five lakhs and to take away the excess above the ceiling after paying some compensation, whereas the Jan Sangh says the ceiling should be two lakhs and the property above the ceiling should be taken away without payment of compensation. Can we call ourselves like-minded with any of these parties? We will be cheating ourselves if we do that. I was disillusioned with the Jan Sangh. It did not take me long to do so. It was

difficult for me to curb my sentiments particularly because I was a founder member of the Jan Sangh. To break off and talk against it was a great problem for me. Therefore it took me four years to make up my mind. Once I came out openly I did so strongly. I was strong enough, with my personal influence to annexe all the seven seats in Mandsaur district for the Jan Sangh and also the Parliamentary seat. This was the only district in the whole of India where the Jan Sangh could claim such a victory. I drove out the Congress. But now I have made up my mind to drive the Jan Sangh out. Within twenty two days from the time I started working for the Party I drove out the Jan Sangh from my district. Most of my friends here are soft towards the Jan Sangh because it is an opposition party. But I feel that the fellow travellers who have entered the Congress have also entered Jan Sangh and they are on the path to lead those who are with them into the same pitfall in which this Congress is going.

As long as we remain honest we have a future. I agree with Mr. Mody when he set down two qualifications for every politician to follow. I will lay down a third one; to your recklessness and irresponsibility add one thing more viz. unreasonableness in your attitude. Until you become unreasonable you cannot become a fanatic; until you become fanatics you cannot carry on with your party. Be fanatical about your party stick to your ideals and it will pay in the right direction where you are going.

Mr. N. Dandekar (Bombay) : I feel that there is such a degree of unanimity about various matters that I should merely perhaps help by stating what the unanimity is about.

I think in the first place it is perfectly agreed that the Swatantra Party must continue. There is every need for its continuance and there cannot be any talk about dissolving it.

The second proposition I think that is agreed is that we have got to go it alone. There isn't any like-minded party with which we could possibly have an alliance and if there was a like-minded party then the best thing would be to merge in it. I think it has been agreed unanimously again that there is no question about this and we should go it alone. There should be no talk about alliances with parties except when elections come along and you may make adjustments in regard to seats which is really a matter of local tactics.

Thirdly, I think it is agreed that we must now orient ourselves to a vigorous re-establishment of the Party throughout India to the end that will have an impact upon elections as and when they come along and that we should get prepared for it now. I think it was also the general consensus of opinion that elections mean not merely elections to Parliament or State Assemblies, it means elections all along the line, like elections to the municipalities, Corporations, Panchayats, Zilla Parishads, and so on. This last point I emphasise because for a long time our Party believed that politics ought not to be introduced into local self-government elections. It is now the consensus of opinion I think that the election force and the capability of winning an election at point A depends upon winning elections at point B which in turn depends upon winning them lower down until we come right down to the lowest level at which elections take place.

What is further agreed is a large bill of things to be done. And in this I was particularly impressed by the speeches among the many made by four members; viz. Mr. Lobo Prabhu, Mr. Arya, Mr. Yashwant Kumar Choudhary and Mr. Kalyansingh Kalvi. To repeat the points would be meaningless. I will therefore content

myself with mentioning the main headings under which we quite obviously are all agreed action has to be taken -

(1) While our principles are perfectly sound, our plans, our policies and programmes have to be restated in a manner consistent not merely with the current context but consistent with the understanding of our plans, policies and programmes by the people at the ground level who make up the voters in this country.

(2) There is the problem of getting publicity for us and Mr. Lobo Prabhu had some suggestions to make in that connection.

(3) At local levels again an organised way of dealing with the grievances of the people;

(4) The most impressive need that was stressed by many is the urgent necessity to study the Representation of the Peoples Act viz., the mechanics of elections, of voting, of propaganda; the problem of cost and a whole range of problems connected with the voting and election processes.

There was also Mr. Arya's suggestion particularly about the training of whole time cadres at the ground level in terms of our principles, policies and programmes in such a manner that they in turn can explain. I can tell from my bitter experience in the 1969 Mid-Term Elections to the Assemblies in Bengal, Bihar, UP and Punjab where I was on my feet the whole time (something like four weeks of campaigning) that it was pathetic to see our candidates themselves unable to project either our principles, policies or programmes in any manner that was understandable. As Mr. Piloo Mody pointed out we must get hold of the tremendous discontent that exists among the unemployed educated young men to whom the one subject that appeals is the subject of injustice. They are the victims of injustice. And if our plans and policies can be reoriented in a manner in which they can see that there is injustice and it is curable, there is involved a tremendous problem of training.

Do we leave it there merely stating problems and stating ad hoc solutions or do we take this thing one step further? I propose to take it one step further. I suggest that the time has come for the General Council to consider whether all this does not require a revamping, a change of the leadership itself at the National Headquarters level and also at the State level. One must begin in my judgement at the top level. What do I mean by a change of leadership? I mean that we have got to have people, young enough, vigorous enough and at the energy level adequate enough, to do all these things to give it the push and to give help wherever material of that kind at the state level, district level, etc. is available. There is need at the top level in my judgement for a very considerable change in the composition of the National Executive and of the leadership, that is the office bearers. I am one of them. I want a leadership that will have time, that has competence, that has energy, a leadership that has the capability of putting these things across. Therefore, obviously not as old as I am for instance but considerably younger. I suggest to you for consideration not for decision at this meeting but for consideration and for thinking it over is there not need beginning at the top level for a change in leadership such that it answers to these requirements. And if it answers to these requirements would be capable of doing the hundreds of things that require doing and which are agreed need to be done. I perhaps don't have the energy for the kind of job that requires to be done; for attaining the kind of objectives we have in mind so that the attainment of these objectives may have the impact at the elections levels which is the final thing that we want to achieve; so that from the bottom upwards we start capturing an impressionable number of seats at various places, so that we make an impression at all levels of legislative process in this country.

You may say there was an election held last year. Yes, that election itself was the reflection of the kind of situation we came out of in 1971.

1972 has come. and the whole dimension of the problem has changed. The dimension of the problem of what is needed, how it should be put across, what is required to put it across, what is that that is needed by way of revitalising the organisation at all levels, has changed. It is my submission that the General Council ought to consider and at the next appropriate meeting (which I hope will be an early meeting) decide that they want a revamped office bearers; a revamped National Executive of the kind that I have just mentioned who will take in hand the question of persuading people at the state level (because we believe in the democratic process), the need for a similar revamping of the operative parts of our organisation at the state level.

As the President said no decisions are required at this stage. As far as I am concerned, I think I am not fit. Whatever the organisation, whoever may be the President in terms of these requirements my services will always be at his disposal. I don't need to be a Vice-President. If I am any good Swatantra Party man at all, and I claim I am, I don't need to hold any particular office. All I need is the conviction on the one hand and the willingness to assist and to listen on the other. I do most earnestly Mr. President, suggest this and as far as I am personally concerned, my resignation is there at any time for this particular purpose, because that is a purpose in which I firmly believe.

President's Remarks: Mr. Dandekar has summed up very ably various speeches that has been made and has also gone on to put forward a very interesting and to my mind, sound suggestion. It is quite clear that we must do something and we must do it as quickly as possible. But that does not mean that we must do whatever we wish without adequate thought. Therefore I think that when we meet again we ought to be ready to take a decision on whether on the lines that he has suggested or on some other lines. In the meanwhile, in order that such a suggestion be considered without any kind of a feeling that you would, by accepting his suggestion, be passing a kind of vote of censure on the existing office bearers, let me say that I would not interpret it as such. Indeed like him I would say that the kind of qualities that are now needed - sufficient time, energy and so forth - are the sort of things which anyone who wishes to hold the position that I am holding today must have. And like him also I agree that I do not fill that bill. And therefore I should be perfectly willing to step down. You must therefore think of this in precisely those terms. I would also ask all the other colleagues on the National Executive and the rest to look upon this suggestion in the same way. Our services and advice would be available to whoever takes the leadership. But that the leadership should now be in the hands of someone who has the energy, drive and time, that is quite obvious. Some of us who came in and took these positions did so because in a sense there was nobody else at that time to hold these positions.

I felt I ought to intervene - it was not my intention to make any speech as such - to remove any possible misunderstanding, any feeling of embarrassment and make this point clear. It will be the General Council which will decide if the General Council considers it. This is the line along which we should proceed. The General Council should proceed on the assumption that the resignations are there with them at least myself. And others who think like we do would also indicate that they would have no objection to stepping aside.

Mr. G. B. Sukhee : Will this be done constitutionally or the way in which it has been suggested.

President : It will have to be done entirely constitutionally and therefore I have said this is not the time when we are taking a decision. This is a proposition which has been pitched for you. put My observations were merely so that you can consider it without any embarrassment.

Sundaramani Patel (Orissa) : To my assessment, organisation requires three vital things:

1. Ideology and programme; 2. Physical Strength and 3. Finance.

But in no case should finance be allowed to prevail upon ideology and programme which is the basic thing and we have failed here. Since 1963, I have seen that the Swatantra Party is more dependent on finance than on its programme. This has to be reversed. Secondly, a political party must have a constructive programme. The Swatantra Party has no constructive programme at all at the ground level. My suggestion is that we must prepare an infra-structure viz., education of the people. What is the percentage of literate people in the country - less than 20%. One way is for adult education at the ground level. Every party worker should educate a minimum of at least 100 workers.

Thirdly, we must take up agitations. Remaining a mere constitutional body and speaking only on constitutional matters will not pay us any more. We must organise agitations on every issue - national or local. Fourthly, there should be a team of leaders, say two or three from the Centre who should go around and meet State Executives and also a few district committees before the meeting of the next General Council to ascertain the defects, the demands and local conditions. Then we should formulate our policy and programmes.

The most important point is publicity and literature and a research wing of the Party.

Finally regarding alliance with other Parties, the moment we talk of alliance or adjustments, we demonstrate our weakness.

Dr. R.C. Cooper (Bombay) : I do not stand here today to justify my action. I was fully aware of the fact that I was in a hopeless minority of one. And now after hearing a large number of speakers yesterday, I stand here before you with a complete feeling of satisfaction. This feeling of satisfaction comes because I feel that I have fully achieved the purpose for which I had written the two letters. My purpose was three-fold viz., to ginger up the party; partially to make the Party shake up its lethargy and to focus attention. And therefore you would have noticed that there was an interval of approximately one week in the two letters which I had written giving sufficient time to the few top leaders to whom I had addressed my letters to reply. I got replies from most of them. Unfortunately, Mr. President, perhaps because of your multifarious activities we could not exchange our views on this important matter.

I would also invite your attention to my first letter of March 28. In this letter there is one very important sentence in the penultimate para which appears to have been overlooked by most people viz., "unless we are prepared to resort to direct action as suggested by Rajaji". The entire premise of my letter and the various suggestions made therein were conditional upon our whole-heartedly applying our mind to the important suggestion which a little earlier was made by Rajaji viz., that if our Party was to survive then it must resort to direct action having regard to the peculiar circumstances in which we are faced. I am sure you will all agree with me that Rajaji is a great believer in the rule of law; a great respecter of law. But, there are certain situations in the history of the world, in the history of a country where drastic diseases require drastic remedies. And perhaps Rajaji feels that the time has come when this country also requires drastic remedies in the shape of direct action which may or may not necessarily be in consonance with the rule of law.

After making this suggestion, I exchanged some correspondence with him. I requested him to spell out in greater detail what he meant by direct action. And Rajaji's reply was most significant. He said that he had thrown out this idea and that it was for important leaders of the Party like Mr. Masani, Mr. Dandekar and our President and others to spell out in great detail what this direct action programme was going to be. It was for this purpose, that my second letter of April 5 was written. I thought that perhaps in view of the approaching General Council meeting, it would be worthwhile my trying to put before you a few ideas which could take more concrete shape, in form of direct action and that was spelt out to a limited extent in my second letter. Very little attention was paid to this second letter either in the National Executive or in the General Council.

What is the difference between my proposal (I am now referring to the other part of my proposal which has been unanimously rejected by everybody) making a distinction between what is known to the world as mercy killing and lingering death. What I was suggesting was that if you are not bold enough to act now, then it is no use allowing the party to die a lingering death. It might as well be appropriate to resort to mercy killing. And the speeches I have heard since yesterday afternoon have led me to believe that perhaps we would prefer slow poisoning which would lead to a lingering death rather than the mercy killing of the type which I have suggested. Now that my second alternative has been rightly rejected by the General Council, I will once again plead with my colleagues to very seriously consider the suggestions contained in my second letter.

One important thing which has been repeatedly mentioned at General Council meetings these last twelve years is the inability of the Party to do much because of a lack of resources and the control of mass communication media by the Ruling Party. Although I admit that these factual positions are well-founded, I would submit that this cannot be an excuse for inaction. But I would like to draw your attention to one important aspect relating to this question of lack of resources. Let us not forget that the staunchest Naxalites who were member of the Party in West Bengal were young men coming from the best of families. They were sons of ICS officers, of rich industrialists of West Bengal. And these were the youth, perhaps wrongly fired by enthusiasm and adventurism, who went to the wrong party.

Therefore, with a right programme and with the right amount of training in leadership, it should be quite possible to get the services of these young men coming from the best of families for the purpose of a constructive programme of direct action by the Swatantra Party. One aspect about which we have been complaining is the controlling of the mass communication media by the Ruling Party or one or two people at the top including the Prime Minister. Are we going to sit down with folded hands. We are going to demand from every platform that AIR & TV should be under separate autonomous corporations to ensure a certain amount of independence. But there is every probability that as in the past this very just plea will once again be rejected. If it is rejected what are we going to do about it? I think we should do the same thing which was done during the Second World War by many people

in the occupied countries. We should do the same thing which in the early days of the freedom struggle in this country was resorted to by the Congress. Many of you are perhaps aware of the fact that during the early part of the struggle for freedom the newspapers in this country were completely under the control of the British Government. And a situation very similar to what we are facing today had arisen. At that time, the Radio and T.V. were not in existence. But a small-cyclostyled bulletin called the Congress Bulletin used to be issued everyday which was an unauthorised journal and yet it got the maximum acceptability from the people of this country who were prepared to pay even Re. 1 or Rs 2/- for a single cyclo-styled sheet of paper. And this is what the party will have to consider with regard to the Radio.

Then, in my programme, I have referred to other matters like unemployment, the need to bring down prices and so on. The ruling party though it talks of Garibi Hatao has been doing very little. Here also there is a tremendous possibility for direct action. I would recommend a no-tax campaign. This I have been recommending to the Party without any success for the last two years. I don't mean that the rich industrialists should stop paying their income-tax. They started their no-tax campaign long ago and with the full connivance of the ruling party. When I talk of direct action, a no-tax campaign, I do not mean the rich industrialists but at the lowest level - the land revenue payable by the smallest farmer, other small taxes payable by small people in the villages. And they should be exhorted not to pay their taxes, until the prices of essential commodities are brought down to reasonable limits. They should be asked not to pay their taxes until a certain percentage of employment is guaranteed or considered by whatever means by the Government every year. And I feel that if this type of time-bound programme is resorted to by the Party then alone can it expect to survive. Because whatever Mr. Dandekar might say about carrying the message of the Party, bringing the programme of the Party to the rural people, there will be no success for the Party unless we have direct action which is going to benefit the masses of this country. And unless we have a plan which directly affects two types of people in this country, the poor and the minorities, the Party has in my opinion no chance of success.

One last word regarding Mr. Dandekar's suggestion about the change in leadership. I am fully in agreement with what Mr. Dandekar has said. I will exhort all of you to support his idea subject to only one qualification viz., that whatever leadership of the youth which we are going to have in future, should be a leadership based on democracy and not on dictatorship. I think I am speaking on behalf of the entire National Executive when I say that once a new leader is elected, everyone of us will tender our resignations immediately so that the General Council can elect a new team of office bearers, and a new National Executive based on the principle of democracy.

President's Remarks : I would say this that when you consider young leadership, I do not know what age limit you have in mind. But after hearing Dr. Cooper, I would say that round about 50 is not wrong.

Mr. M. R. Masani : We face a very difficult situation and I am not quite sure whether my friend Mr. Trivedi's prescription of "fanaticism" is the right prescription today. It may be called for after a few years. But today it seems to me that the qualities we want most are courage and patience. Patience and fanaticism don't go well together; that is why I am suggesting a slightly different prescription from the one suggested by my friend Trivedi. I would like you to take the present situation in its historical perspective and not be carried away by the feelings of the day.

As far as I can make out, we are in a stage that other countries have gone through. I will give the analogy of France, at the end of the fourth Republic when their politicians had also played the fool, their SVD governments followed one after another and there was a climate of popular disgust with the politician very similar to what has existed for the last two or three years in India. France turned to De Gaulle. De Gaulle was a great statesman and a great patriot. He served a constructive purpose and he handed back power to the people when his job was done. I think we are very much in this kind of a situation because we politicians in India did play the fool and the democratic parties forfeited the confidence of the people. The SVD Governments in the Northern provinces from 1967 to 1969 behaved so badly that all of them were toppled with popular approval.

It was not the Grand Alliance that lost the General Election but the failure to bring about a grand alliance on a principled basis and thus providing an alternative to the country. The six months that we lost from June 30, 1970, till the debacle on January 3, 1971, is what lost us the elections. It was the misbehaviour of certain politicians in the Congress(0), the Jan Sangh and the SSP. On that particular issue, our hands are clean.

But were our hands clean otherwise? I say that the hands of the Swatantra Party also were not clean and people also hastened to show disgust with us. During our ten years of existence, we did a lot of honest work and good organisation. But there was also a lot of indiscipline and skulduggery. First example, the Raja of Ramgarh; second example, several Gujarat MLAs with a consistent record of indiscipline and disloyalty to the Party. Thirdly, welcoming defections. Fourthly, the defections - some from our Party- amongst those who voted for Dr. C. Deshmukh in the election of President and then gave their second preferences to Mr. Giri, thus losing us that election. So even our hands are not clean and it is because of all this that the people have turned against us.

Every single answer to our problems today including Dr. Cooper's time-bound programme is in the Mid-Term Report, but we did not carry it out. That was the lack of sincerity that we showed. Also the lack of hard work. Mr. Ramakrishnan was quite right when he reproached us for forgetting Gandhiji. Gram Swaraj, Trusteeship, not one of these things that we picked up from Gandhiji and put into our programme, did we ever implement.

So we too let down the country in a certain measure and the Indian people have done what Walter Lippmann said they would always do. He wrote many years ago that when the people are faced by the choice between bad and corrupt representative government and what they expect will be strong undemocratic government, they will choose the second. If they have chosen Indira Gandhi, it is because of this reason.

That is why, if Col. Pasricha will remember, when we met here last year and when he said that we had lost a battle, I ventured to say that

we had lost the war. That is why today we are in a post war situation and very puzzled how to carry on. I am glad he now agrees with me.

We are now entering a period of dictatorship. We have left behind us (although some of us are still thinking it exists) Party and parliamentary democracy. Let's face it. Fascism is already raising its ugly head. It started with Jantar Mantar, went on to Bhubaneswar and Mr. Biswanath Das being assaulted and asked to sign his resignation under force by Indira's MLAs and MPs; it went on with the burning of copies of Current in Bombay; it has taken in its sweep the death of Nagarwala and, most shameful of all, the suppression of the people of Kashmir completely and of Bengal partly in the recent elections. In Kashmir, the elections were completely rigged and in Bengal they have been partly rigged.

I was in Calcutta on the day of the polling and the general consensus among people I met after the poll was that, at least in several constituencies, the Congress Party defeated the Marxists by sheer hooliganism and violence. Indeed, I was told that some of the same goondas who had been operating for the marxists in the earlier elections had now been purchased and had operated on behalf of the Prime Minister's party.

But what is happening in Calcutta today after the elections are over is even worse. It is a continuing process of violence. There are several examples now of so-called INTUC and chhatra Parishad young men going into factories pulling out physically Marxist Trade Union workers, ruthlessly assaulting them and throwing them with fractured bones on the streets to be taken to hospitals. Principals of Colleges have been abused in their offices for not duly derecognising elected Students' Unions which happened to be under Marxist leadership and not replacing them with Unions under the leadership of the ruling Congress Party. Students have been assaulted. We are entering a phase of incipient pro-Soviet fascism. There is in fact no conflict between communism and fascism - they are two sides of the same coin. We appear to be going the way of Indonesia, Ghana and Tanzania - a one-party Afro-Asian dictatorship.

I am very glad some of our people have recognised all this this morning and characterised the position accurately.

My friend Dandekar said that this has strengthened his resolve that elections should be fought from the bottom right upto the top. Of course as democrats we must fight elections whenever we can. But I must confess to a fear - and I hope it is a fear which will be disproved - that elections are going to become irrelevant in the next five to ten years. I hope I will be proved wrong and that things won't go that far. But that is my own hunch and fear.

Now, in this situation, what is the Party to do? I must confess to a feeling which may not be considered heroic that there is no panacea that is going to solve the problem overnight. There is no instant cure. After all, what we are enduring now is the result of twenty years of playing the fool among many members of the Swatantra Party along with other democratic parties. And we are not going to be able to get out of those consequences within one day by any heroic decision. Let us do something! Certainly. Let's carry on what we are doing. But the idea of doing something dramatic or drastic or heroic like swallowing an Aspirin tablet to relieve pain, that's not going to work. I am a short-term pessimist and a long-term optimist.

Let us consider some of the suggestions that have been made. Let us consider the suggestion for a change of name. I am glad Rajaji has dropped it. (This morning Laxman's cartoon about the cactus is very relevant. A rose by any name will smell as sweet - a cactus would be just as prickly whatever you call it.)

Similarly, the suggestion for dissolution of the Party. I am very glad that Rusi Cooper has dropped it. I would like to endorse what the Chairman said yesterday that Rusi Cooper's letter was a courageous letter. It is not a cowardly thing to suggest the dissolution of one's party. It is very easy to drop out quietly and not be noticed. But to come before this group and say "let's put an end to our Party", that requires great courage. And I am very glad he did it because he has provided a very good basis for discussion. The unanimous rejection of the thesis itself is in a way his vindication. He has now come up with a much more practical proposal.

I felt there were two fallacies in Rusi Cooper's thesis. I do not agree that the country has rejected the policies of the Swatantra Party. I think this formulation is a defective one. What it has rejected is the performance of the leadership of the Swatantra Party in various fields and in various States and the way they let down their own programmes and policies.

The second fallacy in Cooper's letter was that it would free members to do other good things. I don't know what other members feel, but I certainly have not got the feeling of being frustrated or limited from doing other good things by my membership of the Swatantra Party. I have been conducting the Leslie Sawhney Programme for Training in Democracy. I am running a little "rag" called Freedom First; I am trying to build up the Indian Liberal Group. Membership of the Swatantra Party on the contrary gives one a little courage; gives one a feeling of solidarity that one belongs to a fraternity of free spirits. I do not think that in order to enable one to do other work, it is necessary to liquidate the Party.

On the contrary, when the day comes, it will be very valuable to have a nucleus of the Swatantra Party around which people may rally. I shall give an example. When Rakosi took over Hungary after the War he destroyed all the non-communist parties. The Liberal Party, the Peasant's Party, the Social Democratic Party, were all liquidated and banned. That was in 1947-48. In 1956, when the Hungarian people drove the Soviet forces out of Budapest for a few days, the moment this happened, the offices of the old parties were re-opened. Immediately thousands of people who were non-conformists, rallied round the Socialist Party, the Peasant's Party and the Liberal Party with the result that Imre Nagy, the Communist Prime Minister who was standing up to Soviet tanks, was able to form a coalition government with the leaders of the socialist, peasants and other parties. It did not last for more than a few days because of the Soviet tanks coming back. But it shows how valuable keeping alive the flag and symbol of the party is when the time comes for the Party to function aggressively once again.

Now we go to the other extreme and that is "non-violent insurrection" suggested by Rajaji in a very fine article and now in a more modified and restricted form by Cooper in his time bound programme of direct action. Here again, I feel that all this is premature. As Napoleon said, it is magnificent but it is not war. In order to have an insurrection you must have a hated tyrant. Where is the hated tyrant today? People who see things as we do are a hopeless minority today. Otherwise, the election results, in spite of all the skullduggery, would have been different. Therefore, to talk of insurrection at a time when there is no hated tyrant is unfortunately lacking in a sense of historical perspective.

I agree with Patodia when he said yesterday that this kind of direct confrontation is likely to be counter-productive. It may hurt us more than it hurts the other side. As Mr. Parmanand Kejriwal reminded us yesterday, this is not the first time that some of us are going through this

this unfortunate situation. When I started saying in 1950 that Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru was a disaster, that he was taking India to Soviet satellitism and that he was opening the door to communism, it was not possible for me to find more than a couple of people in India to understand what I was saying. My best friends thought that, I was a little crazy, that Jawaharlal Nehru, a great leader was leading India to peace, prosperity and social justice and that I was completely off the track. And it took all of ten years from 1950 to 1959 to get a sizeable number of people to agree with me and to establish the Swatantra Party. At that time, Rajaji and Munshi were in office and Prof. Ranga was an office-bearer of the Congress Party. So, having once gone through ten years of wilderness, I would like to suggest that we may have to have a few years of the wilderness now. Luckily, there are lots of us now. But I do not think there is an easy escape. If we try shock tactics, I think the shock will boomerang against us. Anything we do which is drastic will not cut much ice today. This is the time for the patient to recuperate.

Take, for instance, Mr. Dandekar's proposal for a revamping of the Central and State leaderships. I am all for it. If it is feasible, let's do it. I thought that my resignation as President last year in this very hall was exactly, if you read my speech then, for that purpose. I said that I felt that I should step aside, that younger and more dynamic people must take over and that was the slogan on which I invited you to elect new office bearers and a new executive. But the General Council in its wisdom elected you and your colleagues on the present National Executive. If we feel that we made a mistake and that there are better people available, then certainly let us at the next meeting and with proper notice and in accordance with the Constitution, let us elect a new President, a new General Secretary and new Office Bearers and members of the Executive.

With the necessary resignations of the Executive in our hands, if we feel that there are better people available, let us certainly make the changes. But let me say this. This will not solve the national problem. This is not going to make any difference of any material nature except in the distant future. So I take this very unheroic attitude that nothing you do today or at the next meeting is going drastically and radically to change the position -- that this country has forfeited its democracy; it may have to undergo some years of dictatorship and that after that baptism of fire we will have to emerge. This has happened to other countries. Dr. Adeneur, as somebody reminded us yesterday, was overthrown as Mayor of Cologne by Hitler. He sat through the War cultivating his garden and he became Chancellor of Germany when Hitler was overthrown. These things which cannot be cured overnight will have to be endured.

So what I feel is that today we want not so much politics or electioneering but active citizenship. That is, voluntary activity, extra-curricular activity. The Swatantra Party is there. Let it stay intact. Let it grow. But round the Swatantra Party let us build up democratic, voluntary institutions which will bolster the party, give it a broader foundation. Those who don't want to become our members, let them be our colleagues in these worth while institutions. I give one example.

For the last four years, in my General Secretary's reports, I have been pleading that the organisation of the consumer is the specific task of the Swatantra Party. As Piloo said this morning, the consumer is our common man. But what have we done for him? Nothing. In not one unit or city of this country has a single member of the Swatantra Party formed a consumer society. Today, it is disgusting to see that Mr. Chavan, the biggest enemy of the Indian consumer, patronises conferences which are meant to protect the consumer! From whom? - from the shop-keeper

and business men, not from Mr. Chavan. This is how we have allowed our task to go by default. Why don't we do this? It is nothing heroic to form consumer associations throughout India. In other words, what we want to keep alive is a pluralistic society where power does not concentrate in the hands of a monolith and, even without fighting elections, even without winning elections, there are ways of keeping that society going. I would like to suggest therefore some rather unheroic specific measures for your consideration.

I was a socialist once, and I have also studied Marxism. The Marxists have a very good way of dealing with an adverse situation like this. A Marxist Party, like the CP(M) just now, which finds itself with its back to the wall, starts by preparing and drafting a thesis. Get one or two people to draft a thesis - a cool analysis of what has happened and what is to be done. That is what we have been trying to do in our speeches today. I can't conceive of anyone more intelligent and acute than our young friend Raju to draft such a thesis, if he will kindly take on that assignment. After a couple of months when he has drafted the thesis, let it be circulated for private discussion among members of the General Council, call a study camp if you like which is also what Marxists do, go to some remote place, thirty or forty keen people amongst us and thrash out the thesis, revise it and then make it a public document. Then call another meeting of the General Council, discuss the thesis point by point and see what is the programme of action on which the Party agrees. And then ask the Executive of the day, the present one or its successors, to keep it out.

Publish more literature. The simple kind that we have been told we should put out in simple language. If on the issue of the AIR or other issues of that kind, we can gather enough support, let us have direct action - what is called in the Marxist jargon limited struggles on the specific issues of the day."

Lin Yutang, the well-known Chinese philosopher, in his book The Importance of Living which several of us must have read many years ago, describes the two Chinese principles of Yang and Ying. Yang is the male principle, Ying is the female principle. There are times when you attack and assault a fortress in a frontal way. But when the fortress turns out to be a stone wall, you stop banging your head against it in male fashion and you take up the ying principle not of giving in, not of surrendering but of a certain measure of flexibility and subtlety so that you outflank and ~~bypass~~ the enemy. It means operating on a low key for the time being. As Lenin used to say, "One step backward, two steps forward".

Today is the time to conserve our forces, hold our team together, educate people, "educate our masters" build up support in the country and wait for the time when the general disillusionment will come. I have no doubt at all that this picture will change within five to ten years. And when the storm subsides and people realise what fools they have been made of, they will turn to us. And at that time let us be heroic, let us be fanatical, and let us attack!

President's Remarks

Thank you Mr. Masani for a very interesting and wise speech. I was glad that he at one stage referred to himself as young. He said it of course with reference to Rajaji. So I hope you appreciate that the term young and old is relative. His was the wise dictum that whatever we do, let us not go in for dramatics. Let us go in for a line of action which might be sound and though it may call for patience, it will also involve a lot of courage.

Mr. Devanathan (Tamil Nadu) : Why was the Party defeated? Not because of the leaders but because of the Grand Alliance. When Mr. Masani was the Party's president, he brought us into the Grand Alliance. Actually when he walked out of the meeting on January 3 many young men of the Party and also likeminded people in my state they welcomed Mr. Masani's action. But when he came to the meeting of the General Council in Madras I do not know how Mr. Masani agreed to Rajaji's suggestion and brought us this big trouble today.

When Mr. Masani suggested that the Grand Alliance should be based on a common programme we agreed. But there was no common programme. When we went among the people they criticised the Swatantra Party, Congress(O) and Jan Sangh as having joined only to drive away Mrs. Gandhi and nothing else. In 1967 when we joined with the DMK our slogan was to drive out the Congress. When we joined in 1971 with the others our slogan was to drive away Indira. But we never explained to the public the Swatantra Party's policy. That is the cause of our debacle.

The 21 principles of the Swatantra Party are very good. The Party is here to preach and do the right thing. Even if it means helping Maharajas. What is wrong if we help them if they are being victimised by the ruling party. Today it is the Maharajas tomorrow it might be people like me. I subscribe to my provident fund in the company where I am employed. The Indira Government might decide to take away my provident fund. What will happen to me? This Party alone can help all, poor and rich alike.

Please refer to an editorial in the Mail of February 18 which has been translated and printed in Tamil by my colleague Mr. Ramabhadran. It explains the Party's mission very well. It says ours is the only party which will safeguard the interest of the nation.

Our candidates were not selected on the basis of their work for the Party. They were given nominations on the basis of their capacity to spend. When they lose party workers are blamed.

I suggest that we decide not to contest elections for the next five years. Let's preach our principles among the public and make it clear that we are not asking for their votes.

Though we are only 6 members in the Tamilnad assembly, we are the only real opposition and the DMK takes only the Swatantra opposition seriously.

The Madras District Unit has adopted a system of prizes to be awarded for the constituency which enrolls the maximum number of members and to the worker who enrolls the largest number. We visit each house. In my area we visited 382 houses. Only in 4 or 5 houses was our policy rejected. In houses where there were government servants they asked their wives to become members. With the result that my constituency has the highest membership.

Mr. Babu Joseph (Kerala) : After Dr. Cooper's speech I thought of supporting him. After hearing Mr. Masani I reversed my position and support his sober views.

We the younger elements want radical policies and programmes. I request Mr. Masani and our other leaders to give some work for the younger elements not necessarily in the name of the Swatantra Party but in some other name if necessary. We are prepared to die as martyrs for the cause of liberalism, democracy and freedom in this country.

There is total indiscipline in our party from top to bottom. The 24th and 25th Constitution Amendment Bills are against our fundamental principles. When those amendments were introduced in Parliament, our former President, Prof. Ranga issued a statement asking our MPs and MLAs to support these constitution amendment bills.

Mrs. Gandhi introduced a bill to lift emergency except in border areas. Our president Mr. Patel supported the bill. After 24 hours we supported the opposition and Mrs. Gandhi scored a victory in Parliament.

During the last meeting of the General Council we unanimously passed a resolution condemning the Indo-Soviet Treaty. Our Founder issued statements supporting the treaty. I am not asking for disciplinary action either against Prof. Ranga or Rajaji. But this house should express its displeasure at such acts by our leaders, as we did in the case of late Dr. Munshi.

I want a clarification from the Chairman whether these matters come under the 21st principle ?

/ an I would like to draw the attention of the Council to the peculiar circumstances in Kerala, where United Front Government headed by the Indira Congress is ruling. After her party's sweeping victory there is every chance that Mrs. Indira Gandhi may order a mid-term election in Kerala also. There is a move to oust the Muslim League which is presently a partner in the ruling United Front Ministry from the coalition. Naturally the Muslim League will, in two or three months, move to the opposition led by the Marxist Communists, Kerala Congress, Congress (O) and Jan Sangh may also join them. There is going to be a clear-cut polarisation in Kerala as above. What should be our stand ? E.M.S. Namboodiripad within and outside the Assembly has announced that they are prepared to ally with the Swatantra Party on specific issues.

Take Dr. Cooper's seven-point programme. Supposing Marxist Communists agitate for reducing Ministers' emoluments what should be our attitude. Do we refuse to join them ? If we fail to join the Left Opposition on specific issues we will lose our chance to become an effective opposition party. Therefore can we come to an understanding on specific issues with the Marxist Communists.

We the younger elements do not want to take the leadership from you because we want to learn so many things from you. After sometime when we get sufficient funds and other resources we will take over. For the time being you may continue in your position.

President's Remarks: I must confess that such misgivings as I might have had in the leadership of the young have been removed. The maturity he showed when he said 'I am not prepared to take over until there are adequate funds' very sound sentiments.

And so far as the other parts are concerned our directive always is to take the right line in whatever you do.

The question of indiscipline will only arise when after having taken a decision on what the right line is, somebody takes a different course. Then it becomes a case of indiscipline. So far as Rajaji is concerned I think he is absolved under our 21st principle. His Indo-Soviet Treaty will probably come under the mischief of the 21st principle.

Mr. Dandekar : The particular political situation described by Mr. Babu

Joseph where there may be a mid-term election in Kerala and where you might find yourselves in a very difficult position as a small party and you ask what should be done ? This was exactly the same position in Bihar after the 1969 elections. My advice to the Bihar friends was that they should take their positions on particular issues according to the merits and principles of the Party.

Mr. Baldeo Singh (Uttar Pradesh) : I was in the Congress from 1937 to 1942 and was jailed six times. I was in the Dandi march. I have a concrete suggestion to offer. Let us not get into an argument about the validity or otherwise of ceiling legislation. Opposition parties always try to be more radical than Mrs. Gandhi's party and then call it socialism. We cannot do so.

Let us emulate the Dandi March. We should gherao Mrs. Gandhi. We should serve notice on the Prime Minister that she should fulfil her promises to remove poverty, unemployment within 3 months. If she fails to do so then we will begin a satyagraha from 1st June. Batches of party workers should participate in the gherao. I offer to be in the first gherao and carry on the satyagraha for 50 days on behalf of the Uttar Pradesh Unit.

People want to know what we have done for them. They point out that the Indira Congress has promised to remove poverty, unemployment and social inequalities. And what do we offer ? We promise to give them fundamental rights ? How is a poor man concerned with fundamental rights ?

By struggles and satyagrahas alone can the Party be built up. If you think my idea is not immediately possible I ask your permission to gherao the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.

President's Remarks: We must give serious thought to his request for permission to try this out in Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. G.B. Sukhee (Bombay) : I am confused over this issue of the young and the old. There should be some definition. Young in terms of maturity of ideas, the fire, zeal and conviction to fight, or in terms of age ? This young versus old argument destroyed the Congress and it can well destroy the Swatantra Party. The real issue is what do we do to revitalise the party.

We shall have to work at the ground level. Let us go to the villages, the street corners to educate the people, enrol them in the party not merely to increase in numbers but soldiers who will fight with conviction. We have not been doing this.

The major mistake of the Swatantra Party was to give money from the top. That is the cause for the present state of the party. The flow of money should really have been from the bottom to the top. This is what happens in so-called revolutionary parties. The national office bearers are flooded with requests for funds to open offices. If you have no money to open an office don't open that office because it will close the moment money stops.

We were the strongest opposition party in this country. But Mrs. Gandhi played her cards well. It was she who destroyed the Congress which had become very unpopular and not we, though we wanted to do so. She said she had started a new party with a new programme, a new outlook, a new philosophy and a new leader. She said that she and her party provided an alternative to this country and not we who had been talking about it all along. Thus she confused the issues.

We shall have to play our cards well if we are to again snatch the initiative from her. We should create a cadre which alone will bring success to the party. We must come forward with a new programme conceived in revolutionary language.

Those who wish to become members of primary committees must take the responsibility to collect at least Rs. 5/- to Rs. 10/- each to run the primary unit. Those on district committees should bring money by collecting or by donating themselves. I propose that every member of the Party should contribute 5% of his income or Rs. 1000/- whatever is less to the funds of the Swatantra Party. I was at one time member of a terrorist party and I know how we used to manage. I want to appeal to all of you and suggest to the president to bring this type of reform.

More than the Swatantra Party by itself, it is the fronts of the Party which can do much more e.g. farmers' front, youth front, cultural front. This is how the communists operate. Even if their Party is in the doldrums, their fronts continue to be active.

Mr. Manubhai Amersey (Gujarat) : At the outset as the treasurer I would like to take the entire blame for whatever happened in the last elections. We completely lacked resources. The atmosphere this time was strange. When our leaders in parliament, decided not to boycott the elections I thought that this was a very strange decision. We had a reasonable idea of our resources and sanity almost dictated that in the short time that was given to the opposition we had reasonable grounds to say that we would not contest the elections; coming as it did immediately after Bangla Desh it was unfair to the opposition. But here again it was the Jan Sangh and Mr. Vajpayee who led us. And we fought without any resources, without any manpower and with hardly any time.

But our failure does not mean that we give up our fight. I had a sense of despair when I heard Mr. Masani. To go to sleep and think that in this country the embers may still flicker and that the Swatantra Party will still carry on is not my conception of doing things. I believe that in this country certain fundamental behaviour patterns have been established viz., that we want elections all the time; we revel in them; and we like them whether they are held fairly or not. In a five-year period we get parliamentary elections, assembly elections, panchayat elections, municipal elections, society elections and so on. People have become election minded and this has become a part of our democracy. May be the Congress under Mrs. Gandhi's leadership has understood what elections are and she knows how to win them.

In certain constituencies we had the necessary resources, the workers the presence of charismatic leaders and yet, even in these constituencies we failed. There is certainly more than the explanation that Mr. Masani has given us. It may be right in Hungary, or Russia or in the liberal western democracies. But if my leader is going to ask me to sit on the sidelines for the next five years doing some constructive work, the necessary logical conclusion would be that let us not have an elective system so far as the Swatantra Party is concerned for the next five years. Let us do only ground level work.

Ours is a very peculiar situation where ground level activity is developed through elections and elections are won if we have ground level activity. My little experience tells me that we must be in the election fray. The fault of the party may be that in-between elections we may not be doing any work. This will have to be changed. I suppose it will change because we have been administered a shock in 1971 and a still greater shock in 1972. At least in 1971, with the concept of the grand alliance our

traditional supporters were not against us. But after having seen the results of 1971, even our supporters failed us. Our methods of collection will change. But to be able to accept an advice that we do not take up the challenge in this democratic country, I don't think is the right advice. I would like to participate in each and every election from the ground level right to the top whenever they come - win or lose - but necessarily with the idea that we not merely fight elections but try and also do some other work.

Immediately after looking at the election results, Rajaji came out with his suggestion for direct action. We had eschewed direct action. Perhaps the only advocate of direct action in our party and who built up whatever little we have in Bombay is our young General Secretary Mr. Madhu Mehta. There will be many occasions in the next few years when building on the grievances of the people we can translate our ideology and ideas into direct action.

In this particular election and in this particular crisis that we faced I would like to thank the Orissa and Tamil Nad units of our party who set the principle of aid in reverse. We are grateful to them for their noble contribution and timely aid.

Mr. Dandekar has laid down that at our next meeting the National Executive should perhaps resign. I would request the Chairman, or the Vice President or the General Secretary to give an idea to this Council as to when the next meeting is to be held and where, so that members like me who according to the desires of this body desire to give their resignations could do so in right time (I believe there is a constitutional provision that a month's notice has to be given). I therefore think that in fairness to all it would be right to set a deadline as to when our next meeting is to be held so that we can follow the guidelines as given by Mr. Dandekar.

President's Remarks : Mr. Manu Amersey has I think somewhat misunderstood Mr. Masani and somewhat misunderstood one or two other things. But I won't go into that. He may have done that deliberately !

Mr. Budhi Prakash (Himachal Pradesh) : Twelve years ago when the Swatantra Party was formed it was a new party with new leaders and new policies. Unfortunately these policies did not reach the people.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi understood correctly the demands of the poor people and gave the slogan of Garibi Hatao. The poor have responded to this slogan. Mrs. Gandhi gave them hope which no other party could give all these years. And in exchange for her slogan the poor people gave her full support to secure power.

The poor people are not worried over fundamental rights. They don't bother with what you do or don't do in the legislatures. The poor dream of a better life. Our message did not appeal to the sentiments of the poor. Mrs. Gandhi's did. And people rely on her saying that if she is not able to do much immediately, she will some day fulfil her promises. The policies of the Swatantra Party are right. But who can understand them ? Therefore we too should coin a slogan that will be understood by the poverty-stricken people.

I helped independent candidates during the elections. The voters after pointing out to Mrs. Gandhi's achievements, asked me what programme we had for removing poverty. Till such time as we are not able to produce a programme which the poor understand is for their benefit, we will never get their support.

Regarding Mr. Dandekar's proposal, I am partially in agreement that we should have a dynamic leader, who can tour the country, establish contact with the people and infuse strength in the party. But at the same time I would like to say that when an army fails, the captain is retired but the army is not disbanded. We talk of democracy within and outside parliament. But does not Mr. Dandekar's suggestion mean destroying democracy within the Party? When you ask an elected national executive which has yet to complete its term of office to tender its resignation, it is undemocratic. Electing a president and asking him to choose the executive is like Mrs. Gandhi appointing Chief Ministers, the President of her party etc., of her choice and if this is what we wish to do in our Party the National Executive will be reduced to the status of a durbar of the President. This is not good for the party's future. We are creating a precedent. I do not wish to comment whether Mr. Patel is responsible or not for our defeat. But if such a precedent is established, tomorrow, in a similar situation, we shall have to follow the precedent and replace another elected executive. While I agree with the arguments put forward by Mr. Dandekar, I feel that in the current situation despite whatever changes we might wish to make it will be very difficult for the opposition parties to become strong.

Mrs. Gandhi being a clever person keeps on saying that if poverty is not removed there will be chaos in the country. And she herself will create the chaos! In 1975 just before the elections she will suddenly decide to produce the atom bomb and create a stir in the nation. Immediately Mr. Vajpayee will proclaim her as Goddess Durga or Bhavani. The Jan Sangh will then say that they too wanted the atom bomb. Excuses will again be provided by the Congress which will say that India's freedom was in peril because of the getting together of China and the U.S.A. therefore India had to produce the atom bomb. Making an Atom Bomb costs a lot of money, therefore Mrs. Gandhi could not fulfil her promises. Elect her again and give her another five years to solve the problem of poverty, will be the argument that will then be advanced by the Congress.

Therefore we should fashion our policy in such a manner as to be in a position three or four years from now to challenge Mrs. Gandhi's policies and expose her failure.

Mr. Ranjitsingh Ghorpade (Mysore) : I came here quite angry. But after having heard Mr. Dandekar, Mr. Masani, Mr. Piloo Mody, Dr. Cooper and Mr. Lobo Prabhu who made a very good analysis of the situation I have cooled down and am prepared to accept their wise considerations on certain burning problems that are facing our party.

I am of the firm opinion that at all levels, the Party has failed to organise itself into a political organisation. Possibly we have added to the work of the Forum of Free Enterprise. I am proud of being one of the young turks of the Swatantra Party, because I have joined this party out of conviction. If we cannot organise ourselves as a political party then we should go back and start growing roses or potatoes or whatever we were doing.

As a political party we have to organise and have a leadership which can deliver the goods. I have two weaknesses - one is the Swatantra Party and the other is for some of the very eminent people in our party. Therefore when I talk about leadership I am not commenting about their ability. Tenacity and dedication to the Swatantra cause are the qualities in a leadership that can deliver the goods.

I now fully agree (though last time I didn't) with Mr. Masani that we have lost the war or practically lost it. I am still an energetic young man and I am still not willing to accept total defeat. If we start functioning again as a political party we will make an impact. Because there is no other alternative.

There no longer are any like-minded Parties. The last time I was proud of the Swatantra Party was when he walked out of that so called alliance. It was nothing but a garbage alliance. I am glad none of us here are prepared to associate with any of these parties.

Just as it is shameful for the Congress after twenty five years of rule to talk in terms of removing poverty, it is shameful for the Swatantra Party after twelve years to talk about organisation. What have we been doing all these years.

It is not any single person to be blamed but the entire organisation. What did the Gujarat Unit do? Why did we lose the elections? Among other things it was the shameful way our legislators conducted themselves. If the legislators of the Party in Rajasthan and Gujarat had conducted themselves with some amount of decorum and dignity and believing in the party's ideology stood by the party for the last four years we would have formed governments in those States today.

I came across an interesting paragraph in an article I read recently. It said: The youth of this country does not require any leadership for they will find their own; the youth of this country does not require any advice, because they have enough and more; the youth of this country does not require any friends because they know how to find their own friends. But what the youth of this country requires is example. And if an example is bad for Ghorpade, it is bad for anyone in this party. How dare the former president of this party stand as an independent I cannot understand. Who gave him permission?

I endorse fully Mr. Dandekar's suggestions regarding our organisation. I have written many letters on organisation and I have been congratulated by eminent leaders like Mr. Masani for my views. I have the greatest regard for the elders here. They shall always be with us. And we shall always take their advice. But there must be someone who must be able to drive the cart. And with that object I strongly suggest that we choose a person who is able to move, to go down to the district level as the President of this party. And unless we do that it is not possible to build up a political party. And I am going to put down here (I do not know when the next meeting will be, I do not suggest anything unconstitutional) that something must be quickly done with a time bound programme as to what and how we are going to organise and who will organise. And if this does not take place within a month, I think I would like to go back and grow coffee rather than waste my time in politics. When Mr. Masani said do nothing I am sure he didn't say go and sleep for five years. What he meant was that we do not do anything in haste, anything like children but take some time, apply ourselves, gear up the organisation and attack when the right time comes. I am young and so are many of us here. We are prepared to lay down our lives for the sake of democracy in our country. But we are not prepared to waste our time.

President's Remarks: We want now in charge those who can really move about, young energetic people and so on. I think there is no doubt on this subject.

K.H. Subramanian (Bombay) : Before these deliberations began yesterday, I had the feeling that may be we were congregating here to administer the extreme unction to the Swatantra Party. Fortunately it proved to be a false alarm. The patient's heart is ticking and vigorous, although the flesh is bleeding. The patient is in fact pleading that he be left alone so that he can come into his own on his steam. Down the ages, every big cause, at one time or the other, reached a situation and looked as nearly lost as ours does today. But the votaries of that cause showed indomitable courage and a faith that bordered on mysticism. It is about that kind of faith that Rajaji has been talking over and over again, and for which he has been misunderstood as a religious man. It is that kind of faith that we need to see us through these days.

I want to draw attention to one or two things that were said here. May be I am sounding unfashionable, but I certainly don't accept the suggestion that the whole lot of elder leaders here have not done any good to this party. I don't accept the wholesale denigration of the elders. I don't think that it is the prerogative of only the young men here, of which I am one, to do this or any other society any good. We need the experience of the elders. It is not acceptable to me that merely by a revamping at the top we are going to achieve a great deal, because I lay as much stress on experience as on youth.

A lot of criticism has been heard some unjust and some just as to how the party has been conducted and how the principles have not permeated down to the ground level. In my experience as an ordinary worker of the Swatantra Party at the unit level I have this to say about our people that they have a certain contrariness. It is not the done thing to say about the people but it is true. I have close knowledge of the campaign that Mr. Dandekar fought in the recent election. Every speech of his was a classroom affair. Yet I accept that some of our ideas were a little highflown. And many of our principles are of course in a language not easily understood. But this I think is a problem of communication. We have got to raise the level of comprehension and we have to go down a little in our own language so that there can be a meeting point between the language of our ideal and the understanding of the common people.

Finally I wish to say that a lot has been said quite unjustly about indiscipline at the top. I have not heard a single speaker give a clear instance except what my friend Babu Joseph said about Prof. Ranga writing to the legislators regarding the Constitution amendments. But by and large those who actively worked for the party in recent years have not said anything contrary to the principles of the Party.

Although I do accept in all humility the suggestion made by Mr. Dandekar that we should try and have a look at our organisational structure, let us not forget that it is not only the youth of this country who are capable of doing good to this society.

Mrs. Louella Lobo Prabhu (Mysore) : When I listened to Mr. Nasant I shared his apprehension that we might be moving towards a communist or fascist society. I also shared his hope that during its years in the wilderness the Swatantra Party will survive as the only democratic alternative available to the people. But if this opportunity is availed of then I believe that we as a party must keep our democratic principles and our democratic functioning intact. That is why when I spoke in the National Executive yesterday I was rather disturbed when a senior and most respected colleague suggested that we might take a leaf out of the Congress book by doing away with the present leadership, nominating a new president with

extraordinary powers and allowing him to function according to his likes. I am very happy that Mr. Dandekar has had second thoughts and that he now hopes that such change as is to be achieved will be done in a constitutional manner.

But let me say this to you. Even if we proceed within our constitution to throw out the present leadership and get a new committee we will still be going against the principles of democracy, because not six months ago this very validly constituted general body meeting in Bangalore validly elected, and with good forethought, the national executive now sitting here. So if we feel that this leadership has failed we are casting a slur not only on the leadership but the judgement and the verdict of the General Council. This is a verdict of no-confidence not only on those sitting here but also on those who elected us. Let us look into this problem a little further. We are a small party. I do not think there is a queue of people waiting to join us. Can we at this stage afford to throw away like an old tube of toothpaste the few respected, eminent persons whose private status and personality lends to this party whatever credibility and whatever respectability we have? Let us look a little further into the arguments advanced for getting rid of this leadership. One of the reasons advanced is that they must have a young person at the helm of affairs. I think I am the youngest member of this National Executive, and yet I wonder whether youth by itself is the principal qualification for the presidentship of a national party which has a great future I think, in ten years time. First of all what is the definition of youth. Mr. Patel had occasion to ask this question more than once. Someone like Dr. Cooper who can suggest direct action is not so old at 50 as a youth of 20 who might have made up his mind to give up. But suppose we go into chronological factor of age then I believe that this National Executive has more young people in it than the national executive of any other political party in this country or anywhere else in the world. I believe we now have the ideal combination in an experienced President and a young and an enthusiastic General Secretary who between them should provide the right balance of maturity and of youth.

The second point Mr. Dandekar made on the second qualification he suggested one must have is the capacity to do service. But let me ask you a single question but does one have to be the president of the party to do service? I see Mr. Masani the founding father of the party sitting on the General Council and though I must not talk about my husband he too has been with the Party since its inception. He was twice defeated for the office of the Vice President and still continues on the General Council because I think he believes that someone who wants to work for the party can do so in any capacity and at any level. So I believe this youthful and future president of ours can start doing his work wherever he is and when if his work is so outstanding let it merit recognition. He too should get elected at proper time as the present President who was elected by a validly constituted General body only six months ago.

For people now to be cast aside would leave a trail of bitterness which may not improve the party but which could do a great deal of harm. If this country has gone for a thousand years of history I think the present leadership could be given the two years it has to run and during that time those young and dynamic people who are supposed to replace us can show us what they can do. So that when we hand over to them, we hand over to people who have proved themselves as workers who have something more to offer than the chronological fact of youth.

There is a lot to Mr. Masani's speech. He enunciated Lin Yutang's principles of Yang and Ying. I agree with Mr. Masani that the principle of Yang in the present context may not be a meaningful one.

When Dr. Cooper enunciated his time-bound programme I was the one who asked him to spell out what exactly the implications of his direct action would mean. And having listened to Dr. Cooper I think direct action at least at the present stage, when there is no hated dictator to depose, may not be the correct way of life for the Swatantra Party. We of the Swatantra Party have always taken our stand on the rule of law. And I believe if we have to take direct action it should not be to break the law but to fight for it. In this I think Dr. Cooper was one of our most successful exponents. To take up the case of bank nationalisation, it was due to him and the action which he fought in court that the Supreme Court enunciated the principle of property and compensation which are the foundations for democratic values and economic progress in this country if those who had eyes would only see it. So I believe our work has to come not in fighting against the law but in changing the law in a constitutional way.

And for this I believe that there are three things we can do because in the ten years of wilderness that face us. The first thing we will have to look after is to see that the Representation of the People's Act does indeed offer candidates a fairer chance of election. There are three things which I believe could make a difference to our election prospects and which we must press in every forum that we have. First, that the two elections are not separated because this involves expenditure which only the ruling party can meet; second there should be no mixing of votes when they are to be counted because, as our friend from Bihar pointed out, this does not lead to secrecy of ballot but secrecy of manipulation; and the third point I do feel we should take up and press in every public forum is that the use of transport is made a cognizable offence and that anyone spending for a candidate is liable for that expenditure because the present law provides for privacy between the candidate and his election agent and privacy as any lawyer can tell you is almost impossible to prove in law. There are two other aspects which I would like to take up very briefly. Mr. Dandekar told me that in all his calculations and they were very meticulous ones, the one factor that he left out was the women's vote. And this I think is something which the Swatantra Party would have to look after very carefully before the next elections come round. This is something which Mrs. Gandhi looked after very carefully when she put up so many women candidates. I think we will have to make a very careful local study of what women want in the area and then try to press for their grievances because I believe these 51% can be the decisive and determining factor in our future elections. I will make this promise that in the South Kanara district where I live I shall try to make a study of what the women want and make the findings available to you for the next general meeting.

The other aspect which Col. Pasricha very rightly stressed was the minority vote which we got in 1967, which we lost in 1971 and did not recover in 1972. In actual fact no party has stood for the minorities more consistently than the Swatantra Party, at least in theory, because by standing for fundamental rights we also stand for the rights of minorities. But in actual fact I did find that in the last parliament there were members of the party who were too often, I think, with the Jan Sangh in what they had to say about the minorities and not essentially tolerant which is the spirit of the Swatantra Party which has a higher proportion of minorities on the national executive than any other national party. So I believe that if we concentrate on women and on minorities and our few members in Parliament are careful either to take up their causes or to refrain from giving hurt then we will be able to capture two sections of the electorate which can make up the marginal difference in elections. In elections as in economics it is the theory of the marginal unit which counts.

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,

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.

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.

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.

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.

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'état 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. Dandeker, 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. Dandeker 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. Dandeker, 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.

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. Maybe 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. Ganapiah, 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"-. NRM: "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 Ganapalaiah, 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 spokesmen 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.

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 Che Guevara 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. Dabhyabhai 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.

We failed to educate our masters and they kicked us out.

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.

Left Hussain

SWATANTRA PARTY



CONSTITUTION

As amended on April 14, 1973, by the
Sixth National Convention in Rajajinagar, Madras

SWATANTRA PARTY

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the Party shall be the Swatantra Party.

2. OBJECTIVE

The Objective of the Party shall be to further and endeavour to put into effect the principles adopted by the Party's Preparatory Convention in Bombay on August 1 and 2, 1959, and such policies and programmes as the Party may from time to time adopt in furtherance of those principles.

3. HEADQUARTERS

The National Headquarters of the Party shall be located at such place as may be decided by the General Council. The Headquarters of the Party in each State or Region shall be located at such place as may be decided by the State or Regional Council.

4. MEMBERSHIP

(a) Every person above the age of 18 who subscribes in writing to the principles of the Party, pays the prescribed fee and expresses his readiness to work for the Party will be eligible to be a Member of the Party; provided that he/she is not a member of any other political party. If he/she is a member of any other political party, he/she shall

resign his/her membership of that party and this fact must be declared in a manner prescribed by the Party.

(b) Work for the Party may be any of the following activities:

- (i) Enrolling new members;
- (ii) Campaigning for the Party;
- (iii) Attending to public grievances on behalf of the Party and securing their redress;
- (iv) Functioning, when called upon, as prospective candidate of the Party to an elective public body;
- (v) Collection of funds;
- (vi) Acceptance of executive responsibilities in the Party;
- (vii) Preparation of literature;
- (viii) Distribution of literature;
- (ix) Organisation of study circles and meetings;
- (x) Helping to run Party Offices;
- (xi) Any other approved activity.

(c) The State/Regional Executive Committee shall be competent to frame rules in this behalf.

between the various units in the following manner:

Primary Unit	...	40 %
District Unit	...	40 %
State/Regional Unit	...	10 %
National Headquarters	...	10 %

- (e) Every Unit shall maintain appropriate accounts of the receipts and expenditure which shall be available for audit.

6. PRIMARY UNIT

- (a) A Primary Unit of the Party shall be formed in respect of every Legislative Assembly Constituency in the State or Region. Provided that the Executive Committee of the State or Region may for more effective and convenient organising of the Party's work, authorise the formation of a Primary Unit for an area comprising more than one Legislative Assembly Constituency or for an area smaller than a Legislative Assembly Constituency.
- (b) Every such Primary Unit shall elect a Primary Unit Committee provided there are not less than 50 members enrolled in that Primary Unit; and provided that these 50 members are spread over at least one-third of the number of polling stations in the area of the primary unit concerned.
- (c) Such of those members who represent the Primary Unit on the District Committee but are not members of the Primary Committee concerned

shall be invited to meetings of the Primary Committee. They shall have the right to participate in discussions but not the right to vote.

7. DISTRICT COMMITTEE

- (a) For every Revenue District of the State, there shall be a District Committee constituted of such number as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee of the State or Region. Provided however that the Executive Committee of the State or Region may, for more efficient and convenient discharge of the Party's work, designate a Lok Sabha constituency as a "district" for this purpose; and provided further that there are at least two Primary Units in the District concerned.
- (b) Such a District Committee shall be elected by the elected members of the Primary Unit Committee of that District by proportional representation as set out in Appendix A annexed hereto.
- (c) Each District Committee shall elect a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, one or more Joint Secretaries and one or more Treasurers.
- (d) Presidents and Secretaries of Primary Units in that district shall be *ex-officio* members of the District Committee with the right to vote.
- (e) Such of those members who represent the District Unit on the State/Regional Council but are not members of the District Committee concerned shall be invited to meetings of the District Com-

(d) Decisions in regard to the enrolment of members shall be taken by the District Unit. Where there are no district units, decisions shall be taken by the State/Regional Executive or any other body designated by it for the purpose; provided that:

(i) a District Unit may suspend a member of the Party in the district concerned if in the view of the District Unit, such a member's continuance in the Party is not considered to be in the interests of the Party. The District Unit concerned shall then report the suspension to the State/Regional Committee. If after due consideration, the State/Regional Committee desires to either confirm the suspension or recommend his/her expulsion, it shall make an appropriate recommendation to the National Executive.

A member aggrieved by such a decision of the District Unit may appeal to the State/Regional Unit and if aggrieved by the decision of the State/Regional Unit, he/she shall have the right of appeal to the National Executive.

(ii) Any State/Regional Committee may on its own initiative, suspend or recommend to the National Executive the expulsion of any member of the Party in the State/Region concerned if, in the view of the State/Regional Committee such a member's continuance in the Party is not considered to be in the Party's interest. A member aggrieved

by such a decision shall have the right to appeal to the National Executive.

(iii) The National Executive may on the recommendation of the State/Regional Unit or on its own initiative suspend or expel any member of the Party whose continuance as member is not considered to be in the interest of the Party.

5. SUBSCRIPTION

(a) Every member of the Party shall pay a subscription of Re. 1/- per year. A member can pay his/her subscription for as many years as he/she desires. Anyone who pays his/her subscription at a time for a period of twenty years or more shall be deemed to be a member of the Party for life.

(b) A member of the Party will continue as such, as long as he/she pays his/her subscription. Each member of the Party will be issued a Party Card (preferably in his/her regional language). The Cards will be issued by the National Headquarters of the Party. Renewal of membership shall be done in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Executive.

(c) Only members whose membership is current on the date of the election shall have the right to vote in Party elections or to serve as Office Bearers or as members of elective committees.

(d) The membership subscription shall be divided

mittee. They shall have the right to participate in the discussions but not the right to vote.

- (f) Where the strength of a District Committee exceeds twenty-five it may elect a District Working Committee in such manner and constituted of *such number as the Executive Committee of the State or Region may prescribe* provided, however, that there shall be at least one representative on such Working Committee from each Primary Unit in the District.

8. STATE OR REGIONAL COUNCIL

- (a) For every State or any part thereof which may be recognised by the General Council to be a region for this purpose, there shall be a State or Regional Council.
- (b) Every such State or Regional Council shall be constituted of such number as may be prescribed from time to time by the National Executive. Such a State or Regional Council shall be elected by the elected members of all the District Committees in the State or Region by the method of proportional representation as set out in Appendix A annexed hereto.
- (c) Each State or Regional Council shall elect an Executive Committee consisting of a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, one or more Joint Secretaries, one or more Treasurers, and not less than 10 and not more than 20 other members.

- (d) (i) Swatantra Party MPs from the State and Members of the State Legislative Assembly and State Legislative Council and Presidents of District Committees shall be invited to meetings of the State or Regional Council, *if they are not already members thereof*. They shall have the right to participate in the discussions of such meetings, but not to vote.

- (ii) Leaders, Deputy Leaders and Chief Whips of the Party's Groups in the State Legislatures shall be invited to meetings of the State/Regional Executive Committee concerned, to participate in the discussions at such meetings but not to vote.

- (iii) Such of those members who represent the State/Regional Unit on the General Council but are not members of the State Regional Council concerned, shall be invited to meetings of the State/Regional Council. They shall have the right to participate in the discussions but not the right to vote.

- (iv) Past Presidents of State/Regional Units shall be full members of the State/Regional Council.

9. GENERAL COUNCIL

- (a) There shall be a General Council of the Party consisting of not more than 250 persons.

(b) The General Council shall be constituted of not less than 3 and not more than 20 from each State or Region as the case may be.

(c) The number allotted to each State or Regional Unit between the minimum and the maximum mentioned in sub-clause (b) shall be determined in proportion to the number of members enrolled in the State or Region.

(d) The members of the General Council allotted to a State or Region shall be elected by the appropriate State or Regional Council by proportional representation as set out in Appendix A annexed hereto.

(e) (i) Swatantra Party Members of Parliament, the Presidents and General Secretaries of State/Regional Units and Leaders, Deputy Leaders and Chief Whips of the Party's Groups in the various State Assemblies and Councils shall be invited to meetings of the General Council if they are not already members thereof. They shall have the right to participate in the discussions at such meetings but not to vote.

(ii) Past presidents of the Party shall be full members of the General Council.

10. QUORUM

The Quorum at all meetings of all elective bodies from the Primary Unit level upto the National level

shall be one-seventh of the total strength of that body, or five, whichever is higher.

11. ABSENCE FROM MEETINGS

Office Bearers and members of all elective bodies from the Primary level upto the National level who absent themselves from three consecutive meetings of their respective committees and councils without leave of absence shall be deemed to have vacated their seats or offices.

12. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

(a) The General Council shall elect the National Executive of the Party.

(b) The National Executive shall consist of a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, one or more Joint Secretaries, one or more Treasurers and not less than 10 and not more than 20 members.

(c) The election of Office Bearers and members of the National Executive shall take place at a meeting of the General Council and, if possible, such meeting may be held on the eve of the National Convention.

(d) The National Executive shall be competent and shall have the power:

(i) to take all such actions and decisions and to do all such things and acts as it may consider necessary or desirable in furtherance of the Party's objective; and

(ii) to raise funds, collect subscriptions and to borrow moneys for the purpose.

13. ELECTION TRIBUNALS

(a) There shall be set up one or more Election Tribunals for one or more States or Regions, constituted in such manner and composed of such persons as the National Executive may direct after consultations with the Executive Committees of the States or the Regions concerned. All disputes relating to all elections at the Primary or District Unit level, or concerning elections from the District level to the State/Regional levels shall be referred by the President of the State/Regional Unit to the State Election Tribunal concerned for decision. Appeals from the decisions of the State Election Tribunals shall lie (within one month from the date thereof) to the National Election Tribunal whose decision shall be final.

(b) There shall be set up a National Election Tribunal constituted in such manner and composed of such persons as the National Executive may direct. All disputes relating to all elections at the National level or concerning elections from the State or Regional level to the National level shall be referred by the General Secretary of the Party (at the National Headquarters) to the National Election Tribunal for decision. Appeals from the decisions of the National Election Tribunal shall lie (within one month from the date thereof) to

the National Executive whose decision shall be final.

(c) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in sub-clauses (a) and (b) above, the General Secretary of the Party at the National Headquarters may, at any time after making such inquiry as may be possible in the circumstances, direct that pending the reference of an election dispute to the State Election Tribunal or, as the case may be, to the National Election Tribunal the results of the disputed election shall not be operative and shall have no effect until the determination of the dispute by the Election Tribunal.

(d) Members of the Party are prohibited from taking election disputes into Courts of Law and the decision of the National Election Tribunal or, as the case may be, of the National Executive shall be final.

14. CO-OPTIONS

(a) The General Council shall be entitled to co-opt members who shall not be more than one-tenth of the number of its elected members.

(b) The President shall, for giving representation to unrepresented States or Regions or for other reasons, have the power to nominate not more than 7 members to the General Council.

(c) The State or Regional Councils shall be entitled to co-opt a number of members not more than one-tenth of the number of their elected members.

- (d) A State or Regional Council shall have the power to authorise a District or Primary Unit Committee to co-opt members in number not more than one-tenth of the number of elected members of such bodies.

15. PARTY ELECTIONS

- (a) The first elections to the Primary Unit Committees, District Committees, State or Regional Councils and General Council shall be held before the end of 1964 and thereafter fresh elections shall be held by the end of every alternate year. Provided that elections shall not be postponed for more than one year without the approval of the General Council.
- (b) Workers and Life Workers duly enrolled by July 31, 1964, and Life Members enrolled on or before December 31, 1963, will be entitled to vote in the first elections to the bodies referred to in sub-clause (a).
- (c) The elections to the State and Regional Executive Committees and the National Executive shall be held as soon as practicable after the elections to the Committees and Councils are held as provided in sub-clause (a).
- (d) The procedure for the conduct of Party elections shall be such as may be prescribed by the National Executive from time to time.

16. NATIONAL CONVENTION

- (a) The National Convention of the Party shall be held at least once every two years.

- (b) The Convention shall be constituted of delegates elected on the basis of direct election by Members of the Party in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Executive.

- (c) The appropriate strength of delegates from each State shall be determined by the National Executive.

17. STATE OR REGIONAL CONVENTION

- (a) Every State or Region as the case may be shall hold a Convention of the Party at least once in two years for making recommendations in regard to the policy of the Party and for deciding policy in respect of matters relating to the State or the Region concerned.
- (b) Delegates to such Convention shall be elected on the basis of direct election by Members in the State or Region in such manner as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee of the State or Region.

18. RULES

- (a) The General Council shall have the power to prescribe by rules and directions such matters as are herein provided to be so prescribed and such other matters which may be necessary for or incidental to carrying out the objects of the Party.
- (b) Subject to the rule making powers of the General Council, the National Executive shall have the

power to frame such rules and to issue such directions and instructions as may be necessary for or incidental to carrying out the programme or activities of the Party.

- (c) Subject to the provisions of sub-clauses (a) and (b) of this Clause, every State or Regional Council shall have the power to prescribe by rules and directions, and subject thereto every State or Regional Executive Committee shall have the power to prescribe by rules, directions and instructions such matters as are herein provided to be so prescribed and such other matters as may be

found necessary to carry out its functions and duties in accordance with this Constitution.

19. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at the National Convention of the Party:

- (a) on the recommendation of the General Council by a majority of delegates present and voting at such Convention, or
- (b) on a proposal by 200 Members of the Party by a three-fourths majority of the delegates present and voting, provided 30 days' clear notice thereof had been given to the National Executive.

PROCEDURE FOR VOTING AT PARTY ELECTIONS

I. The voting procedure set out in this Appendix shall be applicable for election of Office Bearers and Members of Committees and Councils at *all levels*, i.e.

- (i) Elections at the Primary Unit Level, and from the Primary Unit Level to the District Level;
- (ii) Elections at the District Unit Level and from the District Unit Level to the State/Regional Level;
- (iii) Elections at the State/Regional Unit Level and from the State/Regional Unit Level to the National Level;
- (iv) Elections at the National Level.

II. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

The procedure set out in sub-paras (1) to (4) of this paragraph shall apply for election of Office Bearers to the following (or similar) categories of offices:

- (a) One President or Chairman
- (b) One or more Vice Presidents* or Vice-Chairmen*

* If and where considered necessary

- (c) One Secretary or General Secretary@
- (d) One Treasurer
- (e) One or more Joint Secretaries*
- (f) One or more Joint Treasurers*

(1) Two or more Scrutineers (who are not themselves candidates) shall be appointed before the commencement of voting, which shall be by secret ballot.

(2) There shall be separate voting for elections to each category of office.

(3)(a) Where only one Office-Bearer is to be elected to any office (or only one vacancy to be filled up in any category of office) the voting shall be by casting a single vote, to be marked by the voter on the ballot paper against the candidate of his choice from among the contesting candidates shown on the ballot paper.

(b) If more than one vote is marked against any one candidate, such votes shall count as one vote.

@ The description "General Secretary" would be appropriate at the State/Regional and National levels; at the Primary Unit and District Level the description "Secretary" would be more appropriate.

- (c) If votes are marked against more than one candidate, such ballot paper shall be declared invalid; so, too, every ballot paper which discloses in any manner the identity of the voter shall be declared invalid.
 - (d) The scrutiny of ballot papers and the counting of votes should be done by the scrutineers as soon as possible after the voting is over.
 - (e) The candidates *or* their representatives (one for each candidate) may be present during the scrutiny of ballot papers and counting of votes.
 - (f) The candidate securing the highest number of valid votes shall be declared elected; and in the event of equality of votes between two or more candidates securing the largest number of votes, the scrutineers shall ascertain the result of the election by drawing lots between each candidate.
- (4) Where two or more Office Bearers are to be elected to any category of office (or when there are two or more vacancies in a category to be filled up) the voting shall be by the system of single non-transferable vote, where each voter shall cast as many votes *of equal preference* as there are vacancies to be filled from among the contesting candidates shown on the ballot paper, as follows:—
- (i) For each category of Office Bearers' election, each voter shall have (and may cast) as many votes as there are vacancies to be filled up;

- (e.g. for the election of two Vice-Presidents, each voter shall have two votes).
- (ii) Such votes shall be marked by the voter on the ballot paper against the candidates of his choice from among the contesting candidates shown on the ballot paper.
- (iii) A voter may not cast more than one vote for any one candidate; but if he did so, such votes would count only as one vote.
- (iv) The voter shall not cast votes in favour of more candidates than the number of vacancies to be filled up; any ballot paper not complying with this condition shall be declared invalid. So, too, every ballot paper which discloses in any manner the identity of the voter shall be declared invalid^{*}
- (v) The scrutiny of ballot papers and the tabulating and counting of votes shall be done by the scrutineers as soon as possible after the voting is over.
- (vi) The candidates *or* their representatives (one for each candidate) may be present during the scrutiny of ballot papers and the tabulating and counting of votes.
- (vii) As many of those candidates who have secur-

^{*} A voter shall be at liberty to cast *less* votes than the number of vacancies to be filled up, without rendering the ballot paper invalid; e.g. if there are three vacancies to be filled in any category of office but a voter chooses to cast votes only against two candidates, he will be at liberty to do so.

ed the largest number of valid votes as there are vacancies to be filled shall be declared elected; and in the event of equality of votes between two or more candidates for the last vacancy to be filled up the scrutineers shall ascertain the result of the election for that position by drawing lots between such candidates.

III. ELECTION TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

(1) For every election to Primary Unit Committees and to the Executive Committees at the State/Regional and National levels, the voting shall be by the system of single non-transferable vote, where each voter shall have (and may cast) as many votes, of *equal preference*, as there are vacancies to be filled up from among the candidates shown on the ballot paper.

(2) Such votes shall be marked by the voter on the ballot paper against the candidates of his choice from among the contesting candidates shown on the ballot paper.

(3) A voter may not cast more than one vote for any one candidate; but if he did so, such votes would count only as one vote.

(4) The voter shall not cast votes in favour of more candidates than the number of vacancies to be filled up: any ballot paper not complying with this condition shall be declared invalid. So, too, every ballot paper which discloses in any manner, the identity of the voter shall be declared invalid.*

(5) The scrutiny of ballot papers and the tabulating and counting of votes shall be done by the scrutineers as soon as possible after the voting is over.

(6) The candidates or their representatives (one for each candidate) may be present during the scrutiny of ballot papers and the tabulating and counting of votes.

(7) As many of those candidates who have secured the largest number of valid votes as there are vacancies to be filled shall be declared elected; and in the event of equality of votes between two or more candidates for the last vacancy to be filled up, the scrutineers shall ascertain the result of the election for that position by drawing lots between such candidates.

IV. ELECTION TO DISTRICT COMMITTEES, STATE COUNCILS AND GENERAL COUNCIL

In every election to District Committees under Article 7 of the Constitution, to State or Regional Councils under Article 8 of the Constitution and to the General Council under Article 9 of the Constitution, election shall be by proportional representation.

V. In the foregoing paragraphs, the word 'voter' with reference to any election shall mean the persons entitled and eligible to vote at that election.

* A voter shall be at liberty to cast *less* votes than the number of vacancies to be filled up, without rendering the ballot paper invalid: e.g. if there are ten vacancies to be filled but a voter chooses to cast votes only against eight candidates, he will be at liberty to do so.

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