

Some Points

Indira Gandhi
Tuesday, 16th July, 1974

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The move to dissolve the Swatantra Party in order to facilitate the establishment of a new party with six others has run up against rough weather. The Bombay, Madras and Delhi Units, which are among the best established in the country, have flatly rejected the move and have announced that even if by a snap vote ~~the~~ the National Convention called in Delhi on August 4 and 5 endorses the Party President's proposal, they will continue to function Swatantra Parties at the State level.

A large part of the membership of the Party elsewhere is also in revolt.

The reasons for opposition to the move are three-fold:-

1. The new party will not be a National Alternative and will not also be able to prevent multi-concerned contests.
2. The character of some of those in the other parties will not permit the new party to have public credibility. The Swatantra Party itself has had a bitter experience with most of them.
3. The so-called programme is vague and platonic and will provide no guarantee of smooth and homogeneous functioning.

For these reasons, there is no chance of the Convention endorsing the move to dissolve the Party to enable the formation of a new one. The Party Constitution does not provide dissolution of the Party at all but even an amendment to the Constitution requires a three fourths majority, and in the face of Opposition this is out of the question.

In order to avert an impasse and a likely split in the Party,

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Mr. M.R. Masani, Founder of the Party along with Rajaji and a former General Secretary and President of the Party, has tried to show the way out by a proposal which would permit both those who want to join the new party and those who wish to continue educating the Indian people on the principles and policies of the Swatantra Party be given an opportunity to do so without bitterness. It is understood that the National Headquarters has today received a resolution tabled by Mr. M.R. Masani to that effect to be placed before the Convention. The proposal which has been brought to the notice of all concerned seeks to convert the Swatantra Party ~~into~~ into a non-party organisation which will eschew electoral and party politics and devote itself to educative propaganda and constructive service of the people. The likely name of the proposed organisation may be the Swatantra Seva Sangh.

If this compromise proposal is accepted both by the pro-changers and the no-changers, there is no doubt that the proposal could go through with more than the 3/4 majority required. Otherwise an unpleasant situation is bound to arise at the Convention leading to a repetition of what has happened to the Socialist Party on more than one occasion in the past. Dedicated members of the Swatantra Party are hoping this can yet be averted by heeding Mr. Masani's counsel.

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