

SWATANTRA SERIES-2

Why SWATANTRA?

to save freedom ...



... to preserve family economy



to restore fundamental rights...



... to provide a democratic alternative



Price 20 nP

WHY SWATANTRA ?

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

N. G. RANGA

K. M. MUNSHI

M. R. MASANI

I hope to demonstrate that real Swaraj does not come by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

—MAHATMA GANDHI

The people have surrendered their fate in the hands of a few representatives. But we attribute even more wisdom to these representatives than to God. God has given intellect to every man and that is why He is care-free. If He had planned to keep all the intellect with Him, what a botheration it would have been to Him! But He did not do like that. Today our planners have arrogated all the wisdom to themselves and have not given any rights to the villages to plan.

—VINOBA BHAVE

Four of the top leaders of the Swatantra Party—the founder and guiding spirit, C. Rajagopalachari; President N. G. Ranga; Vice-President K. M. Munshi, and General Secretary M. R. Masani—analyse with incisive logic the need for the new party and explain with great clarity its fundamental philosophy and programme.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

To Save Freedom

THE Swatantra Party stands for the protection of the individual citizen against the increasing trespasses of the State. It is an answer to the challenge of the so-called Socialism of the Indian Congress party. It is founded on the conviction that social justice and welfare can be attained through the fostering of individual interest and individual enterprise in all fields better than through State ownership and Government control. It is based on the truth that bureaucratic management leads to loss of incentive and waste of resources. When the State trespasses beyond what is legitimately within its province, it just hands over the management from those who are interested in frugal and efficient management to bureaucracy which is untrained and uninterested except in its own survival.

The Swatantra Party is founded on the claim that individual citizens should be free to hold their property and carry on their professions freely and through binding mutual agreements among themselves and that the State should assist and encourage in every possible way the individual in this freedom, but not seek to replace him.

The new party seeks to oppose the trend of the ruling Congress Party to adopt the ways and ideals of the Communists in its eagerness to prevent the Communists from going forward. The Swatantra party believes that going over to the enemy is not defence, but surrender.

The Swatantra Party, apart from the ideology here explained, hopes to furnish a real opposition to the Congress Party so that parliamentary demo-

cracy may be properly balanced. The absence of a true opposition has led to the rapid deterioration of democracy into a kind of totalitarianism. Voices have been heard from all quarters calling for a strong opposition and the new party is supplying a felt want.

This party of freedom is further making a novel experiment in restricting disciplinary control over party members to essential issues, giving freedom in all other matters to vote according to individual opinion. This is not mere strategy to "net in" discordant miscellaneous elements as at first might appear. It is really an answer to the constantly expressed sense of dissatisfaction with party rigidity, and to the complaint that it often amounts to suppression of opinion and rule by a minority in the name of a majority. A majority in the ruling caucus can always, under present conditions, impose their views on all and every issue in the Parliament of the nation.

The Swatantra Party intends to initiate a departure from the usual practice of political parties and, true to its name, give *Swatantra* or freedom to its members to vote according to their own convictions and conscience on all but the party's fundamentals so that the decisions of Parliament may on those issues truly reflect the prevailing opinion, and not be just a replica of the majority opinion of the ruling party or the fads of the ruling clique.

Without the inconveniences resulting from proportional representation and, in particular, the instability of governments formed under such a system, the reduction of voting in accordance with whips to the barest minimum, as proposed by the Swatantra Party would be a healthy example for all parties. If followed generally or even by the more important ones among the various parties, the freedom given to members on all but essential issues would result in government more in accordance with the ideals of those who conceived the system of proportional representation and laid

high hopes thereon. In this matter, the new party may claim to have initiated a great democratic advance worthy of trial in all countries really believing in democracy, and not willing to be subjected to a form of dictatorship in the name of party discipline which often serves only the ambition of individuals or groups.

The new party does not believe that legislative compulsion, any more than the violence that preceded and enthroned Communism in certain countries, can contribute to true or lasting human happiness. We must depend on the moral sense of the people in order to equalise without destroying freedom.

It may be that there are a large number of people in our ancient land who have now lost the capacity to respond to moral appeals, who are impervious to the call of *dharma*. There have been causes that have brought about this state of things. But this large number of bad and successful men of the world should not blind us to the fact that in the large mass, *dharma* still rules and supports our society. The millions that make up our nation are still moved and guided by their sense of *dharma* and the voice of their conscience. If the cynics who deny this were right, our society would have broken down long ago and perished. We should have been hearing of starvation deaths in thousands every day. If we take a survey of the numerous charitable foundations and trusts that work as a matter of routine in the country and which were born of a sense of *dharma*, without any kind of State compulsion, we can cure our cynicism with irrefutable and abundant facts. The charitable motives and compulsions of the heart which prevailed in the days when these trusts and charitable institutions were founded can prevail today, for we are the same people after all.

"There is no need for charity when there is an obligation; let the State compel". This is the slogan of the Socialists. But it is forgotten that this will lead irresistibly to total serfdom.

The cynics are not right. Our society is still maintained by the inner law. The outer laws can touch but the fringe of life. They deal with criminals and keep order going. Normal life does not depend on the laws. It depends on the moral consciousness of people. This moral sense has not been effaced whatever changes may have taken place in the rituals and observances of forms. It is by *dharma* that society is sustained, *Lokah dhriyate*. It is on *dharma* we must build, and not on the sands of material motives and our capacity to satisfy them quickly and get votes to be in power. The good seed is not lost. It is still there. We must not ignore its availability. The soil also is good and God will send us the rains. Let us not fail to look after it.

N. G. RANGA

To Preserve Family Economy

TWELVE years of Swaraj Government have brought to the fore certain dangers inherent in planned economy and the prevailing political atmosphere of Sovietism that has unobtrusively come to influence our planners and Government. Our friends of the Congress, who have come into power after long decades of striving and who have been enjoying it for so long without any effective fear of losing it, have fallen very much in love with it. So they have forgotten the historic evils and dangers of that power if allowed to go on making such inroads into the basic freedoms and rights of individuals, groups and masses, and have failed to have any second thoughts as to the dangers of its uncontrolled exercise. They have become so intoxicated with the use of these powers of the post-war State, augmented as they have been by the war-time legacy of controls, that they have mustered courage to seek to destroy the very foundations of our social economy. It is now for all lovers of India's traditional family economy, which has withstood many challenges from successive rulers, both Indian and foreign, to mobilise all their forces to arrest the mad rush towards Sovietism and destruction of every kind of freedom and independence that gives any meaning to our existence as human beings. The Swatantra Party has come into existence to shoulder this sacred responsibility.

We are being attacked as being people of yesterday's thoughts by no less a person than Jawaharlalji because we dare take up this challenge of the Congress to the fundamental rights and the

farm-family economy, which is the very marrow of our Nation. But we are convinced ours is part of the world-wide movement of liberation of the individual from the controls of Statism and uplifting of the personality of every human being. Ours is a challenge to the totalitarian tendencies and dictatorial parties masquerading as Governments which are threatening to overwhelm humanity.

This cause of Swatantra and the cry for Swatantra is an ageless one ; it is as old as society in its relations with its individual members and their groupings. From the days of our Rishis, long before the age of Ramayana and Mahabharata down to the era of Socrates and Athenian democracy, sages and statesmen were obliged to debate and their peoples had to struggle with successive types of rulers, as to the nature and quantum of Swatantra the people in their homes, associations and citizenship should achieve for their spiritual and material progress, consistent with the need for the state to assure them of the basic national security, peaceful existence and social harmony. Plato and Aristotle argued from opposite sides over this essential question as to what should conduce most to the happiness of people ; to give more power to the State or to allow more Swatantra to the individual. The schoolmen of Europe of the Middle Ages had to reconcile themselves to what is known as pluralism in social structure in which various guilds of craftsmen and city corporations were allowed to enjoy the freedom of corporate organisations free from interference by the State.

In India, too, the conception and practice of *dharma* were evolved through several centuries and popularised through the didactic treatises, including the popular Epics and Bhajan Songs, and kings, their ministers and the whole hierarchy of officials had come to accept it as their inviolable code of conduct. According to that *dharma*, the rights and privileges of internal autonomy in almost all social and economic matters of self-governing guilds of craftsmen and professionals, and panchayats of peasants and villagers were fully assured and respected and peasant proprietorship and craftsmen's economic freedom were accepted

as warp and woof of the fabric of our social economy. Almost all the people of our country were encouraged to achieve self-employment and thus attain social and economic independence irrespective of the personnel of the rulers. Whenever encroachments were sought to be made directly or indirectly by the rulers upon these individual and group freedoms, there were revolts from the people concerned as well as others against the power of the rulers. The British Bill of Rights, the French and American Charter of Natural Rights of Man came to take their shape, as a result of such revolts and revolutions. We, of these two generations, have been through the past seventy years of national struggle to achieve, once again, these rights and freedoms from the encroachments made by British imperialism. And European peoples of the Western and Eastern systems of government made common cause during the second world war to fight and defeat fascism. Those Europeans who fought for freedom in their respective countries were known variously as Liberals, Radicals, Republicans and Revolutionaries. In the inter-war period, the champions of freedom came to organise themselves internationally also and fight for national independence and human freedom for peoples of all countries and called themselves the anti-imperialists. Later on, they took up the role of anti-fascists, during the second world war. Ever since the Soviet powers have refused to accept the United Nations Charter of Human Rights and begun to envelop countries after countries in Eastern Europe and Asia with their suffocating communist overcoats denying human rights and depriving the peasants of their holdings and self-employment and oppressing the intellectuals and the professionals by opposing their freedom of thought, speech and writing, all freedom-loving people have been obliged to face up to this challenge and fight for the Swatantra of the Indian conception embracing human rights and freedom and the independence of people, as individuals and members of concentric circles of self-governing groups and associations. It does not need much display or heroism for rulers to retain power and expand their control over others. But to question their authority, arrest its expansion, to keep it under

control, guide and regulate its use for the benefit of people and also for the expansion of their privileges, has always demanded all the moral and physical courage and material sacrifices from the noblest of all nations. This is the role that the Swatantra Party has now taken up. This is the mission it has chosen to fulfil. It is unfortunate that Jawaharlalji should have mistaken this heroic role and noble mission for a lost cause of the nineteenth century. However, we shall continue to march ahead under the leadership of the Swatantra Party and Rajaji, with the full confidence that our mission will protect and promote the invaluable human rights, self-employment and other social and economic freedoms and privileges of our masses. This is an all-world embracing movement.

It is surprising that Jawaharlalji, who has made such a deep study of the history of these freedom movements and who has played such an important role in the league against imperialism and the fight against fascism, should be repeating his un-historical charge that the inauguration of this movement by the Swatantra Party and the Kisan Sammelan smacks of the nineteenth century. This is indeed the most progressive and the latest contribution to the ageless human struggle for freedom and independence against the equally ever-recurrent manoeuvres of those in power over the lives, freedoms and free associations of people.

We are today obliged to protest against the Soviet approach of our planners. There was a time, when I for one did much to promote the plan for the establishment of the Planning Commission and for the making of the National Development Plan. But never did I imagine that the planners would try to subvert our national economy in such a manner as to make me explain in Parliament, as I was obliged to when the First Five Year Plan was presented, that it was a pale imitation of the Soviet Plan and not at all a Gandhian plan. The Second Five Year Plan made a bolder approach to Sovietism while paying lip homage to the principle of decentralisation and the economy of cottage industries and peasant proprietorship.

Most of the people in our country have been so keen on rapid economic development that they allowed themselves to be hypnotised by the magnitude of the rupee values of the plan expenditure and the national hydro schemes, iron & steel plants, chemical works and machine tool factories. So they did not care to pay much attention to what appeared to be didactic theses on agrarian and other aspects of our national life incorporated so cleverly by the Planning Commission in their *Neo Maha Bhagavata* (report on the plan). Now that the Planning Commission has begun to give concrete shape to several of the chapters in its theses on agriculture, industry and trade and the Congress Party wanted to toe the line through its preparatory resolution at Avadi and Amritsar and its greatest Nagpur declarations of the preparatory steps proposed to be taken to enable the Planning Commission to give practical effect to its schemes, that large sections of our people have begun to realise the real intentions of the planners and their Government.

We know now, thanks to the Nagpur exposition, that the Congress and the Planning Commission too, deprive our peasants of their much-cherished self-employment. They want to induce them by direct and indirect means at the disposal of the Government to accept the position of wage-earning members of co-operative farming under the guise of the farm managements being amenable to their democratic control. They want to deprive them of their peasant proprietorship and control and utilisation of their holdings. They desire to exploit the need of peasants for the service co-operatives to cajole and coerce them into embracing co-operative farming. Similarly, they wish to draw millions of our artisans into the embraces of the small factories tied up however loosely to the growing large-scale economy as is evident by their plans to replace the whole of the handloom weavers of more than one crore by the introduction of five lakhs of power looms through the sugarcoated weavers' power looms co-operatives. They want also to replace crores of small shopkeepers and their family economy of trading by introducing state-controlled, regulated or

owned grain shops (whether co-operative or otherwise), manned and supervised by so-called educated and qualified employees. All these evil possibilities have become patent only after the Congress passed its Nagpur resolution.

The people of our country do not approve of these objectives, plans, schemes and intrigues against their cherished social, economic freedom based on their family economy. This has been demonstrated through the nation-wide protests voiced from the platforms of the peasants, artisans and traders. The Swatantra Party has arisen as an answer to the challenge of the Congress and the Planning Commission to those precious liberties and freedom of the great majority of our nation to find self-employment and a modicum of social security in the family economy in agriculture, cottage industries and trade. The Swatantra Party is the political champion of these peoples and their freedom-laden family economy.

K. M. MUNSHI

To Restore Fundamental Rights

THE Congress leaders loftily ask the Swatantra Party as to what it positively stands for. Like the Pilate, they ask the question and do not wait for the answer.

The Swatantra Party stands, first and foremost, for the restoration of freedom and democracy in our country which the Congress is doing its best to undermine. We want to breathe freely. We want to possess and enjoy our earnings without government dictation. We want freedom to organise ourselves without bureaucratic direction.

We want, in the words of Gandhiji, to 'feel that we are the makers of our own destiny' and not clay to be moulded at the will of the Congress supermen. We want independence which comes, as Gandhiji said, 'not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused.' Again, in his words, we want to 'educate the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.'

The Congress has lost the right to speak as a democratic body. It has reduced all democratic processes to a farce. The Congress is no better than an inverted pyramid. Its annual session is a propaganda stunt like the regimented rallies in totalitarian countries; even the services of cinema stars are being requisitioned to buttress its attraction. The delegates have only one function: to admire the leaders and set the seal of approval on the A.I.C.C. resolutions.

The A.I.C.C., in its turn, dutifully rubber-stamps the resolutions of the Working Committee.

The Working Committee is nominated by the president; the president is chosen in accordance with the wishes of the leader. We know the fate of a Congress president who a few years ago dared to think independently.

The Parliament is dominated by the Congress Party, the Party by its leader. The last irresistible and independent voice in the Cabinet was hushed when Maulana Abul Kalam Azad died. And the super-Cabinet of the country—the nominated Planning Commission—is always there to bring errant ministers to heel.

The National Development Council of Ministers—many of them dependent on the Congress bosses for their tenure—has also arrogated to itself equal powers of a super-Cabinet. This was evident when the Council at its recent meeting swore by State trading in foodgrains despite the fact that the outgoing Food Minister had categorically admitted the failure of State trading and the incoming Food Minister had expressed grave doubts about its suitability.

Democracy can only function through the existence of mutually-respected political parties with a national outlook. But that is not the view of the Congress. Anyone who disagrees with the rubber-stamped views of the Congress is dubbed a 'reactionary' or an 'obscurantist'. He is branded 'out of date', not modern; 'static', not dynamic. Any person even in the Congress or in its Parliamentary wing who dares to differ is openly snubbed. Even an ex-Judge of the Supreme Court enjoys no immunity, though he may enjoy the luxury of a private apology. The P.S.P. is 'unpractical'; Jan Sangh is 'communal'; the Swatantra Party is 'feudal', and the Press, no sooner it dared to raise its voice against the vicious trends in the Congress, is the 'voice of vested interests' or in the retracted version, 'run for profits' and, in substance, therefore, venal. Only the Congress, entrenched in enormous power and patronage and with the resources of the State at its disposal, can be right!

When climbing to Heaven in mortal body, Sahadeva, one of the Pandavas, fell on the way,

Dharma Raja said, 'He fell because he thought he was the wisest of men'.

* * * *

The Swatantra Party next wants to restore the fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution, which the Congress has whittled down. The right to property is on its way to become extinct; the fundamental right in this connection has been reduced to a shadow.

Even taxation is expropriatory. During the last seven years, indirect taxation has been so oppressive that the common man is denied even the necessities of life through soaring prices. At several levels the taxation far exceeds the income. A man with a dividend income of Rs. 1 lakh a year pays income-tax and wealth tax of Rs. 82,471; has to live on his own capital and pay in addition an expenditure tax. The attempt in substance is to kill private industry and private property at the same time.

The fundamental right to carry on business is being extinguished under various pretexts. One has to be a businessman to know how at every step his right to business is circumscribed, crippled or throttled. The big business was the enemy so far; the small trade is now the enemy. State trading is to substitute the bureaucrat for the trader and the latter will swell the ranks of the unemployed, helplessly seeking Government support.

Gandhiji said: 'Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of Government control, whether it is foreign Government or whether it is national.'

The so-called democracy of the Congress would mean controls on all spheres of life. Every one has to depend upon the State. Every property has to go into the hands of the State. Every man has to be helpless before the mighty State. We are fast approaching the Servile State of Fascism implied in the *diktat* of Mussolini: "Everything for the State; nothing outside the State; nothing against the State." And the State belongs to the political bosses.

Not an Act is passed by the multitude of legislatures in this country but imposes upon the people greater regimentation, operated through an ever-increasing bureaucracy. Even education, culture and religion are threatened in State after State by a mad passion for improving us out of our national traditions, values and ideas. And for that purpose, octopus legislative measures, with well-drilled majority in the legislatures, translate the will of a few into a prison house for all.

Now has begun the invasion of the rural structure, the most powerful bastion of a free people. By one Bill after another, now on the legislative anvil, the agriculturists are being reduced to a new *shudra* class of submerged people. Their income in most cases, whatever be the effect of inflation and whatever be the cost of prices, will not exceed Rs. 3,600 per year for a family of five working hard throughout the year.

In order to support these measures, even class hatred is openly declared to be inevitable by some Congress leaders. Gandhiji was emphatic: 'In India, class-war is not only not inevitable but it is avoidable if we have understood the message of non-violence.' But those who claim to wield power in his name have use only for his name, but no use for his creed!

Punjab was once a highly deficit State. It has now become highly surplus in foodgrains due to the labours of its progressive farmers. They have contributed their initiative, drive and money, mostly raised on the pledge of family ornaments, to reclaiming waste lands, buying tractors, sinking tubewells and levelling lands. But they are now to be expropriated; their crime was that they responded to the call of the nation for producing more food. They will now be forced to give up their lands beyond the miserable minimum at which the ceiling has been fixed and consign their tractors to a junk pile.

Prof. Otto Schiller, a world authority on co-operative farming, in a recent interview in the *Statesman*, condemned co-operative farming. He is the latest to add his expert voice to Charan Singh's unanswerable logic. But our power-intoxi-

cated politicians remain unshaken in their resolve to reduce farmers to serfdom.

Though co-operative farming is being soft-pedalled of late, it still remains the sinister end of Congress policy. We are told that no compulsion is going to be used to induce farmers to join farming co-operatives. This is either a cruel joke or a dangerous delusion. If all amenities are preferentially given to service co-operatives and denied to individual family farms, would it not be the most invidious form of compulsion?

Look at the facts. In Bombay, by law, 34% of farmers could be expropriated if 66% decide upon a co-operative society. There is also a Bill before the Bombay Legislative Assembly (Clause 30) providing that if any farmer is unwilling to surrender his land, the Collector, with the previous approval of the Government, will be entitled to acquire it. This is the non-compulsion of the Congress brand!

We are told that the farmer would be free to leave a farming co-operative even after he joins it. This again is a cruel joke. No sooner is a farming co-operative formed, it will borrow large sums of money from the Government and the banks. In fact, the Government will be entitled to recover its dues like land revenue. How can an individual farmer, one out of a hundred, be free to take back his land so heavily burdened? In substance, he will become the serf of the supreme landlord, the State. There will be a new economic feudalism of the worst type, against which there is going to be no relief and no appeal.

But that is not enough. The Conference of State Ministers of Co-operation which met at the end of July 1959, among other things, recommended: 'Prompt action should be taken to secure deterrent punishment to the delinquents. To ensure this, it is necessary that

- (1) a small cell be created in the Registrar's office to look after this work;
- (2) a junior Co-operative Officer be posted in districts to look after this work'.

And the 'cell' in this context can only be a cell of C.I.D. watching over the 'free voluntary'

co-operatives which the Congress Government will bring into existence!

The people are led into complacency by the promise that co-operative farming is not coming for three years. The reason is very clear. The service co-operatives handled by the Congress and lavishly supported by the State are expected to be the instruments for winning the next elections. Then, they believe, it will be easy to get a 'mandate' from the electorate to introduce universal co-operative farming.

If anyone is foolish enough to think that the Nagpur resolutions have been given up, that the rural structure is out of danger, that family farming is going to have a chance under Congress rule, he is living in a fool's paradise.

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What is the Swatantra Party's economic programme?—they ask. It is *laissez faire*, says a Congress spokesman. The man who says so has not read our fundamental principles or does not know what *laissez faire* means.

The Swatantra Party's policy is based on the Gandhian dictum that 'all administration should be done by popular will; everything should go from bottom upwards. Democracy will break under the strain of apron strings; it can exist only on trust.'

The cardinal problem of India to which the Swatantra Party has addressed itself is how to meet the basic needs of the people to make their lives worth living.

We stand for an economic programme for the common man to secure him social justice and equality of opportunity; to fulfil the basic needs of the people, viz., food, water, housing and clothing, as the first charge on the State; and to provide adequate safeguards for the protection of labour and against unreasonable profits, prices and dividends.

The Congress claims to have been building up a social welfare state. But the stark fact is, it has

hopelessly failed to provide the people with adequate food, water, housing and clothing.

In spite of ten years' rule, the Congress still asks us to tighten our belt, so that 'unborn' generations can enjoy prosperity. Such an attitude is criminally heartless. It cannot help to expand our economy. It has naturally not evoked any enthusiasm among the people.

Let us have a closer look at the achievements of our social welfare experts since they embarked on socialising policies. The *per capita* income in 1957-58 showed a decline to Rs. 276 from Rs. 284 at 1948-49 price level in the preceding year. It is far behind Ceylon which has a *per capita* income of Rs. 500.

For a population of 400 million, we should have about 80 million houses, but we have only 15 million *pucca* houses. In spite of demand for more and more houses, the Congress Government could create conditions for having only 125,000 houses built per year. In U.S.A., with a population of 40% of India's, a million and a quarter houses are constructed every year. In the last decade, our socialists have seen to it that we built not more than a million and a quarter houses. And ask any man who has built a house under what stifling conditions and regulations he has had to work.

What have these 'social welfare experts' done with regard to clothing? We have a textile industry, the second largest in the world and yet our *per capita* consumption of cotton cloth (including handloom and powerloom production) is only 16.8 yards against 60 yards in U.S.A., 35 yards in Japan and 29 yards in U.S.S.R. In their insatiate greed for taxes, the Government raised the excise levy on cloth from Rs. 45 crores in March 1956 to Rs. 72 crores in September of that year. This led to the closure of mills and consequent large scale unemployment; it made cloth oppressively expensive for the common man.

And what about food? It is the primary requirement of man; it forms 45 to 80% of the budget of a family. Freedom from foreign food, therefore, is the only basis of our economic freedom. Our

'social welfare experts' have, however, completely betrayed that trust.

The recent food situation in Bengal is a grim example of it, if one were needed. The food prices are soaring higher and still higher, thanks to the Nasik Security Press; the people are cheated in the value of their money to finance prestige projects of the State. But, whatever the oppressive nature of food prices, the Government must take their sales-tax even from the poorest!

Between 1952 and 1959, the food imports have cost the nation as much as Rs. 948 crores, and the quality of food available is far below the minimum standards required for the health of the nation. The only remedy which the Government know is to spend crores and crores of money on spectacular schemes and make us more and more helpless in the matter of food through controls administered by a corrupt bureaucracy. Is this social welfare?

There are the great economic achievements of the Congress Government, trumpeted on a hundred platforms. No wonder that the Congress, at the election, got only 32 per cent of the votes of the people. It will not get even that percentage next time.

The aim of the Swatantra Party, therefore, is clear: it wants to restore free democracy and real parliamentary control to the people; to meet, as the first charge, the elementary needs of the common people, viz. food, water, housing and clothing at easy prices; to stimulate private initiative to create employment opportunities; to destroy the weedy growth of corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy; to place the security of India beyond the grasp of ambitious World Powers, so that we can stand fearless before the world.

The Swatantra Party has to be made strong and effective to rescue the common man from being regimented, impoverished and enslaved by the totalitarian devices of the Congress.

To quote the words of our great poet Gurudev Tagore: "A cause as great as India's should not be dependent on the will of a single master."

M. R. MASANI

To Provide A Democratic Alternative

IN August in Bombay, a new political party was born. If it were yet one more party wedded to some kind of socialism, that would hardly be news. What is interesting about the development is that the Swatantra (Freedom) Party, which has come into existence under the leadership of elder statesman C. Rajagopalachari, is pledged to the maintenance of individual liberty, believes in peasant proprietorship on the land and people's enterprise in industry, and is opposed to Statism and the methodology of socialism. That a broad-based political party of this nature should have come forward to question the very foundations on which the social and economic structure of the 10-year-old Indian republic has so far been reared constitutes nothing short of a revolution on the Indian political scene.

The birth of the Swatantra Party marks, in a way, the end of the post-independence era which has been infused with the agitational politics of the struggle for national freedom. It may well mark the beginning of the functioning of normal parliamentary democracy in a country, whose freedom has been well and truly founded on the rock of a democratic constitution and which now turns to utilize that freedom for the well-being and happiness of its people. Swatantra Party leaders claim the emergence of the party as a sign of the growing political maturity of the Indian people.

The philosophy of the new party, put in a nutshell, is that it has faith in the people's capacity to serve the country by serving themselves. The

Originally published in "LIFE International".

slogan under which Dr. Ludwig Erhard has accomplished the magnificent postwar recovery of West Germany, "Let the men and the money loose and they will make the country strong," strikes a responsive chord with the Swatantra party's members. The new party's members do not believe that a collectivized economy can co-exist for long with political democracy. One or the other must give way. Some measure of State enterprise and regulation in the economic field the party accepts as inevitable in the conditions of the 20th Century. But, when government regulation steps across a certain limit, it threatens the purpose for which it is invoked. The new party stands for the "defence of farm and family." It rejects materialism and recalls the stress which Gandhi laid on moral values. It rejects the false dichotomy of bread *versus* freedom. In its view, bread can be achieved only *with* and *through* freedom. Abraham Lincoln's adage that the legitimate object of government is 'to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they cannot, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves,' was quoted in one of the key-note speeches at the Bombay founding convention because it has relevance to the problems of India a century after Lincoln's time.

The new party has decided to limit its opposition to the socio-economic sphere and has not so far developed a plank on foreign policy or on the linguistic and other local problems which abound in different parts of India. The sponsors feel that the political parties of today, whether in India or elsewhere, often tend to lay down "the party line" on almost every aspect of life, and they accordingly believe that the Swatantra Party might well set an example of limiting its area of agreement and discipline and leaving its individual members free to express their own points of view on many of these issues outside the party platform.

For a decade now Prime Minister Nehru, with his quaint blend of Soviet-style economic planning and British-model parliamentary democracy, has dominated the Indian intellectual scene. A faint challenge from an isolated pocket here and

there is all he has had to encounter. The fundamental thinking on which the Nehru government's economic measures have been based is that, in an underdeveloped country such as India, a departure from the normal functioning of economic laws becomes necessary if the high expectations of material improvement raised in the minds of newly independent people are not to turn sour. So, the argument goes, the building up of heavy industry must, contrary to the normal sequence, precede consumer goods industries. The government has to play a particularly active role, both in establishing capital goods industries, such as steel and huge river-valley projects, and in regulating the entire functioning of economic life, whether in industry or agriculture. Like Russia and China, would India, though not under political dictatorship, pull itself up by its bootstraps, performing in a short span of time what might otherwise take generations to accomplish? There can be no question that, during the first decade of independence, a large part of the Indian intelligentsia followed Mr. Nehru in this line of thought.

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Under the surface, however, second thoughts have been developing and discontent with the "socialist pattern" has been building up during the last few years. The middle classes have found themselves being ground down slowly by the inevitable consequences of excessively high taxation and of inflation slowly creeping over them. The consumer was made to pay more for the necessities of life through successive impositions of heavy excise duties. The investor was being taxed out of his investable surplus. The entrepreneur was being harried by bureaucratic regulation and interference. A businessman responding to the government's call to undertake the manufacture of some scarce material for which there is an export market found that he had to trudge the dusty corridors of the New Delhi secretariat, moving from office to office in a never-ending attempt to obtain the various licenses and permits. Those already in the field of manufacture have been known to spend several days every month, flying up to Delhi to answer queries or remove some

road block in the way of obtaining the necessary facilities. New constraints on the people's enterprise were being systematically imposed, and justified by reference to the socialist doctrine. Fear, hesitancy and uncertainty as to what the government would do next have become a feature of economic life.

On the political plane, the evils of interference by political bosses in the administration of the country and the pressure brought to bear on officials have been causing demoralization among civil servants and destroying public confidence in the government of the day. Interference on ideological grounds has been elevated into a principle. The cult of personality has smothered free discussion even within the ruling party itself. The bulk of the members of the Congress Party, who think along liberal or Gandhian lines, have been intimidated into silence by a few confused Marxists at the head of the party. In the absence of an alternative government, discontent has been funnelled increasingly into Red channels, and the kind of polarization that took place in China in the '40s between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party was becoming noticeable in the State of Kerala and was in danger of developing elsewhere. Even so, only the wildest optimist could have foreseen the emergence of a major political party which advocated rejecting the entire pattern of planning and economic development that has been followed during the past decade. Only a year ago, I myself tried unsuccessfully to weld together several of the local groups which have now come together under the umbrella of this new national party. How has this new party of freedom finally come about?

Oddly, credit for its emergence must go to the Congress Party, because of what is described in India as the "Nagpur Resolution" which the Congress Party adopted last January.

That resolution constitutes a three-pronged attack on the way of life in the Indian village. The first prong of the attack is the imposition of ceilings on land holdings which in practice would deprive the farmer of all land that he might own

in excess of what would bring in an income of around 3,600 rupees (\$760) in the year. This measure would break the back of the middle classes in the villages and deprive them of the capacity to withstand the inroads of governmental authority.

The second prong is the proposal which is euphemistically called "joint co-operative farming." Barring its name, it has nothing in common with the principles of genuine co-operation as practised in Denmark, England and other countries. It is in reality an attempt at introducing collective farming of the Soviet-Chinese pattern through the pooling of land, the uprooting of boundaries and the establishment of big co-operative farms. Even if this plan were brought about without coercion it must, in present-day conditions in India, inevitably mean management by officials of the government and the reduction of the farmer to the status of a landless labourer. Heedless of the lessons of the failure of collective farming in the Iron Curtain countries and ignoring the magnificent achievements of small-scale peasant farming in Japan, Prime Minister Nehru insists that this change would result in increased food production. It is also supposed to constitute a "higher way of life" than the age-old method of a man and his family cultivating land which is their own.

The third prong is the attempt to establish a State monopoly in the wholesale trade in food grains, thereby eliminating thousands of traders and leaving the farmer face to face with the monopoly, which can dictate to him the price at which he must sell his produce.

It was this ill-conceived Nagpur Resolution which acted as a sparkplug to the political revolt. The urban middle class and the business class, helpless against the hold of the Congress Party on rural areas, have found a new ally. The reaction of landed peasants, who with their families constitute at least 52% of India's population, has been instinctive. In a country where most peasants live in mud huts, own little more than a plow, and, if they are lucky, a pair of bullocks, the piece of land that they have is all they can call their own. When

Prime Minister Nehru brushes aside the plea for peasant proprietorship by pointing out that most of the peasants own small, fragmented farms and should therefore not object to the pooling of their lands, it sounds to the peasant like asking a mother not to mind parting with her child because it is only a tiny infant. So it was not surprising that the All-India Agriculturists' Federation convened the initiating meeting at Madras on June 4 where the decision to launch the Swatantra Party was taken. Professor N. G. Ranga, a leading spokesman of the Indian peasantry, resigned his post as Secretary of the Congress party in the Parliament to become Chairman of the new party.

Even within the ranks of the Congress Party there is widespread disquiet over the Nagpur Resolution. Only a few weeks back, the Indian press published the gist of a letter written to the Prime Minister by the veteran Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Republic, sounding a note of warning against a hasty and doctrinaire approach to rural problems.

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Perhaps, the best parallel to the character of the Swatantra Party in Western countries is that provided by such as the Smallholders' Party in Hungary. In the field of agriculture, the paramount need for increased food production is stressed, and it is felt that this is best attained through the self-employed peasant proprietor who is interested in obtaining the highest yields from his land. The peasant farmer should be given all psychological and material inducements for greater production without disturbing the harmony of rural life and without affecting ownership or management. Among such incentives would be a fair and stable price, the provision of credit and the supply of water, tools, seeds and fertilizer.

In the field of industry, the Swatantra Party believes in the incentives for higher production and expansion that are inherent in competitive enterprise, with necessary safeguards against monopoly. The party would restrict State enterprise to the field of heavy industries, where essential, in order

to supplement the notable achievements of such private enterprises as, for example, the giant Tata Iron & Steel Company in Jamshedpur, and such national services as the railways. The party has declared itself to be in favour of a balanced development of capital goods industries, organized consumer goods industries and rural industries that afford supplementary employment to the large number of unemployed and under-employed people on the land. The party is opposed to the State entering the field of trade. It believes in free choice for the investor, the producer and the consumer.

Through such a positive policy, the Swatantra Party believes that agricultural production can be set on its feet in the way that has been so successfully achieved in Japan since World War II. Thus can be provided a sound foundation on which the industrial structure of the country can be reared. While deprecating the policy of asking the present generation to tighten its belt (which, in India, it does not possess) for the sake of generations yet unborn, the Swatantra Party believes that the policies it suggests would liberate the productive forces from the restrictive effects of bureaucracy, so that a much quicker expansion of industry and a more rapid rise in the standard of life of the people can be brought about, just as was accomplished by the successful implementation of Dr. Erhard's policy of social enterprise in West Germany. Such a policy would be in consonance with the established Indian principle that those who possess wealth should not run the government, while those who control the army and police should not be in control of agriculture and industry. The party's policy would prevent the concentration of political and economic power in a few hands. The way is thus opened for the building up of a broad-based coalition of the peasantry in the villages and the middle classes in the cities.

Two charges have been levied against the new party by its opponents. The first is that it is a projection of the interests of big business and is therefore "reactionary." Since this is Mr. Nehru's main line of attack it merits consideration. It is

undoubtedly true that the implementation of the party's programme would bring the businessman the much needed relief for which he has been clamouring for the past few years. That does not, however, mean that the business class will wholeheartedly throw its weight behind the Swatantra Party. The reason for this lies in the present controlled economy where business tends to become the handmaid of government. The selfish scramble for licenses and permits blunts the capacity of businessmen to stand up for their way of life. Fear of the wrath of Government against businessmen who give political or financial support to the new party is omnipresent. Thus, while some courageous businessmen will no doubt gravitate to the Swatantra Party, it is more than likely that those businessmen who have hitherto distinguished themselves by lack of vision and supine attitude to the government will continue to be found on Mr. Nehru's "socialist" bandwagon. The new party will therefore have to rely for its sinews on the small man's support.

Another argument advanced by the critics of the Swatantra Party is that by dividing the democratic forces in the country, it may unconsciously help the Communist Party. I believe this fear is based on a profound misconception of current political realities.

If today the new party has come out in frontal opposition to the government of the day, it is because the policies of the Nehru government are in many ways preparing the ground for Communism, giving it respectability and making it ideologically acceptable. The Prime Minister has often said that he sees nothing to object to in the ideology of Communism but only in its methods of violence. In other words, the Communist leopard is good, but without his spots. The moral barrier which Gandhi erected against Communism has been lost in a fog of confusion. The economic policies of the ruling party, and in particular the attempt at collective farming, justify the use of a phrase which the late Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel used in a different context: these policies are in some ways "the sappers and miners of the Communist Party."

In the past few months, we in India have seen Communist imperialism destroy the freedom of the unarmed and defenceless people of Tibet. Until only recently the people of the State of Kerala were battling bravely to throw off the Communist yoke. Unfortunately, it seems that many good men in the Congress Party, who would react violently at the direct threat of Communist dictatorship, do not mind very much if the poison is administered to them in homeopathic doses over a period of years. And certainly there is little merit in the suggestion that, in the face of the inability of Congress Party members to assert themselves, others should stand by helplessly and watch this erosion of democracy for fear of splitting the non-Communist vote.

The whole world, including the peoples in the Iron Curtain countries, is moving away from the shibboleths of collectivism. The danger of India's being committed to outmoded dogmas which the rest of the world is discarding must be combated. By rallying India against Communism and by educating public opinion about the moral gulf between Communism and the free way of life, the new party will eliminate the danger of the current unconscious drift toward the precipice. The party's Statement of Principles allows no co-existence between it and the ideology of Communism, and the leading spokesmen of the party have a long record of struggle against Communist totalitarianism.

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The main architect of the party is India's elder statesman, C. Rajagopalachari, a former Governor-General and Home Minister in the Union Government and more than once the Chief Minister of the State of Madras. The charge of irresponsibility laid on him by the Prime Minister sits oddly on the shoulders of this 80-year-old patriarch. One of Gandhi's trusted lieutenants, and allied to him domestically by the marriage of Gandhi's son with his daughter, he has said that Communism is "Public Enemy Number One." The phrase has become famous and is now part of the party's credo.

Professor N. G. Ranga, the party's Chairman, early learned the facts of life about Communism in the villages of his home state in Andhra, and has increased his knowledge through the bitter experiences of such friends and associates as Ferenc Nagy of Hungary.

The party has the moral support of Jayaprakash Narayan, former socialist leader and now Vinoba Bhave's chief lieutenant in the Bhoodan (land gift) campaign. Jayaprakash, though himself a believer in non-party democracy, has welcomed the emergence of the Swatantra Party because he supports its opposition to the totalitarian trends in centralized planning which he describes as "creeping paralysis." He is also heartened by the party's acceptance of the Gandhian way of achieving social justice through the theory of "trusteeship" on the part of those owning wealth and enjoying privilege of any kind. Currently, Jayaprakash, who three years back had raised the banner of revolt against the Indian government's ambivalent attitude toward the Hungarian revolution, is hard at work to keep alive the issue of Tibetan freedom.

What are the party's prospects? Here we are in the presence of imponderables. The next general elections are scheduled for the spring of 1962, and a great deal of water will flow down the Ganges between now and then. The mind of India is in flux. No static or statistical analysis based on the figures of the last elections makes any sense. The Indian voter is, by and large, an uncommitted voter, swayed by a multiplicity of such pulls as religion, caste, region, ideology and the cult of personality. There can be no question that the Congress Party has had its day and must now be prepared for a continuous decline in its prestige and popularity. People are getting bored with the old faces, the old voices and the old slogans. By 1962, it will be "time for a change."

The question is now whether the Congress Party will lose ground. It will. The question is who will occupy that ground—the Communists or the Swatantra Party? The answer to this question will lie in the capacity shown by the new party to

build what is now a broad national movement into an efficient machine, to convert widespread but nebulous sympathy into resources and votes. My personal belief is that, whether we win or lose the next elections, our greatest service will lie in the fact that we will have broken the "Congress or Communist" strait-jacket limiting the Indians' choice. And we will have prevented India's going along the Chinese path. For every vote the Swatantra Party takes away from the Congress Party it will take away scores of potential votes from the Communist Party. A friend of mine in Bombay told me about a year ago that at the next elections he would vote for the Communists, much as he detested them, because that was the only way to remove the "corrupt and inefficient Nehru government." I pleaded with him that this would be a tragic mistake on his part, but to no purpose. Last month the first donation that came into the Swatantra Party's offices in Bombay was from the same man, who wrote that once again he could see a bright future for India.

At the last elections, the Indian who was not a socialist—and there were quite a few million—was virtually disfranchised. The choice between the Congress Party, the Praja Socialist Party, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party candidates was for him little choice indeed. It will now be possible for the country and the electorate to have before it a clear alternative.

Will the Swatantra Party succeed in giving India, in course of time, a government that will implement its liberal policies? I don't know. No organization has a guarantee of victory at its birth. Indeed, no worthwhile cause would ever take shape if its sponsors awaited such assurance. Every spontaneous, grass-roots development must at the same time be an act of will and an act of faith.

You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.

You cannot establish sound security by borrowed money.

You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn.

You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative.

You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could do for themselves.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Printed by P. H. Raman at the Associated Advertisers & Printers,
505, Arthur Road, Tardeo, Bombay 7 and Published by Pilo Mody
for Swatantra Party, 143, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1.