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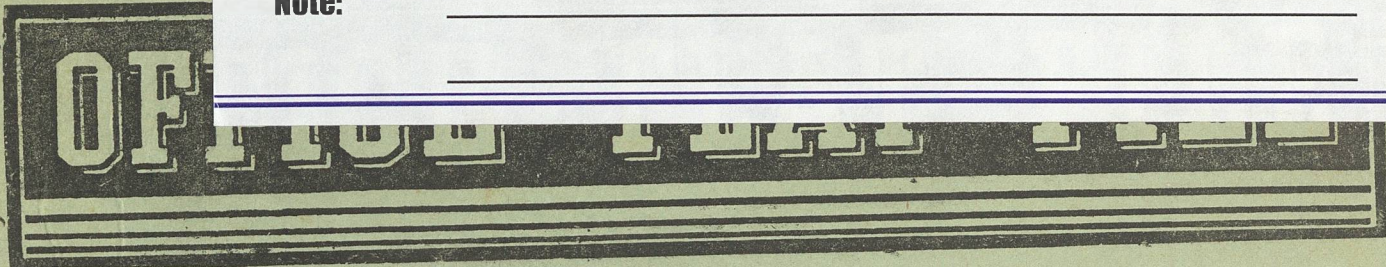
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14 AUG 1959



# SWATANTRA PARTY

PREPARATORY CONVENTION

August 1 and 2, 1959

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CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

by

N. G. RANGA, M.P.

WE meet here on this day of sacred memory of our great national leader of indomitable courage, Sri Bala Gangadhar Tilak, who enunciated the inspiring principle "Swaraj is my birthright." It is in the fitness of things that we should be gathering here today after having had these twelve years of Swaraj India's experience of growing encroachments of the State upon what we enshrined in our original Constitution as the fundamental rights and the traditional socio-economic freedoms and privileges, to make the complementary declaration that "Swatantra India is also the birthright of every individual in Swaraj."

We are grateful to Rajaji, the sage statesman, the closest collaborator for long of Bapuji and the ablest of our national leaders, for having roused our nation to the menace of Soviet inspired Statism which has been gaining its stranglehold so rapidly, through the all-enveloping tentacles of the Plan. We are also grateful to the peasants' organisations for their courageous revolts against Congress plans to impose ceilings and, unilaterally on the agriculturists, introduce cooperative farming, and also for their political initiative in convening the Madras Conference which gave birth to the Swatantra Party to champion the causes of freedom and independence of our masses. When crores of self-employed masses, artisans, traders, professional peoples as well as the proletariat of the towns and villages are in danger of being overwhelmed by the New State of the Plan and the New Class born out of nineteenth century socialism

and Soviet inspiration, Rajaji has come forward with his clarion call to our masses to band themselves together to work and fight for the protection and furtherance of our birthright, Swatantra.

These thirteen years of Swaraj Government have brought to the fore certain dangers inherent in the 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, consistently with their 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 questions 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, 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 encourag-

ed 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 mad 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 governments 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 began 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 upto 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. I am glad to inform you that our valued colleague Sri Masani was recently chosen as one of the Seven Patrons of the Liberal International.

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 unhistorical 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 BHAGVATA (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 resolutions 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 which, 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 the cooperative 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 cooperatives to cajole and coerce them into embracing cooperative 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 cooperatives. 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 cooperative 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.

It is no satisfactory answer even to those sections of the freedom loving Congressmen to say, as some of the top-most Congress leaders, are saying, that the Nagpur resolution has not said anything new but only tried to amplify what had been already stated in 1945, 1951 and 1957 election manifestoes. The Nagpur resolution was like the last straw that breaks the camel's back. It brought into relief what had not earlier been so clearly noticed. Surely that last straw cannot be justified because the earlier leads had been borne patiently. Similarly, the Nagpur resolution cannot be imposed upon loyal Congressmen and those sections of the public who have reposed for so long their confidence in the Congress just because they

had so patiently and confidently accepted the earlier manifestoes which had contained some of these things along with so many other hopes and aspirations. In fact so many of us took early steps to protest against those proposals in the Congress manifesto which were capable of weakening our present economy and replacing it by cooperative farms and state farms. In 1945 the Congress talked of making experiments in cooperative farming and state farming when it was not in power and when our knowledge of the working of such farms in Soviet country was so meagre and one-sided. In 1951 when the Congress wanted to meddle with the peasant family economy and suggested the possibility of depriving the peasants of small and uneconomic holding from their self-employment without offering any alternative many of us broke away from it and organised our rival political parties and protested against it. I am sure that most Congressmen did not attach as much importance to that suggestion contained in the election manifesto as their traditional craftsmen might have intended. Otherwise, they would have protested against it, at least as ineffectually as was done at Nagpur. Now that this great issue has come so fortunately to be presented in the country all by itself in the form of the Nagpur resolution, the masses of our country have begun to bestir themselves against this menace to the basic feature of our economy.

I am confident that just as the world has emerged alive and kicking from out of fascism and peasants of the European Soviet Lands have been fighting their way out of what seem to be suffocating totalitarianism of Communist states, so also Indian peasants as well as proprietors and tenants working in alliance with such proprietors will continue to fight against the one sided ceilings that are sought to be imposed upon them without paying just compensation and also against the national campaigns for the organisation of the cooperative farming to take the place of peasant family farm economy. They know only too well that the service cooperatives are avowed to serve to decoy sections

of them into the other national campaign for cooperative farms. Fortunately Indian peasants have had 45 years of experience during this Gandhian Era, of struggling peacefully as well as through Satyagraha against many such intrigues hatched against them by the British, the old feudal order and capitalists. Some of us have grown grey through our participation in these battles. So we are confident of peasants' continued support in the present struggle also. We are equally confident of our ultimate success, hence the quick reaction against the Nagpur challenge.

It is, however, the duty of all political parties, who value the freedom of peasants to enjoy proprietorship of their holdings and who cherish the family economy and self-employment on the farm and in the shop and workshop, to strengthen this struggle of our peasants as well as artisans and others. I am very glad that Rajaji has given us the clarion call that the Swatantra Party has come into existence, especially to protect the Farm and Family; these are the two great social and economic institutions which are being menaced everywhere by communists, socialists and their fellow travellers. It is symbolic of the Congress leadership's divorce from the Gandhian way and liaison with the Soviet way that it should have chosen to menace the family economy of our Kisans and Kalakars. It is equally symbolic of the historic mission of our peasantry that they should have intuitively reacted to the challenge of Nehruism by being the sponsors of the Madras Conference which brought this party into existence with the *Ashirwad* and *Namkarna* ceremonies at which Rajaji officiated.

We are face to face with the danger of our masses being driven by this one-party dominated State into the long-long dark night which has been depressing the Soviet countries, if Jawaharlalji's drive towards indiscriminate cooperativisation of agriculture, trade and industry is not arrested in time. He may think that he is marching towards light and not darkness. But let him

pause and see why the Soviet countries are yielding concessions after concessions to their peasants and in allowing them to recapture the enjoyment of their small so-called kitchen gardens of up to two acres per family. His own Labour Minister, Nandaji, had to admit that freedom and liberalism are being introduced by small doses into their totalitarian Sovietism. Does that not hold a beacon-light to us? Is that not also a warning that we should not embrace their darkness, only later on to hanker after light? Are we to accept the dismissal almost to a political operation of the Kerala Communist Ministry only to sneak into their brand of darkness and steal their discarded clothes and put the trademark of Nehruism on the resultant grave of human freedom and farm family economy and the self-employment of Kisans and Kalakars.

I am glad to find that more and more of our masses are awakening to the need to fight against such plans of the government to subvert the major segment of our social economy. The Swatantra Party is placing itself in the vanguard of this growing revolt of the masses against these plans.

