

FURTHER ADVANCE OF JANA SANGH AND  
SWATANTRA PARTY

In the 1951-52 general election Jana Sangh polled 28,66,566 assembly votes or 2.67 per cent. In the Lok Sabha the party's poll was 32,46,288 or 3.1 per cent. Together with Hindu Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad this group of parties won only ten seats in Lok Sabha and 87 seats in assemblies. The total poll was 4.5 per cent and 7.3 per cent respectively. But of the 87 assembly seats 51 were in Rajasthan and Madhya Bharat. In Orissa the Ganatantra Parishad polled 7.6 lakhs votes and 31 seats mostly in the four districts where the Congress had never any influence. The anti-congress votes shifted mostly to the left and democratic parties and the overall position of Jana Sangh and its allies paled into insignificance before the massive left gains.

In the second general election the Jana Sangh registered considerable progress. It polled 67 lakh votes in parliamentary elections but its strength in the Lok Sabha rose from 3 to only 4. The Jana Sangh had begun to spread out. The total votes of JS, RRP and HM rose to 82 lakhs as against their 63.6 lakhs in the previous election. The gain was mainly due to the JS. The Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa secured 13.9 lakh votes as against 8 lakhs in 1952.

Its seats in assembly went up to 51 from 31, a notable advance. Lok Sabha seats were now 7 as against 5. It was noticed that GP was spreading its influence and exploiting the growing discontent against the Congress. In Bihar the Janata Parishad of Raja of Ramgarh improved its seats in the assembly from 11 to 23. It is the left parties which however still emerged as the main challenge to the Congress. In the parliamentary election, for instance, the parties of the democratic opposition won 31 million votes and 75 seats.

Among the opposition parties it is the left parties that were in an impressive lead. And among the latter it was the CPI which came out as the strongest. Nobody then even talked of any shift of the votes to the rightist parties. But the second general election was all the same a warning that rightist parties especially in the areas where the democratic movement was weak, were growing. In UP and Madhya Pradesh, the Jana Sangh assembly votes were 21,57,833 (9.84 per cent) and 7,33,315 (9.89 per cent) respectively. The corresponding figures for Lok Sabha were 33,85,247 (14.79 per cent) and 10,62,936 (13.96 per cent) in 1957. The Jana Sangh also made headway in Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, Mysore, Maharashtra and Delhi.

In the third general election Jana Sangh not only moved forward but did so impressively. In the assembly election the JS secured 63,70,893 votes (6.07 per cent) and 116 seats as against 46 in 1957 and 35 in 1952. Its Lok Sabha poll however rose marginally from 71,49,824 (5.39 per cent) to 74,15,170 (6.44 per cent), the seats having increased from 4 to 14. UP and MP gave it respectively 49 and 41 assembly seats and 7 and 3 seats in Lok Sabha. JS secured parliamentary seats in 4 states and assembly seats in 5. But in most states it contested, its votes went up substantially, the exception being Punjab and West Bengal where they fell.

It was in the third general election that the Swatantra Party made its first appearance with 77,88,335 (7.42 per cent) assembly votes and 166 seats and with 90,85,252 (7.89 per cent) parliamentary votes and 18 seats. The Ganatantra Parishad (which later became the Swatantra Party in Orissa)

added 37 assembly seats (won on GP ticket) and 4 parliamentary seats. The assembly seats of the party came from Bihar (50 because of Ramgarh Raja's joining it), Rajasthan (36), Gujarat (26), Andhra Pradesh (19) and UP (15). Bihar and Gujarat provided 7 and 4 parliamentary seats and Rajasthan and UP 3 each. Only one came from Andhra. The main source of swatantra strength was the areas of feudal influence and almost nonexistent democratic movement.

Notwithstanding these gains by the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party, the CPI and the PSP won 41 seats under symbols (29 plus 12) in Lok Sabha and 302 (153 plus 149) in the assemblies. There was no assembly election in Kerala and Orissa. The combined strength of the JS and Swatantra Party in assemblies was 282 and 32 in Lok Sabha.

Although the left and democratic opposition was still the stronger component of the opposition, the JS and Swatantra Party had advanced much faster and at a bigger pace than the CPI and the PSP and others of the democratic opposition barring the DMK which raised its seats in the assembly to 50 on a total poll of about 35 lakhs.

The Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party had also become a challenge to the Congress with a much faster rate of growth in their strongholds (UP, MP, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Orissa and Bihar). They were spreading into new areas. Our National Council called the attention of the entire democratic movement to this development when the vast discontented masses were coming under the influence of these two parties. It was also shown in the results of the third general election that left parties had not been able to halt the growth of these two parties, and were themselves lagging behind the growth of popular discontent and the advance of the JS and the Swatantra Party.

In the period between the third and fourth general elections the situation has further worsened from the point of view of the democratic movement, most certainly in the bases of the JS and the Swatantra Party. The position is now as follows:

The Jana Sangh assembly poll has risen from roughly 6.4 million (6.07 per cent) to 12.45 million (8.74 per cent). The

seats from 116 to 265. In 1962 the JS won seats only in five states (UP and MP alone accounting for 49 plus 41). In this election, it has gained seats in 11 states (Haryana included). Whereas its seats in UP have risen to 97, its strength in MP Assembly has however declined to 18. (the Congress has gained.) In Parliament the JS votes have risen from 7.4 million (6.44 per cent) to 13.4 million (8.95) and seats from 14 to 35. These seats have come from 6 states and Delhi, UP and MP having provided respectively 6, 12, and 10 seats. In 1962 the JS won Lok Sabha seats only in 4 states, UP's share being 7.

The results show that the JS is growing mainly in UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, MP, Delhi, Haryana and also marginally in several other states. The Hindi region continues to be the JS source of strength and it is precisely here that the left movement is extremely weak, barring Bihar and UP.

In the last five years the Swatantra Party has braced itself up for further electoral successes. It has polled in this election 94,81,995 assembly votes (6.66 per cent) and 255 seats. In the Lok Sabha its seats have risen to 42 and votes 12,487,711 (8.59 per cent). The party has now representation in 12 state assemblies as against 9 after the third general election. Gujarat (64), Orissa (49), Rajasthan (49), Andhra (29), Madras (20) are its main source of strength. In Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madras (due to alliance with DMK), Andhra Pradesh and Orissa the party's gains have been substantial. Except Bihar (where its strength has come down to 3 from 50 because the Raja of Ramgarh's party has broken away from it), the Swatantra Party has improved its position in every state. In Kerala, Punjab, Maharashtra, J&K it has however no seat in the assemblies. In Lok Sabha the party won mainly from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa, and Madras. Once again it has been shown that the mainstay of the Swatantra Party still continues to be the states where the former princes wield influence. The fortunes of this party depend on the support of the feudal elements (e.g. Bihar). Nevertheless, the party has entered new areas.

One upshot of the fourth general election is that it has

placed the Swatantra Party as Parliament's principal opposition and also as the second biggest opposition party from the point of view of the total number of assembly seats. Although the expectations of the swatantra leaders have not been fulfilled (they spoke of winning 100 seats in Lok Sabha) and capturing Gujarat and also Rajasthan by themselves, this party has undoubtedly attained a big status and become an influential force in national politics. Its capacity to pressurise, manoeuvre and bargain has immensely increased. Its leaders have been first to moot the idea of a coalition government at the centre. Many in the Congress are receptive to the swatantra ideas.

In this connection, it must be noted that efforts are being made to bring the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party closer. The latter is more eager. Those two parties account for 17.29 per cent of the votes and 77 seats in Lok Sabha. There are however difficulties. These two parties do not represent exactly the same social and class interests, the Swatantra Party being clearly wedded to the big business, princes and big landlords and to the Americans. Whereas the Jana Sangh has a strong popular mass base which it cannot leave out of count, the Swatantra Party still relies mainly on feudal influence and support for its seats in legislature. There are contradictions between the two parties which cannot be easily resolved and anti-communism is not proving efficacious under the impact of the popular anti-congress upsurge and the election results.

It must be said that the weaknesses of the democratic movement are in no small measure responsible for the rapid growth of these parties. If the Swatantra Party is going ahead by mobilising more and more feudal forces and big money, the Jana Sangh exploits the Hindu communal and revivalist sentiments to broaden its mass base. This was the motivation behind its pre-election cow-slaughter-ban campaign. It is the urban petty-bourgeois (small traders, shop keepers including those in the rural areas) who today constitute the driving force in the Jana Sangh organisation.

If the main challenge to the Congress in the previous three general elections was constituted of the left and demo-

cratic parties with the CPI occupying the central place, that position no longer obtains. The challenge flung to the Congress is now shared by both the left and democratic parties on the one side and Swatantra and Jana Sangh on the other. Incidentally, as the election results were being announced in February, London's evening papers gave the head lines: "Shock after Shock in India's Elections—Right and Left Hit Mrs. Gandhi" etc.

It is understandable why the broad anti-congress masses, while searching for an alternative to congress misrule, look forward to some sort of an understanding among these and other opposition parties. The masses have become anti-congress but they are not always and everywhere politically radicalised to see what really makes a true, democratic alternative to the Congress. The masses would require their own experience to attain the desired level of political consciousness to realise this.

But let it be said again that no matter which opposition party secured more votes than others, the people were all the same registering through ballot their protest against the anti-people and anti-democratic congress policies. They were certainly not voting for what the swatantra princes or monopolists stand for, nor were they voting for Hindu communalists to replace secularism.

This must not, however, lead to any underestimation of the menacing rise of the parties of right reaction.

#### PERFORMANCE OF LEFT AND DEMOCRATIC FORCES

In the first and second general elections the democratic opposition came out with flying colours, and most of the losses of the Congress were turned into gains of the democratic opposition. In the 1951-52 elections, the CPI, ULF, PDF together polled six million votes. The Socialist Party, the KMPP and others of the democratic opposition polled well over 18 million votes. The total tally of the democratic opposition came to roughly 25 per cent of the polled assembly votes. But the actual gains, politically and otherwise, were greater than these figures would show. In Madras