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Bombay,

January 10, 1973

My dear Dilip,

I am grateful to you for sending me the copy of your letter to Jayaprakashji. As mentioned to you on the telephone, I have taken the liberty of passing on my comments to you for whatever they are worth.

As Vinod continues to be unwell, perhaps you might consider discussing these points with Vijay and Prof. Shah tonight. (Vinod's tonsillitis has now been complicated by chest congestion).

I heartily approve of Jayaprakashji's effort. My only misgiving is that JP is in some respects like our Madhu Mehta viz., (a) a lack of consistent effort, and (b) confused thinking.

It is true we have too many inactive organisations but the fault lies not in the older people who started these organisations but of the "younger generation" in whom you lay so much emphasis. While you are in your early thirties I am almost at the flag end of my thirties but I have never been able to contribute to what I feel is the Utopian belief about the "enthusiasm and the constructive thinking of the so-called "younger generation".

Take the ICCF for instance : it is true I have just taken over but it is equally true that I have not been able to, (for some valid reasons) take the kind of interest I should. But, in this period, I do not know how many of the younger members of the Executive Committee got in touch with me to goad me on or give me "instructions" (I do not mind instructions at all if they come from friends) for carrying out any kind of activity.

As you know, for the last thirteen years I have been at the fulcrum of a political party and the developments over the last couple of years have made me more cynical than you can ever be ! I have been watching the behaviour of the generations - old, middle and young - and all three of them, are, in my mind, equally guilty.

Like many people in active political life, I have also come to the conclusion that all political parties (including my own) have not merely lost their credibility, but, to quite some extent, their relevance in the present context. There is thus a vacuum which has to be filled in and the only groups that can fill this vacuum even for a temporary period are non-partisan, voluntary organisations in the social, economic, cultural and political fields. To that extent, I lay great store in the existence and active functioning of organisations like the one JP has in mind, the ICCF, the DRS, the Indian Secular Society, the Indian Liberal Group, the Forum of Free Enterprise etc. If the Communists can function through fronts, why can't we function through genuine voluntary organisations which are no fronts of any political party ?

This brings me to your reference to Minoo vis-a-vis the ICCF and your statement "his association with the ICCF has made its political neutrality suspect". As you know, I hold Minoo in great affection as much for his weaknesses as for his plus points. At no time, and I am sure Prof. Shah, Karnik and Mr. J.B.H. Wadia will bear witness, has Minoo ever tried to inject Swatantra policies into the affairs of the ICCF. I don't mind confessing

that in the early days when I was a novice in such matters, I used to get very irritated with him when he used to compartmentalise his activities. To my simple mind, (I confess my mind is elementarily simple even today) so long as the ultimate objectives of a free society in which people have a right to full expression are shared, why should they not pool their resources and work for a common goal? However, I soon found that this kind of thinking was not popular even with Minoo and I kept it to myself.

By that same token, I should not be the Secretary of the ICCF holding as I do the office of the Executive Secretary of the Swatantra Party. It is true that I was planning to leave this job but due to a variety of factors, largely emotional (and not at all rational) I have decided to stay on and "stick my neck out" at least for the next six to eight months. If you, Vijay or Prof. Shah, should feel so, I shall immediately step down to enable a non-political animal to take over.

About anti-communism and the cold war, here again I feel that anti-communism and cold war politics were very relevant some years ago. Anti-communism is no longer fashionable. Only yesterday, Karnik and I disagreed rather basically in regard to our attitude to the Soviet Union etc. He said that he now appreciates Bertrand Russell's position of Better Red Than Dead. Being still a reactionary I cannot accept it. I am unable to reconcile myself to living under communism. However, one can of course qualify it by saying "Better a Yugoslav Red or a Rumanian Red Than Dead". But I have noticed even among those who decry communism, a kind of inhibition to call a spade a spade. This is, I feel, the contribution of the "younger generation".

All credit therefore to those in recent years gone by who took up hard though unpopular positions both in giving expression to their opposition to communism and their alignment in the cold war which I agree is no longer there in that concentrated form.

On Neorani, I completely agree with you. He is a rank communalist in a secular garb and I am just waiting for the day when he will stab all of us in the back. Don't you think that in our cynicism with what is happening today in our public life and also the mood of frustration among many of us who are taking some interest in public life, there is a tendency to over-glorify the younger generation and attribute qualities to them which are really not there or if they are, they don't seem to be very evident.

I do not think that at any time, older people, whether it be Minoo, or Karnik or Prof. Shah have ever come in the way of our taking on greater responsibility. The fault, if any, lies in the indifference and apathy of most of us and not in those whose public life is rapidly drawing to a close.

May be, I have not expressed myself well. I am no intellectual and thank God for that. But as between close friends, I thought I should share with you "these few stray thoughts" hastily dictated !