

Express Delivery
Personal & Confidential

3251

February 2, 1963.

My dear Rajaji,

As there may not be much time to talk things over in Bombay when you are here, I thought I would drop you a line to share some information and thoughts so that you may have them before you start for Bombay.

2. While in Delhi I had long discussions with Ranga. He told me about various things that had been happening in Delhi prior to my visit there, including a tea party in honour of Ramgarh which the Parliamentary Group gave. Before leaving Delhi, I met Dahyabhai Patel, our Akali friends in our Parliamentary Group and Maharani Gayatri Devi. As far as I could understand their mind, it was that, while an effort should be made to avoid a schism in Bihar, it should only be done in terms of maintaining the Party's authority and preserving its prestige and integrity. This view was more forcibly held by Paliwalji, Raja of Mankapur and Sardar Basant Singh, who also saw me while I was in Delhi.

3. On returning to Bombay, I finally settled with Munshi the Comments that are now being circulated. These have gone out yesterday by registered post and your own copy will reach you about the same time as this.

4. The Raja of Ramgarh has been in Bombay. He had seen Munshi and Dandekar by the time I arrived here and Parmanand Kejriwal and he called to see me here at my office on January 31. He asked me what I felt should be done and I told him that, since I had been accused in the Appeal made by his followers of quite disgraceful conduct which would not entitle me to hold any responsible office in the Swatantra Party, there was no point in my making any further suggestions since my bona fides were questioned. The only suggestion that I could make to him was that he might have a talk with you before the COC meeting. So far as I was concerned, his Appeal and our reply was being placed before the tribunal that he and his friends had chosen and I was prepared to submit to its verdict.

5. It was quite a friendly talk. I had told Kejriwal before he brought Ramgarh that I could not enter into any 'negotiations' or 'talks' (in the Prime Minister's sense) in view of the fact that the meeting of the General Council had already been called.

6. According to Parmanand Kejriwal, in response to the latter's suggestion that the Appeal should be withdrawn, Ramgarh said that, if after all he was to carry out the Madras decision, he did not see why he should also withdraw the Appeal. He might as well allow it to be rejected by the General Council. Kejriwal pointed out that, in that event, he could hardly expect any goodwill from those with whom he would have to work in future.

7. In Delhi, Ranga had told me that Ramgarh had agreed to his suggestion that he should put himself right by giving effect immediately to the Madras decision. Ranga understood that Ramgarh was going to call Baksi to take charge of the Bihar Party Office as General Secretary and to co-operate with him in convening an early meeting

of the new State Executive appointed by us at Madras. Ranga also understood that he would arrange for his lieutenants to withdraw the Appeal and perhaps apologise for the allegations made against all of us. From what I can gather from Munshi, Dandekar and Kejriwal, Rangarh did not mention to them his readiness to do anything of that kind; on the contrary, he has been attempting to find out how best he could evade doing so.

8. While in Delhi I had requested Ranga to convey to you my own thoughts in this matter. I said that I had no desire to make this any kind of personal issue between myself and Rangarh as the latter desires. The Party should not be driven to any such choice, but should act on the merits of the matter!

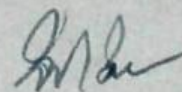
9. While in my political judgement it would be a good thing for the Party if Rangarh leaves it now as the advantages, in the long term, outweigh the disadvantages, I have no desire to force that view on my colleagues. I therefore told Ranga that if you, he and Munshi felt that we should not precipitate a schism in the Bihar Party, I was quite prepared to bow to your collective judgement on this particular point. At the same time, I was clear that, whatever happens, there should be no further appeasement, since appeasement commencing with our acceptance of the 'Bicycle' as symbol had already led to a continuously deteriorating situation in Bihar.

10. When Ranga asked me what I thought were the prerequisites of a solution that would permit of Rangarh remaining President of the Bihar unit, I said that it should embrace the following three requirements: (i) Implementation of the Madras decision; (ii) Withdrawal of the Appeal by those who had appended their signatures to it, along with an express of regret for the slanderous allegations made in it, or alternatively, the rejection of the Appeal by the General Council; and (iii) a vote of confidence passed by the General Council in the Organising Committee and Parliamentary Board, the Senior Vice-President and the General Secretary. I told Ranga that, unless these three things were done, I did not see how it would be possible for the Party's work to be carried on by those who were at present in charge of the Party's affairs.

11. Having heard and seen what has been happening in Bombay, I am of the same view as that which I had expressed to Ranga.

12. I am sending Ranga a copy of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



(M. R. MASANI)

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