

Personal & Confidential
3290

26th September 1961

My dear Rajaji,

Your postcard of 21st September came in a couple of days back. I am very touched by your appreciation of whatever little I was able to do during my visit to Bihar, and it has helped to a certain extent to make me feel a little less unhappy about the whole situation there. Thank you very much for your generous comments.

I have a very uneasy feeling that, unless we are careful, we shall have more trouble on our hands. Our having given in on the symbol will probably be considered as an act of appeasement and I fear that undue advantage may be sought to be taken of it. For instance, I heard dark rumblings of what was planned to be done at a meeting of the Bihar State Executive Committee which the President has called in Patna on 30th instant. I fear that the majority there might be used for some act of vindictiveness against Shri Janki Nandan Singh, General Secretary, and Jaleshwar Prasad, the Vice-President, who showed their anxiety to abide by the decision of the COC in adhering to the symbol of the Star and who have given expression to their feeling that the Party in Bihar is run like a continuation of the one-man dominated Janata Party. Similarly, I was told that an attempt will be made at this meeting on the 30th to reverse large parts of the decisions taken by the Election Committee of ten members in connection with which Munshi and I were in Patna. Let us hope that these forebodings will not come true and matters will not be driven to a head but the telegrams that you and I have been receiving from Darbhanga show that a ~~clear~~ campaign is being worked up against one of the two General Secretaries of the Party in regard to his own district. When I was in Patna, I pleaded with the President to leave the four seats that have been recommended in Darbhanga to Janki Babu in consultation with the Maharaja of Darbhanga but I fear that though he agreed not to interfere in Darbhanga district affairs, that will not be adhered to beyond a few days. Are we then to sacrifice those who have shown their loyalty to us and a certain capacity to maintain independence of thought and action in comparison with the passive acquiescence of the old members of the Janata Party? Are we further to throw our financial support which is one-fifth of our entire national budget, behind what is increasingly becoming a closed caste group which will, after the elections, strike out on its own according to caste interests rather than our Party interests? I send a clipping from the current issue of the New Age which, despite its source, is worth reading.

I fear that we shall have very little time to ourselves when ^{you} are in Bombay on the 6th. What with the arrival that morning of the Maharaja of Patna and the Raja of Kalahandi to negotiate the Swatantra Party-Ganatantra Parishad relationship and our own Parliamentary Sub-Committee meeting that afternoon, I felt that I must share these thoughts with you so that you may consider their implications in advance of the meeting. If it were not for the heavy burden that you have undertaken and which I would be the last person to increase, I would really like to ask you to release me from the work of General Secretary between now and the General Elections. In seeing this operation through in a clean, decent and businesslike way, I am also creating considerable resentment at State level from people who want immediate financial support unconditionally while they themselves are unprepared either with candidates or with plans. In other directions, this situation is under control but the way in which the President of the Bihar Party has quite obviously been attempting to create prejudice against me and the rest of us at the Centre by suppressing correspondence, distorting discussions and inventing false grievances, to which Munshi was a witness when we were both in Patna, and my subsequent offence of having

*about neglect
and breach
of assurances
of financial
support,*

checked the move for the revival of the Janata Party by apprising the two Vice-Presidents and two General Secretaries of what was happening without their knowledge and in seeking to protect one of the Vice-Presidents and General Secretaries from being completely isolated and ousted from the work of the Party has, I fear, created a situation where we either have to assert the integrity of the Party as a national institution or capitulate and allow a Zamindari to be established within the Party. Once this happens in one State, similar proprietary rights will be claimed in others. As you yourself mentioned in Madras, with the coming in of our Orissa friends, such threats need to be firmly controlled.

. There is another issue also. I feel far from happy about being beholden to the Raja Sahab for being put up from one of the two Hazaribagh constituencies. To what extent that understanding will be seen through is also a query that was put to me by Bakshi, a former ICS official, and one or two other friends in Patna. Personally I would rather not stand for Parliament at all if this is ~~the~~ the atmosphere in which one has to function.

Seems to me I do not know to what extent you will think my fears and forebodings are justified but it ~~is~~ important that, unless you have a talk with the Raja Sahab when you both arrive in Bombay and he is made to realise the need for a change on his part, things may go out of hand at the Bombay and Baroda meetings.

Yours sincerely,

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(M. R. MASANI)