

VADILAL LALLUBHAI

BIPIN NIVAS
ELLIS BRIDGE
AHMEDABAD-6

4089

November 23, 1967

My dear Masani,

I have received your kind telegram conveying your desire that I should be present at the next meeting of the General Council to be held on the 25th.

I wonder what really useful purpose would be served by my attending the said meeting. At the most, as far as I can see, the deliberations would lead to exchange of words and to bickerings. Excepting a few ex-Princes of the Saurashtra aide, who are sober but who do not count at all in the scheme of things of the Gujarat Swatantra Party, that is they are ignored, most of the Kshatriya and Patel leaders in Gujarat are communal-minded. I have tried my best to fight this communalism but I am sorry to say I have failed. I think I am a misfit into this kind of communal atmosphere.

I am sending herewith a copy of HM Patel's letter of November 10, to CC Desai and its reply dated November 16, from CC Desai. ~~At~~ This correspondence speaks clearly of personal ambitions and aggrandisement of some important people.

You will have seen that when the Government was practically in our hands, for their selfish personal interests and ambitions, these people have squashed the efforts and made them unsuccessful. If such people are going to be at the helm of affairs in the Party, a serious thinking on the issue is a must. From what I saw at Madras at the first meeting of the Party after elections, I feel the Central leadership feels helpless in the matter and is not prepared to set things right. In such an atmosphere the best thing for a wise man to do is to keep quiet and bear it as long as is possible. This prevents me from attending the Council meeting. I hope you will understand.

Yours sincerely

Vadilal Lallubhai

VADILAL LALLUBHAI

Shri MR Masani, MP
2, Tughlak Road
NEW DELHI 11

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VADILAL LALLUBHAI

COPY

BIPIN NIVAS.
ELLISBRIDGE.
AHMEDABAD-6.

P.S:

Since writing this letter, I received a telex message from Mr. Dandekar reading:

"Glad to know from Raju you will try to attend Delhi meeting. May I request you to ensure that you do come especially in view of discussions on Centre Vs State relations in the Party where your views are very necessary and should be represented. Kindly telex confirmation your attendance".

I have replied as under:

"I have written at length to Masani. Writing another letter today. Please discuss with Masani same. Due to reasons stated in the letters to Masani I am not attending the meeting"

... VL

November 16, 1967

My dear Hirubhai,

Please refer to your letter dated 10th November. I was not aware of this decision of the Central Parliamentary Board; but nevertheless I am definitely of the view that either we do our best to topple the Congress government in Gujarat or gradually we lose our position in and disappear from the State. Five years is too long a period for remaining in barrenness when the seizure of power is almost within easy reach. This is not a case where power is far away from us; but it can be had only if we close our ranks and we work for seizure of power with a determined effort and a united team. I shall press for the acceptance of this view wherever and whenever I can.

2. It is also obvious to me that this non possumus resolution of the Central Parliamentary Board arises from or is occasioned by a feeling of despair. It was passed after the fiasco of last August when there was a general expectation that we were about to defeat the Congress government. Then it was found that we had bungled within our own party and had counted chickens before they were hatched. That presumably made the leaders in the Central Parliamentary Board to take the view that Gujarat is not yet ripe for an attempt to seize power, or that the Swatantra Party should write off Gujarat. I cannot imagine the Central Parliamentary Board taking the view that it is not in the interest of the Party to seize power with the help of defectors from the Congress Party. We were about to do this in Rajasthan and we were only prevented from doing so by the partisan attitude of the then Governor. We made an attempt in this very direction in August this year. We contributed a Minister to the coalition in U. P. So there can be no objection to the formation of a Government based upon Swatantra support and it is inevitable that such a government should put into practice Swatantra principles, objectives and policies, and that is why we want and that should satisfy all our people so that not only our policies are implemented but also our voters are satisfied by getting their wants fulfilled.

3. So the obvious requirement of the hour is unity in our ranks and determination on our part to go all out to seize power without caring for our own personal interests or ambitions. If necessary, we should be prepared to give a ministry to every defector; but that is a much better position than remaining perpetually in the opposition. Everybody I have talked to in Delhi from Gujarat is of this view and that is why I am writing on this subject again and again and I shall continue to do so until the objective is attained.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd.

(C.C.Desai)

Shri H.M.Patel (ICS Retd.) MLA
Swatantra Party, Vallabh Vidyanagar
Dist.Kaira.

cc:with a copy of the letter to
which it is reply is forwarded to:

ShriVadilal Lallubhai Mehta, MLA, Ahmedabad 6

COPY

H. M. PATEL

Swatantra Party
Vallabh Vidyanagar, Dt.Kaira

November 10, 1967

My dear Chandubhai,

Thank you for your letter of November the 3rd. In case you have not seen the following decision of the Central Parliamentary Board at its meeting held in Madras on September 29, I reproduce it below:

"The Board was of the view that the Swatantra Party in Gujarat Legislature should be advised not to pursue its futile efforts to seek power (in competition with the Congress Party) through what plainly amounted to "horse-trading", but to play its role as an effective and vigorous opposition".

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Sd.
H. M. Patel

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== RECD TELEGRAM THANKS DO NOT FEEL LIKE ATTENDING REASONS

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My dear Masani:

I was a little perturbed when Raju told me that H.M.Patel has raised the problem of Centre vs State relation on Junagadh issue and that some Maharajas are also going to raise such issues. He asked me when I was going to Delhi and I said I am not going.

I showed you and gave you a note on my talks with Pravinsinhji and others and my letter to him. A confirmation has come from C.C. Desai also that what Pravinsinhji had told me was also told by Pravinsinhji to C.C.Desai, about what talk Pravinsinhji had with Jaideepsinhji, H.M. Patel and others, ^{and} that whoever wanted to come and if the party comes in power, that outsider will have third place, 1st being Bhaikaka, 2nd being H.M.Patel and the new comer third in rank. This is now confirmed by C.C.Desai's letter.

If Patel was not given 1st place after the retirement of Bhaikaka, Patel told Pravinsinhji that many Patels had told him that many of them will defect. All these are confirmed by Pravinsinhji to C.C.Desai.

I send herewith a copy of my letter to Pravinsinhji alongwith a note to him and a letter of H.M.Patel to C.C. Desai, - copies of which C.C. Desai has

p.t.o.

sent to me and to others like Manubhai Amersey,
Bhaikake, Viren Shah, Natwarsinhji and Pravinsinhji.

Would you call this a democratic party?

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Vadilal Lalubhai

(VADILAL LAILUBHAI).

Enclosure.

Shri M.R.Masani, M.P.,
57 Lodi Estate, 2, Tughlak Road
New Delhi - 53.

20th September, 67

My dear Pravinsinhji:

I am attaching to this a rather detailed note which I prepared on the very candid and heart-to-heart talks which you and your father had with me on the 18th, 19th and 20th of this month. It occurred to me that you will find it interesting as well as useful to go through - in your own mind -- these details of the talks we had, just as my recapitulating them myself give me a clearer idea of the forces we have to counter and set right in the interests of the future of our Party, of our State and of our country. When you go through the attached note, I think you will share with me the thought that emerges from recounting of the factual data, that in the present context, it is the forces of self-aggrandisement and not considerations of inspiring and practical ideology which determine the course of events and action. If this state of affairs continues, it will be very bad for us all. And therefore, it may be necessary for us to consider calmly and evolve a joint policy and joint course of action to set things right.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Sd.
(Vedilal Lallubhai)

20th September, 67

NOTE TO SHRI PRAVINSINHJI

You will remember how I was shocked by what you told me during our talks at my residence on Monday and Tuesday (the 18th and 19th) viz. that Jaideep Singji had informed you in Bombay that it was Bhaikak and H.M.Patel who were instrumental in our failure to achieve the aim we had, because both of them had told him that Bhaikaka will be the Chief Minister, H.M.Patel the second and Gaikwad will be the third man in the Ministerial set-up of the party! I told you that this was a complete surprise for me. However, you decided to go to H.M.Patel and ask him straight about what Jaideepsinhji had told you. You were so good as to subsequently meet me again and apprise me of the fact that after some preliminary parrying, when you confronted him straight with what Jaideepsinhji had told you in Bombay about Bhaikaka and his attitude, he did not contradict you. That clearly means that he admitted this. Further, you told me further that H.M.Patel told you that he was clearly promised that after Bhaikaks he will be the President of the party and the Chief Minister, if the party won the election. I told both yourself and your father that if I had been told by Jaideepsinghji that this was the decision of Bhaikaka and H.M.Patel, I would have told them to forget the recent effort of ours in the matter of Swatantra party strengthening itself and coming to power, and wait till we find a solution to this problem posed by this attitude of H.M.Patel.

I was really surprised to know from you that H.M.Patel ultimately told you that but for these conditions given to him he would not have come to the party.

This morning both you and your father were so good as to come to me and we had again another long talk. I remember how both of you made it clear to me about the nature of the sense of harassment which you have been feeling about the

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behaviour of the patels of Charatur and about this harassment continuing even during the time of the Elections.

You will remember that I had told you that my surprise was particularly intensified by the fact that while you told me that H.M.Patel asserted before you that such assurances were given to him, Jaideepsinhji, Natvarsinji and Jhala, under instructions from Bhaikaka, had promised me several times — without my stipulating any conditions or asking for anything — in the presence of Prabhudasbhai that I would be considered next to Bhaikaka. I told you to confirm from your father ^{and} Jaideepsingji whether or not they have talked so categorically without myself stipulating any such conditions. ^{which your father confirmed whenever} In this connection I asked you whether you remember the fact that I showed you a letter of Jaideepsinhji written eight months ago — before the elections — when we were both in Ankeleswar on a lecturing tour. I am glad you told me that you remember this.

Against this background of factual data, you were not surprised, I hope, when I told you that this is clearly a case of "double crossing". I pointed out to you that in all fairness to me. Bhaikaka should have told me of this before I joined the party — that I should be after H.M.Patel. I myself never asked for any of these conditions and yet the assurances were categorically given to me unasked. But as I told you, what hurts me is this kind of double crossing, for which there is absolutely no justification. I told you that you know that they have whipped up the Patidars' communalism and got together all Patels of Gujarat and Saurashtra. Actually H.M.Patel went to the extent of telling you that if he was not made the Head of the Organization and the Chief Minister, Patels of the party told him that they would not accept that position. I hope you have realised what this means.

You may remember that it occurred to me -- which I have passed on to you -- that a constructive step which may be taken in this atmosphere is to request Jaideepsinhji to take over the party and be the President, because that alone will avoid the trouble. Or in the alternative, I suggested to you that a fourth person -- a sober person even if he is a small person -- may be found out for heading the organization..

You may remember that while we were talking about these things, there was a telephone call from Jhala to say that there was a news in today's papers that ten of our people are going to join the Congress party. I told him in reply on the phone that anything could happen if Patel communalism is allowed to be continued and if the rank and file of our party continue to feel frustrated at the absence of any ideology to enthuse them, and things being determined merely on considerations of such narrow and sectarian outlook. It is only natural that when to enthusiastic rank and file the Congress offers the red carpet as against the black carpet available to them in the party today, some of them may tend to prefer the former. That is why, as I told you personally, something should be done speedily, to put matters right and put the party back on a high ideological pedestal so that the image of the party as one standing for certain basic principles may shine again .

Then your father told me about the talk with Thakore of Dhrol that H.M.Patel may be made the President and myself be the Leader of the Legislature Party and Bhaikaka may resign, and when the time comes, I as the first man, so far as the Assembly is concerned would be the first person when the Congress Govt. falls and not H.M.Patel. However, I told you that in view of H.M.Patel telling you during the last few days that he would never agree to what your father was saying and that there is no point in trying to achieve the impossible when such an attitude is known to be prevalent in the minds of these persons, and that therefore Jaideepsinhji should also be consulted by you.

I have already conveyed to you that when my Secretary, Himatlalji Patel, had been to Ankleswar during the week-end, the people told him there that they had heard from very reliable sources ^{of Swatantra Party} that myself, Prabhudasbhai Dhrol Thakkar Shahib and Liladhar Patel were leaving the Swatantra Party and joining the Congress!

You can understand very well— in the light of what you know and what you told me during Monday and Tuesday -- who are the people who are engineering such rumours which while meant to discredit those whom they dislike for communal reasons will tarnish the reputation of the entire party.

I am afraid this note has become a trifle too detailed. But I thought that I should write confidentially to you the summary of what I felt when you spoke to me frankly and when I spoke to you with equal frankness and sincerity.

November 3, 1967

My Dear Hirubhai:

Many thanks for your letter dated 30th October 1967. I shall be looking forward to see you and to have a chat with you on our Gujarat political matters during your next visit to Delhi later this month. I am not quite sure whether I would be staying on in Delhi for that meeting as before I came to know of these dates I had already fixed a programme for Bareilly. I would see if I can adjust so as to maintain both the programmes.

2. As regards the talk between you and Pravinsinh, I had a talk with Pravinsinh before receipt of your letter and he confirmed that there was some talk between the two of you in which you said that if you were not elected Chief Minister there would be defection of some Patels and that only you could be the Chief Minister in the event of a Swatantra Government in Gujarat. On the other hand, all the evidence indicates that we could still achieve a change of Government in Gujarat provided that we in Swatantra are prepared to stand down and to allow any of the defectors from Congress or other parties to become Chief Minister provided that the coalition is able to form a reasonably stable Government. I put this proposition to Bhaikaka when I was in Vallabh Vidyanagar and he confirmed categorically that neither he nor you were a candidate or would expect to become Chief Minister and that you would allow and agree to anybody else to become Chief Minister if there was any prospect of forming a coalition satisfying the ambition of some defectors to become the Chief Minister. I hope that what Bhaikaka said has your concurrence and that that is the correct position today. If so, we can still try and have a coalition supported mainly by the Swatantra Party and bringing about a change in the Gujarat Government.

3. As regards the main point as to whether we should continue in the opposition or try to replace the Congress Government in Gujarat by coalition between us, Independents and Congress defectors, I hold a different view from yours. You say in your letter that we could never form a stable Government and that we could not implement the Swatantra Party principles in the event of such a coalition and that it would be better for us to wait until we form a Government on the basis of our own strength in 1972. Let me tell you straightaway that we did not fight elections in 1967 merely to sit in the opposition. We are not and will not be content with the present position. We are bound to make every effort to break the Congress and to replace it with a coalition Government in which Swatantra Party is a major partner. If we had succeeded in the 1967 elections, we could have formed a Government on our own strength; but unfortunately Kaira and Kutch let us down and all the best efforts of the other districts have gone in vain. This has caused consideration frustration and despair in our ranks and I know this from my own experience in Sabarkantha. This position cannot be allowed to go on indefinitely or until 1972. After all, it must be realised that even if we are not in Government ourselves, any government in office based on our strength must, by and large, act according to our principles and carry out our major policies. That is better than sitting in opposition and leading a barren political life, which is the prospect today. If we cannot get the best, we must be satisfied with the second best. If we do not try on these lines,

I am sure we would not be able to maintain integrity of our party and that by 1972 there will be no possibility of Swatantra Party ever getting a majority. The question, therefore, is now or never. This is such a fundamental question that there should be an early meeting of the leaders of the party in Gujarat to thrash it out so that we know what policy our leaders are going or expect to follow and what to expect during the next 4 or 5 years and how to mould our actions.

4. I am sending a copy of my letter together with a copy of your letter to Bhaikaka, Natwarsingh, Vadibhai, Manubhai Amersey, Virendra Shah and P.S. Solanki. We must get out of this complex of no-Swatantra-dominated Government until 1972.

With kindest regards,

Yours ever,

(C.G. Desai)

Shri H.M. Patel (ICS Retd.)
Charutar Vidya Mandal,
Vallabh Vidyanagar (Gujarat)

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