

March 14, 1971

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Jr. ash

My dear Minoo Masani,

This letter will come as a surprise to you if it reaches you. I am sending it to the address I have in my address book. I really don't know where you are at present - and what your permanent address is.

I am sorry indeed that I have lost all contact with you since I left Bombay nearly ten years back. They used to be quite close and cordial in the old days. You have been so much in the news all this time, that I, for myself, was able to follow your activities with interest and admiration, and have always been glad of the share you have taken on public affairs.

The tremendous victory of Indira Gandhi in the recent elections has astounded everyone. It is so overwhelming and so unexpected. Your statement on it was the best - that I have come across. There is the correct and truly sportsman-like attitude. I did not like what Nijalingappa, Patel or Bajpai have said. With all my high respect for him, I must confess I didn't like the statement of Rajaji either.

All the same, the result of the elections bodes ill for the future of the land. It is bringing back a dangerous personality cult - which was slowly receding in the background after Jawaharlal's death. The leadership is also projecting a programme which is not in the best interest of the country situated as we are today. I don't know what your plans are for the immediate future, and what chances there are for reviving the Swamtra party and ideology. You have and will always have my best wishes for success in your noble endeavours.

As regards myself, I have no good news to give. For the last eight months I have been hospitalised here in Calcutta undergoing a series of operations. I have gone through ^{already} four, and more are in the offing. It is all due to the complications of prostate - that curse of men's old age. I don't know when I should be able to get back to my home in Benares or my retreat at Dehra Dun.

I am now fully 80 years of age. All my old friends and colleagues have gone to their rest. I feel so lonely and lost. Conditions in the country make me unutterably sad. It seems as if the half-century of struggle and suffering of my generation, have all gone to dust. Let us hope wisdom will still dawn on our people and all will still be well for our hapless land.

I cannot help feeling that the one man who can save us and who, luckily for us, is still alive, is Rajaji. No great leader knows his people and his country in all its facets as he does. I know what wondrous change he brought about in Madras in 1952 within a week of his taking up office as chief minister. I know he can do the same ^{in the country,} if only we were wise enough to make him prime minister. Though 83, his mind is still very alert and active, and his physical health not too bad either for his age.

Hoping all is well, and with kind regards to your good self and the family,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

B. C. Prakash

M. R. Masani Esq.