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HRM Resignation
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J. M. Lobo Prabhu, ICS (Retd.)

Chateau de Lou,
Mangalore 1.

16th May, 1968

My dear Masani,

I am probably the oldest friend you have in the Party and I am certainly one of those who is fully aware of your contribution to the Party. In the circumstances, I regard, I have a right to let you know what your present posture means to your friends and to the Party.

1. Your demand for "ethical and disciplined functioning of the Party" can suggest that the Party is worse than others, which opponents can exploit in elections. Even if some members of the Party did not come up to your standards, this is a domestic affair, which cannot benefit from publicity.
2. Your "holier than thou" attitude to Ranga and Dandekar who were also involved in the decision which the Gujarat Party did not accept, implies that your principles are higher. You suggest a monopoly for rectitude, which is a slur on all of us.
3. Your arrogation of being superior to the National Executive and the Gujarat State Unit in the decision of appropriate punishment to those at fault, is extremely undemocratic and even undisciplined, to use your own term. However important you may be to the Party, decisions taken unanimously by others deserve your respect, if the set up of the Party is to have any meaning.
4. On the actual issue, the Gujarat State Unit could conclude that you failed to consider its own rights and responsibilities, particularly, as you never cared to meet the members and ascertain their commitments before they were asked to vote for an outside candidate, who had no regard for any one but you. From the correspondence, it is also evident that the President who agreed with you, stated in his letter to the members that he did so "with reluctance". In fact, those who voted against your candidate could well have assumed that the letter to them was not a whip but a request made under duress.
5. The ethical issue raised by you is related not to corruption but to a difference of opinion. This difference could well be traced to the questionable authority of the Centre to interfere in State matters. I have always maintained that the Party has been destroyed in Bengal, Bihar, Delhi, UP, by the Centre's disregard of the authority of those who mattered. If there was any moral gain it

has not been reflected in the elections in those States or others, which shows what people think of discipline by itself. I have also stood out for the Centre being only an appellate authority in the circumstances of perversity in the State Unit. What the majority of the Gujarat legislators did cannot be regarded as perversity, and certainly they are worth more to the Party than an outsider, whom they failed to support.

6. I also cannot understand your reaction on the ethical grounds when it has been a regular feature for State Units to betray the candidates chosen by the Centre. I shall recall to you that when I got only two votes out of the nine votes of the Party for the Rajya Sabha in 1962, you did not show the righteous indignation you are now showing. Have you considered that people may relate your present indignation to your own interest in the candidate ?

I would therefore request you to change your attitude and to spare me the necessity of bringing the issues stated above before the General Council. No doubt you have burnt many bridges behind you, but one golden bridge still remains. I am suggesting to Rajaji that he appeals to you. Considering what he is to the Party, and the Party to him, you cannot fail him, particularly when he needs the feeling that the Party is not breaking down.

Yours ,

Sd/-

Lebo Prabhu

To,
Shri M. R. Masani, MP,
148 M. Gandhi Road, Bombay.

CC To :

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari.