

Confidential

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from 2 Tughlak Road,
New Delhi 11

3rd April, 1968

My dear Rajaji,

I received your letter of 31st March and also a copy of your letter to Dandekar of the same date which you have kindly sent me.

I would not be honest with you if I did not convey to you a sense of disappointment and disquiet about some of the things you say.

15th ?

Your view that, because we allow freedom of opinion on points not covered by our fundamental principles, we should also allow freedom of vote to our members to vote against the Party's own nominee in an election is something I regret I am unable to follow. As you know, in the case of Acharya Kripalani in U.P. and Babubhai Vaidya in Gujarat, the motives that have actuated those who have flouted the Party's whip were anything but honourable. It may interest you to know that a senior office-bearer of the Party in Gujarat has received a large amount of money from the candidate in whose support he worked against the Party's decision. Can we really equate freedom of conscience with the freedom to sell the vote against the interests of the Party? Were we wrong to expel half a dozen of our MLAs in the U.P. two years ago for the same offence? Were you wrong when you raised a moral issue over the election of the Speaker in Madras last year?

I would like to remove your suspicion that my action has anything to do with "lurking fatigue." As you are aware, I was quite prepared, at Dandekar's instance and with your agreement in Madras a few months ago, to take up the highest responsibility for the running of the Party and it was only in response to your advice a little later that I asked those who wished to press my name for election to desist from doing so. You may also have noticed from the press that I have just taken on, with the Party's approval, membership of a Committee to investigate the recurring accidents on the Railways which will involve a heavy load of work on top of my present commitments including the Chairmanship of the PAC. I propose in addition to devote myself actively to organise the Leslie Sawhney Programme of Training for Democracy (press release attached on which I would appreciate your comment in Swarajya). In connection with this, I am leaving for Puri this evening to inaugurate a training camp there for Volunteer Captains of the Swatantra Party. As it happens, I am a sucker for taking on work and am not aware of any sense of fatigue. I must, however, confess that I am sick and tired of having to deal a great deal of the time with dishonest people and to condone their misdeeds. Nor do I think

this is inconsistent with 'manliness'. This has never been my idea of politics. I agree with Professor Tawney's remark to Ramsay Macdonald made many years ago that "your Party has a right to expect everything of you except that you dishonour yourself."

For these reasons, while I shall campaign for Party candidates and do everything to help the Party in every way, in Parliament and outside, I must decline to share in the responsibility of running the Party until I am satisfied that the Party leadership is prepared to take energetic steps for the clean and disciplined functioning of the Party. Naturally, I shall judge to some extent by the way it reacts to the disgraceful incidents in the Gujarat unit. I take it you have received a sad letter addressed to you by Babubhai Vaidya, a good man, who has sent me a copy.

I am glad you liked my Budget speech. I hope the speech I make this afternoon on the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty and foreign policy in general will also appeal to you.

With regards,

Yours as ever,

encl.

(M.R.MASANI)

Mr.C. Rajagopalachari,
5 Naoroji Road,
Kilpauk,
MADRAS 10

c.c. Mr. N. Dandekar, M.P.,
New Delhi.

