

July 20, 1976

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Dear Shri Dhar,

*Smiling*

Knowing how busy you are, I would not ordinarily have wished to burden you with the problems of the Express Group of Newspapers but for the fact that they raise fundamental questions vis-a-vis the relationship between the Editor, Proprietor and the Government. This has come to me as a grave disappointment after the way we have tried to do the best we can to co-operate with the Government even to the extent of terminating the services of our former Editor-in-Chief, Shri S. Mulgaokar.

Let me begin at the beginning. In October last year a suggestion came from Shri V.C. Shukla, Minister for Information & Broadcasting, for the constitution of a Committee of three eminent public men mutually acceptable to the Government and myself, to supervise the editorial policy of the paper. I readily agreed to this as is clear from the letter of our General Manager, Shri R.K. Misra, to Shri V.C. Shukla, dated 22nd October 1975 (copy enclosed, marked annexure 'A').

Shortly after this, Shri K.K. Birla told me that he was summoned by Shri V.C. Shukla and was told that the arrangements which were discussed with Shri R.K. Misra no longer held good and a new arrangement under which the Government should have a majority of Directors on our Board would have to be agreed to, if myself, my son, B.D. Goenka and my daughter-in-law Mrs. Saroj Goenka, that is, the entire family, were not to be detained under MISA.

In November final proposals were put up by the Government regarding the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Express Group. The Government was to be represented on the Board by six persons to be chosen in consultation with me, one of whom, Shri K.K. Birla, was to be the new Chairman, five Directors were to be nominated by me. The main concern of the Government was that the Express Group