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CONFIDENTIAL

22nd November, 1974.

My dear JP.,

Since I have to return to Bombay on Sunday and ~~even~~ you will probably have your hands full during the weekend, it is more than likely that I shall not get the opportunity to talk to you. I am therefore putting down on paper a few thoughts which are troubling me and which I thought I should share with you.

2. First of all in regard to Electoral Reform, I am convinced that, so long as the Single Member Constituency and 'first past the post' on British lines prevails, as it undoubtedly will in the next General Election to Parliament, there is no hope of wiping out the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha, though it may be possible to reduce it somewhat. The reliance on cutting out money power is platonic like all legislation which runs contrary to human nature. Certainly, an effort should be made to limit expenditure knowing fully well that anti-social elements on all sides will ignore it as has happened in other countries like the U.S.A. which have legally restricted donations for and other expenditure on elections. The West German system and now the American system of using the tax-payers' money to share between recognised parties in an election will be disastrous in India in the absence of a stable party balance as in West Germany and the U.S.A., with three and two stable parties respectively. I mention all this to urge that the change from the British Electoral system either to some form of proportional representation or a Second Ballot should be given the highest priority by us so as to

educate public opinion to the realities.

3. Quite apart from Electoral Reform, I am a little bothered by what appears to me to be a shift in your position in the last few days from the path of 'total revolution' within Bihar to veering round to a commitment to establish on the national level an electoral bloc to defeat the ruling party at the next elections. You are aware of the effort Rajaji and I made from June 1970 to 3rd January 1971 and how it was defeated by sabotage and double crossing on the part of the leaders of several political parties whom you are no doubt inviting to your Conference in Delhi on November 25 and 26. With all my desire to believe in a change of heart, I frankly am sceptical about the extent to which this has happened during the last three years. To me, it looks only too likely that these people, themselves discredited, are wishing to exploit your reputation, prestige and credibility, without being prepared to pay the price of winding up their respective parties. In the absence of an agreed programme which the new Government after the next elections can carry out for the next five years, which is almost impossible in a grouping which extends all the way from the C.P. (M) on the one hand to the Jana Sangh and the B.L.D. on the other, the Bloc will inevitably drift towards the discredited slogan of 'Indira Hatao' with the consequences which I had warned against at least a year ahead of the General Elections of March 1971.

4. The target of "One against one" in each constituency which alone can negate the effect of the British Electoral system may, I fear, elude you. There is bound to be wrangling for seats

as has happened on all past occasions between these allegedly cooperating parties, whose selfishness is by now a well-established. Are you prepared to be a mediator or arbitrator in regard to scores of constituencies as Nehru and Indira have been on the other side ? And how many of these will stick to you till the end ? Charan Singh has already publicly rejected the idea that his list of candidates should be scrutinised by you and has threatened to go it alone. If he has his way, Biju Patnaik will be among JP's approved candidates ! If he does not, you will not have the B.L.D. with you, and the same may apply to some other parties.

5. I have no doubt that you have thought of all this. You will undoubtedly ask me what is the alternative to following this line. This is always a difficult question to answer. My own hunch would be to adhere to what I had already told you in Vellore and Madras, which comes to this:

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I feel you should stick primarily to Bihar and avoid making a commitment on the national level for one more year. You will thus avoid needlessly antagonising all the sitting Congress MPs ~~and~~ in Bihar some of whom are, man to man, no worse than the opposition leaders who are flocking around you. You could rally the people of Bihar behind you by demanding restoration of the Federal Constitution and the autonomy of the States which have been eroded during the past two decades as exemplified by the rule from New Delhi through gauleiters imposed on Bihar. This would still leave your option open as to the role you

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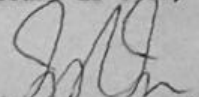
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- (b) In Bihar you could carry on with your campaign for a parallel government even if it should not amount to anything more than preparing the ground for a massive sweep by the people's candidates in the State and Parliamentary elections in Bihar in March 1976. You have the power to enforce sanctions on political parties in Bihar but, let us face it, you have no comparable power at the national level, and the balance of forces between you and these elements will be quite different at the national level from what it would be in Bihar.
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6. It is quite possible that I may have misunderstood what you are doing, in which case I shall be relieved. We could discuss all this when I see you towards the end of December either in Delhi or Patna to consult you in connection with the short book I am writing about you and your movement.

Yours as ever,



(M. R. Masani)

Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan,
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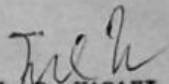
Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan,
Camp: DELHI

22nd November, 1974.

J.P.

When your plans are a little more definite, will you kindly guide me as to whether it will be possible to see you in Delhi some time between December 16 and Christmas ?

If this is not possible, I shall be prepared to come to Patna from Delhi on December 24 and spend the next two days with you to consult you about the short book I am writing about you and your movement which I have to hand over to the publishers in January.


H. R. MASANI

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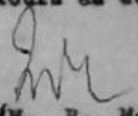
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