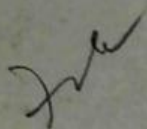


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Jayaprakash Narayan

c/o Sarvodayagram,  
Muzaffarpur

Jan. 29, 1971

Dear Minoo,

Thanks for your letter of January 20. As Karpooriji was visiting here the other day, I gave him a copy of your letter which he was very happy to read. You are of course right - these matters can be discussed only after the elections are over.

Regarding your election, I do not think a press statement would be either useful or proper. But I have written to Morarjibhai and Hitendrabhai as well as Atal Behari Vajpai about it (copies enclosed). I cannot say what effect these letters will have on them, but they should be more effective, if at all, than a press statement.

Yours sincerely,

sd/- Jayaprakash Narayan

Shri M. R. Masani,  
148, Mahatma Gandhi Road,  
Bombay 1.

P.S. Today's papers report that the Jan Sangh is not setting up any candidate against you. I hope they give you their full support too.

J.B. has said that it is not fair  
to put up candidates against NRM  
The opposition should be together and  
not divided. NRM's presence in  
Parliament is most essential

Radma

Mr Bhatia ✓

Please let me have a  
translation of Hindi  
enclosure to JP's letter.

U

20th January, 1971

My dear J.P.,

Your letter of the 16th has just reached me.

I have already had a chat about this with Mr. Kargpoori Thakur when he called on me in Delhi. I told him then that for the moment he should not move in this matter of changing the land ceiling but, as soon as the elections are over, I would be at his disposal to sit with him and mull over this problem with a view to giving him the least possible trouble and the best possible deal in so far as my Party was concerned. I think you will agree that, for the moment, we shall have to leave it at that as I am in no position to make any commitment before the elections are over.

In so far as <sup>the</sup> autonomous statutory board for Chhotanagpur is concerned, I am the former M.P. for Ranchi as all for it and I do not know why we should come in the way. Here again, as soon as the elections are over, I shall certainly check it with our Bihar people and I am confident that we shall make the necessary adjustments in our attitude.

Meanwhile, it may interest you to know that I am threatened by both the Congress (O) and the Jana Sangh putting up candidates against me in Rajkot in flat violation of the principle that the seats of the sitting members of the alliance should not be interfered with. What a "grand" alliance!! It would not be a bad idea if, in pursuit of your non-party politics, you were to make a public statement on this as an illustration of the degradation of party politics in the country. Who knows it might even help as your statement in 1957 did in regard my candidature at Ranchi.

Yours as ever,

*M.R. Masani*  
(M.R. MASANI)

Mr. Jayaparakash Narayan,  
Kadam Kuan,  
PATNA 3

MRB:rka

*To put up to M.R. after  
the elections are over*

*There have been  
Repeated Press  
Reports to that  
effect -*

JATAPRAKASH NARAYAN

CAMP

Permanent Address :  
KADAM KUAN, PATNA-3  
BIHAR, INDIA  
Telephone : 25347

G/o: Sarvodayagram  
Muzaffarpur

January 16, 1971

Dear Minoo,

I am writing about the Coalition Government in Bihar headed by Shri Karpoori Thakur. I need not tell you how frequent changes in Government have harmed the interests of the people of this State. Most of the previous Governments since 1967 fell on account of differences between the coalition partners. The same is likely to happen to Shri Karpoori Thakur's Government if its constituent parties are not prepared to adjust mutually their policies and programmes. There are two issues on which, I understand, the Swatantra Party and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh are threatening to withdraw their support from the Karpoori Thakur Ministry. One is the issue of land-ceiling, and the other that of an autonomous statutory Board for Chhottanagpur. The S.S.P. at its last meeting at Poona went the farthest, I think, in accommodating the views of its coalition partners in the matter of land-ceiling. They decided that the ceiling for a family should be 20 acres of irrigated land and 30 acres of unirrigated land. Personally I think, considering the land/man ratio in Bihar, these are rather high ceilings. Twenty acres of irrigated land in these days of high-yielding seeds and modern farming methods should make any Bihar family affluent from Indian standards. The existing ceiling law is like a pot full of holes that retains not a drop of water. So far, inspite of all the brave talk about enforcing the ceiling, not a single acre of surplus land has yet been distributed to the landless. At the same time, it is common knowledge here that there are land-holders in this State who with their families still hold thousands of acres. And yet the Swatantra Party and the Jan Sangh are holding out their threat to topple Shri Karpoori Thakur if he dared touch the existing ceiling. This, I think, is unreasonable.

As regards an autonomous statutory Board for Chhottanagpur, I do not see why there should be any objection to this. You know very well how autonomous such Boards are. From the time the Damodar Valley Corporation was set up I have noticed that every so-called autonomous Board becomes in reality a department of either the State or Union Government. This is not as you or I like it to be, but nevertheless it is the present position. Therefore, I do not see any reason why so much fuss should have been made over either the word 'autonomous' or 'statutory'. The argument, of course, is that an autonomous statutory Board may pave the way for a separate State of Jharkhand to be ultimately carved out. I do not find any strength in this

argument. As a matter of fact, I feel that obstreperous opposition to the legitimate demands of the Adivasis, particularly in the context of centuries of neglect, is more likely to drive them to demand separate statehood. I, therefore, appeal to you to consider both these questions and give the necessary advice to your Party in Bihar.

Yours sincerely,

*Jayaprakash*

(Jayaprakash Narayan)

Shri M.R. Masani,  
148, Mahatma Gandhi Road,  
Bombay-1.

cc to: Shri M.R. Masani, 2 Tughlak Rd., New Delhi-11.

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