Letter, August 3, 1905, Lajpat Rai to Babu Ganga Prasad Varma

Source: File No. 296, G.K. Gokhale Papers, (N.A.I.).

London,
Dated: 3/8/05

My dear Babu Sahib,

I am sorry I could not write to you earlier but then I wanted some time to form mature opinions and confirm impressions. I have now been about 2 months in this country and have seen men labouring to almost all sections of the Liberal Party. Permit me therefore to communicate my opinions to you as you are the man whom the whole credit of my visit to England is due if there is any credit in the same.

(1) Regarding the chances of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's candidature Mr. Naoroji told me that he was opposed by another liberal and a conservative and that now Liberal retired he had good chances of success what meant that otherwise he had no chance of success. Mr. Shayamji K. Varma and Mr. F.H. O'donnel President National Democratic League of which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji is a Vice-President are of opinion that Mr. Naoroji has not the remotest chance of success. The latter told me that the official Liberal candidate who opposes him would rather see the conservative returned than retire in favour of Mr. Naoroji. Shayamji is very bitter against Naoroji and openly tells everybody that this man has been wasting the money of the country so long and that he does it simply as a profession. He has told me that Mr. Naoroji is completely in the hands of his election agent who spends money like anything. Mr. Naoroji's Secretary one Mr. Mukerjee a Bengalee who has married an English woman and has a child from her is the Secretary of Mr. Shayamji's Indian Home Rule Society and seems to be in Mr. Shayamji's confidence. My own opinion is that whatever truth there may be in Shayamji's statement about the success of Mr. Naoroji's income Mr. Shayamji is jealous of Naoroji and wants to pull him down in the estimation of Indians. Shayamji is an extremist of that class who are not agreeable to anybody's advice and who want to rule supreme. So far I think his fellowships too are not likely to be a very great success as his conditions are very onerous and his attitude very exacting. So far his India House too is not attractive. Out of the 5 fellowships granted by him the two are granted to the Hindu have not been availed of. But that is a digression. It must be however admitted that Mr. Naoroji does not seem to possess much influence or any influence at all in official Liberal circles. For election he too depends almost exclusively on the working men.
idea. I am of opinion that we should not erect a Pandal nor
should we in the Congress Committee arrange for the accommodation
of delegates or visitors. At any rate we should fix one day for
monster meeting - a great demonstration of at least a lakh of
people on the bank of the Ganges in the open air to protest against
the policy of Lord Curzon. From the Ganges the whole assembly
should return to the city in procession saying national songs.
Some speeches may also be delivered in vernacular from different
platforms. After this you can have your ordinary Congress for
two days consisting of not more than 200 delegates. I think a
demonstration of a 100,000 people thus collected as a protest
against the policy of Lord Curzon will carry more weight and will
impress the people in England more than any number of your
Congress. I am of opinion that if properly organised and worked
the movement is bound to be a great success. People are just
now fairly well excited and you should not fail to take advantage
of this. Unless you are prepared to change the nature of your
movement in this direction you are not likely to make any progress
towards political freedom at all and I am sure that if the
Congress will not take the initiative in this matter some other
movement may have to be set up to do the same and then the Congress
will dwindle into insignificance. Do kindly give your best
thought to the matter and take counsel amongst your friends.
This letter, at any rate, the justly paras are strictly
confidential. The contents of the 5th para if approved of by
yourself can be made public. Please do pass on this letter to
Mr. Gokhale as I have no time to write two long letters by one
mail. I am writing some educational articles in the Agra Gazette.
Do please to read the same.

Yours very sincerely,

Lajpat Rai