

Xs Jan, Jan 3-10, 1977, G. (circled)

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014

October 17, 1977

Baroda, India

Dear Magan,

I just received your letter of September 26, and am happy to hear from you again. I will check with Pathfinder about your literature requests, and will let you know what we can do, and I will pass on your request about the Marx biography to George Novack. But I also wanted to write you a personal note about a couple of points.

I know from reading your internal bulletin that you were considering a school together with the RBC group, and that there was a dispute in the CL over this. I don't want to get involved in that dispute, and particularly not in the organizational aspects of it, but there were a few questions that came to mind about your educational program, as it relates to groups like the RBC.

I remember something about the RBC from my discussions with them a couple of years ago. As I recall, they considered themselves Trotskyists, but their basic orientation at that time was to do nothing, except study theory. They were beginning with basic theory. After this supposed theoretical grounding had taken place, they were going to study the history, economics, social structure and politics of India. Only after this was all completed -- and it could take a long time -- would they be in a position to consider what to do in India. Perhaps they have changed; I hope so, because their position at that time was certainly sterile. People with that outlook have never in history built a revolutionary party, and never will. For us, education is linked with, and is designed to prepare for action.

I have encountered people like the RBC of two years ago in the USA and elsewhere. They are often attracted to studying the more difficult works of Marx, such as the Grundrisse, as well as writers such as Gramsci and Lukacs and others of this school that New Left Review has done a lot to popularize in left intellectual circles. Most of them strike me as pseudo-intellectuals, whose pretense to learning does not measure up to their real knowledge, and who in any case are not equipped to offer us lessons on politics.

It occurred to me, from your literature order, that the CL was considering a study of some of the writers of the New Left Review school or of Monthly Review in order to be able to deal with arguments raised by some people outside our movement -- perhaps from the RBC. Of course, we have to answer their arguments, just as Trotsky and Lenin and others had to do in similar circumstances in their day. But personally, I don't think that this is a priority item in the long-term educational needs of our parties.

The question of our educational needs is a question of political priorities. Our main need is to develop in all comrades a basic understanding of our political program, and an understanding of how to put it into practice under current day conditions. This is the continual need in party educational programs. Once comrades have achieved this basic understanding, they are of course in a position to go on to further study of the more difficult Marxist works; and they are also better equipped to answer the various anti-Marxist currents and deal with the semi-Marxist pseudo-intellectuals. But I think that this is more a matter of individual study, rather than a main priority in party classes.

Some individual comrades -- most of whom are not intellectuals, and are not going to become intellectuals -- may not feel they are in a position to answer all the arguments of the pseudo-intellectuals who claim to be Marxists. A few educationals in the CL may help to equip our comrades to handle this problem; and those who want to go on to further study, can do so. The main point, though, is to answer the New Left Review types on the political level: on what to say in the class struggle and on what we propose to do to build a revolutionary party, versus their general tendency towards doing nothing.

We can also win people from groups like the RBC. We will win them primarily on the basis of what we are and what we can offer. We are a political party; we participate to the best of our ability in the class struggle, and continually attempt to apply Marxism to the specific problems of the day. Within the party, and on the basis of agreement with the basic character of the party, there is room for all sorts of differing views on theoretical questions. But any theory that justifies inaction is not Marxist, no matter what else it says; and any theory that rejects building the Trotskyist party is not Trotskyist. I think this is a key point to get across in our educational program and in our attitude towards other groups.

All of this, however, presupposes that the party itself carries out continual education of its members through party-led and party-organized classes, suited to party needs. All comrades, especially young comrades, have a thirst for knowledge. That is all to the good, and everyone should be encouraged to read widely and to read all points of view. But the main responsibility of the party, as a party, is to provide a basic Marxist education and a basic understanding of our program. If this educational need is not filled, if continual party education is not carried out, then there is a danger that some comrades may be disarmed in face of the pseudo-intellectual milieu that has nothing to say about real Marxist politics -- that is, what to do in the class struggle.

I'm sorry I got so long-winded on this point. I'm sure you are taking up the same points in your discussions there. But this is an area of party activity that I'm concerned about, having once been the SWP educational director. I'm enclosing a short article I wrote in that capacity a few years ago. I'm sure you receive the education bulletins with the various guides to Marxist education that we have put out. These can give you a more concrete idea of what our educational programs are like.

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I was somewhat disturbed about the note you wrote concerning your health and financial responsibilities. I thought that some of the suggestions that Jim raised would have been helpful.

Two things occur to me. One is the need to develop the capacity of other comrades besides yourself, to raise funds for the party. Until this can be done there will not only be a special burden on you, but also an uneven development of the party; it will be too dependent on one person. A second thing to consider, if fundraising absorbs too much of your time, with the result that some key political needs suffer, may be the need to place limits on the time you devote to fundraising, even if less funds means that certain other party activities are limited. There has to be a balance. I especially think it is a big mistake to press yourself to the point that your health suffers.

Give my regards to everyone.

Greetings,



Gus

retyped letter from Magan

*Handwritten note: J. P. ...*

English fixed up

Sept. 26, 1977

My dear comrade Gus,

After a lengthy interval I am resuming correspondence with this letter. You are in New York now, according to Comrade Percy. You may have seen the letter from us addressed to Comrade Rebecca last week. Meanwhile, I would like you to ~~do~~ do the following things that we need at your earliest.

1) A biography of Marx is being prepared in Gujarati, by a sympathizer/journalist friend. We want guidance regarding the overall structure, points to be emphasized in it from ~~the~~ Comrade Novack. It will be about 400 [not certain of the figure] pages, written for the common man, not scholars. A biography has recently been written by David McLellan. We want to know about the new information provided by him. It is not available here. Can we get it on loan, as it is too expensive.

2) We need 50 copies of Marxism and Existentialism, edited by Novack (paperback) and 25 copies of Mandel's Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx (Monthly Review Press paperback) and 5 copies of Late Capitalism (Pathfinder Press) just to cater to the needs of our circle. Of course this is to be billed to us. We will pay.

3) Our Central Secretariat comrades <sup>feel that</sup> some important publications of New Left Review editions should be gone through. Please arrange to have this through our England-based Pathfinder Press.

4) It seems that some publications of Monthly Review Press should be read and promoted. Once you had suggested to me that Pathfinder could sell them to us at 50% discount plus delivery charges.

a positive reply  
I hope to hear ~~from you.~~

Yours comradely,

s/Magan

This is just for your information. With the relative growth of our grouplet, the workload has increased, as well as my responsibilities. Comrade Shiraz is a fulltimer, assigned to handle the office work and including trade union work. Comrade Thakorbbhai is in charge of trade union work.

As the nature of work for me has changed, I find it difficult to cope with the existing and new assignments given to me, like the collection of money to meet the needs of the party. This consumes a ~~considerable~~ considerable amount of my time. Hence my work in editing and writing for the central journal and the local fortnightly ultimately suffers. If I concentrate on writing, the finances and organizational

Manan....2

If I don't write, then <sup>(then)</sup>  
work suffers. ~~the party~~ the party as such suffers  
politically. I am in a great dilemma. There is the most severe  
internal mental agony. At this time, neither can be avoided.  
This is gradually affecting my health.

I am[limping?/hoping?] to meet the challenge.

Manan