

X. Jack, vol, DIC, 11-11, Noug, Harry, 10

14 Charles Lane
New York, NY 10014
June 19, 1978

Magan Desai
Baroda, India

Dear Magan,

I am very sorry for the long delay in answering your letters of April 4 and 5. I have been traveling for much of the past two months and have fallen far behind in my correspondence. But I am very sorry.

First, concerning your literature requests. Pathfinder has been informed of your new status re ordering literature, but they have not yet received an order. I assume you will send one soon. We did receive your edition of The Leninist Theory of Organization, and Pathfinder will write you about this. Have you heard from Ink Links about whether they would exchange it for the Mandel book? It is possible that they will not do this because they do not do much distribution. But perhaps the IMG would make the exchange. The IMG has a bookstore, which might be able to sell the Mandel booklet.

Now, concerning your letter about Ralph Schoenman and Joan Mellon.

First, we were surprised to learn that they had been in India. It was the first we knew about it.

Perhaps it would be helpful if I described briefly our relationship with Ralph and Joan over the past couple of years. Several years ago Ralph expressed an interest in joining the SWP. Joan, who is not particularly close to us politically, made it clear she had no desire to become a member.

We had a number of discussions with Ralph. We let him know we were very happy to hear of his decision. We worked out with him a series of steps, including a brief period of close collaboration so he could get to know the party better, helping him to write an article for publication to explain why he had come to the decision to join the SWP, regular financial contributions to the party, etc.

Ralph said he had no disagreements with the party. He did raise a few questions along the lines of what Vibhuti reports he and Joan raised in India, but he presented them as questions he got from his friends and not as his own views. As you can tell, they are difficult questions to pin down, since they do not directly raise questions of political line, but focus on organizational criticisms. In any case we discussed them with him at some length, and he expressed his satisfaction with our response.

Despite quite a bit of effort on our part to bring Ralph into the party, however, he apparently lost interest. He never followed through on our agreed upon plans. We had several subsequent dis-

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cussions, but nothing further came of them.

He has since participated in some Iranian and Soviet dissident defense work. Unfortunately, he has never carried this activity out under party direction. We continue to work together, usually in agreement, but not always.

So it was with some surprise that we learned through Vibhuti's letter of the criticisms that Schoenman made of the SWP while he was in India.

The criticisms are false on all counts, and could not convince any objective comrade with a first-hand knowledge of the SWP. I am sure you noticed that most of the charges that Vibhuti reports resemble the type of undocumented "horror stories" that are sometimes spread around to convince people who do not have first hand knowledge of the situation. Ralph Schoenman himself has little first hand knowledge of the situation concerning most of the charges Vibhuti reports he expressed.

How should the comrades in India judge such stories? The best procedure is not to accept anyone's word on faith, but to examine the documentary record. Fortunately, the record of the SWP's activities and policies is very well documented.

The record of the SWP policy in the antiwar movement is readily available in the Militant. Fred Halstead's history of the antiwar movement, Out Now!, has been serialized in Intercontinental Press and will be published in book form in August. We have also published an Education for Socialists bulletin, Revolutionary Strategy in the Fight Against the Vietnam War. (I'm sending you a copy.) Both of these works should help clarify most questions comrades may have.

Similarly the Militant has carried regular reports on SWP policy in the women's movement, in which charges similar to those reported by Vibhuti are thoroughly answered.

In respect to the merits of the SWP case against the Internationalist Tendency, there is full documentation in Internal Information Bulletin, No. 6 in 1974. I am also sending you a copy of this in case you don't have it at hand.

The charge that the party insists that our members only read "second-hand" literature is the most outlandish of all. Pathfinder Press has published more than 20 titles by Trotsky in the past decade for the exclusive purpose of educating our comrades. And comrades are encouraged to read and study them, along with the Marxist classics. In fact just last month we had an excellent rally here in New York City to celebrate the completion of the Trotsky Writings series. Many comrades think it was the most spirited rally we have had in New York for a number of years. A feeling for the political understanding of the party members--and of the internal freedom of debate--can be obtained from the SWP Discussion Bulletin, which you receive.

Our Iranian defense work, where we are active participants

in the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI), is very successful. CAIFI has broad support and organizes large meetings. It's most notable achievement was winning the release of Reza Baraheni from the Shah's Jails a couple of years ago.

We don't have many opportunities for winning such broad support in our Soviet dissident defense work, but the committee in which we worked with Ralph, The Mustafa Dzhemilev Defense Committee, won respect from some prominent radicals, intellectuals, and writers. We think that our activities, played at least a small part, in the Kremlin's decision to release Dzhemilev last year.

Although we have made errors, I think our record of political activity and our functioning in other organizations is good. Comrades should read our documents and press closely, before taking very seriously the charges of someone who is not and has never been part of the Fourth International.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Gus', written in dark ink.

Gus