

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

March 2, 1973

TO MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is an exchange of correspondence between
Bala Tampoe and myself.

Comradely,

Gus Horowitz

March 1, 1973

Dear Bala,

I have received your letter dated February 19, 1973, and have shown it to Joe Hansen and to the SWP Political Committee as you requested.

I have stopped all arrangements for the subscriptions to M. Manickam. The publications that would have been sent here are certainly not worth the ill feeling that would result. Please do not yourselves send these publications. We do not wish to ask your party to undergo this financial expense.

However, I still do not share your opinion about what is permissible procedure in a case like this, and would like to explain more fully the motivation behind my previous two letters.

When the December 12 letter from M. Manickam was received here, the name rang a bell with me, and I wrote you to inform you of his letter. At the same time, what was involved was not an offer of political collaboration. We would have absolutely refused such relations because your party had severed relations with him due to your suspicions of him from the security point of view. Nor was this a request for a complimentary subscription; these are generally extended only if it is a question of a comrade in need. What was involved here was a purchase of a subscription (in the form of an exchange of publications, a procedure that is not uncommon for countries where currency restrictions exist). As I said in my letter of December 23, this was taken into consideration from the point of view of whether or not our receiving these publications would be worthwhile -- and be assured that what I was concerned about was whether it would have been worthwhile from the point of view of the Trotskyist movement as a whole -- including the LSSP(R), the SWP, and all other parties of the world movement. The question in my mind was whether receipt of these publications would enable us to give better coverage of Ceylonese events, which, in turn, would help the Trotskyist movement as a whole.

The question of Manickam's suspected connections does not seem to me to be relevant at all in a case like this.

What is involved here is proper procedure regarding security. (I assume you agree that there is no moral question involved, since you did not say anything about such.)

We sell subscriptions, and have exchanged subscriptions with government publications and with the publications of opponent political groups who would like nothing better than to see our movement destroyed (and who work to that end). We do not screen subscribers to our public press, not even known political opponents or government agencies. We never have, and we will not do so in the future. There is no point to it, because there is

no way whatsoever to stop anyone who wants to buy our public press from doing so. To try to do so, or to act as if we could do so, would be self-delusion. If the Ceylonese police want to follow The Militant, they can send an agent to buy it on the newsstands in New York, send in money for a subscription in the name of someone we don't know, make photocopies of the issues we send you in the mail, or use some other means at their disposal.

To try to screen subscribers to our public press might create a false sense of security in an area where there can be no security. Everything written in our public press is written, and must be written with the certain knowledge that both political opponents and the class enemy will read it if they want to. Where security comes in, is in being very careful about what we write in our public press. We try to be as careful as we can in deciding what to write and how we write in our public press, particularly in covering events in countries where there is great repression or the danger of great repression. I trust that we have not written anything in our public press that would endanger comrades in Ceylon.

For the above reasons, I do not think there is any question of impropriety in exchanging publications with Manickam. But it would be foolish to do so at the expense of good relations between our two parties. So we are complying with your request in this matter.

Fraternally,

Gus

February 19, 1973.

Dear Gus,

This refers to your letter of Jan.26.

Your intimation that you plan to go ahead with the proposed exchange with a man whom we have expelled because we believe him to be a police informer, if not an agent, came as a rude surprise to us. In the circumstances, our Central Committee has decided unanimously to request your party officially to desist from going ahead with the exchange, or to cancel any arrangement you have already made with the individual concerned, since it will endanger our section politically and security-wise as well.

We are quite aware that your publications can reach unfriendly hands, but that is no reason for you to place them knowingly in the hands of a person whom we believe to be an enemy agent, especially under the prevailing conditions of repression, which prevent us from any public announcement of the fact that the individual concerned has been expelled from our party, and is not to be regarded as a Trotskyist at all, but only as one who seeks to deceive people into believing that he is one. Your placing any of your publications in his hands directly will assist him to do so, whilst giving his principals direct information that may affect us or a comrade of ours who visited the US recently.

Since you have considered the proposed ~~xxxxx~~ exchange from the point of what your party will gain from it, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ we are quite willing to supply you with whatever publications you want from ~~the~~ this end, out of our very meagre resources, from our sales of the publications you have been sending us. We would rather incur financial loss even, in that respect, if it will assist in persuading your party to ~~not~~ refrain from entering into a transaction which we regard as being positively harmful to us under the prevailing conditions.

I have received a letter from Joe, and will inform him of this matter as well, due to its gravity from our point of view. Please show him this letter anyway, and inform your Political Committee that this is a request from our Central Committee.

Please acknowledge this letter straight away, as we would like to be assured that it has reached you as soon as possible.

Yours fraternally,

Bob

New York
January 26, 1973

Colombo

Dear Bala,

I received your letter of January 13. We acknowledge your suspicions concerning the individual who suggested the exchange, and we will certainly avoid entering into any form of political relations with this person.

As to the exchange itself, I fail to see how there can be any harm in such an arrangement. The Militant and ISR are publicly distributed, and subscriptions are always sent to whomever pays the required subscription price. Thus, there is no way whatsoever to prevent these publications from reaching unfriendly hands. Furthermore, in this case we stand to gain from the proposed exchange, since the publications that he proposes to send to us may well help our coverage of political developments in Ceylon. So, we plan to go ahead with the exchange, unless it turns out that the publications themselves are not sent or are not ~~worthwhile~~ worthwhile following.

Regards,

Gus

Colombo
13/1/73

Dear Juv,

Thank you for your letter of December 23 and the enclosure. It only confirms the very strong suspicions we already had regarding the individual who has suggested the proposed exchange. We are of the view that this proposal has been made at the instance of the principals of the person who wrote to you for their regular information as to what is being published in your journals, both generally and particularly with reference to Ceylon.

We shall be glad if you will advise all concerned in your own country and also elsewhere, as we suspect that the same kind of request has been made to our friends in Europe, Australia and elsewhere, without our knowledge.

Thank you once again for notifying us promptly of the request made to you. Please do not even acknowledge it.

With best wishes for 1973,

Yours fraternally,

Pal

New York
December 23, 1972

Dear Bala,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter we received here. I recall this fellow's name from our discussions. Do you think that these publications would be useful for us to receive here? If so, do you have any comments to make ~~h~~ about the proposed exchange?

I saw a copy of your letter to Walter. Glad to hear that the hunger strike went well. I'm sorry you were not able to come for the discussions, which were very important. But, in any case, you will be receiving the next bulletins containing the documents.

Regards,

Gus

24/2, St. Anne's Road,
Wattala
Sri Lanka

12th December, 1972

DEC 18 1972

Business Manager,
"The Militant",
141, Charles Lane,
New York,
NEW YORK 10014

Dear Comrade,

I am a Trotskyist from Ceylon. I am a regular reader of the "Militant" and "International Socialist Review" since 1959. All these days I have been receiving these publications from a friend of mine who was studying in USA. This friend had find a job and gone to Ghana. As a result of this at present I am not getting them.

In the circumstances, I would like to know whether you could help me in this respect. Due to the restriction imposed on Foreign Exchange by the Ceylon government, I will not be in a position to send money. But I can send you the undermentioned publications regularly by Air Mail.

NATION A weekly newspaper (20 pages) published by the Coalition (SLFP/LSSP) partners.

TRIBUNE A pre-Stalinist periodical published twice a month.

ECONOMIC TIMES: The only newspaper from Ceylon that covers the economic field and is published twice a month.

In addition to these publication I will send you other publications. If you agree to this proposal kindly let me know. If it is not possible for you to handle this, kindly let me know an address of the responsible comrade of the YSA or SWP with whom I could have this exchange of publications. I need "The Militant" and the "INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW" regularly.

I trust that you will be in a position to comply with my request, since it help both parties.

An early reply will be very much appreciated.

With Warm Revolutionary Greetings,

Yours Comradely,

M. MANICKAM

24/2, St. ANNE'S ROAD,

WATTALA

Manickam
(M. MANICKAM)

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