

X: Joe, (Gus), MA, Jack, Day
May 5, 1978.

Dear Walter,

Thank you for your letter (undated) of April 6, presumably. It has been fully discussed in our PB and reported to our CC. Our unanimous view is that it is essential that I go to Europe before the end of June, both for the purpose of attending the USec meeting and for a full discussion with the Bureau on all aspects of the Ceylon situation from the point of view of our International. We have reached a crucial stage in the life of our Section, and we are urgently in need of assistance from the Centre on the basis of a proper understanding between us of the strategic aims of the PI in Asia, which, unfortunately, are most unclear to us, if they exist at all. To prepare world congress theses without ~~such~~ a strategy for Asia, or to do so without adequate ^{developing} discussion with us, would be most unsatisfactory even from the point of view of a global Strategy of the PI. Apart from this, there is the need for discussion with us on the more specific question of a strategy for our Section, not in isolation from, but in relation to such a global strategy. There are also important tactical questions that we need to discuss, at least for the purpose of obtaining the considered and fully informed advice of those comrades at the Centre, like yourself, who have both the world outlook and experience that would render such advice really valuable to us.

Unfortunately, there is no way of my arranging for a visit to Europe through the IUP this summer. The CC has decided, in the circumstances, to request the Bureau to make the necessary arrangements to provide a return air-ticket for me to go to Europe in about the third week of June. This, we hope, would enable me to have some discussions before the USec meeting, so that I may have an opportunity of briefing myself on the matters that are to come up at that important pre-congress meeting and also brief the Bureau on the situation here. Whatever briefing we may give/Picco, ^{or receive from} when he comes here, will not, in our view, suffice, ~~without~~ either way. So please let me know, as soon as possible, whether the funds for my trip can be provided by the Centre or raised from interested sections or groups.

W. met me recently and informed me that he was planning to go to London early this month (May). He intends to have a medical examination there and go to Moscow in August, for a heart operation, if so advised in London. He said that his "old friends" in Moscow would have the operation done for him free, and that he would stay there for about a month. You may draw your own conclusions from this. W. plans to meet Tariq in London, and to visit France, too. He said he might go to Sweden in July, and may also arrange a visit to Havana. I hardly think that the money for such an extended trip can all come from the "Ginipupura" group in London.

The JVP seems to have ample funds for their work here. They had a much publicised fund-raising campaign recently, which was probably a cover for their true sources of finance. W. said that they were obtaining an automatic double-duty printing machine. They also now have their own office in Colombo. Their propaganda for May Day was more than that of any other party. The ULP had booked the Colombo Town Hall grounds for May Day, which is the best venue for a public meeting. The SLFP applied for the same venue, in March, when the ULP announced that they were going to celebrate May Day with a festival at the Galle Face green. The JVP, meanwhile had requested the Police to allocate the Town Hall grounds to them for May Day, in February, but did not apply to the Municipal Commissioner for the grounds, as the SLFP did. Ultimately, despite strong protest from the SLFP, the ULP allocated the venue to the JVP, on the ground that they had asked for it earlier.

We had a RHP-CMU demonstration and rally at the CMU premises on May Day. The Police gave us information, two days earlier, that the ULP were planning some kind of a demonstration from near the Galle Face green, just before the commencement of their meeting at 4 p.m., and advised us to finish our demonstration by 3.30 p.m., to avoid the possibility of a "confrontation" near the turn off to the CMU premises on the Galle road, which is only a few hundred yards from the Galle Face. We suspected that there might be an attack on our demonstration, which was the only one to come along Galle road in the direction of Galle Face. We made full preparations for an attack, accordingly, and I told the Police that we would not rely on them for protection in such an event. Knowing we meant to fight if we were attacked,

the Police took precautions to ~~prevent~~ prevent a clash at our turn off, and we marched ~~into~~ into our lanes with UMP'ers watching us, but with no interference from them. The preparations we made to meet an attack raised the morale of our demonstration, which had about 1500.

The JVP had quite a big demonstration (for the first time), mainly of young persons, of whom, about 2000 were claimed to be workers by the JVP Secretary, Gamanayake, who met me two days ago. I am defending him in a case tomorrow, in which he is charged, with another JVP'er, with attempted armed robbery in 1974. The attempt to waylay ~~the~~ the manager of a rubber estate, taking the workers' wages to the estate in a jeep, had miscarried. It was a thoroughly amateurish job, just like the JVP's preparations for 'armed struggle' in 1971!

The SLFP had the biggest demonstration, but ^{it was} much smaller than in previous years, as the Government banned the hire of CFB buses ~~for~~ for transporting people from the provinces. The ULF seem to have had a relatively poor show. They are clearly incapable of attracting any serious support any more, as the "only alternative" to the UMP. The JVP, incidentally, are now holding themselves to be "the only Socialist alternative". We think that this is an electoralist perspective, but Gamanayake denied it when I asked him. He said that they would be sending us a reply shortly to our letter to them of April 5, a copy of which I enclose. It will be of the greatest tactical importance for us to consider electoral perspectives in relation to the Ceylon situation, even though the prospects of the establishment of a naked dictatorship in the proximate future are very real. This is one matter that I want to discuss fully with you, particularly in view of the line the JVP is taking, and the decomposition of the 'oldLeft'.

The question of party-building, "on the basis of regular party activity which attracts new members", is being discussed by us, and I shall discuss this matter, too, when we meet. In the meantime, I think it is necessary to correct ~~the~~ the impression you seem to have got regarding the "Vasu group" and the Healyites here. Both have young members, but hardly any 'militants' to speak of. Vasu ^{was so} doubtful of making a ~~any~~ show on May Day that he tried desperately to hitch on to the SLFP, with various opportunist 'Maoist' and other groups, after our move to have a ~~JTUAC~~ May Day demonstration and meeting was rejected by the ULF leadership, ^{even though} the SLFP had consented to it. We were not willing to have a May Day with only a section of the JTUAC, as the SLFP would have dominated the show; and the SLFP decided to have their own show. Vasu, Shaimugathagan and ~~the~~ a number of opportunist groups ^{finally} organised a 'United May Day' show, but it was a flop. The Healyites had a morning demonstration and meeting on May Day, but it was nothing to speak of. some his book with the Left and

There is bound to be a serious crisis in the ULF before long. It is clear from their refusal to agree to the JTUAC May Day (without political parties) and from their brazen sabotage of a JTUAC meeting on April 20 on the teacher-student struggles, that they fear that the JTUAC will completely eclipse the ULF, as it has already become a much more meaningful rallying point against the UMP Govt. today. Our May Day resolution ^(enclosed) will indicate our current assessment of the situation.

When is Pierre due to come here? We can meet his expenses here, in return for like assistance to me at that end. He will have to bring in a certain amount of foreign currency when he arrives, of course, to ~~satisfy~~ satisfy the local regulations for foreign visitors.

Please reply without delay on the question of the air-ticket for my trip to Europe in June. It must be a return ticket, as there will be visa and other problems otherwise. I am hoping to stay on for the whole of July, if possible, and to visit England and Sweden, by arrangement with the sections and interested comrades in those two countries. I intend to go to Paris first, but will let you know ~~details~~ further details on hearing from you.

Yours fraternally,

Bob