

June 10, 1971

Dear Joe and Barry;

We held the first bureau meeting since Ernest went on holidays. The ~~one~~ ^{one} planned for last week which I agreed to go to Paris for didn't come off. I went to Paris alright ~~to find~~ ^{to find} the meeting called off unilaterally and to miss Mary-Alice. The net gain was that I read three back issues of Intercontinental Press going there and back, on the train.

Pierre came here for this one. We commenced as soon as he arrived at 11 and ended at about 1.15—and I managed to read all the correspondence that had come in except of course material in languages other than French and English. So in my opinion it was a good meeting and they had no complaint. Nothing really very important but some incidents of interest.

Under the cadre school I raised the matter of Joe's contribution to the discussion on L.A. Pierre's reaction was that it was unreasonable to expect that it would be out in time for the discussion at the school. I stressed its importance but to no avail—we won't have it. Pierre made a few comments along the line that he did not know why Joe wrote at such length—many comrades won't read it anyway even when it is translated. It appears that it would be too much for the European mind. So now you have to make a decision on that. I think if we made it right away that the Toronto and or Montreal comrades could get it out so that it could be taken over by whoever you decide to have go over. Toronto and Montreal could split the job between them—but time is important.

Breakthrough. The Cypriot comrade(s) wrote a letter of a couple of paragraphs stating very loudly and clearly that they agree with Joe's contribution all down the line and that they want the short statement to appear in the bulletin.

The statement on the imprisoned Chinese comrades is nowhere to be found. Apparently Ernest and Gisela looked high and low. Vergat found my note which I composed with Peng to be added but not the main body. Big search on with V looking high and low, questioning Charlier who apparently drew up the main body and finally an agreement ~~xxxxxx~~ by Pierre to see if Peng has a copy. Pierre incidentally went out to see the Bengs a week or so ago. He gathered that their son had been under psychiatric care before and was under sedatives that he never came out of. I again raised the matter with Pierre of some young French comrade who speaks English going out to see them once a month or so.

Correspondence from Ceylon suggested that ~~that~~ the projected idea of sending possibly Pierre there to launch an investigation or inquiry into the enforcement of the war measures set there and the murderous assault on the JVP was not a practical one. For several reasons—one of them that the government itself has felt it necessary to give to pressure to investigate rumoured excesses by the police and army against the citizenry. Bala's ~~xxx~~—the CMU's—democratic protests and somewhat formal legalistic approach is causing considerable unease among our friends although it seems to me to be essentially correct. You know after all their talk I find that Uphali is still not there and probably won't be there until several weeks. At any rate I decided in our overall interests to open up a bit of a discussion on this fellow, my doubts about his outlook, his capacity to achieve anything that we might hope and the danger of him blowing things up. Surprisingly they affirmed all that I said—he is ultra left, sectarian hard to work with etc etc. It appears that sometime before he had a blow up with Bala but it appears that the latter is ready to give it a go again. The friendly discussion ended up with Pierre saying—that anyway he is going to go on his own if we don't send him....so what can you say. They even know what they are working with

Looking back—when Vergat stalled as the crisis developed I should have taken the allocated money and gone off to Ceylon. I have done almost nothing as it is of what the Canadians anticipated of me—would have missed all these conventions—but it would have been a good experience

I am not sure just how this came up—what point on the agenda that I had roughed out but ICP came under attack again—along with the Mole. Pierre expressed great irritation that the English language press did not give a real play to the Paris Commune demo—didn't seem to understand the significance and great value of such an action, such numbers under the banner of the FI. I personally came out of this very well of course as Vergat very quickly while agreeing with Pierre mentioned the article that I had written along just that line. I hope the Canadian papers carried my article. I do not know whether it missed the last ICP deadline or you did not think it a ~~very~~ good article. I will see next Monday when ICP come in. Vergat attacked ICP for always carrying material from Le Monde and never picking up material from Rouge. But Pierre thought it correct to carry the Le Monde article—prestigious to his mind. They both expressed astonishment that the most recent Militant contented itself with picking up the Le Monde item so long after. I suggested that my article probably missed the deadline as possibly did Alain's photos he said he would send—and that due to staff problems my impression was that the Militant followed a policy of relying entirely on ICP for international news. Pierre widen his criticism of the British—for not sending any leading comrade to the Commune Action-- I think they are irritated also about the poor delegation to the LC congress. They did not say a word about the handling by ICP of the Argentine events—which I thought might come out in the course of such a discussion.

The Swedish comrades are holding their congress August 27-29 and a cadre school in July that wont conflict with the Br and French school—so that means I take it July 11 to 16. Their congress is the weekend after the August U.S. meeting and of course they know English—in fact I seem to recall that they often speak English to overcome language divisions. Possibly we can do something about someone going to it... although it is on the tail end of the Canadian educational week. The main topics of the congress are youth work, university and high school work, women's liberation.

Apparently the Greek comrade who has been putting out the paper in Frankfurt is turning it over to some young Greeks here in Belgium. I do not have much of an impression of their background. They have drawn up some material in French—I will try to get through it tomorrow

When you get the agenda for the coming U.S. meeting you will see Livio is listed to give a report on Cuba. I suggested that we should take a statement on the Padilla case. Vergat agreed—Pierre doubtful--so I suggested that he let ~~me~~ Livio know our opinion. You will recall the Irish commission will be coming up.

That is all of any importance I think on the bureau.

Some incidentals:

We should send whatever women's liberation material we can on a regular basis to Alex Weisgal, 14 rue St Guillaume, Paris 7, France. She is completely English speaking and reading and I think head of the LC women's commission. The Canadians should make sure she is on Velvet Fist mailing list

Charlier would like Joe's document to go to Guy Desolre, 121 rue des Trois Tilleuls, Bruxelles 1170, Belgium

Do you have John Glenns new address; John Glenn, 148 Chico Street, project 2, Quezon City, Philippines.

It appears that Canadian papers are still going to the old IKG address at 8 Toynbee Street London. I gather that the present LC bundle going to Pentonville is adequate—for the present at least.

The best book on Algeria—Pierre recommends is a Maspero title written by Lecheraf

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We should pick up a copy of the book Shipwreck of a Generation by a J Berger. published by Harvill 2 pounds 50 s. According to a recent review he was a leader in the Palestine CP, interned in Stalin's concentration camps where he met Trotskyists and others.

I never did get around to writing up the May 22 U.S. meeting.

Here are a few things still of some possible interest.

Before the opening of the meeting I spoke to Jordan about my having heard that one Brian Slocock was a member now of the IMG and SL. He affirmed that I told him that I assumed he knew Slocock had been a member of the Canada section and while we had not formally expelled him it was only because it would have been like a boss who when a worker says he is going to quit tells him "no you're not. I'm firing you." Slocock had tried to carry out a split from our movement and he himself broke. Pat said nothing—was ~~embarrassed~~ embarrassed.

In the balance sheet of anti-war action discussion—Ernest expressed concern as to what the SWP might do when the war ends—he made a prediction that its got one year to go—then where will the SWP go since the movement has been a single issue movement. Feels the co-option of the anti-war movement by the Democrats and worried about a bridge to the workers. Apparently he intends to expound on these matters at the next U.S. meeting. The French who missed the ball this April 24 period are apparently now considering getting moving in this area. In the French area of Switzerland it was not possible for the various groups to unite in common action and our own forces too busy to do anything. The Belgians carried no Vietnam activity this April 24 period—admitted inability to organize national action and intention to rethink the whole problem. Report on Commune demonstration. Surpassed LC anticipations. Only Paris Lutte Ouvriere participated—1,500 to 2,000

Under report on finances there was quite a little stir over fact that ~~xxxx~~ SWP contribution more than wiped out by Joe's coming here and it in debt to ~~xxxx~~ south

Ireland—according to official minutes the IMG proposal for the striking off of an Irish commission is to be discussed at next U.S. meeting but my notes very clearly have it being referred to the bureau. This commission idea was raised before and I mistakenly went along with it. Joe sharply opposed it—at today's bureau when this was mentioned while drawing up the agenda for the coming meeting Vergeat expressed uneasiness that we were in for another conflict. Pat's proposal to circulate the international discussion bulletin was opposed by Livio and I think Ernest Britain—Jordan in his report said not a word on the electoral victory of the Labor party—nor on the big Common Market dispute until raised by Ernest

French cadre school—expect 150 to 175 French to come—20 Swiss, 30 Belgians, 20 Italians. Of the total of seven days two are going to be working commissions, dealing with various areas of work of the sections—student, anti-imperialist, teachers, workers etc. reports to be written

Ceylon—great consternation. Big anticipations, not based on substantial facts but under the euphoria of armed struggle, not realized.

That we previously knew about the state of LSSP (R) and circumstances of Bala completely forgotten, shoved aside. Hence a whole series of ~~circumstantial~~ criticisms of Bala, of the movement there, of the information that Bala gave us but which it seems to me they with their high anticipations grossly misinterpreted. Vergeat sees the movement there as being of a European type not prepared for guerrilla action. Am very much disturbed by line of defense being taken by CMU—French embarrassed before members. Joe brings a bit of sanity into discussion—asks why were our comrades caught by surprise with JVP development—radicalization not just on country ~~side~~ but on the campus too—didn't comrades think there was going to be a student radicalization. Proposed that correction of certain "facts" should come from Ceylon.

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Should check on what Bala said in fact and what was said in particular by Rouge--Verge's articles. According to Uphali Bala exaggerated on the united front with the JVP--he sees our Ceylonese paralyzed--not sure that they can take advantage of situation--their paper doesn't seem to be coming out. Pierre sees the problem that we are caught up in the CMU, the party was the tail, our forces were surprised by events and didn't react properly. He thought that the imperialist united front lining up behind the government would cause great uneasiness amongst masses. We should have sent someone there. Alain expresses the LC embarrassment--comrades want to know what the CMU has said in the events. Bala confronted with a dilemma--stick to union or go with JVP--uneasy about the line of the CMU demanding the restoration of civil right with argument that the government itself admits JVP not a danger. Livio--our comrades did not understand the peasant problem--no real connection with Indians and Sinhalese, denied rural population was a factor. Livio up tight about the south's covering letter with Domingo's --Pierre thinks the letter very sad, casts doubts on the integrity of comrades

fraternally

Ross

They are trying to jack up the rent on the apartment--by making an extra charge on water. I stalled payment. Will check with agent what the customs are here and the lease--