

July ~~28~~ 29, 1959

Dear Boss:

Western Europe is naturally preoccupying my mind now. Because I will not have a single week before expanded REB & will not be able to write out any speech, I was anxious to get away to the Y for at least two days to gather my thoughts undisturbed, and letter writing to you is not only the easiest way to jot down my thoughts, but will allow you to answer with your in-person knowledge of the European scene as of last year.

The reason I was so disturbed by the letter from the Chaulieute that you received is not only the fact that it shows there is nothing to build on among the intellectuals who are now sorry they so "early" called DeGaulle a fascist. It is the objective pull of the successful State Plan. The minute I saw it I began to look for others than that nonentity to see what is happening on the current scene in France, and sure enough I found the perennial victim of "the betrayers." Look up the June 22nd copy of The New Leader and read Andre Philip's "France's New Power Elite."

Andre Philip is the Socialist who broke with Guy Mollet over his imperialist policy in Algeria, and openly exposed the tortures not alone by the colons and the Army, but the "Socialists" of the 4th Republic, who were "for" social measures in France, but led the counter-revolution in Algeria. In a word, he would have nothing to do with a regime, no matter what its name, that perpetrates the atrocities of French rule in Algeria. Well 2 years have now passed since his break with the SP, and out of his mouth comes a whitewash not alone of DeGaulle (who, no doubt you noticed despite the conspiracy of silence among our "free press", has opened out an all-out campaign of extermination of the Algerian revolution) but a giving up of all socialist principles on the supposedly objective basis of looking "realistically" at the concrete economic and political situation, to re-examine old doctrines and to define relevant policies to meet the new conditions."

Philip begins with the objective situation, that finally "France has adopted a modern, highly progressive economic structure." The bifurcated economy, between large "progressive" automated production and "the backward sector" had kept the 4th Republic in turmoil because "traditional political parties wanted to win elections" and thus sided with artisans, small business, etc. against "the inventive, innovating elements of the economy." He no sooner says that than he comes up against the first contradiction in his political principles--the fact that he opposed colonial wars but now realizes "Ironically enough, this progress has to a certain degree been made possible by the post-liberation colonial wars, in Indo-China and Algeria." That is to say, the war strain on the economy also however produced "a great productive effort in plants producing military goods and in the aeronautic, electronic, automotive chemical and machinery industry." ~~Therefore~~, France's entry into the European Common Market was also a step forward.

This has produced a new elite of course, bureaucrats, managers of enterprises, "workers in big industry." He could not possibly mean production workers for he stresses that those automated industries use very few workers and so their better salaries are, at best, the skilled, and technical-scientific help. These "disinterested and competent workers naturally think in terms of plans"

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And they even favor both "European unity and a Franco-African community."

Here and there a very perceptive counter-analysis seeps through such as his description of trade union leaders as "technicians of mass action:"

"The mentality of these men is scientific & technical. They are scornful of empty political rhetoric & are likely to believe that all problems are susceptible to objective solution so long as politics is kept out of the picture. They tend to be even more paternalistic than the public functionaries and have the pride of people who know they can and ought to impose their solutions on the mass of people. At the same time, they are interested in developing a science of human relations and have formed the habit of discussing problems with trade union leaders, whom they regard as technicians of mass action/"

These group of managers, bureaucrats, and "workers in pilot industries" consider themselves "a new middle class, one that has nothing in common with the decadent pre-capitalist middle class. They think of their problems in technical terms, within the framework of an economic plan...and they are quite indifferent to events in Algeria."

This "indifference to events in Algeria" and to "empty political rhetoric" does not, however, seem to include that of DeGaulle who has given them a new lease on life plus "planned production." And where does Andre Philip stand on all this? His answer he gives "as a socialist"(!):

"The time has come to recognize that the period of revolutionary romanticism is at an end, and phraseology that no longer corresponds to reality ought to be dropped." The only class that is capable of making a revolution today is the very class that is actually doing so, the class that in fact has the power to administer, organize and create."

Nothing of course succeeds like success but if anyone merely says "what else did you expect from a yellow socialist", they will show that they understand nothing whatever of what has happened to all revolutionary Planners, incl. the state capitalist tendency which has bifurcated either into praise of Nkrumah or of the Chinese communes. No, let us remain with Philip for a while longer and see what is new in this betrayal. The rationale is not only DeGaulle succeeded, but (1) "distribution of income has taken on a new form. It has become an int. rather than nat. ques." So, since you are going to give up "limit action" for betterment of workers' conditions, there must be a "good cause": "The distribution of wealth must henceforth be regarded as a world problem, and the economically advanced countries must, if they are to survive devote at least 3 per cent of their annual nat. incomes to aid for underdeveloped countries." (2) eliminate the backward sector of economy "which have failed to meet the needs of our time". We will all now be for "technically perfected eco. org." Indeed we must raise ind. growth to a rate more akin to Russia's rate. (3) "Seek to integrate the Army into the nation's democratic life." And finally (4) "Men may be distinguished not so much by the ends they proclaim as by the means they are willing to utilize...The real difference is not between those who seek to create a capitalist society or a collectivistic society or an anarchistic society or what have you-- but between those who are ready to torture others to attain their ends and those will never accept such methods." But my dear Philip

has already so accepted "democratic" torture that there is not a single word about the colons and paratroopers and all the filthy brutal elements that brought DeGaulle to power.

Now, why then do I insist we cannot merely say "betrayor"? precisely because an element, as I already showed, are in the state capitalists who have aligned themselves with the "new" powers, whether of Russia or Africa, or Asia, or the Middle East, AND THOSE WHO HAVE NOT DONE SO HOLD THEMSELVES ALTOGETHER TOO ALONE FROM THE MOVEMENT FROM PRACTICE BECAUSE THEY ARE "BACKWARD" ENOUGH NOT TO RECOGNIZE "THE NEED FOR A VANGUARD PARTY" OR BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT YET "UP TO INDUSTRIAL PROLETARIAT." In a word, we alone, with our Marxist Humanism, are trying to create out of living movement a theory and if we do not demand "theoretical leadership, we have not taken up our responsibilities."

Italy remains one key, and England the other. Both have extremely bad pasts insofar as any grasp of theory is concerned. England, with its profusion of "talented" intellectuals from Fabians like Shaw who glorified that Mussolini's trains were running on time and Beatrice and Sidney Webb who glorified Russian totalitarianism as "the new civilization", on the one hand, and the mass Labor Party, on the other hand, has never managed to reach more than a "general strike". Italy, while it at once was "socialist" and "revolutionary", managed nevertheless to do nothing either on theory or in action when the two had to unite, but a lot to keep the two apart.

3 weeks in each place is a very short time and yet we must not only unfurl a banner but get some live people (as indeed we already have) to carry those ideas forward and into practice. I want, outside of the lectures, to have intimate, hard study of method and perspective and locale. That is why I get so mad at JY who insists like running like a chicken with its head cut off so that despite his very wonderful proletarian instincts and head he acts like a dilettante, reading all and sundry, and not knowing why one month on a single chapter in MARXISM & FREEDOM can give him more of Marxist method to carry on original work than all the knowledge of all the latest publications to keep up a running argument with Cliff or what have you.

I want to know more of the positive features of Resaz.

If I'm able to make any connections not alone with African revolutionaries but those from behind the Iron Curtain in any of the WE countries—and France being what it is, I should think it will be easier to make friends in England, then we will have those international streams that are indispensable for any serious work.

I hope you are not working. If you are quit. You should begin to write me at least twice a week, not alone on activity or work you are doing abroad, but mainly from your head and what you are thinking. It will be as good a way as any to overcome your phobia about not knowing how to write. We do very well, so just lose the self-consciousness about it. I depend on you.