

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
June 22, 1973

TO POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Attached are two reports from comrades who attended the national trade union work conference of the Communist League in Rouen, France, June 9-11. The first is by Dan Styron; the second by Ed Heisler.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice

June 12, 1973

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a report of the ~~the~~ Trape Rouge Conference held in Rouen June 9,10,11.

The CL had planned for 400-500 members and organized sympathizers to attend. Instead about 800 attended. Krivine gave a preliminary breakdown of the attendance; 683 workers, 300 CGT, 186 CFDT, 350 members of LC, 300 members of Trape Rouge(non-LC), 63 cities represented, average age 25, delegations from ten sections of the Fourth International.

A breakdown of participants by place of work showed- 131 metal workers, 6 electronics and auto, 6 construction, 118 health, 62 government, 57 ITT, 44 petrol and pharmaceuticals, 43 social security and banking, 24 printing, 48 banking, 15 railroads, 48 nurseries.

During the conference there were five plenary reports by leaders of the CL. Additionally, there were three sets of workshops, and a movie Saturday night.

The first report was on elected ~~strike~~ strike committees. This is very important in France as there are no closed shop or union shop contracts and usually there is more than one union in each factory as well as non-union workers. The strike committee brings all workers in a single factory into one organization to run the strike. The reporter emphasized only two other demands- workers self-defense and equal pay increases. The importance of workers self-defense was illustrated with two ultra-left sounding examples. Equal pay increases seems to be the most strongly advocated demand put forward by the CL. The CGT supports per centage wage increases.

The report on workers control was ambiguous as to what workers control is. The examples given were of fighting for working conditions. Other demands raised included Equal Pay for Equal work, Equal Pay Increases, Self-Defense, Elected Strike Committees, Unity of Trade Unions.

André gave a report on autogestion - workers ~~self~~ self-management. This was the least clear of all the reports. They support workers selfmanagement, but what this means is completely unclear. They emphasize that workers self-management can only "really" take place under socialism, and also give examples of workers self-management under capitalism. Much confusion. ~~The~~ The leaflet given to all participants ~~on~~ on self management listed three demands for the transitional society, ~~1/2~~ 1/2 day of work, Quality goods and services free, and World Revolution. Could this have been a joke?

Charles Andre Udry from Switzerland gave the over-all political report on the rising working class struggles in Europe.

Alain Krivine gave the final report on the Fourth International.

After all of this I couldn't tell what the trade union program of the CL is. Only Krivine spoke of the party and in a context removed from the question of trade union work.

The first set of workshops were on workers control and people spoke of their job situations, discussed elected strike committees, etc..

The second set of workshops ~~was~~ ^{was} on women workers, the army, immigrant workers, metal work, and the railroads.

A good discussion took place around the question of women. About eighty women and ten men attended the workshop. Iraine (?) Krivine led the workshop. Her opponents fairly described her position as "Read Origins of the Family and fight for free abortion". Krivine's proposal was that we should ~~introduce~~ introduce discussions

into women's groups about Origins of the family as the oppressive role of the family is the fundamental question. Also, we should build the abortion movement as strong as possible.

In an organized intervention, the women from Rouen and Grenoble challenged this conception. Their ideas were feminist and they dominated the discussion. They argued that the LC should not concern itself solely with working women. All women are oppressed. Housewives comprise an important part of the movement. Many women who join women's groups aren't ready to read Origins of the Family and often aren't leftists. That consciousness raising groups are important as a ~~first~~ first ~~step~~ step for many women.

Several women spoke in favor of ~~having~~ having groups made up exclusively of women. This was the best discussion that I heard during the week-end.

Ed was able to speak at the railroad workers workshop. He later stayed behind in Rouen to talk with the railroad workers there. Rouen is a big rail center in France.

~~Alberto~~ spoke in the metal workers workshop.

John from Canada attended the workshop on military work. He reported that the LC advocates retaining the draft, and are for the right of women to be drafted. They counterpose themselves to the "opportunistic" Lutte Ouvrier which advocates abolition of the draft, abolition of the army, for military training under control of the trade unions. Recent Rouge articles go into greater detail on their approach to the army.

The international panels included Spain (LCR & ETA), England, Italy, Belgium, USA. Ed spoke to 150 about trade union work in the USA. He emphasized the importance of the party in trade union work and the importance of a trade union program or system of demands for the party cadres to raise in trade unions. Both of these concepts are almost entirely lacking from the LC perspective. He was well received.

We had requested a panel on Argentina for Alberto. Krivine told us this would not be possible because it would raise the disputed questions of the International discussion with non-members. We made a guarantee that we would not discuss the PRT or any other aspect of Argentine politics other than trade union work. Krivine said this was not sufficient, that if a PSTer spoke it would automatically raise the international discussion because the CL members know that the LC supports the PRT. We tried to work around this decision of the conference steering committee, but with no luck.

A rule was in force that those attending the conference could not give their last names or addresses to others attending the conference. This made everything very difficult - especially for Anita who was trying to get IP subs. This was a "security precaution."

A young comrade from Cartiers reported that there would be presentations on the international discussion this coming week-end in Cartiers. We asked him if someone would be there to speak for the LTT. He said that there would be. We said there must be a mistake as we have not been notified. We then asked him to take us to his section leader so we could straighten this "misunderstanding". However, when Vergeat was asked, he said he didn't know a thing about any meeting in Cartier and convinced the young comrade that he must have been mistaken.

A comrade from Rouen told us that when Riel reported on the international discussion, ^{in Rouen} the comrades at Rouen were told that the representative from the LTT was unable to attend for organizational reasons. We told him that this wasn't true, that we were eager to speak, but so far haven't been able to speak in front of any group of the CL this year.

Ed stayed behind in Rouen to discuss with the railroad workers. He raised with them the fact that a member of the PST was in France and would be available to speak in Rouen if the comrades wanted. The railroad workers thought that was a good idea so they went to the headquarters to check this out with the leadership. After a long sober discussion it was decided that they should take the proposal to some people who were meeting not far away. Ed and the railroad workers then went to this meeting. Vergeat was there. He outmanoevered us at this point by saying that if the PSTer wanted to speak in Rouen then the LTT should try to get a point on the agenda of the political bureau meeting to be held in Paris this week-end. Then the political bureau could discuss the question of the Rouen meeting. By doing this Vergeat altered the proposal. All we had done was to point out that the PSTer was available to speak. The Rouen comrades were making the request that he speak. Vergeat turned this around to make it appear that we were making a request.

Summary; The Traupe Rouge conference was very well attended and the people who participated were very good. There was a great deal of enthusiasm and the conference was very well organized. Ed's report on trade union work in the United States was well received.

The LC leaders did not put forward a system of demands that would orient the work of the Traupe Rouges in the trade unions. I don't think people left the conference knowing much more than when they arrived.

There is great interest in the international discussion. However, the lack of documents and lack of discussion leave the LC members very ignorant. It is unusual to meet a LC member who can defend Mandel's positions. Instead, they just don't know. They are not so much miseducated as uneducated. Under such ~~unfavorable~~ conditions, a discussion within the CL could have a very unpredictable outcome.

Comradely,

Dan

LTT members at Rouen - Carl, Dan, Ed - USA
 Alberto ~~Edwards~~ - Argentina
 Collette + John - Quebec
 Anita - England

JUN 21 1973

Ed Heister
Tubingen, Germany
June 16, 1973

Dear Mary:

The following is a report on my experiences and activities ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ FRANCE:

FRANCE

Rouen: 1. A railroad workers commission attended by 30 C.I.L. members and symp. was organized at the Taupe Rouge conf. About 10 of those in attendance were actually railroad workers. 1 of them is learning to be an engineer and the others are either towermen (they are responsible for operating mainline mainline rr switches) or clerks.

Comrade Jamard chaired the meeting. He works on the railroad in Paris and may be a C.I.C. member. He is director of the C.L. work in the railroad industry.

I entered the meeting during the discussion and introduced myself as an American comrade who works in the rr industry and director of our union activity in the rr industry.

One of the members went to get Comrade Stern to translate since most of those present could not speak English. Of course I needed a translator since my knowledge of French is rather limited.

When Stern arrived I told him that I wished to give a report on the activity of the SWP in the railroad industry. I long discussion took place between Stern and Jamard. They agreed to let me speak.

My report lasted 15 minutes. I described our work in the RTVC, our general propaganda activity around transitional demands in the rr and other unions and how our work was directed toward building the rev. party. I indicated that I was pleased to find out that French comrades were active in the rr industry just as American comrades are and that I hoped a visit of rr yards in Rouen could be arranged during my visit. 6 C.L. ers work in the rr industry in Rouen.

The response to my report was very friendly and afterwards to C.L. members active in the rr industry asked me many questions about the activity of the SWP and the operation of the rr industry in the states.

Arrangements were then made by local comrades to take me to a major rr yard following the conference.

2. While in Rouen I had several long discussions with Jocelyne Tonoble. She is a English teacher at the University and translated for me. She is very concerned about the int. discussion and would like to receive int. discussion documents, lit. on women's liberation, the Militant, etc., Her address is:

19 rue de Neuville
76 - Mesnil - Esnard
France

3. During the first two evenings of the conf. I, Dan, Carl and Alberto stayed at the apartment of comrade Dominique Jelong. Her address is 1, Rue Henri Barbet
76 - Rouen
France.

About 4 or 5 other C.L. members live in the same apartment. We had general discussions on L!A!, the American section, etc.,

She speaks English and I think it would be worthwhile to send her all of the English language documents on the int. discussion

4. As you may have heard I give a report on the American movement in a commission. It was attended by about 150 C!l. members and symp. Carl has a transcript of that session and you should contact Peter or Dan to receive that transcript. The response was friendly and there were many serious questions about our work in the T.U.'s, women's liberation movement, etc.,

5. After my trip to the major rr yard in Rouen I had a very interesting discussion with Comrade Michel Dupont
11 A imm Dieppe
me Jean Texier
76 Rouen
France

and comrade Evelyne Ple
n° 142 rue de Lausanne
Appart 43
76000 Les Sapins
France.

These two comrades plus two other C.L. members and I had coffee during which I presented the ~~minority position~~ LTT position on L!A! I pointed out the necessity of a full & free democratic discussion in all sections. I asked them if they had access to I!P! and the Militant in order to be fully informed on developments in North America and the world movement and indicated that comrades in the Chicago branch and other branches has access to Rouge, Was Turn, Red Weekly and most of int. press of the world movement. They indicated they do not have this press available and ~~xxx~~ I told them it was unfortunate because the C.L! hdq. in Paris receives the world press.

I then reported to them on the activity of the PST. They were surprised and I then told them that a comrade from the PST was in attendance at the C.L. conf. and that it was unfortunate that the comrade was not permitted to give a factual report on their activity at the conf. since they are deeply involved in working class struggles.

Michel told me that a majority report on CIA! was given ~~xxxx~~ at a special section meeting in Rouen one or two weeks ago. I asked him if he would be int. in having a LTT report at a section mtg. He told me he would like to have such a report given but that it would have to be arranged with the local leadership of the C!L. I then asked him if the question could be taken up with the local leadership that evening since I was in town and could possibly arrange for a rep. of the LTT to speak.

He said he would make a request to the local leadership and took me to the local hdq. where he conferred with 4 local members of the C.L. for about 15 minutes. He told me that local members of the national C.C. were not present at the hdq. and then asked me if I wished to go with him to an apartment where he indicated CC members were staying.

We travelled to an apartment where I met Vergeat and John Clauder who is a member of the C!C! possibly representing Rouen. Michel talked to them in French for about 5 or 10 minutes. He appeared to be making a request for a rpt. at a special section mtg. Vergeat then spoke to me and stated that in order for a LTT report to be given in Rouen it was necessary for a member of the Tendency to make ~~y~~ a request before the C!C. He suggested that I contact a member of the Political Bureau to get information on the C!C. mtg.

I discussed this with Dan and Peter when I returned to Paris. Vergeat had turned things around. The request for speakers should and must come from sections. Peter suggested I write to Michel and indicate representatives of the LTT are available to speak before ~~any~~ section that requests a speaker, and that the Political Bureau has been notified of this standing offer.

Later that evening I had a 3 hour discussion with Michel (he is a rr worker) and Evelyne. We had a very productive discussion on LA, the activity of the SWP in the women's liberation, antiwar and national struggles. They were both very interested in learning more about the activity of the SWP. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of party building and the necessity of build~~xxxxxxx~~ing mass rev. Trotskyist parties in all countries.

Both comrades should receive sample copies of I.P. and the Militant and our lit. on women's liberation especially the last convention resolution. They should also be sent all of the int. documents.

6. When I returned to Paris I had a 3 hour discussion with a older Trotskyist militant who joined during WW II. He is ~~Jean~~ - Rene's
Jean - Rene' Chauvin
54 rue Monsieur-le-Prince
75006 ~~Rix~~ Paris
France

He is Secretary of a C.L. press cell consisting of 8 members in Paris.

He has a subscription to the ISR and ~~afterwards~~ at the conclusion of our meeting he took out subs to the IP, Militant and bought a copy of Teamster Rebellion.

He believes there are too many students in the French section. He quite concerned about the Terrorist activity of the ERP and is anxious to receive all of the int. discussion documents. He believes a full, complete and democratic discussion must take place in every section and is disappointed that this is not taking place in the French section. While he has not made up his mind in the int. discussion (he wants access to all documents first) he appears to lean in our direction.

He indicated that some French members are discussing the possibility of split and wanted to know our view. I told him there is absolutely no discussion of split ~~within~~ among the supporters of the LTT and that any comrades suggesting or advocating split within the majority are not acting in a responsible and serious manner. I told him fundamental disagreements on program have not developed. He agreed and said that split is neither necessary or desirable because most sections consist of young and inexperienced comrades and that many sections including France have great possibilities for growth and expansion in the period ahead.

He should be sent the documents immediately and I would suggest he receive a small bundle of 3 because he may circulate them among other comrades who share the same concerns.

Chauvin approached me and Dan at the conf. in Rouen where we agreed to meet following my return to Paris.

Until later,

Fraternally,

Ed

Ed

ORDRE DU JOUR DE LA CONFERENCE DES GROUPE TAUPES

- SAMEDI : fin de matinée : introduction à la conférence : saluts divers
après-midi : rapport sur Parti-syndicats (le travail des
révolutionnaires dans l'entreprise)
commissions sur le rapport
soir : films
- DIMANCHE: MATIN : rapport sur le Contrôle ouvrier 10 - 1130
rapport sur l'autogestion 1 + 3
après-midi : commissions par branches 330
+ 3 commissions : Armée-Femmes-Immigrés — 630-450 ← 547m
~~fin après-midi~~ : commissions internationales avec camarades d'Italie, 1
~~et soir~~ d'Espagne, d'Angleterre, de Belgique, d'Allemagne..] eve. 8:30
- LUNDI matin : rapport de ~~Belgique~~ sur la construction du parti
révolutionnaire et de la 4^e Internationale
Conclusion.

L'AUTODEFENSE OUVRIERE

LES 9, 10 et 11 juin RENCONTRE NATIONALE
DES MILITANTS ET SYMPATHISANTS
OUVRIERS DE LA LIGUE COMMUNISTE



GUIDE DU

STAGIAIRE

PLAN DU RAPPORT "LES MILITANTS REVOLUTIONNAIRES ET LE TRAVAIL DANS L'ENTREPRISE".

1°) CE QUI A MANQUE EN MAI 68 :

La crise ouverte en Mai 68 n'a pas permis à la classe ouvrière de s'emparer du pouvoir. Les grévistes de mai ont délégué leurs pouvoirs à leurs directions bureaucratiques réformistes et stalinienne.

Aujourd'hui notre tâche, c'est de préparer la prise en main par les travailleurs de leurs luttes, de leurs propres affaires, vers la dictature du prolétariat.

Dans les syndicats, nous militons pour unifier les travailleurs dans le cadre de la démocratie syndicale, pour la prise en main directe sans délégations bureaucratiques des luttes par les t(ravailleurs eux-même.

2°) POUR REALISER CES TACHES, SURMONTER TOUTES LES DIFFICULTES :

Un premier obstacle : ~~l'absence~~ l'absence de vie syndicale. Le militant révolutionnaire doit créer sa base de masse dans le syndicat.

3°) LA BUREAUCRATIE INSTALLEE CRAINT LES LUTTES QUI REMETTENT EN CAUSE SON ASSISE :

Nous luttons pour le soutien à toutes les luttes ouvrières, nous avançons les revendications qui unifient les travailleurs. En ce sens nous sommes les artisans de la véritable unité syndicale contre ceux qui craignent la prise en main des luttes par les travailleurs eux-même, refusent la discussion de toutes les options et de toutes les orientations.

4°) NOTRE TRAVAIL QUOTIDIEN PREPARE LES TRAVAILLEURS A LA PRISE EN CHARGE DES LUTES ET DES REVENDICATIONS PAR EUX-MEMES :

Nous nous battons pour les comités de grève, organisation démocratique de la grève, unifiant tous les grévistes syndiqués et non-syndiqués contre un seul adversaire : le patron. Ils sont l'outil le plus efficace dans les luttes réalisant l'unité de tous les secteurs de l'entreprise, dépassant les divisions syndicales. Dans de nombreux cas, la mise sur pied d'un comité de grève se heurtera à de nombreuses difficultés dues essentiellement au blocage systématique des directions syndicales Mais aujourd'hui de nombreuses expériences reflètent la montée de l'auto-organisation des luttes.

CONCLUSION :

La révolution socialiste ne naîtra pas de la juxtaposition pièce à pièce des comités de grève ! Mais de leur dépassement en conseils ouvriers, structures de dualité de pouvoir qui permettront après la destruction du pouvoir d'Etat de la bourgeoisie, de donner le pouvoir aux masses des travailleurs. Le socialisme de demain se prépare dans les luttes d'aujourd'hui.

PLAN DU RAPPORT SUR L'AUTOGESTION :

INTRODUCTION :

- Beaucoup de gens se réclament de l'autogestion en parole ;
 - Nous en devons être les authentiques défenseurs.
- 1°) Si la société capitaliste repose sur la loi du profit maximum imposée par la concurrence aveugle sur le marché, le socialisme ne peut être que quelque rationalisation ni quelques nationalisations autogérées.
 - 2) Le socialisme c'est la planification démocratique permise par la collectivisation des moyens de production et d'échanges, planification consciente opposée à la concurrence aveugle du marché capitaliste.
 - 3) Les décisions sont prises au niveau où elles peuvent l'être : l'autogestion de l'entreprise représente l'éducation à l'autogestion de l'état.
 - 4) Les choix centraux doivent être pris par un congrès national des conseils ouvriers après débat démocratique dans les conseils ouvriers.
 - 5) Contre la technocratie.
 - 6) Contre la bureaucratie.
 - 7) Les tâches fondamentales de la société de transition :
 - a) la 1/2 journée de travail
 - b) Développement des services et produits alimentaires gratuits et de qualité
 - c) La révolution mondiale.

PLAN DU RAPPORT SUR LE CONTROLE OUVRIER

REPRENDRE LE PLAN DE LA PLAQUETTE "Controlé ouvrier"