

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES, No. 18, June 26, 1968

Present : Barnes, Dobbs, Halstead, Kerry, Novack, Jones, Sheppard

Visitor : Waters

Chairman: Jones

AGENDA: 1. Northern Convention
2. Resident NC Meeting
3. Report on France

1. NORTHERN CONVENTION

Barnes reported.

Motion: That Novack attend Northern Convention as a fraternal observer.

Carried.

2. RESIDENT NC MEETING

Barnes reported.

Motion: To have a resident NC meeting when Hansen returns.

Carried.

3. REPORT ON FRANCE

Waters reported (see attached).

Meeting adjourned.

Attachment to PC Minutes No. 18

Report on France

by Waters

In this report I want to concentrate on the functioning of our co-thinkers in the JCR and the PCI throughout the course of the developments in France. That is, how they were organized, exactly what they did, what the relationships were between the JCR and the PCI and how they related to what other groups were doing. I was able to spend quite a bit of time with the younger comrades particularly -- at the headquarters, talking with them, seeing what was happening, attending meetings, and so forth. So I had the opportunity to evaluate some of the strengths and weaknesses and problems they were having.

I want to put my remarks in the following all-important context: The French Trotskyists were successful in meeting a very crucial test, an enormous challenge. In the midst of a revolutionary situation, our French co-thinkers unquestionably emerged as the leadership of the revolutionary wing of the struggle. Any strengths or weaknesses have to be seen within that context and have to be evaluated within that context. I am going to say a lot about some of the problems they faced, but that is because you already know the other side of the picture -- their successes and the central role they played in the struggle. Also, we have some important things to learn from the problems they had.

The JCR

At the beginning of May, the JCR was an organization of about 650 to 700 people. By the middle of June the comrades estimate that the JCR had more than doubled in size. It emerged with somewhere around 1500 members. The bulk of that, maybe about 1,000, was in Paris itself. The rest of the growth had been throughout the rest of the country in all the major cities. They have groups in about 35 to 40 different cities now. Their major strength is still in the universities, where the overwhelming bulk of the membership is. They also have a very important and fast-growing contingent on the high school level. These high school youth played an important role in the organization during this crisis. They provided some very important general leadership and did a good job in their own arena as well.

There are still a very small number of working class youth in the JCR. Before the crisis erupted there were almost none. One of their main contacts with working class youth was through the technical schools themselves, but very little contact in any of the basic industries. During the course of the struggle the JCR was able to establish contact with an important, though far from decisive, layer of young workers. Through the efforts that they made to orient a lot of their activities toward working class youth -- by going to the factories and leafleting, by building the action committees in various districts and involving the young workers

wherever possible, by establishing contact with those who came to the Sorbonne -- they were able to begin to bridge the gap. But it was still a very restricted contact.

There were many organizational problems throughout the entire period. These were problems you could expect knowing the strengths and weaknesses beforehand. To begin with, they had a very weak financial base. There was always a question of whether they had the finances to pay for what they wanted to do. Fortunately, they knew they were going to get some of the money they needed, so that they didn't let this block them as much as it could have, but it was a problem. Secondly, they had no full-time personnel among their cadre. Neither the JCR nor the PCI had any full-time staff with the exception of Pierre Frank. They had no apparatus that they could quickly begin to expand to be able to take advantage of the situation. Of course, as soon as the crisis developed, all the schools were closed, nobody had classes and once the strike was on, nobody was working. So almost immediately, there were hundreds of people who were available full-time; the only problem was organizing it.

The JCR found it was short on literature. They didn't have as much as they could have used because during this whole explosion you could sell almost anything. People were anxious for any kind of literature, any kind of explanation, any kind of political guidance they could get. Books that had been sitting on the shelves for years and years were gone as soon as they were put on the table. In a very short time, the JCR was almost completely wiped out of literature and in the midst of the general strike it was rather difficult to replenish this stock.

Organizational problems within the JCR became very much exacerbated under the pressure of these events. The main day-to-day decision-making was in the National Bureau of the JCR, which met on a fairly regular basis. This produced strained relations between the non-party members of the JCR leadership and the party members. The National Bureau is almost entirely composed of party youth and the Paris leadership of the JCR is composed almost entirely of JCR members who were not in the French party. At one point, the majority of the Paris leadership just resigned and said they'd had enough, that they just weren't being consulted on the decisions that were being made. For us, that would be a rather serious step; but in France, I guess it's more of a symbolic, minor protest. It was smoothed over quite rapidly. But it gives you a little idea of some of the problems that developed under the pressure of events.

Communications with the provinces weren't easy either. For communication with the provinces, all the branches and locals around the country, they rely primarily on periodic NC meetings which are held every month or two months. In the midst of the general strike, with no mail, no transportation, they found it very difficult to maintain the necessary level of communications with the other cities. Of course, this gave rise to a lot of problems. As it turned out, in some of the areas the JCR members really did not understand the depth of the social convulsion that was going on in France. They

knew that a lot was going on, but they didn't really comprehend that they were in the midst of a revolutionary situation.

Those were the main organizational problems that came up. What were the main strengths on the part of the JCR and the JCR leadership? First of all, their Trotskyist political training and political grounding was the most essential thing. Secondly, they also have a number of very articulate leaders who became mass leaders both in Paris and in the other cities. They were able, day after day, to provide a political leadership for the masses of young people, particularly students, who were following them and looking to them for this leadership. They proved themselves fairly flexible on their tactics and they avoided the dangers of sectarianism that most opponent organizations, such as the Lambertists and Maoists, fell into. Despite some of these problems I've enumerated, they really pulled together as a national leadership team and worked together quite well.

The PCI

Let me leave the JCR and go on to the PCI. All of the same weaknesses I enumerated in relation to the JCR largely exist to the same degree in the PCI as well. In addition the PCI is very small. They have less than 200 members. In the split with Pablo they lost a very large portion of their trained cadre that would have been capable, say, of putting out a weekly or twice weekly paper throughout May, they lost many capable organizers and speakers. They just didn't have a large enough cadre to take full advantage of the openings before them. This brought to a much sharper focus a lot of the internal questions they had been discussing in recent months. The questions of the independent sector, the entrust sector, the youth sector, all came more sharply into focus. For instance it became clear that there were only a few people who were really working inside the CP. Others, though formally CP members doing "entrust" work were really working with or around the JCR and its periphery. The implications of this for the entrust strategy will undoubtedly be discussed as the immediate crisis recedes and there is more opportunity to discuss.

The whole question of the youth orientation and the importance of the youth work immediately came to the fore as did the problems in organizing it. For instance, during May and June, the youth cells of the party did not meet once. That is, they functioned through the JCR; they didn't even meet as party cells. While the JCR more than doubled and tripled during the six week period, the PCI virtually recruited very few. There are many more contacts, of course, and they have many more opportunities for recruitment, but during the course of May and June the PCI recruited a very small number of new members.

What was very important, and came through very clearly, was that the political functioning of the PCI far excelled the JCR. That doesn't sound like a surprising statement, but it was quite a surprise for many of the younger members. That is, the PCI got out

daily leaflets, that were politically superior to the daily propaganda put out by the JCR. At the headquarters a daily orientation sheet was put up outlining the major political events of the day, what their attitude towards them was and what the main tasks for the day were. The PCI headquarters became a real functioning center for the JCR and the PCI. Almost everything was organized out of there. Part of the result of this was that many of the younger party members began to have a little bit more confidence and a little more pride in the PCI itself. That will have very important repercussions.

The Relationship Between the JCR & PCI

Let me say a few words on the relationship between the PCI and the JCR. One of the most important results of the whole process was the drawing together, the closing of ranks, between the JCR and the PCI. The JCR came out openly and publically for the first time as a Trotskyist organization. In signing the joint communication with Voix Ouvriere and the PCI, the JCR said we, as Trotskyist organizations in France, recognize the need for further coordination and cooperation between us. That was really the first time that the JCR ever publically said they were a Trotskyist organization and this was a big step for the JCR. But there were absolutely no negative internal repercussions from this, or from the growing public identification of the JCR with the PCI and of the JCR leaders as PCI members. If anything, non-party members were very glad to see this and very glad to see it out in the open.

Because of the size of the JCR as opposed to the size of the PCI, there was a tendency for the JCR to substitute itself for the party. There was probably little choice, given the circumstance. One of the problems that emerged out of the central public role played by the JCR was what to do with the adult periphery that the JCR was drawing around it through its activities. There were probably hundreds of men and women in their thirties, forties, fifties who were attracted to the JCR, agreed with the JCR politically, but who were too old to become members of the JCR. Many of them would not have been willing or ready to join the PCI directly, although many of them could have been recruitable eventually. One answer to this problem was to support the Revolutionary Movement. The Revolutionary Movement was initiated by representatives of the various Trotskyist tendencies -- Lambertists, Pabloites, Voix Ouvriere, PCI and JCR -- plus a couple of individuals who had split to the left from the CP, like Vigier and a few others. The French comrades hoped to use this as an arena to draw together all of these potential and possible recruits for the Trotskyist movement, to organize them at least in a minimal fashion, so that the PCI would be able to reach out to them and keep them around long enough to be able to recruit them. But the precise organizational and political nature of the Revolutionary Movement was never too clear. Was it an adult JCR? Should it be based on the action committees? Should local units be organized? Those were all questions that came up, but were never fully clarified. When I left, the RM existed only as a name and a list of people who had signed up to join. Many comrades were skeptical that anything more would come out of it.

I want to mention one other problem in relation to recruitment to the PCI. There is a significant layer of the JCR leadership which is not in the PCI, particularly after the events of these last couple of months. These JCR leaders consider themselves Trotskyists, consider the JCR Trotskyist and think that joining the PCI simply means another meeting every week. As these JCR leaders look at it, they're obviously going to be part of any process out of which a real mass revolutionary party comes, they can be just as important a part of it as the cadre coming from the PCI, so at this particular point there's no need for them to join the PCI. That's an attitude that's expressed by a significant number of the leaders of the JCR and one of the main problems that our co-thinkers have to deal with and answer.

What Next?

Where do things stand now? Of course, when Joe gets back he will have more complete information. Whether the bans are going to be permanent, how strongly the government will try to prosecute or repress the movement -- those are questions that will have a lot of bearing, and it's hard to evaluate them right now. But, keeping that in mind, let me go over several things.

The main thing is that now there are tremendous propaganda openings for the Trotskyist movement in France. The audience for our ideas in France and the rest of Europe has multiplied by the thousands. Trotskyists provided the political and organizational leadership for the revolutionary vanguard in France and that will change a lot of attitudes. You can see it in the university milieu particularly, where the normal prejudices against Trotskyists have broken down to a very, very large degree. But, the openings for Trotskyist propaganda among working class youth are also far greater than they've ever been before. There's a mass audience for our ideas today in France, particularly amongst the youth. It's a tremendous opportunity for us, but it will be a tremendous challenge for the French section of the Fourth International to be able to meet this. (Even the technical problems of getting the literature printed and distributed under conditions of repression will take time to solve.) In order to do what's necessary they're going to need help from the rest of the world movement. The period that's ahead of us is one of consolidating these gains and taking advantage of these tremendous propaganda openings that we have there.

Let me finish up on a couple of other points about which I know there are questions. One is the whole question of the elections that just took place and the line adopted by our co-thinkers toward these elections. Let me just explain how they arrived at their decision. I think everyone knows what it was -- not to run candidates, but to hand out a ballot in the name of the JCR saying "I've already voted for socialism on the barricades and by participating in the general strike." Let me explain their reasoning and how they arrived at this decision. First of all, they recognized at the time the elections were announced that a real turning point had been reached and from then on there would be a recess in the revolutionary upsurge. They didn't have any illusions about the

struggle continuing to rise after that point. However, I think there were two main reasons for their decision. First were some of the technical problems, which were secondary and which they recognized as secondary. The main thing, I think, was the pressure from the radical student milieu.

On the technical side of it, in order to get any television or radio time, you have to put up a minimum of 75 candidates which they felt they didn't have the forces to do. They had to put up a minimum of \$200 for each candidate they ran. They didn't feel they had the money to do it. There was only a week between the time that the elections were announced and the time they had to make a decision on whether they would run, and who would run. They didn't think they had time to work out a program on which to run a joint campaign with Voix Ouvriere or the whole Revolutionary Movement group. Voix Ouvriere wanted very much to run candidates. They wanted to join with the PCI and JCR in running candidates and the only reason that Voix Ouvriere did not run is because they felt they couldn't do it alone, and when our co-thinkers decided not to run they had to pull back on that. Those were some of the technical problems.

The main political problem, I think, was simply the anti-parliamentarianism, anti-electoralism of the student vanguard. This feeling was expressed in the burning of the election billboards and the slogan "elections are betrayals." Our comrades decided it would be a mistake for them to run candidates to present a revolutionary platform because they would not be able to convince this student vanguard of the correctness of the position, and that they would alienate themselves from a large section of the vanguard that they had been leading for the last couple of months. This was their explanation, their final reasoning, for not running the candidates.

This was a unanimous decision as far as the central leadership was concerned, but there was considerable discussion about it within the JCR and PCI. There were some cities in the provinces that very much wanted to run candidates and others which were absolutely opposed to running them. From what some co-thinkers told me, the JCR members who had the most questions about the decision not to run were the young workers. But this was a very small section and wasn't a decisive section.

Our Campaign

The final thing I want to mention is the impact of the SWP-YSA propaganda campaign around the French events. In the beginning when we first got over there, some comrades were a little bit skeptical. They didn't really understand why we were there, what we were supposed to be doing -- you know, whether we were there as revolutionary tourists or whether we were there to actually do something and if so, what. But as they began to see the material coming back week after week, the Intercontinental Press, the Militants, the buttons, the posters, the leaflets, the letters (I showed them the copies of the letters that the NO was sending out to our own people organizing our campaign here) -- they were quite impressed. The international implications, the international importance of the French events came

through quite clearly. After they saw a few of these things we put out -- one of our young co-thinkers commented that, for the first time he really understood what an international movement is. They understood that we were getting the word out not just to the Americans and the Canadians, but we were getting information to revolutionaries around the world; and they knew how important this was. I think this side of the experience will have a very important effect on the whole development of the world movement.

Discussion:

Question: Could you give us some information about the development of the other left groups?

Answer: All of the tendencies grew under the impact of these events. Let me start with the various other groups that consider themselves Trotskyists. The Voix Ouvriere was the group that came closest to the PCI and JCR throughout the entire struggle. That is, on the day to day basis, with the exception of the elections, there was agreement with them right down the line on what had to be done and what the next step was, as far as the struggle in France was concerned. There were daily meetings between the leadership of the JCR, the PCI and Voix Ouvriere. I don't know how broad a range of political topics was being covered. There are very deep disagreements with VO on a whole series of other questions, such as Cuba, Algeria and black nationalism. The group in the U.S. which they've had most contact with is the Spartacists. But on a day to day basis in France during the struggle there was almost complete agreement between them and the PCI-JCR. The French comrades estimate that the Voix Ouvriere group is about six or seven hundred people. Also, it's a very well-organized group, according to the French comrades. They say, "it's organized almost like the Americans" which is a compliment. VO got out a twice-weekly printed paper throughout most of May and June. They always had their literature table up at the Sorbonne and they had a good selection of material. They got out daily leaflets. They had no individual leaders, no spokesmen, who played anywhere near the kind of public role that our French comrades did in the struggle. They don't have a separate youth organization, although a large section of their members are youth. They apparently have a stronger working class base than we do. How strong, I don't know for sure, but the French comrades estimate that a much larger percentage of Voix Ouvriere's membership is working class and involved in basic industry. They were apparently able to do a little bit more in the unions themselves. But not a great deal because of the tremendous weight of the CP.

The Lambertist group is probably about 800 to 1,000. How much they have grown I have no idea. They found themselves extremely isolated in the student milieu. Their decision to leave the barricades and not to stay on the barricades and fight, and then they're defense of this decision meant they literally could not speak at the Sorbonne. Whenever one of their representatives took the floor in a general assembly or in a meeting of one sort or another, they would immediately

be met with cries of "where were you on the night of May 10th," "why did you leave the barricades," "why didn't you fight," and so on. They literally could not speak at these meetings. Their isolation will be even further exacerbated by their response to the banning of their organization. They issued a statement saying, in essence, we're going to accept this ban, we're not going to take to the hills, we're not "the Che Guevara's of the Latin Quarter" and so forth. A real belly-crawling response. The FER (Revolutionary Student Federation) the Lambertist youth group, was virtually the only organization that did that. Under those circumstances, particularly after their performance throughout the months of the struggle, I think they will be further isolated.

The other major tendency, of course, was the Maoists. They were able to put out some of the best propaganda on a day-to-day basis. They had a daily paper. It was large, well-printed, a good job. They were the one political tendency that got out lots of posters, signs and things like that which they plastered all over the city. They unquestionably grew and picked up strength. They also have something of a working class base. I don't think it's a great deal, but it's still important. They had fractions that functioned inside some of the unions and were putting out regular propaganda. They formed a "Proletarian Syndicalist Caucus" in several unions. I know at Renault - Billancourt and also at Renault - Flans they had functioning fractions that attempted to challenge the CGT leadership. They picked up strength amongst the students, but they didn't have the same kind of impact that our French comrades did, primarily because they weren't willing to function in a united front fashion. That is, they insisted on functioning on their own, and even on calling their own demonstrations and organizing their own demonstrations counter to the united ones. They tried to pull people out of the united front organizations and formations. In that sense, they didn't function as a central part of the political leadership of the entire student movement.

Let me make one other comment on the CP youth. In the student milieu, amongst the vanguard youth, the CP was also totally discredited by their actions and by their political line throughout the struggle. Our criticism of the CP and our analysis of the role of the CP was accepted by almost the entire vanguard of the youth, all the revolutionary student and youth organizations. There's no question about that. I think it was Alain Krivine who commented in an interview that in the student milieu and in the vanguard milieu, it's the CP which is really the tiny grouplet, the handful. Day after day, they were besieged over and over and over again by hostile students demanding that the CP try to defend their political line. This is one reason why some of the first splits and fissures within the CP are occurring among these intellectuals who had the closest contact with the student milieu and who were able to see the loss of CP influence over the students.

Question on Pabloites and anarchists.

Answer: The Pabloites had a table up in the Sorbonne, but that was all we saw of them. And that was only during part of the time, towards the end. But as far as any real living intervention in the struggle, it did not exist.

There was a lot of talk about the various anarchist groups. There were probably thousands of individuals who thought of themselves as anarchists, meaning that they were for the socialist revolution but they thought it could be done spontaneously, and that little organization was needed. But as far as an organized tendency, they didn't have much of an impact because they weren't organized.

The March 22 Movement was described as an anarchist movement, but, of the three or four central leaders, one of them was a JCR member, one of them was Cohn-Bendit, and there were a couple of others. In essence, the March 22 Movement was a united front formation of all the Nanterre students. But you couldn't really classify it as an anarchist organization.

There was no single anarchist organization that even stood out in the course of the struggle, no one that you could point to and name. When it came to the banning of the organizations, there was one anarchist youth organization that was put on the list, but nobody had ever heard of it. Even Le Monde didn't know what it was. Le Monde printed a little blurb saying the group had been placed on the list, but only the Department of the Interior seemed to know anything about them.

Question on arrests.

Pierre has been released and he was the last of our co-thinkers being held. After a three-day hunger strike, they finally let him go apparently without charges. So the latest information we have is that all of our co-thinkers have been released without charges.

Question: Wasn't the CP youth banned also?

Answer: No. The Communist Youth Marxist-Leninist, which is the Maoist group was banned, but the CP youth was not banned.

Question on action committees.

Answer: The Action Committees -- our French comrades pushed hardest for these and worked hardest towards their formation. They began in the Sorbonne on the basis of being organized in the different schools of the Sorbonne, drawing together all of those people who were interested and who felt the need for some sort of a structure, some sort of organization to be able to coordinate what they were doing. From there, they spread to the various districts of Paris, again at the initiation of the students, and particularly of our co-thinkers. They would call meetings, put up posters, distribute leaflets in each section of Paris, each district, saying a meeting of the Action Committee of the district will be held such and such a time, anybody who's interested should come. These committees ranged

in size from 20 or 30 people to a couple of hundred, depending on what section it was in and depending on how well it was organized, etc.

They played a very important role as an example of the direction in which the struggle should go. There wasn't really time for them to develop to their logical conclusions. When the peak of the struggle was hit and the down-turn began, the action committees had not reached a point where they could play a decisive role in the struggle. But they played an important role in advancing transitional demands and putting them forth in a public way and in a broadly propagandistic way, by putting up posters and handing out leaflets all over the city.

For instance, one of the things they were just beginning to discuss when I got there, was the demand to open the stores. It had reached the point where all the big stores had been closed for two or three weeks and there was a tremendous shortage on a lot of things, and they were beginning to advance the demand through the Action Committees, in a broadly propagandistic way, to open all the big stores to be run by the people of the districts. Our French comrades worked in the action committees as one of the chief arenas of activity.

The big weakness, of course, was that the committees did not exist in any of the basic industries, in any of the factories. The elected strike committees did not exist except in a very, very small number of places. As soon as there was any pressure for a strike committee, the CGT appointed one from the top to prevent an elected committee from developing. They were able to do this without too much trouble. But as a result, those people who were interested, those young workers and other workers interested in the political struggle and who felt hamstrung in their own factories went to the Action Committees in their own districts, their own areas, went around to the Sorbonne, went to the demonstrations called by students, went anywhere they could to find ways around this tremendous block that prevented them from having any real control over the direction of the struggle. But it didn't develop far enough and there wasn't time for it to develop far enough to have any decisive influence.

Question: Do you have any information about the present internal situation in the CP?

Answer: I know very little that has not already been made public. There have been two main developments. First of all, in the middle of May, André Barjonet, one of the central CP trade union leaders, head of their trade union study center, resigned on the grounds that the Communist Party was not following a revolutionary line. He joined the PSU. He was the only trade union leader of that stature who made any public break with the CP.

The only other significant cracks that we know of, as I mentioned before, are amongst the intellectuals. About the end of May a fairly large size group of intellectuals -- doctors, lawyers, professors, physicists, etc. -- signed a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party pointing out the very bad relations that the CP had with the student vanguard and saying that they thought this was the fault of the leadership of the CP for not attempting to link up with these students, for continually denouncing them as provocateurs and agents and so forth. They arranged for a meeting with the Central Committee of the Communist Party attended by most of these intellectuals. According to our information, what happened is that after a short discussion, the Central Committee walked out and the intellectuals occupied the National Bureau of the CP for a couple of hours and continued their own little sit-in and teach-in on the subject.

Question: Do you have any picture of the present mood in the factories?

Answer: To the extent I was able to get answers to that question, the indication was that the workers felt they had won significant economic gains and there was not a real sense of going back in defeat. They hadn't gotten as much as they wanted, but they had forced the Gaullist government to give them very significant economic concessions and that at least was a victory. That was the assessment of the French comrades of the general mood at the end, as the general strike itself began to come to a halt. Whether or not that is still the case two or three weeks later, whether that has shifted at all, I don't know. But right at the end of the strike, as they began to get these concessions, there was a sense of power, that they had just totally paralyzed the country for three weeks. There's no question but that they understood what they'd done on that level. It sets a tremendous example for this entire generation of new workers in their early twenties that are just beginning the struggle.

Question on defense.

Answer: There was no united front defense set up before I left. The feeling of the French comrades was that they would probably be able to work a united front defense, in essence, with the March 22 Movement, with Voix Ouvriere, JCR and PCI but that would be it. It was out of the question to expect any united front defense with the Maoist organizations particularly. But I had to leave within three or four days after the banning of the organizations, and right in the middle of the arrests. Since then, the only thing I have heard of, again, is what was in Le Monde, a report of a defense committee being set up under the leadership of some of the leading French intellectuals like Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Schwartz and a whole series of others with a fairly good set of demands -- demanding the lifting of the bans, the lifting of the ban on demonstrations, the release of all arrested during May and June, and so forth. I assume a defense committee will be established in Belgium.

Question on the high schools.

Answer: From the very beginning, the JCR has been the leadership of the high school movement. The French comrades initiated CAL, the High School Action Committees, last December. They've been the undisputed leadership of it from the very beginning. They say they now have CAL groups in 250-300 high schools all over France. There are many other high school students involved, but as far as political tendencies, the JCR is the only political tendency deeply involved in it. The central leadership of it are members of the JCR. They are a very impressive group of youth. They're fourteen, fifteen, sixteen year-olds on a political level that's really astonishing, even given the fact that we know from our own experience that high school students are on a higher political level than they're given credit for. These high schoolers became genuine mass leaders. They played this role not only in the high school movement, but in the entire youth vanguard. They were mass leaders at the age of 14, and 15. A very impressive political development. Already they are a whole new leadership layer for the JCR that's almost formed and they haven't even finished their high school education yet.

There are JCR circles in probably a dozen high schools around Paris. These JCR circles are the unquestionable leadership of CAL, which in most high schools includes a very large number, anywhere from 20 or 30 to a couple of hundred high school youth. The JCR says they are the only tendency recruiting out of CAL. Exactly what the growth has been in the course of the last two months, I don't know. But I would suspect a significant portion of this doubling in recruitment has come from the high schools.

The high schools in France are composed of a higher percentage of middle class youth than here in the U.S. By the time students reach 14, the overwhelming majority of working class youth are separated out. They're headed towards the technical high schools. And even those who are in the academic high schools, are shunted off towards technical topics. The degree of class discrimination in the high schools is much greater and it's much more blatant than it is in the American high schools.

There's a much greater difference in the educational level of the average working class youth and the average middle class youth, much greater than here in the United States. If you consider that most of the working class youth get only technical education after they're 14 years old, while many middle class youth go on until they're 25, 26, or 27, there's a tremendous difference. A university graduate in the United States is more closely comparable to a high school graduate in France. That is, they graduate from high school in France at 19 or 20. And the range of subjects that they cover and the depth to which they cover them in high school is more comparable, really, to what is done in American college. They consider a junior in college in the United States equivalent to a high school graduate in France. Most of the JCR members are in the universities, which means

they're roughly comparable to graduate students in an educational sense. The difference in the formal educational level between the average member of the PCI and the average French worker is much greater, than between the average SWP member and average American worker.

Question on technical schools.

Answer: The JCR has some following in a number of technical high schools but not to the extent that they do in the regular high schools. At least one JCR circle has a regular monthly mimeographed publication that is oriented towards the technical high school students. They are distributed and sold at the technical high schools. But this is a much less important segment of the work than the work in the regular high schools. They're just beginning to make some sort of a breakthrough on the technical high school level.