

November 29, 1983

Letter, André Martinez to Antoine Gomez

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Summary:

André Martinez reflects on his deep admiration for the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people, recounting key historical events such as the Long March, socialist modernization, and China's industrial and agricultural development. He expresses gratitude for the opportunity to attend the reception for the Chinese delegation in Bordeaux and emphasizes the importance of strengthening ties between the French and Chinese communist parties.

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Contents:

Translation - English

Bordeaux-Nord, Novembre 29, 1983

To my comrade Antoine Gomez Secretary of the Gironde Federation of the French Communist Party

Dear Comrade

Further to your invitation letter which I received with great interest to attend the reception of the representatives of the People's Republic of China delegation. This visit is responding to the one that a delegation from our Party headed by our comrade Georges Marchais Secretary-General of our Party at the national level, upon invitation upon invitation [repetition original to the document] of the Secretary-General of the People's Republic of China a few months ago, further to the interview you gave me last Friday.

Further to last night's event in the private rooms of our national company Ricard famous in France and in the world.

I attended with many comrades who were deeply moved but also excited about the emotional and brotherly atmosphere which pervaded that warm meeting, which I will never forget.

I will now express the feelings which I felt during the reception, my memories overwhelmed me so that the emotion that I felt made it difficult to speak when the comrades came to fetch me in order to introduce me to our Chinese brothers, [an] important delegation headed by Comrade Xi Zhong Xun Secretary of the Central Committee member of the Political Bureau in presence of His Excellency Mr the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to France Mr Cao Keqiang, who was kind enough to agree to translate the declaration [I had the opportunity to give][\[1\]](#), regarding the feelings that the old man that I am has towards the courageous Chinese people, the admiration that I have had [for it] for many years[.] I explain that and I apologise for talking a little bit about my humble self in the process.

Born on December 5, 1898, son of workers workers [repetition original to the document] I became myself as I was a teenager at the age of 14 an emulator of our great precursor Jean Jaures creator and director for many years until his death, murdered on the eve of World War I, of our daily newspaper l'Humanité[,] it is thanks to him that I had the opportunity to get to know what follows.

In the first decades of the XXth century of the Christian era there was in China an illustrious philosopher and his wife his name was Sun Yatsen[\[2\]](#) I am not sure about the spelling. He wanted to free China from the medieval monarchy of its conservative Mandarin regime, free the Chinese people, give it a democratic and progressive voice, he was very popular among the people. He died old and his son-in-law General Tchang Quai Tchek[\[3\]](#) succeeded him. He quickly deviated from his stepfather's path [and] established relations with the Imperialists notably the Americans. Further to ill-treatments against the miserable people rose a man who too became illustrious and popular among the Chinese people Mao Tse Toum.[\[4\]](#) He started the Long March at the beginning with a few hundred partisans who quickly became thousands of partisans, dozens of thousands, then hundreds of thousands as he crossed the Provinces from the North to the South, from the East to the West fighting and disarming Tchang Quai Tchek's mercenaries. So much so that at the end of 4[\[5\]](#) years the partisans had become billions and Tchang was defeated and forced to take refuge with the few mercenaries he was left with on the island of Formosa Taywan[\[6\]](#) under the protection of the American Imperialists.

This is when the Chinese Secretary's socialist transformations started. At the instigation of his Communist Party, the people undertook gigantic civil engineering works, rivers and large rivers especially the Yangtze[\[7\]](#) during the monsoon, [that is] [\[8\]](#) a period of prolonged rain[,] periodically overflowed dramatically[,] flooding entire regions[,] destroying food crops and most critically thousands of human lives of farmers[,] causing irreparable damage [and] leading to famine.

The entire people got on with the job with unsophisticated[,] handcrafted tools[,] with "what's to hand" as we say, man, woman, children undertook the construction of seawalls that would be sufficiently high in order to defeat the Yangtze's angers and that of other rivers that intense work lasted for several years[.]

Farmers' work is now prosperous I was reading that information in my [newspaper]

l'Humanité.

At the same time the Chinese Communist Party started to create a modern industry in order to meet the national needs and to become independent from international capitalists[.] It was a fantastic adventure the Party launched a campaign so that farmers in every village created dozens and hundred of thousands of small handcrafted foundries producing cast iron and steel in sufficient quantities to meet the needs [of the country][9] in the absence of a modern steelmaking industry that must now exist, because I know that Chinese workers are relentlessly working in order to catch up with and overtake Western capitalist regimes.

Those who will read these lines will understand my my [repetition original to the document] admiration for the Chinese people and its Communist Party.

After Mao's death, the wrongdoings of the Gang of Four took place the Party had to take sanctions including Mao's widow who was led astray. The Cultural Revolution with its ethical mockeries, its contradictory slogans hurt the people and the Party.

Nowadays the situation is stable the people and its Party can move forward with confidence and certainty towards Socialism. The Party and the government are now coming out of their isolation if I may say so they are opening up to Western democracies and more specifically to sister parties it is a very good thing which I am very happy about and which is a good sign for the future.

I am coming to the end of this letter I wholeheartedly wish that the delegation makes an excellent return trip to its motherland and comes back pleased with its trip to France. Pleased also with the brotherly relationships it has had during its visit with local and national representatives of our Party, that these [brotherly relationships] are renewed and deepened in the common interest of our countries, [of] our parties[,] of Socialism.

I must express my gratitude and the great friendship that I have for our comrade Henri[10] Chassaing he personally came to fetch me among the crowd in order to introduce me to the delegation which allowed me to express in person the warm sentiments that I feel towards the Chinese people and its Party.

Dear Comrade Antoine Gomez I am very obliged and grateful that you invited me to that event[.] I am sure that you will complete the tasks which you will have to face with honour and success for our Party's greatness.

I greet you cordially

André Martinez

Twice veteran of the C.G.T.[11] since 1912 my first card still a trade union member and a Party member since January 15, 1921[12] I could not join before I was in uniform for three years.

[1] Translator's note: Fragment unclear in the original document, this is the most likely meaning.

[2] Translator's note: For reference purposes, Sun Yat-sen.

[3] Translator's note: For reference purposes, Chiang Kai-shek.

[4] Translator's note: For reference purposes, Mao Zedong.

[5] Translator's note: The Long March started on October 15, 1934 and ended on October 19, 1935. The figure is barely legible in the original document but definitely does not look like a 1.

[6] Translator's note: For reference purposes, Taiwan.

[7] Translator's note: Misspelt in the original document.

[8]

[9]

[10] Translator's note: Name barely legible.

[11] Translator's note: General Confederation of Labour (or Confédération générale du travail).

[12] Translator's note: Not easily legible, could be 1927.