

# From Guy Debord to the members of the French section of the SI 15 October 1969<sup>1</sup>

## *On the functioning of the French section after October 1969*

I – To elevate the French section to the level of cohesion that the other sections demonstrated in Venice,<sup>2</sup> it will not suffice to banish – and sanction, cf. Alain<sup>3</sup> – all the possible consequences of the casualness that installed itself in January-June [1969]. This casualness can only exist as a product of a more profound deficiency.

II – Not only is there more equality in participation in debates and writing in the other sections, but one can also see in them more actual interest in our theory and its use: there is more personal activity, more *reading*, more *ideas*. The French section appeared to be resting on their historical laurels, not only those of 1968, but almost those of 1957. Nearly no one has continued to instruct himself on anything. Not one new idea was formulated in the meetings of this period (whereas the era has changed). These are the roots of the inertia that we must suppress, by as many exclusions as will be necessary. It is certain that three situs between whom relations are good will constitute a much better and efficacious section than seven or eight who collectively bore each other.

III – It is necessary that each meeting (every two weeks, for the moment) becomes a kind of “conference” of the section (working quickly and well), in which, from the beginning, *each member* intervenes by raising one or several general problems. It appears inevitable that each meeting will last much longer than previously, will convene twice: one session in the afternoon, and another in the evening. (If the problems haven’t been settled, to meet again automatically the next day.) A meeting that lasts around four hours is too short and is always dominated by too much minimal information: run-of-the-mill mail must be preliminarily sorted through by one or two comrades.

IV – It is necessary that, from the beginning of November, each member is almost permanently in Paris: that is to say, so as to attend all of the meetings, whatever their length, and to participate in all of their labors or partial encounters that have been accepted at the time of a meeting by the concerned comrades. As a general rule, it is no longer necessary to say to the SI that an external obligation prevents one from being present on a day a meeting is to be held; it is necessary to say to the external obligations that a more urgent obligation prevents any other engagement on those dates.

V – In cases where someone will be late to or absent from the execution of one of his engagements, and if the majority of the section does not want to admit that this member is

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<sup>2</sup> *Translator*: the VIIIth conference of the SI was held in Venice, Italy, between 26 September and 1 October 1969.

<sup>3</sup> Alain Chevalier [excluded on 3 October 1969].

excused by the precise circumstances, it must take formal action. If the absence happens again, exclusion is automatic.

VI – To begin on this basis, it appears useful that each member immediately write several specific notes (of ten to forty lines) on the conclusions that he draws from the Venice conference: its general meaning, what it engages us to do, and the principal desirable points of our next activity. Beyond this initial minimum [effort], it goes without saying that we can never raise too many theoretical or practical questions (in writing, if possible, but without empty phrases).

Adopted unanimously [by François de Beaulieu, Guy Debord, René Riesel, Christian Sébastiani and René Viénet] on 15 October [19]69, comrades [Patrick] Cheval and [Raoul] Vaneigem being absent *excused*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This last word was handwritten by Guy Debord.