

D24036
(H)

23 July 1980

Dear Ben,

Thanks for your letter. Not as newsy as Chanthou's, and full of instructions. I'm not sure what you want in terms of dates of Hu Nim's material. Presumably you know the three main notebooks, with their brown covers. Of the other stuff, there is one that goes from 22 to 29th April, the other stuff was incomplete, ie I copied the front pages to demonstrate what was in his folder, but that's all. As I sent my entire file to Cornell, here are some notes jotted down very rapidly at the NS. I dashed in because, having got your letter this morning I can have the supplement copies taken to Oxford at mid-day, for shipment on.

Don't worry about getting the Heder to me, as I will read it 'stateside'. I will also raise the matter there of the machines.

Now: please take your time and be patient. I can already detect a note of irritation in your letter, a bit like some of the ~~of~~ Oxfam reports. They don't and I can't know that you mean well, and are not looking for material to use against them and/or the Vietnamese. If you suspect them of being too suspicious of you, that will make you appear much more suspect, to them. A lot of this is a matter of vibes, but it really is felt. You have to be laid-back and patient, friendly and explain things. Furthermore, try and see the Vietnamese if you've not done so already, go to Hanoi etc. If you build up the trust to be able to go backwards and forwards, obtaining the few dossiers you need for your thesis will come naturally. Your political responsibility as a scholar is quite simple: to make sure that the people there are not isolated and blockaded.

Please read
this three times

I'm writing to Serge to check out Kaing Guek Iev. He is now embroiled in some argument in France over Chomsky. C was the target of one of the most appalling and vitriolic attacks I've ever seen, in Encounter, who also had a go at you! (Don't worry, it makes them look stupid fools) I presume that N.Obs have done a similar operation over there.

To have met Saloth Suong is astonishing!!! Please do a really sensitive interview, if you've not already, not on PP politics but on his childhood. We know very little of Hitler's childhood, for example. An extended and detailed illumination of PP's would be marvellous. Perhaps Chanthou should do it with you, as she has an ear for the family aspects of life which are closed to outsiders without long experience. Obviously, such an extended interview would be worthwhile and would get translated.

I have to stop now, but will write again soon. Thank you very much for your letter,

A.

22 08 00

Dear Chanthou,

Many thanks for your witty letter, so warm and informative. I wonder what your own feelings are. I almost felt like getting up and coming to join you both. Alas, instead we go to America, where at the moment it is apparently as hot as Kampuchea! In London the summer is terrible.

It was Bum Rong who told me that Sovannarong had gone to Thailand. Perhaps he is wrong in more ways than one! If so, could that mean he was not well informed about your own family? You ~~xxx~~ seem to have relatives popping up everywhere.

There have been all sorts of minor scandals in Oxfam. Pilger has ~~x~~ been storming around in a fury about them. ~~But~~ It is really little more than the 'British disease' in a hot climate: petty hypocrisy and incompetence leading eventually to the brink of total fuck-up. (There are now 1,900,000 unemployed in the UK.)

What else can I report? ^Tamara is thriving, and Judith was thrilled to read your letter, and much less enthusiastic than I about Ben's demand for two photocopying machines! I am working away ~~rather~~ rather slowly.

But I want to know everything about what you are doing, what the food is like, your safety, all the details. You might even try writing a letter to me directly, with the new Kampuchean stamps. That will tell us whether the GPO here 'recognizes' Phnom Penh.

I will write again soon, and enclose some photos ~~if~~ but that can't be for this post, which must leave now, as I've explained in my note to Ben,

I embrace you both,

Ante

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