

April 27, 1971

Dear Joe and Barry;

After we left you Joe at the airport, Manon and I went down to the Gare du Nord to check out the trains to Zurich and send George I wire as to when she would arrive. We found a train was going through in ten minutes so Manon hopped right on. She is due back on the 6th from Lausanne—if she get here in time we will both go out to Ghent to see the comrades there and also hear Ernest at the university there. With you both went the good weather. According to the Times we are right now suffering the coldest late April weather in history—not so bad as it might sound sh'. for the next line says that history starts at 1940 for the London weather center. I woke up last night and had to put another blanket on.

I went to Tariq's meeting that evening. An interesting little experience. It got a big billing in April 23 La Gauche—half of page 3. I met Tariq and Vergat at the office at 7 to go out to the ~~Union des Communistes~~ hall with them. Apparently it was all settled that a couple of the comrades would come down and pick us up. When no one showed by 7:45 we took a taxi. Meeting was billed to start at 8. We arrived at about 8:10 and there were about 10 people. Tariq brought over some new stuff they have run off their press so I scrounged the office of other English language material which I took out with me and set up a literature stand. I figured that it might attract some English reading people. I priced everything at 10 BF. ..and sold 20 pieces of literature. That was all the literature sold there aside from a few copies of La Gauche which were peddled. The two fellows who were operating the bookstalls were there but they brought no literature with them. Vergat all this time was extremely cranky about the Belgians—failure to pick us up, no literature, lateness of meeting, size of the hall (would probably hold about 500 plus a balcony. The meeting finally got underway by 8:45 and by about 9:20 there were about 90 to 100 in attendance. The few comrades that I have seen in Bruxelles were there and they brought comrades in from both Ghent and Louvain. It was a pretty boring meeting—I had one hell of a time keeping awake. I find Tariq quite an uninteresting speaker and of course he was further deadened by having to be translated --although he had the top flite aid of Charlier. All his usual open ended formulations --comrade Mao--of course he exposed the Chinese regime's support of Pakistan but in a very English Oxford style. Surprisingly there were a couple of Maoists in the audience who challenged Tariq in the discussion period--of course he took them on. None of the Belgians offered to take the literature stand so I handled it both before and after the meeting. Through it I got to have a big of a discussion with a fellow who spoke excellent English--he struck me as quite interested in our ideas but but not really acquainted with them. I tried to turn him over to Vergat who didn't seem interested in following him up. After the meeting he came up to the table and ~~asked me~~ told me he had a car and would drive me home if I wanted. I had earlier asked Ernest if he would give me a lift but Gisela was not there--so I had the fellow drive us all home. It turns out that this fellow (about 20 yrs old) is the son of a Belgian diplomat learned English when his old man was posted in Burma I think it was and had lived in Peru and elsewhere. Hates Bruxelles. Ernest is immediately on the defensive to mine and Tariq's amusement. It turns out that this goddam town is really racist. He said that in lots of apartments and restaurants there are actually signs saying they don't want the patronage of foreigners. I told him he should pull some of this information together and take it to the JGS who I am sure would like to do something about it. The guy doesn't know anything about our ideas so we start

suggest some reading material that he can pick up at the bookstore. It was astonishing to hear what Ernest was suggesting to him--Revolution Betrayed etc etc. I started to suggest and then I realized that actually is all that selection of material at the bookstore they have goddam little that is of a good introductory character to our ideas. As Nanon noted--not a thing on women's liberation. ..tning comparable to the trial pamphlets, Peter's speeches, George's writings. After we dumped Tariq and Ernest I took him around and gave him a couple of duplicate copies we have here of the ISR.

When we came to leave the hdtrs to go to the meeting Tariq picks up the several bags he brought. I expressed some surprise that he wasn't using the facilities there and suggested that he come up and stay with me. Oh he said he was going to stay at one of the coorades. It turns out he stays at Trent's. They all thought I was going to Britain for the weekend. When I turn up at the office on Friday and tell Vergast I am not--he tells me that the bureau meeting has been changed from Wednesday to Tuesday--- I would certainly have missed it if I had gone to England. At the bureau meeting Gisela informs us about the lecture she gave in London and about the demo on the 24th there. She thought I was going to London--way wouldn't she have offered to go along with me. All very strange.

Well I did not go to London--for one thing one of the parcels of books came in and I must do some of the work that I promised the Com diems I would do when over here--after all that was part of the deal. And as you know with all the meetings here I have hardly done anything at all on this. I've got about one week that's clear ahead of me

Today was the bureau meeting. Jean Pierre came in with Pierre so there was six of us--but it wasn't the more valuable for that. First off a bit of a round up of April 24. The U.S. -front knows all about it from the Herald Tribune. Prisco a big success because of the unions--~~Washington~~ Washington--no unions, smaller than November. They are watching every move of the Vietnamese. It appears that they have announced some good moves as to how they will employ their forces against US forces in order to deepen anti-war sentiment amongst them. Ernest speculates about possible moves the Chinese may make to work out a settlement --he is utterly convinced that the Vietnamese won't compromise--they have been "welded to the gun". Gisela I gather wasn't actually on the London march but she says there were 2,000--apparently the IS came in as individuals. In Paris there were 3,000 which they seemed to think was quite good as there was no meeting to arrange it for some reason until the Monday of that week. Here or under Ceylon somehow the latest issue of the Militant came up. Vergast made a jab about how at last you had tanked up Tariq's book. Not true I said you had already commented on it in the ISR I think. But with comments like this--and the Mike Mill report you positively feel that you are sitting on top of a vast pool of cafe gossip and grievances. We are certainly paying a price here in Europe for the lack of continuity of cadre. So I didn't say anything about Bale Tempo when Ernest commented that the past few weeks has caused him to change his judgment of Bale as a politician in a positive way--the only mistake he having made ~~his~~ giving guns to Australia. I didn't say anything about a leader who doesn't have anything under him when others can develop a mass movement such as the JVP appears to be--who isn't hardly aware of its existence until the government commences to attack it as a threat to its authority. All I did was to suggest that we may not be heading for a show-down in Ceylon with the CMU etc., that such a policy could smash Mrs B's very useful coalition--that the economic crisis in Ceylon itself is a very small matter for the powerful list of allies she now has to solve and keep Ceylon as a stable basis for operations against any threats that may well develop in India. Vergast had some talks with Le Monde and they let him look over the wire service material. It seems that a slew of papers have been officially banned. One PROTEST V, thought was ours but I said it was Healy's. There was no mention of a ban on our press

series of bits and snatches--It appears that we have come across an article from the Czech press that attempts to make an assessment of the 4th--from seeing it at the Bruxelles assembly and the Pentonville operation. The Spanish are widening out and held a street demo of some 300 in Barcelona--report in one of the French papers--they seek financial aid so there is going to be a very limited appeal directed primarily to Spaniards in European countries. Of course we are turning up some Bengali in England. Gisela gave a eulogistic report of development of the IMG. Big discussion about how V should go about preparing the Arab document for the IMG--obviously Ernest is worried that it won't be ready in time. Luxembourg comrades heavily involved in a high school students struggle--and so it went.

While V mentioned the Paris book review nothing was said about Pat's item on kidnapping in the same issue. Good to see the coverage in the French women's protest--and interesting to see how Rouge dealt with the question without actually mentioning that inspiring protest. I hear that you are sending a whole gang over for the Commune and IC congress. I have more or less committed Manon to France from May 15th on and I see now I will have to ask the Belgians to move the meeting they propose to arrange for her at Lee d'Espaigne back around the 3rd or 4th of May so she can go over to England for several days. She has to leave right after the IC congress. Ernest raised the question of her speaking in England--I told him I speak much better English and while I may not sense the nuances as qualified as her to speak on Quebec if that is what they want--You know I have offered to speak in England on both recent occasions but never have I been taken up. I had a discussion on the general situation in Britain on the way back and to the restaurant. The several discussions that I have had with him are quite astonishing--first they are arguments quite tense--and he rapidly sinks to a very low level of cheap debating tricks. Truly astonishing when you consider the calibre of many of his writings. As a politician it strikes me that Livio runs circles around him--as a politician even on the small scale. And a real one man band. As you know they are projecting a 4 day school right before the IMG meeting. So Ma raises the matter of the SA speaking tour and its dates. . .and what it may do to the school and the IMG. Do you know the school pivots entirely around him--I can only gather from what he said that this 4 day session as the Swedish one several weeks ago is all him and no one else. Oh yes the commune affair. Paris estimates 10,000. IC is coming in behind it but not mobilizing its outside Paris supporters. Of course all Europe will come but they don't seem to be organizing it much--big hassle between E and G whether Belgium is arranging a couple of busses or not--G says no. England estimates only 100--apparently the cost is higher than the Bruxelles project. They have arranged for bed-roll space for 3 to 4,000. Haven't got the IC documents yet but V assured me that they will be coming in the mail to 225 anyday now. Send sample copies of any Red Power material you have--this person appears to be a specialist in the field

Waltraud Wagner, 4351, Herneburg

~~West Germany~~

I think it would be good to arrange a big Pathfinder display for the Commune and the IC congress. I doubt that Pathfinder should sell--Red Books would hardly miff that ball--but a big display of Pathfinder and the Militant and ISR would be good in my opinion.

Alan phoned--they had a good holiday. I told them that all the Br documents were out. I managed to read them all thoroughly over the weekend so we can have a useful discussion when Manon and I go over. Will attend the IMG NC meeting according to the minutes Al received. According to Gisela the Liaison Committee (trade union) that I was talking about attending if I went to London was so tightly controlled by the CP that our comrades were unable to play any role whatsoever.

next is another bureau meeting then the JGS conference here.

comradely Rose