

March 7, 1970

Montreal;

Dear Art;

I have come to a very firm conclusion that central heating is one of the greatest achievements of mankind—if not the greatest. I haven't really been warm since I came here. And yesterday morning I awoke to find about 5 inches of snow although Gisela assured me a few days earlier that the snap would momentarily end. But it isn't the snow or the lowness of the temperature. I see from the Herald Tribune that you have plenty of that in Montreal--that students have recently been marooned in schools and the daily press has been forced to skip whole issues as the paper can't be delivered etc. Here it is a matter of my being unable to come in out of the cold. The apartment here is heated by a little stove that circulates water through the radiators. But the stove is nothing but a version of a Quebec heater. It costs a lot to operate (you have to buy little bags of coal and wood) but it seems senseless to heat the apartment up even when you can manage to cut off two rooms without too much fear of having the radiators freeze and then flood the place.

I am managing to keep the center well informed of my life and times here and what I can gather of political developments in between writing up material for the Militant and LC and if useful La Lutte. But there are a couple of matters that I should address to you.

I was incensed at the March 2 meeting of the bureau when Pierre went over the material for QI that even now they are not planning to carry the Quebec material. Obviously it is political but Pierre with some little embarrassment tries to turn it aside --he doesn't have the document. But I insist that Alain K has it and probably Ernest. The latter affirms this and puts Pierre back on the hook so to speak. Well the other day Ernest told me he only has the English. I was in Paris but was unable to see Krivine--although I left a note for him in his mail box. At any rate I think that we should push Pierre to the wall by your immediately mailing to him personally at the QI address a copy of the document in French. Although they share the same office from where I see it Pierre makes out that it is not practical to expect to get the document from Krivine. We easily handled you should send it off right away so there is no excuse. I think it is more important than the question itself. I raise the status of the Canadian movement in the eyes of the French comrades--which is very important. And of course the status of the international minority.

Are you getting Rouge? It is a standing joke--when I told Ernest that I wanted a sub he laughed that even if you pay for it it is doubtful that you will get it on a regular basis--when he learned I was going to Paris he asked me to pick up two recent issues that he had never received.

If you are, possibly you haven't yet got the March 1 issue. I think they give a big coverage of the big action they plan in commemoration of the Paris Commune. ...probably to be held on the 15th and 16th of May. I am wondering if it is possible for say Manon to come over for that affair. It would be a good experience. When I checked out Icelandica on the basis of a one way fare or regular 6 months, when you count the cost of going and coming from NY it is no saving --but their excursion or 45 day fares are really cheap. For instance me fare here return was \$213--45 days. Why should I not use the return in my case it is as cheap as regular Can.

Incidentally I have written the center that we should consider holding cross Canada celebrations of the centenary of the communists.

I that same issue you will notice a rather vague statement on a split in the Ligue. I wrote up some of the details in my draft of the U.S. minutes but I see that Ernest cut them out. There is an internal bulletin on this but it is before the split--Pierre is supposed to write up something taking up some of the material from the bulletin with supplementary comments.

The split is quite sizeable. Vergeat thinks that it is good as it is composed of the elements that opposed the coming into the FI and is generally Maoist-spontaneist. But you cannot overlook the fact that it is primarily the youth--according to Sandor--half the university youth and 1/3 the high school youth. ~~For some time now the group has been largely Paris based--about 250 all told. A group in Rouen but a more important group in Marseilles--possibly 60. Possibly its greatest significance is not French but its connections in Italy--with our ex comrade Illario. This means a big lift for his spontaneist group in Milan where we have not been able to pull together more than a handful and even worse carries him forward into other areas in Italy. A really serious situation for the Italian section. What the withdrawal of this current from Rouge means for the subsequent development of La Ligue along orthodox Trotskyist lines is not yet clear--but I would think that it spells good as Vergeat and the split took place on the weekend following the big student high school upsurge. I do not know how to read that in the light of their influence in our high school circles.~~ It is largely Paris based--about 250 all told. A group in Rouen but a more important group in Marseilles--possibly 60. Possibly its greatest significance is not French but its connections in Italy--with our ex comrade Illario. This means a big lift for his spontaneist group in Milan where we have not been able to pull together more than a handful and even worse carries him forward into other areas in Italy. A really serious situation for the Italian section. What the withdrawal of this current from Rouge means for the subsequent development of La Ligue along orthodox Trotskyist lines is not yet clear--but I would think that it spells good as Vergeat and the split took place on the weekend following the big student high school upsurge. I do not know how to read that in the light of their influence in our high school circles.

There was a small item about the accidental death of Chartrand's daughter in the Paris press. Hope that this doesn't setback her and his wife's participation in the defense work.

Drop me a line when you have the opportunity

fraternally

Ross