

Xs: M-A, Jack, Joe, Gus ✓ 7/2/78

Dear M-A:

When Alan Wald returned from Europe after interviewing several people, I asked him for more details about Broué and Molinier, which he supplied in this June 28 letter to me. (I didn't ask him about European views on our theoretical magazine, but that will interest you too.)

When you make ~~copy~~ copies of this letter, will you please keep them to the minimum? Because of possible damage to Broué if a copy gets into the wrong hands, I wouldn't like for us to have responsibility for such a mishap.

After copying, will you please put the original in an envelope marked "Naomi" + leave it on her desk in Pathfinder (sealed)? Thanks/OB

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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June 28, 1978

Dear George,

This is in response to your letter of June 23. The 1934 Militant excerpt on Wheelwright is helpful (I found a carbon of the letter in his papers, but didn't know what it was for) and I will write to Dick Fraser today.

Last night Phyllis Jacobson phoned me from NYC to settle the matter of the New Politics piece. We reached an agreement that it would be called something like "Trotsky and the Intellectuals" and that I would try to give an overview of Trotsky's influence in the U.S. and in Europe on writers during the 30s. In order to prepare this, I will be carefully going through all the <sup>file papers</sup> tapes during the summer, and so I will be able to send you summaries and important excerpts. From this it may be possible to decide if any are worth making copies of and sending to you.

When I arrived in Paris I found a letter from Broué asking to meet with me on May 19 or 20, when he planned to be in town for a gathering of the Trotsky Institute. He said in the letter that he had little more information that he could give me in connection with my work, but that he wanted to talk anyway. Prager also was interested in having me meet Broué (I think there is some personal connection there) and suggested that I stop by the publishing house just prior to the Trotsky Institute meeting so that I could set up a time and also meet some of the other people involved (Marguerite Bonnet, Dreyfuss, etc.). Again, Broué was extremely friendly and we arranged to meet at the same office the following morning.

Broué is a very impressive fellow--alert, forthright, energetic. He speaks with confidence, although his English is not perfect and he will occasionally switch back into French in mid-sentence if he wants to carry out his thought process without stumbling for words. He appears to be only about 40, but from his length of time in the movement he is probably older.

He began by talking about certain similarities in the work we are doing--even though he has no special interest in literature or intellectuals, he also has done much traveling and interview<sup>ing</sup> of people who have left the movement. He told me a few anecdotes--about ex-Trotskyists who were now part of various bourgeois administrations--and asked about some of the people I had seen. He showed a special interest in Anita Brenner and said that he had uncovered evidence that she had played an important role in getting Trotsky asylum in Mexico. (He referred to a telegram which I believe he said he had recently identified as being sent by Brenner; from this he seemed to conclude that she had some serious attachment to the Trotskyist movement, although I couldn't quite see his point and said that she should be regarded more as a type like Solow, although she may not have <sup>become</sup> totally deradicalized.) Broué also emphasized the extreme importance of locating Jan Frankel.

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(By the way, I forgot to mention earlier that Phyllis Jacobson said that she thought she could learn what happened to Frankel through her connections, and that she will get back to me on it. [The Jacobsons were, I take it, members of the WP.] She also said that I would be able to get hold of Natie Gould through the Women's section of ORT--Organization for Rehabilitation through Training. She said that this is a Jewish organization in lower Manhattan where Gould works, although he lives outside of the city. She gave me the impression that Gould was a rather odd character--that he always had a strange look in his eye, and a "macho" self-concept which blossomed when he joined Merrill's Marauders in WWII. In Paris, Mandel asked me specifically about Gould. He recalled Gould as having seemed "brilliant" when he stayed at Mandel's father's place in the late 30s.)

Next Broué began talking about the importance of the Trotsky Institute--things you probably already know. He said that even though they regard the Pathfinder series as trailblazing, they intend to do something on a much grander scale. They project as many as 50 volumes, and intend to have long critical introductions, a more comprehensive scholarly apparatus, and to include items which have only recently been uncovered (or which will be made available when the Trotsky papers are opened--I believe that Broué himself expects to go to Harvard for a period of time).

He also emphasized the importance of the Trotsky Institute as a vehicle for collaboration between the OCI and LCR. (I could be wrong, but I have the impression that he sees it only as an instrument for bringing those two parties together and that he regards all the other figures involved as being within the periphery of those two groups, and not representing any broader forces. I'm not saying that Broué wants it this way, but I have the impression that he was trying to tell me that, realistically, this is essentially what the Institute is about at present. I think he said that Bonnet, although no longer a member of the LCR, represents the LCR forces. [He made a point of telling me that Bonnet is Prager's former wife; Prager is now married to her sister.] I got the impression that the owner of the publishing house is personal friends with Broué--perhaps a Trotskyist sympathizer who wants to see "unity"--and that the librarian Dreyfuss, although he once split from the LCR with a faction opposed to the FI, is now also close to Broué.)

This led to Broué's presenting his view that the OCI should be inside the FI. He was very firm about this, and spoke with great anguish about how terrible the 1953 split had been. In the process of this he talked--perhaps in answer to my questions--a great deal about his personal political history. He described how he had joined the CP during WWII, but had grown disillusioned with the way they carried out their resistance work. This led to his reading Trotsky and discovering he was a Trotskyist. He then described how in 1953 Pablo and Mandel had come to a central committee meeting of the French section, and ordered certain individuals to go into the CP. With

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much emotion he talked about the period of the split and the aftermath, the isolation, etc.--I believe he said that these were the worst or most difficult years of his life. He also insisted that the entryist policy had reduced the IS group down to 15 people in a very short time, while the OCI group, originally smaller, declined at first but then began to grow again.

Nevertheless, Broué said, today both parties should be together in the FI. I don't believe he ever gave me the precise political reasons for thinking this, but he made a big point about the sympathy he has always felt for the SWP. He said that during the 60s when his party "officially" regarded the Workers League as the American Trotskyist group and characterized the SWP as Pabloite, he was in a minority by not sharing this opinion. (He did not make it clear whether this was an organized minority.) He said that whenever he has dealings with the SWP--reading its publications and talking politics with its members--he feels like he's still in his own party. (However, it's possible that Broué did criticize the SWP for dropping its theoretical magazine. I must have heard this point from a dozen people--the ISR as presently constituted isn't recognized as a theoretical magazine--and I'm fairly certain that Broué was one of them. This would fit in with a point that he also made here in regard to there having been some sort of struggle in the OCI in regard to his intellectual work. He said that for several years "certain people" in his party had been opposed to his devoting time to research and writing because he was needed for the organization's political leadership. However, now the situation has finally been resolved and he has been "freed up" for theoretical work. He emphasized, however, that there had been a protracted struggle on this matter and implied that certain important comrades did not recognize the value of this work, and had insisted that he maintain heavy political responsibilities even though the OCI is quite strong in his particular region of the country.)

After making these two criticisms of the OCI--the error about the WL and the resistance to his research--he said that his party "has some of the features of a sect." He gave the impression that there might be some benefit gained from interaction with the LCR, which he characterized as being a very different kind of organization than his--an organization which, unlike the SWP and OCI, did not seem like his "home."

However, he then proceeded to lambast the LCR and USEC for its view of Stalinism. He said that Mandel was making the same errors as Pablo in his critique of Eurocommunism; he said that he was "embarrassed" by the positions taken by LCR members in a symposium on Stalinism in which he participated at Grenoble; he even said that Pierre Rousset and Weber were "not Trotskyist." He made these points with much vehemence--perhaps even banging his fist on the table--and I could see that it might be difficult to have a calm discussion with him over these matters.

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The discussion ended on a very friendly note, though. He repeatedly talked about how useful he found the writing I had done in terms of identifying and situating figures who had connections with Trotskyism in the U.S.; he also said that virtually nothing was known in Europe about the influence of Trotsky on American intellectuals, etc., and that he had ordered a copy of the Farrell book. He also urged me to collaborate with Gerard Roche--the fellow who wrote you at Pathfinder--although he wasn't clear as to whether Roche is in his organization.

On several occasions I heard people (Prager, London, Jordan, etc.) refer to Broué and the OCI. I believe that almost all of them said that Broué was distinctly different from the others in the organization. Someone may have even said that Broué had had a conflict with Lambert personally and that he had been "removed" from the Central Committee--although I'm sure that Broué gave me the impression that he had wanted to be "freed up" for his research. I gather that there is a wide range of attitudes in the LCR regarding the OCI. Most see the OCI as rather "bizarre"--taking strange positions and doing strange things (such as not participating in May Day parades, I think). However, some are open to the possibility of close collaboration and others regard the OCI ~~as~~ with extreme hostility--as almost "fascist-like"--and claim that the OCI has used violence against them in taking over meetings, etc.

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Molinier now lives in Paris and is, I believe, a rank and file member of the LCR. (I think I heard a story about a young wife of his having been killed a year ago in Latin America, which may have been part of the reason for his return to France.) He was in the FI center when Prager and I went down to examine the IEC minutes--that's why I didn't have my tape recorder with me. He seemed to be hanging around and I have the impression that he comes around quite often and that he is generally ignored. He is a rather distinguished looking fellow--he wears a tie, is heavysset for a Frenchman, and sports a goatee. I believe he said that Sherry translated for Cannon when Cannon came to discuss unity in 1938 (I can confirm this when I listen to my tape of Prager, because he discussed this as well) but he mainly talked about how he had known Sherry in 1941 in Argentina. He had witnessed Sherry's efforts to unify the different Trotskyist groups, and I think he said (this was all in very fast French) that he was present at the conference where this unity occurred. He also remembered that the mysterious Kurt Steinfeld had been present and had played a role in all this. The fellow certainly seemed friendly and anxious to talk, but I was unprepared and in the process of doing something else; Nat London or someone ought to sit him down in front of a tape recorder.

Enclosed are copies of some of the items that Prager and I found in the IEC Minutes. They mostly consist of the texts of oral reports and discussions in which Patrice participated. I have some more of this material which I'll get you as I xerox it.

Comradely,

Al