

Letter from Guy Debord to Michel Prigent

26 January 1981¹

Dear Michel:

Here [at this address] I found your letters from 19 November and 22 December [1980]. As you have understood, *ce sont toujours les mêmes qui sont dans les mêmes coup!*

Our campaign in Spain² has already had an astonishing success (see attached article).³ These comrades from the Autonomous Group of Madrid, who were acquitted due to “lack of proof” – since a jury in Spain had not yet been impaneled, a political step backwards for power, although it is much more rare, is also much more easily executed than in English jurisprudence – are precisely the most “guilty”; they themselves had *proclaimed* what they had done and why. The police had even seized all of the material at the printer, even the heaviest and the most complete equipment, which they had purchased at great cost with money taken from banks.

Nevertheless, there remain in the prison in Segovia twelve or fifteen members of the Autonomous Groups of Barcelona and Valencia: all condemned to seven years (the *fiscal*⁴ had at first asked for between fifteen and twenty years), but especially the three workers from Barcelona – G. Botifoll Gómez, J. Hernández Tapia and M. Nogales Toro – who were each condemned to around twenty-five years, at the beginning of July 1980, before we started to

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² *Translator*: see Debord’s open letter “To Libertarians,” which called for actions to be taken to facilitate the immediate release of the libertarian prisoners in Spain’s jails.

³ “Anarquistas absueltos por falta de pruebas,” *El Pais*, 27 November 1980, which is translated [from Spanish into French] here:

Anarchists acquitted due to lack of evidence.

The indicted anarchists Antonio and Virginia Cativiela Alfox, José Luis Martín Díez, Máximo Casas González, Luis Guillardini González and Guillermo González García, for whom the prosecutor asked for a total of 115 years of prison, accused of a certain number of *hold-ups* and attacks using explosives, were acquitted by the National Court due to lack of evidence.

The ruling made clear that “the tribunal regards as well-founded the suspicions according to which someone among those indicted could have taken part in the deeds that were imputed to them, but considers that, for a court of law to pronounce a guilty verdict, it was necessary that, beforehand, in an obligatory and indispensable manner, the prosecution would be able in the course of the trial to submit to the court sufficient evidence that would give it, in its soul and its conscience, a complete and absolute certainty that the accused had indeed a veritable and real participation in these deeds.”

⁴ The prosecutor.

intervene. Thus, the prison in Segovia is still full and “then it is not too late for this kind of thing.”⁵ Let us continue to make historic publicity for that pretty little city!

Thank you for your rapid intervention. When you have made the English translation, send me several copies. The French version⁶ is in reality the original version, but not the first one to be published. It was written in a deliberately Spanish spirit and style.

It is a very good idea to record an English-language disk that translates the songs. Here, we are going to try to record a disk in Spanish, to be introduced into Spain on “cassettes,” thus using the technique of the protesters of the East. We only lack a Spanish singer. (I will soon send you several new songs.)

I suggest that you add something like a “*Song*⁷ of the British Internationalists active in the Iberian Region,” be détourning the song of the “Lincoln Battalion”⁸ as sung by [Woody] Guthrie to the melody of “Red River Valley.”⁹

I regret that I did not see you around Christmas, but I have not been to Paris in two years: the town is too dead, and I am too well known in it. By contrast, I find Spain to be very lively, but there as well I fear I will very soon be almost as celebrated as I am in Italy.

It is beautiful to see, in Poland, the revolutionary birth, leading to “the decline and fall,”¹⁰ of a unionism in which Walesa, the Pope and the Polish Party¹¹ gather together to negotiate with Brezhnev concerning sales to them and guarantee the workers. Nevertheless, the slowness of the necessary Russian intervention proves that the bureaucrats are beginning to greatly fear the workers in Russia, because they cannot be impressed by Carter or Reagan. In Portugal, one had already discerned this strange slowness of the counter-revolution, which is typical of the decomposed state of the existing order.

I will be in Arles at the address indicated above, until May. In any case, mail sent to Champ Libre will always follow me.

Best wishes,
Guy

⁵ *Translator*: English in original.

⁶ “To libertarians.”

⁷ *Translator*: English in original.

⁸ Battalion of American volunteers in the International Brigades of 1936. [*Translator*: the song in question is actually titled “Jarama Valley.”]

⁹ *Translator*: English in original.

¹⁰ *Translator*: English in original.

¹¹ Lech Walesa, leader of the Solidarity union, the Polish Pope Jean-Paul II and Stanislas Kania, First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party, respectively.