

Guy Debord
Letter to Hervé Falcou
23 February 1953¹

Monday morning
My dear Hervé

I'm leaving Paris this evening, with the intention of spending 3-4 months in Cannes in order to recover from a certain moral-physical exhaustion to which all the recent events have led me. I hope that things are going better for you.

In the meantime, and basing myself on our most recent conversations and your letter, I have placed your signature on our leaflet,² copies of which I will send to you as soon as possible.

Of the 12 signatories,³ two are in prison, two under-age girls are wanted [by the authorities], another is out on bail for drug trafficking, [Jean-Louis] Bra and his wife are traveling near Algiers – with the result that, in case of highly improbable trouble with the police, everyone can disavow his or her signature, which had been placed there without prior consultation, and only taking account of a general participation in the modern spirit.

The people responsible are Jean-Michel Mension, [Gil J] Wolman and myself.

I believe that this leaflet is very good, as an indication of a stage (transitional, by the way) in our intellectual agitation.

If you want to make contact with the lettrists who are stationed in Paris at the moment, you know where to find them. But I believe that all of this action will be dormant for a while, and I have told them that you were traveling, trying to recover from your famous fall in Austria.

I hope that we will see each other this summer (I will return around June, and perhaps I will spend the holidays in Cannes, but only if it is with certain people and not with my parents).

I'd like it if you could write me, if you have the strength – Villa Meteko, avenue Isola-Bella, Cannes.

I know that I will have a lot of *empty* time down there, but it seems to me that this is necessary. I am close to a total collapse, mainly nervous exhaustion. The uninterrupted drinking and various other diversions have complicated the metaphysical difficulties that are always singularly aggravated.

But it seems to me – not at all times – that we are not ready for suicide, and there is a multitude of things to do, if we surpass certain obstacles AND WITHOUT RENOUNCING ANYTHING of the contempt or the refusal that we have sincerely affirmed with respect to almost everything.

We have been *enfants terribles* [wild children]. If we reach “manhood,” we will be dangerous men.

¹ Published in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol “0”: Septembre 1951-Juillet 1957: Complété des “lettres retrouvées” et de l’index général des noms cités* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 2010). Translated by Bill Brown, 28 January 2025.

² Lettrist International, “Manifeste,” *Internationale lettriste*, no. 2 (February 1953).

³ Sarah Abouaf, Serge Berna, P.J. Berlé, Jean-L. Brau, (René) Leibé, Midhou Dahou, Guy-Ernest Debord, Linda (Fryde), Françoise Lejare, Jean-Michel Mension, Éliane Pápaï, and Gil J Wolman.

I passed by the Mirabeau Bridge this morning. The prestige of Guillaume⁴ fares a bit like this running water (he still has some), but I remember finding you one day on this bridge, which is also entitled to claim a new historical youth.

“We were those cheerful terrorists,” right?⁵ Yesterday I happened to read *la Prose du Transsibérien* in a book by Cendrars⁶ and it is still very beautiful – but in the manner of Bichet.⁷

The other day a lettrist expedition prevented the screening at the so-called “Amis du Cinéma” film club of an “illettriste”⁸ pseudo-film called *Le Squelette sadique*⁹ (by someone calling himself René-Guy Babord). The uproar was very funny. We took the director hostage and forced him, under the threat of violence, to send back the cops that he’d called in.

So, comrade, I hope to read something from you in Cannes and in a future of collective struggles.

Very best wishes,
Guy

⁴ Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), the author of, among other things, a famous poem, “Le Pont Mirabeau,” which praises the new bridge constructed in 1893 using modern construction techniques.

⁵ A reference to a line from André Breton, “Introduction,” in Jacques Vaché, *Lettres de guerre* (first published in 1919): “*Nous fûmes ces gais terroristes, sentimentaux à peine plus qu’il était de raison, des garnements qui promettent*” (We were those cheery terrorists, barely more sentimental than was reasonable, hoodlums who show promise).

⁶ Frédéric Louis Sauser, aka Blaise Cendrars (1887-1961), a French-Swiss writer. “*La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France*” (1913) is one of his best-known poems.

⁷ René Bichet (1887-1912), a French poet.

⁸ A combination of *lettriste* and *illettré* (illiterate).

⁹ *The Sadistic Skeleton*, a parody of the title of Guy-Ernest Debord’s film *Hurléments en faveur de Sade*.