

Ephrussi

June 11, 1948.

Dear Harriett,

I'm afraid you have overestimated my political perspicacity, in your letter of long ago, which should have been answered long since. I'm just a confused Democrat, sore at Truman for not being a wiser man than God made him, and at Wallace for having veered so far out of line as to destroy his own objectives. His apology of the Soviet, particularly since the Czech coup, has made him inadmissible, but his criticism of American policy is drawing enough strength from the liberal wing of the Democratic Party that it seems a foregone conclusion now that the Republicans can nominate anyone, and elect him.

We hear very little here (especially in Madison, Wisconsin) about the details of French Politics. I have a vague conception that Schuman will be hard put to justify German unification, but just what program (if any) his party can have adopted to the end of social justice is not very clear. The same can be said here at home, but the best that can be said for Truman is that he is still pulling, on most domestic issues, in what I would call the right direction.

Seymour Cohen has been back in the states now for some time, of course. We have been corresponding a bit over his work at Paris on uronate metabolism. It is a bit of a coincidence that with the backing of K. P. Link here in our Biochemistry Dept. I had been preparing to ascertain the accumulation of pentose from uronate in some xylose- and arabinose- negative mutants in K-12, and here is Cohen with a study of cross-adaptation between uronate and pentose in, of course, K-12.

The "permanent" lab here is still incomplete, lacking furniture, and Esther and I are still working in a basement corner, but getting somewhere nevertheless. In the past several months, I have been studying lactose-negative mutations as I may already have written you. There are near a dozen loci, quite distinct, mutation of any one of which incapacitates lactose splitting. Studies on the enzyme are still underway (Both Monod and I have had no difficulty in securing active extracts, and there is undoubtedly a simple hydrolytic enzyme). Until the rest of the equipment arrives, I have to confine myself to doing the genetic work, especially the tedious job of mapping each of the loci mentioned.

I wonder whether you hear anything of or from Boivin. Tatum and my studies on transformation of biochemical mutants in his C1-C2 strains have drawn a blank, but we wonder whether we have the right organisms since they deviate in some respects from his descriptions. However, we have had no reply to any of several letters addressed to him, and have wondered whether there were anything amiss with him personally.

The only other news around here, possibly is the arrival of David Green, who is heading an autonomous "Enzyme Institute" across the street from Genetics. He is supposed to have left P&S in order to get out of the Big City.

Give my best to Ephrussi, Monod, Lwoff etc. I'm sorry that I was a hair's breadth from after Lwoff in our visit East in the Spring.

Sincerely,