

I write these few lines to you from my cell on Parthenais Street. I cannot send this to you right away because I am in solitary confinement and contact with the outside world is prohibited. I am a “prisoner of war”, in this war which no one declared, but whose proclamation allows the powers that be to deepen the repression which has been going on for a long time. I am behind bars without knowing why.

Those who are detaining me seem very afraid of me: they arrested me in the street at gun point, frisked me from head to toe many times, and confined me to a maximum security cell, which I have only been able to leave for a half hour over the 48 hours I have been here. I have not been able to let anyone know of my whereabouts, not even my wife, who has probably reported me as missing. They have not told me the reasons for my arrest: according to the War Measures Act, they need not justify it, I have no means by which to defend myself, I have lost all my rights.

I wonder if one of the goals of our incarceration is not just to ostracise us, but to stigmatize us for good as accomplices of the FLQ: the population will never believe they have locked us up for seven days on vague and mostly unfounded suspicions. People have an all too lofty view of justice to even recognize the mere possibility of such arbitrary arrests. In fact, I know many who must be rejoicing at the recurring and cleverly maintained confusion between the PQ and the FLQ. The Parti Quebecois is feared more and more, and they have already begun to try to shut it down.

Walks give me the opportunity to speak with Toupin, one of those sent to the dungeon. The dungeon is a cell, smaller than the one in which we are staying. The ceiling is low and a bright light shines 24 hours a day, and overheats the cell. There is only one piece of furniture, a metal bed on which is laid one-inch-thick felt mattress. Before bringing in a detainee, they are carefully frisked and relieved of any objects they may have, including cigarettes. Their shoes and belt are also taken (in case they may want to hang themselves.) No blankets, no sheets. They must use their hands to eat, because they are given no utensils. Every two hours, a guard passes by to hand out water to those who are thirsty, and to bring those who need to go to the toilet; where the guard stays facing the detained.