

Extract from **Internationale Situationniste at Context XXI**

(http://contextxxi.org/the-next-stage.html)

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# The Next Stage

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What is the most revolutionary element to make its appearance in the SI? The most revolutionary: that is to say the most in touch with the future. And what is the most critical point? To respond to this question, I shall analyze the SI's program as if I were speaking to a philosopher. What an audacious and absurd undertaking! I see the innovative element in the fact that we have begun to *better understand* the peculiarity of our 'being-in-the-world,' and to better understand the nature of our program: the consequences of the incompatibility of our program, as expression, with the available means of expression and reception.

What is the most embarrassing point in the SI's original program, the one that does most to prevent people from sleeping? Responding to this question in philosophical terms is clearly absurd. And yet, as contemporary philosophy is situated entirely within the theme of 'the abandoning of philosophy' (cf. *Thèses de Hambourg*), this occasions a certain surprise, and this surprise is recognized by all theoreticians of information as the condition of the transmission of a 'quantity of information.'

From the start, the situationist project was a revolutionary program. It was practical, quasi-political, objective, in favor of transforming of the world; and linked to the present real transformation, reified but general and inter-bureaucratic. On the other hand, this program was intersubjective, nourished by desire, by what is radically anti-alienating in the lives of everyone — a drink mixed by thirst. From the start, we

were conscious that the manager, the sociologist and the artist comprise a troika paid to make people believe that desires can be cannibalized, or that the energies of these desires can be converted into 'needs without ever having been desires.' We were equally conscious that a unique historical opportunity allowed the managers to expropriate to their own ends 'all the instruments by which a society thinks and sees itself.' Their effectiveness was multiplied by the underestimation of this power, nourished by the most diverse sources, and was due in part to the ignorance diffused by these very channels of spectacles and 'information.' In short: power enters into a direct grip on the system by which individuals communicate with themselves and with others (the responsibility of everyone in this system is recognized by everyone, except for power).

These elements existed in the SI from the start. Their classic content corresponded with Marx's classic criteria for revolutionary theory: don't let idealists exploit the subjective.

We are now involved in a transcendence of this classic stage. It is becoming clear that other movements — surrealism, Marxism, existentialism, etc. — dropped the chestnut when it got too hot for them (they cannot forget the old Hegelian philosophy, even if they have forgotten that the dialectic was originally the dialectic of the subjective and the objective). I see this transcendence, as I have said, in the fact that we have begun to better understand the peculiarity of our 'being-in-the-world,' the consequences of the incompatibility of our program, as expression, with the

available means of expression. And I would add that this is not only about 'our program,' that everyone participates automatically — for or against, but always in this 'infinitely complicated conflict between alienation and the struggle against alienation' (Lefebvre) — in the situationist program.

From the start of the discussions about the implications of the situationist program, we have posed claims in accordance with this program and we have proposed constructions. At the same time, we have recognized the 'chimerical,' 'utopian' character of some of these images and the 'manichean' character of some of these claims. Examples are easy enough to find in our published texts. In spite of this, the approach to this problem remains accidental and we insist on the legitimacy of the momentary utopia, on the revolutionary value of such claims, on the necessity of material means, or completely on the contrary, on the necessity, at a primitive stage, of 'thinking our ideas rigorously enough in common' (*Internationale Situationniste #2 [The Dark Turn Ahead]*).

I believe that though these remarks are accompanied by a certain embarrassment, they are profoundly just. And yet it is here that I see a step already taken in relation to the first programmatic stage, and the possibility of a great evolution to come.

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sich dort der *Situationistischen Internationale* an. Wurde aus dieser 1962 unter dem Vorwurf des "christlichen

Mystizismus" ausgeschlossen.  
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