

Extract from **Internationale Situationniste at Context XXI**<http://contextxxi.org/the-practice-of-theory.html>

extracted on: 19 September 2024

Date of this contribution: September 1969

The Practice of Theory

n REUBEN KEEHAN

(TRANSLATION) ■ KEN KNABB

(TRANSLATION) ■ POINT BLANK

(TRANSLATION) ■

SITUATIONISTISCHE

INTERNATIONALE

How the Delinquents Politicized

On several occasions in November and December of 1967, Debord, Vaneigem and Viénet were brought before the police judiciary in relation to a comic strip by Vaneigem, two images from which were published in I.S.#11. They agreed that they were effectively authors and editors of the journal, and that they were in charge of its publication and distribution. The prosecutors seemed to have a problem with some incitements to theft, debauchery, rioting and murder (of “rulers”), that people might garner from the words and actions of the characters in these brief comics. This rather new type of publishing offense promised an unusual legal process but, in the end, without us knowing why, the investigation established that there was not enough evidence prosecute those responsible.

Without going into whether or not the incitements in question had a more or less *sustained effect*, it should be pointed out that Vaneigem’s comics — translated, reissued and widely reproduced in several countries (notably England, the United States and Sweden) — have attained a remarkable posterity even in France, as all the experiments of our CMDO comrades were conducted in a similar manner. As a result, a number of comic strips

of revolutionary intent have been published by various autonomous groups. The theses explicated in this journal by René Viénet in 1967 [*The Situationists and the New Forms of Action Against Politics and Art*] have been completely confirmed by experiments with every agitational measure that he envisaged, with the momentary exception of the use of cinema.

What is a Situationist?

In view of the striking — though hardly very surprising — arousal of interest in the SI, we should at this point specify the meaning of the term ‘situationist’ when it is used to describe an individual, taking into account our constant development over the last two years.

In the first and most precise sense of the term, a situationist is a member of the SI, taking part in all the deliberations and decisions of this organization and thus personally assuming a general co-responsibility.

Furthermore, individuals can no doubt be called and even call themselves ‘situationist’ if they agree with our principal theoretical positions; or because their personal goals are close to our style of expression and of life; or simply because, through participating in the subversive struggle, they have found themselves crudely and superficially qualified as such by different observers.

The precise sense and the broader sense should be correctly employed with the express condition of not confusing the two. Those who would like

people to believe that they are members of the SI should only be treated *with suspicion*. As for everybody else who does not lead a practical undertaking in some part of the world *organized with* the SI, what can make the best revolutionaries ‘situationists’ is looking after themselves (and therefore looking after the mounting proletarian movement); this is what meets with our approval, as perspective and as method. It is not a matter of evoking us as a reference, but, on the contrary, *of forgetting us a little*.

The Latest Exclusions

On 21 december 1967 Timothy Clark, Christopher Gray and Donald Nicholson-Smith were excluded from the SI, just as they were getting ready to publish a journal in England and begin a group activity there. (Charles Radcliffe had resigned for personal reasons a couple months before.)

The divergences, which had been nonexistent or at least unnoticed in all other regards, suddenly appeared not in regard to their activity in England but on the issue of the SI’s relations and possible action in the United States. Vaneigem had gone to New York in November as the delegate of all the situationists and carried out his mandate precisely, notably in discussions with the comrades with whom in everyone’s opinion — including that of the British — we had the most developed contacts, and who have since formed our American section. Vaneigem refused to meet a certain Ben Morea, publisher of the bulletin *Black Mask*, with whom our American

Comrades were in conflict on virtually every question concerning revolutionary action and whose intellectual honesty they even challenged. Vaneigem had, moreover, already been obliged to break off a conversation with a certain Hoffman, who was admiringly expounding to him a mystical interpretation of his text "Basic Banalities," and who was currently the main collaborator in Morea's publications: the enormity of this fact naturally led Vaneigem no longer even to want to discuss our other, more general divergences with Morea.

Everything seemed quite clear upon Vaneigem's return to Europe. But Morea wrote to the London situationists to complain of having been misrepresented to Vaneigem. Upon the insistence of the English comrades, who were concerned about fully clarifying the matter in the unlikely case that Morea himself was under some misapprehension, we wrote a collective letter detailing all the facts of the situation. The English agreed, however, that this would be the last response we would send him. Morea wrote once again to all of us saying that the reasons we had given were false pretexts and that the real dispute lay elsewhere; he insulted our New York friends and this time questioned Vaneigem's testimony. *Despite their express commitment*, the English responded again to Morea, saying that they no longer understood what was going on and that "someone" must be lying. They showed more and more indulgence toward Morea and more and more mistrust of our American friends; and even of Vaneigem, though refusing to openly admit it. We called on the three English to rectify this outrageous, publicly aired vacillation by immediately breaking with the falsifier and his mystical acolyte. They accepted this demand in principle, but equivocated and finally refused to implement it. We then had to break with them. In three weeks this discussion had given rise to two meetings in Paris and London and to the exchange of a dozen long letters. Our patience had been rather excessive, but what had at first seemed to be merely a surprising slowness in reasoning increasingly began to appear as an intentional (though still inexplicable) obstruc-

tion. Up to the moment of their exclusion, however, the discussion had never concerned anything but the details described here and the questions of method it so strangely raised regarding the SI's solidarity and general criteria for breaking (for the English never denied that Morea was teamed up with a mystical idiot).

Gray later passed through New York and sadly recounted, to whoever would listen, that his stillborn group had concerned itself directly with America in order to save the revolutionary project there from a detrimental incomprehension on the part of the continental European situationists (and of the Americans themselves). The English comrades themselves had not felt sufficiently appreciated. They hadn't dared to say so, but they were pained by the Continentals' lack of interest in *what they were going to do*. They were left isolated in their country — all surrounded by water. A more "theoretical" reason emerged *after* the discussion: England being (according to them) much closer to a revolutionary crisis than continental Europe, we "Continental" theorists were supposedly moved by spite at seeing that "our" theories would be realized somewhere else. The value of this historical law of Anglo-American revolutionism was demonstrated only five months later. But leaving aside the comical aspect of their belated self-justification, it has a rather ignoble side: The spite which they attributed to us over the supposedly impending foreign fulfillment of "our" theory would seem to imply that we are seeking revolutions in "our own" countries in order to have the chance to take up governmental positions. Their imputation of sordid motives to us seems rather to be a *projection* of the English ex-situationists' own hearkening back to the era before America's war of independence, since they seem to want to direct the American revolutionary movement from London. This whole ridiculous geopolitical perspective naturally collapsed the moment they were excluded.

We should mention that during the two years we had known him, Donald Nicholson-Smith was well liked and in every way highly regarded by all of us.

The Practice of Theory
Unfortunately, once he returned to London he became less rigorous and less lucid, passing under the influence of two *poorly chosen* fellow situationists and of various persons outside the SI. When, six months later, he wrote us two letters asking to see us again in order to clear up the "misunderstanding," we regretfully felt obliged to refuse even a personal meeting. The whole affair had been too dubious, and the followup of Gray's activity has continued to be so.

Gray now publishes a rag called *King Mob* which passes, quite wrongly, for being slightly pro-situationist, and in which one can read eulogies to the eternal Morea. Since Morea is all that Gray has left, Gray and his acolytes have gone so far as to *conceal* certain of Morea's current writings that would be too embarrassing to reveal to the people in their entourage who they want to continue to respect their idol; and they make the amusing contention that Morea had the merit of transferring certain radical positions "from the situationist salon" to street fighting — they say this a year after the occupations movement! Gray, too, tried to reestablish contact with us, but surreptitiously, through the intermediary of a certain Allan Green, who pretended not to know him but was unmasked at the second meeting. Fine work, and as cleverly conducted as might have been expected! The "unique" Garnaultins must be turning over in their university graves in envy of such a worthy successor.

It will be noted that for nearly two years there have been no other exclusions. We must admit that this notable success is not entirely due to the real elevation of consciousness and coherent radicality of individuals in the present revolutionary period. It is also due to the fact that the SI, applying with increasing rigor its previous decisions on the preliminary examination of those wanting to join it, has during the same period refused some fifty or sixty requests for admission — which has spared us an equal number of exclusions.

Notes on Spain

The inflexibility of the thinkers of the unofficial capitalism governing Spain

Internationale Situationniste at Context

their best guarantee against a revolutionary uprising. Their forces are crystallized around a technocratic reformism that has nevertheless begun to incite real struggles wherever it is implemented. It is in the most advanced industries, those which constitute Franco's calling card to Common Market Europe, that the workers have asserted their potential most. In 1965, metallurgists from Pegaso made several attempts to march on Madrid to support the student revolt. In 1967, the Echevarri factories in Bilbao remained on strike for six months, with workers' families participating in general assemblies that sent delegates all over Spain. As with the recent spontaneous collectivizations of small farms in Navarre, these actions stand in flagrant opposition to the Christian-Stalinist practices of the Workers' Commissions, who with uncanny timing, cancelled a day of action planned for 24 January as soon as they were faced with the declaration of a state of emergency. With its eyes set squarely on a place in the sun of a post-Franco parliament, the tactic of the Communist Party — an across-the-board alliance of anti-Franco opposition that includes the "left phalangists" — is confronted by its own specter, which haunts it as much as it does the fascists who hold power, even though since 1936, it has been no more capable of frightening the pope than it has the millionaires of New York. As for the state of emergency, it was presented as the only possible response for those who hold nothing more than power to those who know — and even Opus Dei [1] understands this — that modernization cannot be carried out without a corresponding structural change. And it should be added that the state of emergency arrived just in time to avoid a major reconsideration of salaries that had been blocked for a year, during which time the cost of living rose by around 25%.

A long way from these dinosauran struggles, the old mole continues his work. In Spain as elsewhere, the so-called critical university has bided its time with relativistic juggling and contingent contortions. Already, radical elements are gathering around the catch-cry "Abolish the University!" by quite naturally setting language

Internationale Situationniste:

align. Just like any of the French Action Committees, they have been able to define the fundamental alternative: "Either the two-bit University providing alibis for all those who pursue other studies, or the definitive solution to the 'university problem' as a step toward the definitive solution to the class problem." More than anyone else, the Madrid *Acratas* group were able to shatter the illusion of a revolutionary unionism, expressing radical positions and giving them a scandalous reality. Formed in October 1967, the group were not dissimilar to the Nanterre Enragés: the same field of operations, the same program, the same forms of action — this says a great deal about the world in which we live. Under their influence, the frequent tendency to violence toward the police has become an almost everyday fact for the "students." Literally every assembly in Spain ends with songs and a riot. *Acratas*, who translated and distributed texts by the SI, were responsible for the Iberian misadventures of that washed-up prick J.-J. Servan-Schreiber, who they unceremoniously threw out of the Faculty of Law when he had the pretention to try to speak and the illusion that he'd found an audience. But at the same time, their critique of violence protected *Acratas* from the inherent recuperation into traditional terrorism. If attacks on police, cars, school equipment and windows helped verify their critique of ideology, hierarchy and the commodity, it was by tearing down a classroom crucifix that they showed the cops they are most capable of defying the coagulated history of Francoism. With this gesture they revived the great revolutionary tradition that had seen no other preliminary move toward the imposition of the absolute power of the workers' councils, to which *Acratas* claimed absolute adherence.



« Y el cristo en la mierda »

Crucifix défenestré par les « Acratas »
à l'Université de Madrid (janvier 1968).

If *Acratas* disbanded in June 1968, they left behind an invigorating memory of a group as close to Marx as they were to Durruti, and as far from Lenin as they were from Proudhon. Did we not even see four bureaucrats from the FUR risk capital punishment for trying to burn down the University, or worse, bomb the best convent in Madrid, killing two of the good sisters? In Barcelona, where Billyclub Grappin appreciates our moderation best, the students who burnt a faculty door covered the dean in petrol when he attempted to intervene; police only barely managed to put him out. On 20 January, the rector of the same university narrowly escaped being thrown from a window. The process of bringing the faculties to a standstill, which devastates the unions and the government just as much, contributes more and more to highlighting the false oppositions of the ideologies of prehistory: here as everywhere, the desire of the unions to be recuperated leads to their recuperation by the powers that be. The revolutionary movement in Spain will stay beaten as long as it has no consciousness of its victories. It must re-adapt itself or else surrender all its ground — beginning with its memory — to the Stalinist, Francoist and democrat architects of its military defeat. Its victories provide the outline of the absolute power of the workers' councils; they are the minimum requirement of the entire workers' movement. Their knowledge is linked to every coherent revolutionary position. Those who are conscious of making history should never forget the history of consciousness.



Publicité détournée

X « Belle mentalité ! » Conçue à partir d'une bande dessinée publicitaire, c'est la première page d'un de ces tracts dont nos lycées sont journellement inondés. Celui-ci est un mélange délirant et détonnant d'anarchisme infantile et de pornographie enragée. Il est publié par une certaine « Fédération des Comités ouvriers-étudiants de la banlieue sud de Paris » dont les slogans affichés sont « Grève salope » (à l'adresse de « papa, monsieur le professeur, monsieur le curé ») etc., qu'on nous excuse, « Ne nous laissons plus enc... ». Même si les lycéens ont assez de bon sens pour traiter par le mépris de telles aberrations, on se demande qui finance la coûteuse impression de ces torchons. Et surtout quelle autorité peut prétendre exercer dans les établissements scolaires un ministre de l'Éducation nationale qui les tolère. »

Minute (27-2-69).

Maitron the Historian

[The article opens by describing how the “libertarian” historian Jean Maitron, in collaboration with a notorious Stalinist, put out a book on May 1968 (La Sorbonne par elle-même) containing, in addition to numerous erroneous assertions on the SI's activities, reproductions of CMDO texts that were knowingly falsified — critiques of the Stalinists deleted with no indication of the omissions, completely fabricated passages sympathetic to the CGT added, etc. (KK)]

[...] On October 24 the SI wrote Maitron a letter that pointed out, with supporting proofs, the most gross falsifications concerning us in his book and demanded “a written apology.” In two weeks he hadn't replied. Riesel and Viénet then went to his residence, insulted him as he merited, and in order to stress their point, smashed a soup tureen which according to this historian was an “heirloom.” We thus showed this person that his specific dishonesty would not pass unobserved, and could even expose him to being disagreeably insulted; which may make others pause to reflect before committing similar falsifications. [...]

[The article then goes on to describe Internationale Situationniste:

how this incident is soon afterwards ridiculously inflated in several public accounts — that his typewriter was smashed, that his home was “ransacked” by “several” situationists, giving the impression that he was lucky to escape alive, etc.]

But beyond the comical aspects of this incident (the December 1968 issue of *Révolution Proletarienne* rages about the “fascism” of our “massive trashing” of his home, and even calls for “counterviolence” against us) there is an important issue here. In our opinion, the number-one objective for the revolutionary movement that is presently taking shape — even more important and urgent than elaborating a consistent theoretical critique or linking up with democratic rank-and-file committees in the factories or paralyzing the universities — is giving practical support for an *insistence on truth and nonfalsification*. This is the *precondition* and the *beginning* of all the rest. Whoever falsifies must be discredited, boycotted, spit on. When it is a matter of *systems of falsification* (as in the case of Stalinist bureaucrats or of bourgeois) it is obviously those systems that must be destroyed by a large-scale social and political struggle. But this very struggle must create its own conditions: when one is dealing with individuals or groups aiming to establish themselves anywhere in the revolutionary current, one must *not let them get away with anything*. [2] By maintaining this insistence, the movement will fundamentally smash all the conditions of falsification that have accompanied and brought about its disappearance for the last half century. As we see it, all revolutionaries must now recognize it as their immediate task to denounce and *discourage*, by all means and whatever the price, those who continue to falsify. [...]

To reply in advance to those who will still say that the situationists always insult everyone to the same degree [3] and blame everything in the absolute, we will mention two books that devote a considerable space to our documents or to analyzing our action in May: *Le projet révolutionnaire* by Richard Gombin (Mouton, 1969) and *The French Student Uprising* by Alain Schnapp and P. Vidal-Naquet (Seuil,

The Practice of Theory 1969). While we are in disagreement with the methods and ideas of these authors, as well as with virtually all of their interpretations and even on certain facts, we are quite willing to acknowledge that these books are put together honestly and that they accurately cite authentic versions of documents; and therefore that they contribute material that will be useful toward writing the history of the occupations movement.



Mur d'un lycée Français (1969)

Great Friends of Old What's-His-Name

The death of André Breton and an invitation from Havana were enough to turn the ex-surrealists of *L'Archibras* into apologists for the Castroite bureaucracy. In January 1968, the great political mind of this bunch, Jean Schuster, along with the ex-Stalinists Borde, Châtelet, Marguerite Duras, Mascolo and a few other suckers, signed a declaration asserting that “it is in Cuba and through the Cuban revolution that the demand for communism has discovered not only a living center, but its potential for the future.” Eight months later, with the exceptions of Borde and Châtelet, the persons cited above had the unpleasant surprise of having to express their respectful regrets at “comrade Castro's” cynical speech of 23 August approving the Russian army's “socialist” intervention in Czechoslovakia, an intervention whose strategic intention was undeniably to eradicate the threat of a proletarian revolution.

When the disturbances that would become the occupations movement were beginning in France, the Castro-surrealists' only perceptible contribution was the publication of a small tract on 5 May proclaiming that “the surrealist movement is at the disposal of the students” (the italicization of this remarkable inanity is ours).

And yet in June 1969, long after the carnival was over, a “Writers’ and Students’ Committee,” led by Schuster himself and *littérateurs* like Duras and Mascolo, published a text in the Italian periodical *Quindici* that went so far as to accuse *the situationists* of having as much to do with revolution “as they did with literature”! With an aplomb more than worthy of their masters past and present, the authors of this text concluded that the SI’s activity in May was limited to writing slogans on walls — and only those phrases that would edify “certain bourgeois sensibilities.” This omniscience seems fantastic enough for having seen all the walls of Paris at the time, on which so many unknowns spontaneously wrote, reproduced or adapted everything that they wanted, or that appealed to them among inscriptions they had already seen. But these “writer-students” *pushed the imposture to the point of presenting Viénet’s book as “proof” of their claims.* They know very well that this book attributes no more than five or six inscriptions to the situationists and the Enragés, and that these are presented in the specific *times* and *places* where they had some practical significance. And that Viénet, recounting the entirety of our conduct in that period, cites a number of facts and documents that are obviously much more important as far as subversion is concerned. But Schuster and the other scumbags were happy to announce the following dogma: “that which no bourgeois could appreciate in May ... was not situationist.”

We’ll let our readers be the judge of these characters — even in literature, their one little substitute for living — especially if it is pointed out that an article published in *L’Archibras* on 18 June reported admiringly on one of the first radical speeches to the Sorbonne assembly: “One voice dared (...) to demand amnesty for ‘looters’ (...) this proposition was met with angry jeers. This was the beginning. ...” It concerned René Riesel’s speech during the election of the first occupation committee, also quoted by Viénet. [4] The only place where liars of the caliber of Jean Schuster and his friends can escape humiliation is in regimes where they can work with a police

Internationale Situationniste:

force that forbids any recourse to reality — a place like Cuba, for example.

Pushy Salesmen

In June 1968, Vaneigem received a circular from the “Writers’ Union” that proposed, quite simply, that he join them, asking whether he wanted to “participate in the work of the professional commission (PC), the ideological commission (IC), or both,” and if he would like to send thirty francs to Jean-Pierre Faye. [5] He responded immediately with the following letter:

Pigs! Festering dregs from some intellectual’s urinal! Morons! The stench of your own decomposition must have gone to your head for you to wind up asking a situationist to join the lowest of your filthy little gangs. You are the most pitiful bastards in twenty years of misery and lies. We know who you are, you fuck-ups.

Among other things, what just occurred in France has brought into the open the shameful worthlessness of your era. But even so, you doormats persist in thinking there is still a bit of spit left for you to capitalize on by making people talk about you again, by re-petitioning, by re-constituting yourselves into ideological commissions and what-not, by applying for the concierge’s room in the House of Men of Letters.

Imbiciles! You are all as hackneyed as your Bourguibaist Duvignaud, [6] as your unspeakable Sartre, as your ridiculous Faye, who aspires to count the pennies in your little treasury.

You’ll realize soon that the time for such jokes is nearly over. The times are changing, and yours is just about up. We’ll be seeing you, you pricks.

What Makes ICO Lie?

In the preceding number of this review (October 1967), we mentioned the many points of agreement we thought we had with the people who publish the bulletin *Informations et Correspondance Ouvrières*, without hiding our disagreement over their refusal to “formulate a precise theoretical critique of real society” and making it clear on the other hand that we didn’t know them directly. A few of

the people who are among us today had had the occasion to know them directly in the meantime, but it will be seen that that is not the only reason for our not knowing them better.

At that time, all we knew about ICO was what we learned from reading its bulletin: that it was an anti-union, predominantly anarchist group. That having been explained, it was not surprising to see them talk about councils without daring to define themselves as councilists, nor to read in their platform (“Who We Are: What We Want”) of their definition of their action: “All we can do is furnish the workers with information, in the same respect as they can give us some.” What *On the Poverty of Student Life* called ICO’s choice of nonexistence only partially recuperates its reality.

ICO *exists* and this existence is weighted down heavily enough by lies of omission, secret hierarchy, and direct exhaustion. A member of the group of Enrages (René Riesel) attended a meeting of the ICO at the end of March 1968. Since he was *asked* to, he gave an account of his group’s activities, and of the situation in the University of Nantes and Nanterre. This report was published in the issue of ICO that followed this meeting, in a hostile style and with a great deal of misconceptions. Surprised by this malevolence, but all the same conscious of the source of the action (people from *Noir et Rouge* participating in the ICO, friends of Daniel Cohn-Bendit and the March 22d Movement), the Enrages called by letter for the publication of a severely critical flyer. At the next meeting, the March 22d Movement dispatched a delegate who demanded the joint publication of a response to the flier. The Enrages accepted. Alleging that it was inelegant to mention people one attacked by name (Cohn-Bendit in this instance, who already had the attention of all the daily papers), the ICO’s bosses never published the flyer.

The elegance of these people, on a par with the discretion which makes them conceal their opponent’s names and texts, is easily perceived. The reason behind it lies in the fact that, however unnatural they may want that to be believed, ICO has an opposition. And it is

more in their alacrity to disguise this triviality than in the virtuous antipathy to the printed page, where one finds the explanation of the rage which seized them when a certain number of revolutionaries wrote them to establish contact at the end of the note "Reading ICO" that appeared in *IS* #11 (October 1967). In a leaflet dated 27 April 1968, ICO complained about the criticisms "of a group of students called the 'Enrages,' influenced by the situationists, who have manifested a sudden interest in ICO." All of a sudden, the mini-proprietors of ICO saw themselves as centers of attention! And they made it clear that it could only have been caused by "ideologues" and the troublesomeness of "ethics" — however, they aren't referring to their old friend Rubel — for the true class struggle "unfolds on the economic terrain and beyond all 'consciousness' (in the ideological sense of the term)." Can their adversaries and the workers be any better slighted at the same time? And historical reality?

If ICO pretends to offer more than information, it is in return required that nothing more be asked of them. The degree of participation required of its members is thus nothing but their capacity to meet once a month to repeat the same old obvious facts incessantly, communicate the same old information about the same old undertakings discouraged from the start, and bring up again at the following session the discussion of the group's general orientation. When new people try and throw their spanner in the works, the machine stops long enough to tire them out. Finally, one can write that, "Sooner or later comrades who pursue other ends (invariably the propagation of an ideology in one form or another) expel themselves on their own initiative for some reason or other, that is to say, they stop coming." This hypocritical tone should dispel any illusions: when "comrades" clearly saw that they intend to steer the discussion towards the interior of the group, on the basis of affirmed principles, not to negate them, but to go beyond them, to supersede primary economism and to attempt a critique of daily life as well, ICO shows them the door because their text is too long! And when the same "comrades"

print it themselves, ICO refuses to send them the list of subscribers. Five or six oppositionals whom we do not know were expelled in this manner at the beginning of 1968. Two months later, the same problem was brought up anew by others.

The fact that the Enrages approached ICO at the same instant seemed to ICO's masters to reveal a vast conspiracy aimed at undermining the perpetuity of their power over the group. That is no doubt why, while minimizing the impact of the movement when it began to take shape, they preferred the March 22d Movement against the Enrages. The Cohn-Benditist wing with which they were in contact sufficiently guaranteed the formal nonexistence and the absence of coherent theory of the March 22d Movement, by means of which ICO placed their confidence in it: at least three students wouldn't butt into the affairs of the ICO's conscious workers.

This consciousness goes no further than their sense of the ridiculous. The lamentable analyses of their May '68 issue, which appeared at the moment when a major confrontation could be anticipated without extrapolation, and which wanted to prove the inanity and inadequacy of the struggle undertaken, have at least enough of the comic in them so that they don't say at what moment these shrewd observers of historical conjuncture ever noticed that "something happened" (*The Mass Strike in France, May-June 1968*, ICO/Noir et Rouge pamphlet). One can imagine that they did so at about the same time as the Stalinist Party. Nothing contradicts this hypothesis, not even the identical use of the term "general strike" to designate the occupations movement. ICO didn't jump on the bandwagon until the day when the old mole dug under the cafe in which they ordinarily met, disturbing the unfolding of their monthly meeting by the echo of the explosions of police grenades. Like the so-called Communist Party, ICO essentially sees in the occupations movement an accumulation of local strikes. The difference only resides in the fact that ICO *knows and says* that they were wildcat strikes. Thus, "May '68 was from this point of view (the evolution towards

The Practice of Theory an autonomy of conflicts) only the brutal expression of a latent situation that had been developing over the years, in rigorous conformity with the rapid modernization of French capitalism." Only with the incredible gall of these people is it possible to minimize the occupations movement in this way without laughing, while recognizing on a suddenly lyrical note that "the great mass of workers entered the struggle driven by the will to change something in the system of exploitation." They would be able to see that "the realization of a new world in which their intervention will be total, that is to say, where they will totally manage their activity in their work, and, consequently, in their life" will pass for the explanation of the mystery which presents ICO with these realities as separated.

Who are these undeceived partisans of the wildcat strike trying to kid when they weightily explain in analyzing the class struggles in France in March 1969 ("Organizations and the Workers' Movement"), that since the wildcat strikes before May were directed towards categorical demands, and since in these after May "the workers of a limited sector of the business did not want any part of anything anyone imposed on them that was solely concerned with their working conditions (salaries or whatever), one there finds the character of the wildcat strikes in Holland, England, and the USA." The ICO writes: "Certain people will want to see in these many strikes the beginning of a generalization of the struggles, or a transformation of the struggles or of a radical transformation of the workers' movement. If May had at the same time acted as a revealing force and thus accelerated an evolution, it did not radically modify the context of these struggles." Incapable of seeing that a union doesn't just support a wildcat strike so as to get around it, but because it is far preferable to them to lose it in the meanderings of a legal strike, ICO's realists show themselves to be even more stupid than the cretins of *Lutte Ouvriere*: "The intransigence of the bosses and the government forced them (the unions) to organize a central demonstration on March 11" — granting that the strike of March 11, 1969 "was

Internationale Situationniste at Context

part of this political exploitation of the workers' movement." It is surely because they don't beat the drum for any other position than that which they already have — as almost acknowledged specialists of anti-unionism — that ICO's "workers" can predict a beautiful future for us: "the conquest of a large number of seats in municipal and other councils." As for the workers, ICO forgets a little too easily what the revolutionary movement does to its slanderers.

ICO's hatred for everything that resembles theory doesn't stem from a contempt towards their student militants or their intellectual friends, which would be justified. The objective directors of ICO have themselves been turned into intellectuals simply by pressing the button. Now they wish that real intellectuals would come and relieve them in this arduous task so that they can devote themselves full-time to ICO's preservation, which they know has nothing to lose but an illusory existence. Students will heed their call, but revolutionaries will know that they can read ICO to find the anti-union ideology of the *groupuscules* in it.

The Elite and the Backward

The situationists are undoubtedly very criticizable. So far, unfortunately, almost no one has made any of these critiques — that is, the intelligent and precise critiques, made without bad faith, that revolutionaries might make and will one day easily be capable of making regarding many of our theses and many aspects of our activity. But the manner in which many present-day revolutionaries spread inept objections or accusations, as if to repress the problem with the miserable reflexes acquired during their previous period of defeats and nonexistence, only reveals a persistent leftist sectarian poverty, or even miserable *ulterior motives*.

Let us say first of all that, just as we find it quite natural that bourgeois, bureaucrats and intellectual coopters hate us, we recognize that would-be revolutionaries who claim to be opposed on principle to any form of organization based on a precise plat-

Internationale Situationniste:

form, entailing the practical co-responsibility of its participants, will naturally condemn us completely since we manifestly have a contrary opinion and practice. But all the others? It is a clear demonstration of dishonesty and an *implicit avowal of aims of domination* to accuse the SI of constituting a dominating organization when we have gone to great lengths to make it *almost impossible* to become a member of the SI (which seems to us to destroy at the roots any concrete risk of our becoming a "leadership" vis-à-vis even the slightest fraction of the masses); and considering, in addition, that it is quite clear that we have never *exploited* our "intellectual prestige," either by frequenting any bourgeois or intellectual circles (much less by accepting any of their "honors" or remunerations), or by competing with the multitude of little leftist sects for the control or admiration of the miserable student public, or by trying to exert the slightest secret influence, or *even the slightest direct or indirect presence*, in the autonomous revolutionary organizations whose existence we and a few others have predicted, and which are now beginning to take shape.

Those who have never accomplished anything apparently feel that they have to attribute the scandalous fact that we *have* been able to accomplish something to imaginary goals *and means*. In reality, it is because we shock certain people by refusing contact with them, or even their requests for admission to the SI, that we are accused of being an "elite" and of aspiring to dominate those whom we don't even want to know! But what "elitist" role are we supposed to have reserved for ourselves? A theoretical one? We have said that the workers *must become dialecticians* and themselves take care of all their theoretical and practical problems. Those who are concerned with running their own affairs need only appropriate our *methods*, instead of lapping up the latest rumors about us, and they will become that much more independent from us. [...]

The Return of Charles Fourier

At 7pm on monday 10 march 1969,

The Practice of Theory the precise moment when a "general strike" — carefully limited to 24 hours by union bureaucrats — was scheduled to commence, the statue of Charles Fourier was returned to its plinth in the Place Clichy, which had remained empty since the removal of its original incarnation by the Nazis. A plaque on the statue's pedestal explained: "A tribute to Charles Fourier, from the barricaders of the rue Gay-Lussac." Never before has the technique of *détournement* reached such a domain.



The job of putting it in place was accomplished at one of the Place Clichy's busiest times in front of more than a hundred witnesses, many of whom crowded around it, but none of whom was particularly shocked, even upon reading the plaque (hardly anyone in France is ever shocked after May 1968). The statue, an exact replica of the original, was made of plaster but finished in bronze. On first glance, it looked like the real thing. Even so, it weighed over a hundred kilograms. The police were advised of its presence shortly after, and left a guard around it for the course of the next day. It was removed by the authorities at first light the day after that.

A commando of around twenty "unknowns," as *Le Monde* put it on 13 March, was enough to complete the operation, which lasted a quarter of an hour. According to one witness, quoted in *France-Soir* on the 13th, "eight young people of twenty years of age deposited the statue with the aid of wooden beams. Not a bad performance, considering the fact that it took no less than thirty guardians of the peace and a crane to lay the plinth bare again." And *L'Aurore*, telling the

Internationale Situationniste at Context

North for once, remarked that the whole thing was notable because “the enragés aren’t usually in the habit of paying tribute.”



On Repression

The leftist vocabulary of 1968, fundamentally outmoded but at the same time a step ahead of reality when came it being identified in an archaic situation, described the police action of winning back streets taken by the rioters and the barricades that gave them cover as “repression.” This indignation was indicative of the old Left, so good at moralizing incorrectly with its respectful petitions. And when the real repression got underway in the middle of June — which, fortunately, remained quite limited given what had happened — they immediately cried fascism.

These Leftist groups have since disbanded. Apart from “March 22,” which was incorrectly — thankfully enough — supposed to bring together marginal and original currents from across the board, the dissolved groups were all either *Leninists* (Trotskyites are nothing more than this) or *Stalinists* (Maoists are nothing more than this).

The SI’s position on this point couldn’t be clearer: we obviously defend, in the name of our principles, their freedom of association and speech, a freedom that they would refuse us in the name of their own principles if they ever had the chance (we might add that we find it decidedly *unrevolutionary* to call on the Gaullist police to disband a fascist group like “Occident,” and then to congratulate oneself on such a “success”).

In the aftermath of the movement, a number of assassination attempts with explosives took place. Because of this, workers in Bordeaux were imprisoned without the slightest demonstration of

Internationale Situationniste:

any visible solidarity from the revolutionary “students.” Six months later, Andrée Destouet was implicated in the bombing of the façades of several Parisian banks. To examine this from the strategic point of view of social struggle, it must first of all be said that one must never *play with terrorism*. Furthermore, even serious terrorism has never been effective in history except when every other form of revolutionary activity was made impossible by complete repression; and therefore when a significant portion of the population was forced to side with the terrorists. However, the personality of the individual claiming responsibility for the attacks in question — Elisée Georgev — permits the affirmation that these acts were dictated by an honest intention to help the cause of the exploited; in such a way that those Leftists who had spoken on this subject of “political provocation” deserve the definitive scorn of all revolutionaries.

Although the amnesty of June 1969 put a stop to proceedings relating to just about all of the crimes and misdemeanors committed in connection with the movement of 1968, it does not to concern foreigners formally deported at the time (among them Cohn-Bendit), as they have never been charged. Expressing their unconditional right to return to France — not, of course, with whining objections, but with every direct action possible — should be one of the immediate goals of all these groups who claim to possess the means to “paralyze” the proper functioning of a faculty, or indeed of any other sector.

Notice

The fanatical hostility that the SI has always provoked in certain circles has, since May 1968, reached new levels of ferocity. It often assumes forms far removed from the current style of political slander, and can usually be distinguished by its improbability and its absolute *uselessness*. In that regard, the neurotic phrasings of this hostility are obviously produced — and this is the only “production” in which they have ever participated — by admirers spurned, or more simply, never taken into consideration by the SI: a pathetic class of dumbfounding

The Practice of Theory pretenders to a *ruling* intellectual role that they fortunately lack the means to attain. They generally begin by convincing their entourage that they understand and approve of the SI’s theory; indeed, that they know the situationists well. Then, to confirm their own value in comparison, all they have to do is to attribute to these situationists a few surprising defects from which these good saints, at least, are exempt, if it is true that they have done nothing else.



Progrès de la télévision

(caméra utilisée à Milan, en décembre 1968, pour identifier des manifestants). «La deuxième journée des épreuves écrites des concours d’agrégation a été marquée, à Paris, ce mardi matin, comme la veille, par un certain nombre d’incidents ... A l’intérieur du centre, quelques caméras de télévision avaient été judicieusement disposées afin de surveiller les allées et venues des étudiants.»

Le Monde (14-5-69).



Les plaisirs de l’I.S.

«Mais il y a quelque part, au vu et au su de l’administration, vivant sous sa tolérance, une Association recelant dans son sein, comme l’Association internationale, les aspirations les plus dangereuses, agitant les questions politiques les plus brûlantes, remuant des passions ardentes, cherchant à embrasser le monde dans des mailles puissantes d’affiliations redoutables, créant (pour rappeler les termes de votre ar-rêt) un danger permanent pour la sécu-

X rité publique, à raison des principes subversifs propagés par ses membres contre la religion, la propriété, le capital, les relations entre les ouvriers et les patrons, se perpétuant au mépris de la loi et des avertissements de la justice, trahissant enfin la nature de ses actes par le mystère dont elle cherche à s'entourer en refusant de livrer ses registres de comptabilité et d'indiquer l'emploi qu'elle fait des cotisations qu'elle recueille.»

Réquisitoire de l'avocat général Benoist, au deuxième procès de la Commission parisienne de l'Internationale, 19 juin 1868.

So, on top of these exaggerations, falsifications and dishonest reproaches directed at some genuine aspect of our activities, we have occasionally been made aware of various perfectly insane remarks that have been repeated ad nauseum by certain individuals, although they have certainly not had the courage to publish them in writing. It has been said in this manner that the situationists are pimps; that they have all opportunely made their way into wealthy marriages; that they sexually assault girls; that they live in princely luxury; that they did nothing in May, out of fear as well as stupidity, the story and the documents in René Viénet's book being completely false; that in the same period the same situationists reigned heirarchically in the offices they had captured, violently refusing any discussion with the mass of real revolutionaries who wanted to be received by them; and that at the same time elsewhere someone or other could bravely come to insult them and, of course, punch them in the face without them, in their unhappy consciousness, even daring to respond!

Such purely ridiculous falsifications are clear indications of their origin: the daydreams of *students* overcompensating for their own *impotency*. According to several witnesses, a student named Jean-Yves Bériou, who seems to drool most frequently in the region of Lyons, is something of a paragon of the genre, having come up with the aforementioned examples single-handedly. But there are of course many other imaginations - quantitatively not quite as fertile but of a simi-

lar quality - at work from Nanterre to Toulouse and from Strasbourg to Bourdeaux.

The main practical conclusion to be drawn from this is that there is something highly unpleasant about the attitude of those who present themselves to us by denouncing these ineptitudes, put forward by some poor fool who they had after all frequented, and to whom they had listened attentively, as if they wanted to take some kind of merit for not having been taken in or for not having sunk so low themselves. It is well known that we don't request anyone's company; and there is obviously no individual in existence for whom this is a vital need. Consequently, we will no longer allow anyone to think that they can approach us if, having encountered some inordinate slander of the SI, they have not immediately confronted the liar and broken with them, by physically assaulting them if necessary. This decision takes effect from the publication of the present issue of this journal.

Concerning Nantes

Under an extremely presumptuous title, *The Nantes Commune* (Ed. Maspero, May 1969), a certain Yannick Guin evokes the occupations movement at Nantes, propagating the inevitable banality of *modern leftism*: at Nantes there would have been an outline of "dual power"; the Inter-Union Strike Committee had effectively taken control of the town to a degree parallel, if not greater than that of the prefect. Leftist minorities and revolutionary syndicalists are known to wield an influence among the unions of the Loire-Atlantic area (in the FO and even in the CFDT) beyond any proportion to their national reality, an influence which is tied to certain traditions of workers' struggles and local economic conditions.

In the great strike of 1953, the outline of the Central Strike Committee's insurrectional power was clearly manifested at Nantes: it was a nice vestige of the revolutionary possibilities that syndicalism has formerly contained, during a period when the workers' movement had generally been wiped out. In 1968 the situation was completely different. The decisive contribu-

The Practice of Theory
tion of the Nantese, after the sabotage conducted from the academic milieu by the revolutionary group of "students" who held the local office of the UNEF (Yvon Chotard, Quillot, etc.) and who were the first in France to bring the red flag and the black flag back into the streets together, was certainly the exploit of the workers of Sud-Aviation who inaugurated the occupation of the factories on May 14 [1968]. But, from this exemplary action alone, it is wrong to consider Nantes as a separate point in the May movement. May was essentially a nation-wide wildcat strike — and not a "mass strike" as the bureaucrats, and those who don't dare distinguish themselves from them, bashfully say. The strike didn't become "mass" through a kind of mechanical innocence, like a reaction observed in a laboratory, *with* the unions who never wanted to declare a "general strike" and who have since then forbidden them to use this classic term: in fact, the strike was extended *against* them. Thus, while for the first time a revolutionary workers' current was already struggling throughout the country against the unions, the pseudo-Commune of Nantes, with its governing Inter-Union, found itself far behind the newest and profoundest things in the occupations movement.

Next to the ordinary idiocies that make up this terrible book, Guin devoted a large space to often exact, although always maliciously presented anecdotes concerning the highly important contribution of the revolutionary "students" of Nantes. One of these anecdotes, at least, is pure fiction. It can be read in his fourth chapter: "In reality, the true influence sprang from the Situationist International, with which many exchanges were carried out. But here again the Nantes particularism was manifest. Thus one saw [Raoul] Vaneigem, the S.I.'s principal thinker, landing at Nantes and introducing himself to the local AGEN. He demanded to see Chotard immediately. They willingly answered that no one knew where he was. Vaneigem had to wait an entire afternoon, enduring the smiles of the Nantes students."

The events in this *detective story* were

Internationale Situationniste at Context

never witnessed by anyone, except the author who invented them. Vaneigem and a *worker comrade* went to Nantes as delegates of the Council for the Maintenance of the Occupations [CMDO]. They found Chotard at the very moment of their arrival. They certainly didn't have any "order" to give to a completely autonomous revolutionary group, just as much in regard to the SI as to the CMDO. Vaneigem, whose name was somewhat known in Nantes, took precautions not to put himself in the position of celebrity, even refusing to address a meeting as the Nantese invited him to do. The delegates of the CMDO restricted themselves to exchanging information with the revolutionaries of Nantes: the latter had previously sent several comrades (Chotard among them) to Paris two or three times, who were received equally quickly and cordially by the C.M.D.O., as was natural. They certainly didn't come to search for orders in Paris, and nobody, happily, ever thought of notifying them about it. It follows that they didn't come to give us any orders, either.

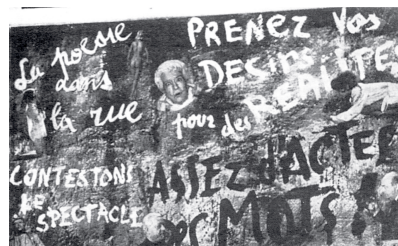
In fact, if several Nantes radicals — having had during the year preceding the occupations movement many discussions and exchanges of letters, on a clearly specified base of autonomy and equality — had evolved towards many, but not all, of our positions, it was done in pure freedom, through the result of their own thoughts, and above all their concrete experience. They had no organizational link with us, neither open nor concealed; and still less was there the slightest trace of subjection, which in any case we didn't want, and which they certainly wouldn't have wanted any more than we.

Subsequent events seem to show that what for us was quite evident didn't appear so simple to all of the Nantes radicals, and that even this question obscurely annoyed certain people. After reading Guin's book, the SI wrote the Nantese to ask them how they reckoned on reacting to this slander, and also if they knew exactly of the existence of this Guin. On this last point, they thought they had to make a dilatory response. And on the first, they wrote us that the slander aimed at

Vaneigem was nothing more than a mere detail in a generally slanderous book, and that they didn't think, as we did, that squashing slanders was a "revolutionary duty." They comically deemed themselves to have superseded the problem by rejecting a short time period previously all reference to the academic terrain, and by setting themselves up as the "Council of Nantes." Without examining here the problem of the validity of a voluntarist proclamation of a proletarian councilist organization existing simply on the margin of the academic milieu, and with the same source of recruitment, we considered that the *lack of rigor* of the comrades of the Council of Nantes unfortunately revealed that they didn't appropriate the truth of the *only* lesson, which, without any ill-timed disgrace, they would assuredly have had to have *learned from us*. Despite what we have always considered as highly valuable in their 1968 activity — and notably as concerns Yvon Chotard, whose intentions and remarkable revolutionary capacities are recognized by us — the SI immediately broke off all relations with all the members of the current "Council of Nantes." (We should point out that shortly afterwards, Juvénal Quillet let us know that since his signature had been improperly put on a leaflet of the Council of Nantes, he disassociated himself from it at once.)



Les occupants de l'université Cornell l'évacuent avec leurs armes



La récupération vulgaire

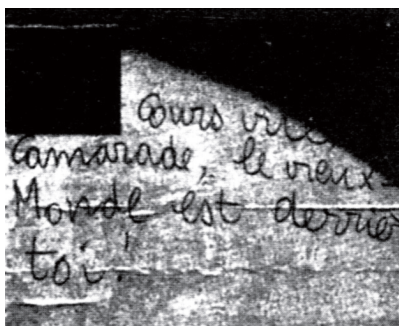
(affiche pour un film commercial, au-

Cinema and Revolution

In *Le Monde* of 8 July 1969, the Berlin Film Festival correspondent J.P. Picaper is awestruck by the fact that "in *The Gay Science* (an ORTF-Radio Stuttgart production, banned in France) Godard has pushed his praiseworthy self-critique to the point of projecting sequences shot in the dark or even of leaving the spectator for an almost unbearable length of time facing a blank screen." Without seeking more precisely what constitutes "an almost unbearable length of time" for this critic, we can see that Godard's work, following the latest fashions as always, is culminating in a destructive style just as belatedly plagiarized and pointless as all the rest, this negation having been expressed in the cinema long before Godard had ever begun the long series of pretentious pseudo-innovations that aroused such enthusiasm among student audiences during the previous period. The same journalist reports that Godard, through one of the characters in his short entitled *Love*, confesses that "revolution cannot be put into images" because "the cinema is the art of lying." The cinema has no more been an "art of lying" than has any of the rest of art, which was dead in its totality long before Godard, who has not even been a modern artist, that is, who has not even been capable of the slightest personal originality. This Maoist liar is in this way winding up his bluff by trying to arouse admiration for his brilliant discovery of a noncinema cinema, while denouncing a sort of ontological lie in which he has participated, but no more so than have many others. Godard was in fact immediately *outmoded* by the May 1968 movement, which caused him to be recognized as a spectacular manufacturer of a superficial, pseudocritical, cooptive art rummaged out of the trashcans of the past (see *The Role of Godard in Internationale Situationniste* #10). At that point Godard's career as a filmmaker was essentially over, and he was personally insulted and ridiculed on several occasions by revolutionaries who happened to cross

The cinema as a means of revolutionary communication is not inherently mendacious just because Godard or Jacopetti has touched it, any more than all political analysis is doomed to duplicity just because Stalinists have written. Several new filmmakers in various countries are currently attempting to utilize films as instruments of revolutionary critique, and some of them will partially succeed in this. However, the limitations in their very grasp of present revolutionary requirements, as well as in their aesthetic conceptions, will in our opinion prevent them for some time still from going as far as is necessary. We consider that at the moment only the situationists' positions and methods, as formulated by René Viénet in our previous issue [*The Situationists and the New Forms of Action Against Art and Politics*], are adequate for a directly revolutionary use of cinema — though political and economic conditions still present obvious obstacles to the realization of such films.

It is known that Eisenstein wanted to make a film of *Capital*. Considering his formal conceptions and political submissiveness, it can be doubted if his film would have been faithful to Marx's text. But for our part, we are sure we can do better. For example, as soon as it becomes possible, Guy Debord will himself make a cinematic adaptation of *The Society of the Spectacle* that will certainly not fall short of his book.



La communication et son moment

« Le film était français et osé. Il s'appelait « Hurléments en faveur de Sade ». Deux cents jeunes intellectuels londoniens avaient fait la queue et payé cent cinquante francs pour le voir. Fébriles dans leurs fauteuils ils atten-

daient des images audacieuses et des commentaires provoquants. Pendant quatre-vingt-dix minutes — la durée d'une partie de football — ils virent défiler un film vierge. De temps en temps de brefs éclairs jaillissaient et tout retombait dans l'obscurité. Le commentaire (en version originale) ajoutait sa dense intellectualité à l'audace du désert de celluloid. »

Paris-Presse (25—5-57).

« Jean-Luc Godard (« Week-End ») tournera en Italie, à partir du 5 mai, un western contestataire écrit en collaboration avec Daniel Cohn-Bendit. La nouvelle a été annoncée par le producteur italien Gianni Barceloni. « Vent d'Est » se déroulera comme un western classique mais les cow-boys seront remplacés par des étudiants qui apprendront la contestation à des mineurs ... »

France-Soir (2-4-69).

The 8th Conference of the SI

The next SI conference will be held in Italy at the end of September 1969.

It provides an opportunity to clarify several aspects the SI's organization in the past and in the present. Notably, this includes dispelling the strange myth of our hierarchical and dictatorial organization, which amusingly accompanies the other myth — strongly contradicted by every single one of our texts — according to which we are advocates of a pure spontaneism when it comes to mass action. The most fantastic sketch of the SI's supposed evolution toward centralism can be found in the article — monstrous in every regard — published in issue 12 of the journal *Communications*, by Robert Estivals, a researcher at the CNRS. Beginning with an obviously false quotation from *I.S.* #3 — “a federative conception of the SI founded on national autonomy was imposed from the start by the Stalinist section” (sic) — the author notes that this federalism was abandoned in favor of a “central council” which “soon ... held all the powers of the conference.” He arrives at the conclusion: “Gradually, the dictatorship of this central committee actually allowed Debord to directly run the SI himself.”

The Practice of Theory
In order to leave this delirious reasoning where it belongs — it goes on to insinuate that the obsessive Debord single-handedly stirred up the May movement and even caused its defeat (“the action in Strasbourg, a general repetition of this undertaken in Paris ... Debord's pronounced liking for the word 'international' is, by the way, very noticeable. ... The Situationist International is essentially the work of Debord. ... no psychological restructuring has been carried out, and this, in our opinion, is the cause of the SI's error, and consequently, the failure of the neo-social democracy of the May 68 students”) — let us remind everyone of a reality that is rather foreign to the police/psychological conception of history according to Estivals. Until this day — and this is very deliberate — the SI has never had more than twenty five to thirty participants — often less — which already throws these little histories of the deprived base commanded from above into a more truthful light. We have constantly demanded the participation of autonomous individuals, even if the real capacities of a few may not have always lived up to it. Indeed, on the basis of a widely held accord in the initial period, there was complete autonomy among our various national groups; not only in practice, but also with regard to the very notions of what the SI would become, even if they did not coincide with those of opposing tendencies. Any change of position was accomplished within the groups themselves, even though there never any more than three groups conducting effective activities at any one time (most often the Dutch, French and German sections). The Central Council was therefore established at the London Conference as a *council of delegates*, meeting every two or three months to co-ordinate the activity of our groups, and *having no kind of existence outside these meetings*. Although they were nominated by the Conference, the delegates were occasionally replaced before a meeting by other members sent by their group. After the Göteborg Conference, there was a sharp debate within the SI that would be somewhat oversimplified if it were described as a confrontation between the “artists” and the “revolutionaries,”

Internationale Situationniste at Context

xxi which was split along such lines to some degree. The theoretical discussion was long and extremely democratic, but in the end, the absolutely divergent practical manifestations, rupture of all solidarity and distinct breaking of engagements by the artists — who nevertheless wanted to remain in the SI and compromise it entirely by choice — led to their exclusion in 1962. At that point, the sixth Conference, in Anvers, decided that a coherent theoretical unification had been accomplished. Following this, when the question of dissolving the Central Council was posed, it was maintained only to emphasize the allegiance of comrades in Scandinavia who were actively opposing the deceptive publicity of the Nashists, who for some time after purported to represent the SI in the art galleries and newspapers of Stockholm. After the disappearance of Nashism, no further mention was ever made of this Central Council, which was formally suppressed without debate at the 1966 Paris Conference. After 1962, the SI had written that although several comrades were geographically dispersed throughout Europe, it considered itself to be a single unified group whose basic activities would be organized in France, where the journal that constituted its principle publication was issued (it ceased to carry the subtitle “central bulletin” after its 9th number). Our perspective was naturally to move on from the foundations laid by this coherent group by reforming into national sections whose activity was genuinely autonomous. The first version of this, the English section, fell apart just as it was beginning to exist as a group (cf. the note *The Latest Exclusions* this issue). It was only between 1968 and 1969 that the SI was once again formed into national sections, each

editing its own journal (this just goes to show that there was never a “Strasbourg group,” but only a few SI members who lived in that town until early 1967).

Although it includes comrades of ten different nationalities — our sections are themselves international in composition — at the time of its 8th Conference, the SI is organized into only four sections: American, French, Italian and Scandinavian.

[1] Roman Catholic organization which exercised considerable influence on Spanish economic policy from 1956 until Franco's death in 1975.

[2] It should be stressed that the SI made an example of Maitron because of his revolutionary pretensions and credibility as an “anarchist” historian — and only after his refusing to make a public rectification of demonstrated falsehoods which any person of good faith would have readily granted. The situationists did not attack people physically merely because they disagreed with the SI. Even in the innumerable instances of deliberate falsification of the SI's positions or activities, they almost always confined themselves to publicly pointing out the falsification. In a related connection (apropos of the French government's banning of Maoist and Trotskyist groups in the aftermath of May 1968): “The SI's position on this issue is quite clear: we obviously defend, in the name of our principles, the right of these people to free expression and association — a right they would refuse us in the name of their own principles if they were ever in a position to do so” (Internationale Situationniste #12, p. 98). (KK)

[3] As Raspaud and Voyer have shown in the “Index of Insulted Names” of

The Practice of Theory their book *L'Internationale Situationniste*, it is a gross exaggeration to say that the SI insulted everybody. Out of 940 persons mentioned in the twelve issues of *Internationale Situationniste*, only 540 were insulted — less than 58%. (KK)

[4] See p.49 of *Enragés* and Situationists.

[5] Jean-Pierre Faye (b.1925), French poet, playwright, novelist and essayist, member of *Tel Quel* and founder of *Change*.

[6] Jean Duvignaud (b.1921), French playwright and social anthropologist, Arguments contributor and supporter of gradualist Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba (1903-2000).

Situationist International: Situationistisch / Situationist: All das, was sich auf die Theorie oder auf die praktische Tätigkeit von Situationen bezieht. Derjenige, der sich damit beschäftigt, Situationen zu konstruieren. Mitglied der situationistischen Internationale.

Situationismus: Sinnloses Wort, missbräuchlich durch Ableitung des vorigen gebildet. Einen Situationismus gibt es nicht — was eine Doktrin zur Interpretation der vorhandenen Tatsachen bedeuten würde. Selbstverständlich haben sich die Anti-Situationisten den Begriff „Situationismus“ ausgedacht.

Ken Knabb: Geboren 1945 in Louisiana. Autor, Übersetzer und radikaler Theoretiker, Betreiber des Website *Bureau of Public Secrets*.

License of this contribution
Public domain
Public domain