

## Extract from **Internationale Situationniste at Context XXI**

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# Situationist News

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SITUATIONISTISCHE INTERNATIONALE

The dutch section of the SI (address: Po-laklaan 25, Amsterdam C) organized two events featuring conferences conducted — in the customary situationist manner — by tape recorder, as well as some rather animated debates: one in April at the Académie d'Architecture; the other in June at the Stedelijk Museum. In March, it adopted a resolution against the restoration of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, demanded from every artistic point of view, instead proposing “the demolition of the Stock Exchange and the redevelopment of the land as a playground for the population of the district,” and pointing out that “the conservation of antiquities, like the fear of new constructions, is the proof of the current impotence ... the center of Amsterdam is not a museum, but the habitat of living beings.”

In a special issue of the journal *Forum* (no 6) in August, the Dutch situationists explained our positions on the unification of the arts and their integration into everyday life. Dispelling a number of misunderstandings on this theme, Constant's presentation immediately declared: “A total modification of social structures and artistic creativity must precede this integration.”

The german section of the SI can now be contacted at the following address: Deutsche Sektion der Situationistischen Internationale, Kaulbachstrasse 2, Munich. In order to contribute to preparatory discussions in the lead-up to the Third Conference, they have translated

and published two documents under the titles: *Erklärung von Amsterdam* and *Thesen über die Kulturelle Revolution*.

A Note concerning the average age of the situationists, appearing in issue 2 of this journal [Situationist News] was intended to be both completed by the evolution recorded since that time, and rectified for the interpretation of the statistics — in themselves correct — that were employed. This note indicated that the average age of twenty nine and a half at the founding of the SI was raised in a single year to a little more than thirty two. To throw some light on the accelerated aging process, and considering that the SI is largely presented as the continuation of the “lettrist” avant-garde movement of the early 50's, we will compare the same figure of twenty nine and a half with the average of less than twenty one years, which, only four years earlier, was that of the Lettrist International “in the summer of 1953.”

Here the oscillations of figures should be closely examined, and their relationship with the variations in the recruitment of the movement understood. The average age of the entire lettrist movement, in 1952, rose to 24.4. On the day of the rupture — the lettrist left was generally composed of younger members — it fell to 23 in the Lettrist International. This last movement was inclined toward an extremism much further away from the cultural economy and was thus joined by very young elements, the average age in effect descending to 20.8 in summer of 1953 (ba-

sic figures evaluated in our second issue).

Therefore, in taking as point of departure the figure of 24.4 in 1952, the normal aging process would lead to an average age of 29.4 in 1957. In fact, by the time of the Conference in Cosio d'Arroscia it equalled 29.53. This analogy shows that the old elements expelled were replaced by another group coming from various avant-garde tendencies of the same generation. The adolescents of 1953 were almost completely replaced by these new professionals. After one year of the SI's existence, the age rose to 32.08 (instead of 30.4 from 1952, or of 32.53 from Cosio d'Arroscia, according to the normal aging rate). This is certainly rather notable, expressing the rallying of elements previously engaged in experimental postwar art. Looking back over a period of six years, however, this aging is far from the catastrophic rate that appeared in our last analysis. But one can certainly worry about the absence of renewal by younger factions.

The signs of such a renewal presented themselves for the first time in 1959. Indeed, after the Munich Conference, the average age of the SI was established at 30.8, a very important reduction on the figure of the previous year (32.08) and a reduction even in terms of the figure of normal aging rate calculated from summer 1952 (31.4).

It remains to be said, however, that besides the fact that most of its causes are confined to Germany, this reduction in age only presents a comparatively weak rejuvenation when considered over a period of several years; and that one cannot yet talk of a younger generation

having totally replaced that of 1952 in the most advanced cultural research.

A note in the first issue (15-7-59) of the new series of *Potlatch* (“Taking Out the Intellectual Trash”) declaring that Hans Platschek was excluded in February due to his collusion with the “dadaist-royalist” journal *Panderma*, underlines the fact that “Platschek is only the sixth case of exclusion since the formation of the SI.”

We would like to point out in comparison that the Lettrist International, in the first two years of its existence, had already excluded a dozen members.

Between June and October 1959, the editors of *Internationale Situationniste* received 127 anonymous letters. All appeared to come from the same people, who were excluded a long time previously, and who remain about as capable of comprehending the indifference toward their rather tired misadventure as they are likely to have any chance of reinstatement, now or ever.

The survivors of classical lettrism, of whom Isou is the most notorious, have failed to rid themselves of several old followers, who are as faithful as they can be to the method, but have now developed the ambition of starting all

over again on their own “creative” account: Isou gives some idea of extremities suffered in the conflict surrounding this split, arguing (in issue 8 of *Nouvelle Poésie*) with a most mysterious follower, known as X:

X then treats me as if I were *self-taught*. Now, I have almost as many qualifications as he does and a bit more than his little friends, most of whom don't even have a high school certificate.

While I was preparing to complete several courses, X went off to get one last supplementary diploma before I could: nevertheless, I'm sure I'll soon have more diplomas than him. ...

But already, some among us have taken to using knives to settle their cultural differences. Some of my followers think that buying themselves revolvers can silence their adversaries. Here, I must stand up and show my opposition. ... Even if this line of blood had to be crossed, I don't believe that, in a world where racism and fascism are on the return — and where Buffet, Françoise Sagan, *Elle*, the *nouveau roman* represent “modern culture” — we should cross this line among ourselves, creators of the avant-garde and, on many levels, revolutionaries.

In a tract distributed in November by the Experimental Laboratory in Alba [In Defense of Freedom], the situationists Eisch, Fischer, Nele, Pinot-Gallizio, Prem, Sturm and Zimmer publicly exposed the Spanish painter Modesto Cuixard, who, in order to increase his

chances of securing the Sao-Paulo Grand Prize for Painting, was not afraid of denouncing the communism of his compatriots Antonio Saura and Antoni Tàpies, at the risk of putting them “in a position of great difficulty with the police in their country.”

The extra information expected from the series of *dérives* to be carried out in Amsterdam in April and May 1960, as well as the complimentary construction of a labyrinth, has led us to postpone the continuation of the study of the *dérive* that began in our preceding issue [Theory of the *Dérive*], and also the plan for a situation announced at the same time.

**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.

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