

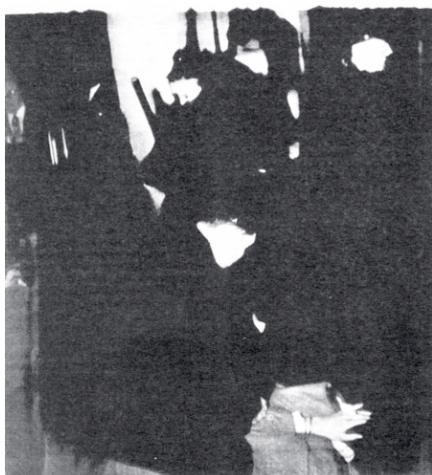
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# Situationist News

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SITUATIONISTISCHE INTERNATIONALE



At the beginning of an article published last winter in the review *Dissent* (volume VIII, number 1), Edwin M. Schur observed with a touch of melancholy:

Regular drug users are increasingly becoming avant-garde heroes and modern scapegoats at the same time. Jack Gelber, William Burroughs, Alexander Trocchi and others have stimulated interest in the “junky” lifestyle. According to Norman Mailer, these rebels even consider the use of narcotics to be part of a new radicalism, justified somewhat by the futility of current opposition in strictly political terms! In truth, “the end of ideology” has seen its own terrible realization. ...

Our comrade Alexander Trocchi was fortunately able to return to Europe at the end of May 1961. As there are a number of rumors circulating, the editors of *Internationale Situationniste* are not in a position to officially confirm whether he escaped the persecutions of the New York police by secretly cross-

ing the Canadian border. In spite of the monstrous imbecility of the accusation, which was clearly demonstrated by two earlier situationist publications, we can be sure that this affair is by no means over.

Modern society is currently based in twenty highly industrialized nations, where every tendency of its transformation and the essential phenomena of its crisis are constituted. The countries in question are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States (this list matches almost exactly that of nations that have sufficient technological capacities to produce nuclear arms). The situationist movement already extends to 11 of these 20 nations — more than half. We have even reached a proportion approaching 2/3 if we discount those countries outside the European majority: indeed the situationist organization, which spreads from this zone, has reached 9 nations out of 14.

In Munich in January, a common declaration by the German and Swedish sections of the SI, *The Avant-garde is Undesirable!*, was published on the occasion of a modernist cultural exhibition disrupted by our comrades. This pamphlet, signed by Kunzelmann, Prem, Sturm and Zimmer on the one hand; St-

effan Larsson, K. Lindell and J. Nash on the other, and thrown into the crowd at the opening, declared that “if an avant-garde puts the very meaning of life into question and goes in search of the realization of the claims of this field of operations, it finds itself cut off from all social possibility. The aesthetic by-products of the avant-garde — paintings, films and poems, etc. — instantly become desirable and completely ineffectual. What is undesirable is the program of an entirely new organization of the conditions of life that will alter the very basis of society.”

Some time earlier, the German section published a manifesto on the festival, notably declaring: “Boycott all systems and all conventions in power! They have lost the game. ... The festival is the unpopular art of the people. Creativity makes its festival with all things through continuous recreation. Just as Marx discovered a scientific revolution, we have discovered a festive revolution. ... A revolution without festivals is not a revolution. There is no artistic freedom without the power of the festival. ... Our demand is the most serious of games.”

The Central Council of the SI met for the second time in Paris from 6 to 8 January. Most of its work was devoted to the study of the construction of an experimental city, beginning with a few conditions put forth by an Italian cultural center. The SI admitted that they could only pursue these talks in the perspective of recognizing the right of the builders to organize the entire lifestyle

of this zone; the permanent arrangement of 20% of the buildings; and the right to destroy the buildings if they became obstacles to rearrangement (this last precondition has since brought an end to the negotiations). Kotányi proposed presenting this project as a city of therapeutic play, emphasizing that “the therapeutic ideas of modern psychology have never been realized in a structure”; and, more precisely, to consider the realization of the architecture described by Sade. He also showed that “the military industry is the present measure of society’s total technical capacity. Our projects imply techniques that notoriously supersede the capacities of the construction industry. It must therefore be admitted that more militarily oriented experiments hold a

great deal of interest for us” (for example the cyclotron in Geneva, produced with the combined resources of several States). Jorn approved, observing that “for those who possess cultural resources, artists are cave dwellers whose only right is to go in search of metallic industrial debris to use in their sculptures. We will correct this little error! Modestly, we are declaring our right to *initiate modern art*, that is, to emerge from the caves of artistic civilization.” Jörgen Nash specified that “every utopian construction is formulated on the basis of an ideal city. We are against the ideal. We have to critique the idealist perfectionism in the old utopian conception (and thus critique Fourier). We will not settle for what is merely *satisfactory*.” The Council adopt-

ed a number of basic hypotheses for the definition of this experimental micro-city, on an uninhabited island off the southern coast of Italy.

H. Prem, in place of Sturm, who was unable to make it to this session, brought the Council’s attention to the undignified treatment reserved for Norman Mailer by the American media and police, who had discredited a subversive intellectual under the pretext of assaulting his wife with a knife. The council decided on the publication of a special issue of our German journal on UU; and finalized the plan for *Internationale Situationniste* #6. Nash submitted a number of questions to the Council, concerning the logistical organization of the Göteborg conference.

The third session of the Central Council took place in Munich from 11 to 13 April. Besides tending to current matters, the council decided to adopt sanctions in response to the pressure exerted two weeks earlier by the art dealer Van de Loo. This person, more or less involved with the Ruhr's bourgeois enterprise of the attempting to reinvent unitary urbanism to their own ends, believed he could resort to economic blackmail toward four German situationists who were financially dependent on his offices, threatening them with dismissal if they did not repudiate certain aspects of the SI's activities (namely Debord). The German situationists instantly chose to break with the dealer. Immediately after, he sent a telegraph promising them a tidy sum if they would only resume relations with him. They did not respond to what they considered a bad joke, thus obliging "the acquirer" to explain later that his clumsy telegram was indeed a joke, pure and simple (this was obviously the first time in his life that he had joked about the question of money). This remarkable affair, unique in the history of the cultural avant-garde, at least by some aspects whose weight is not original in the least, has unfortunately led to the loss of Maurice Wyckaert. Wyckaert, also linked to the dealer, although with a considerably wealthier base, made it known to everyone that he would only

break with Van de Loo if the latter broke with the SI first. But the Council found it perfectly unacceptable to even think that the dealer had any freedom to "to break with the SI" when he had absolutely nothing to do with them. He simply had tentative license to mix in SI matters as an art dealer entertaining personal relationships with several situationists; and through threats and promises, had aimed at nothing less than to create a part for himself in the SI, with the intention of weakening its politics. Wyckaert was therefore excluded.

The same session of the Council accepted the resignation of Asger Jorn in view of various personal circumstances that would make his participation in the organized activity of the SI extremely difficult — he has nevertheless demonstrated his complete accord with the SI. The Council, momentarily reduced to four members by these departures, agreed not to reconvene before the next conference of the International, at which it will be redesigned.

On a completely different subject, Mr Jean Cau, in the *Express* of 27 July, writes that Metz station, "built with somber Germanic delirium, will host the next Conference of the Surrealist International." In fact, the fifth Conference of the Situationist International, which will gather in the days that fol-

low, will convene in the Swedish port of Göteborg on the 28 August.



**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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