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de-programiranje zastarelosti

FOR de-programming
for Obsoleone!

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FACULTY of De-programming for Obsolescence!

WELCOME! A/ Konference!

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WELCOME!

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Book

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HS -> sitting in

Jakob -> Free U from anti-hist (Imk) blog

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Nikoleta -> original 'heresy text'

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Woman uni A Rich

photo of whole
close ups
cut up cards

footage -> 30 mins - seminar

footage -> 30 min cut ~ Jam

petar on floor

Zoran G - original image of 'message 10'

Print Kasper text

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You too can be a leftist activist!

2nd part: Leftist conferences and summer schools

Group for Orgonotherapy by Communism

Our series of useful articles about leftist movement in the former Yugoslavia continues with this text about leftist conferences and summer schools. You too can be a leftist activist! Let's go to the conference!

What's a conference and what's its purpose?

Seminars and conferences are an important part of the life of every activist: activists meet other activists at conferences and pursue networking, but the relevance of conferences does not consist solely in this fact. A conference represents an essence of leftist activism: if you are present at a conference, you're an activist; if you're an activist, you'll be found at a conference. Activism and visiting conferences are inseparable from each other; like flesh and bone, like Laurel and Hardy, like a senior university professor and his female assistant, which is at the same time his wife or his sister, or both (according to the § 18 of the University Regulation Bill, the incest taboo does not apply to senior teachers holding the rank of professor). A conference is one special kind of culmination to leftist activism, and that's why all the activists depart from them (after they're finished) in quite a joyfull mood. It's as if they were participating in a huge swinging sex party. Actually, participation at conferences is a kind of complex sexual intercourse, and at the same time an unavoidable *rite de passage*, because every genuine activist, if they are to be seen as genuine, has to go through this initiation. Once the activists have been thrown in to the 'fire' of conference discussions, they develop an addiction for them, especially when they are receiving fees for participating in them. One could say that conferencing represents something like opium for the wide mass of activists. Therefore, a conference, a seminar, a summer school or a series of useful lectures is at the core of activism.

The meeting of experts and activists is nothing new. It could be traced back hundreds of years, but only in recent times have they been held at such an intensive tempo and in a new form, especially since the organising of them has come to be financed by certain political foundations. In this way one could talk about their being quite a new phenomena. Ten or only five years ago, conferences were quite rare on the left scene in the former Yugoslavia and only a few events happened regularly: the anarchist bookfair and conference in Zagreb (Croatia), followed by some other smaller events also in Zagreb; there was also the 'May school' of DPU (The Workers and Punks' University) in Ljubljana (Slovenia), which was more oriented toward students and academic aspirants. Later there were some seminars in Novi Sad (Serbia) and some other smaller events in other cities. Nowadays the number of events has already reached an immense number and one can find them in almost every village in the region between Austria and Greece. Because wherever you find a leftist group, there is sure to be some kind of networking with conferences, seminars, summer schools etc...

The number of such events is growing according to the rules of arithmetic progression, because the number of activists is supposedly growing and each of them wants to organize at least one conference, seminar or summer school of their own. In this way they want to take upon themselves the responsibility for our emancipation. And funders are glad to support such an activism. This is the reason why we can no longer talk about single events, which are happening every now and then, with a more or less regular rhythm, but instead, about one huge connected series of the meetings. This is the way we arrived at having one big leftist circus which goes from one town to another, from one conference to another, jumps from one seminar to another, goes from summer to autumn schools, from one presentation, promotion, festival... to another one. This phenomenon repeats itself every single year in the same way, each time with the same topics, participants and lecturers. It's only once in a while that some new faces can be seen amidst the same old experts. However, the effect of such a Groundhog Day is deceptive, because that's, actually, the strategy of the activists: in this manner we're developing our own experts and establishing, tactically, our own hegemony in the 'public sphere'.

What is hegemony, what is the public sphere, how are these two related to each other? How is hegemony related to positions of the

power? Does hegemony emerge in public discourse from a position of power or does this power of public discourse emerge from a previously established hegemony? These questions aren't posed. Or have they been solved long time ago? Whatever the answers are to these questions, conferences are producing experts for a future socialist party, a future trade union and, of course, a future Council of People's Commissars, which together will introduce, control and coordinate the process of re-industrialization of the former Yugoslavia. Following on from this isn't the implementation of a socialist self-management system (Version 2.0) to be expected? In other words, the conference-system helps us to produce specialists and knowledge-owners of our own. Such experts are called cadres. Because those who have already participated thirty times in conferences with the same topic(s), are supposed to be experts. And that's why they are cadres. One is a cadre, while he or she is an expert. Or is he/she an expert, because he/she is a cadre? Whatever. In any case, that's our strategy and that's why the only difference between, for example, Misa Brkic (as neoliberal ideologist) and Goran Music (as a socialist one) is the fact that the latter works for our cause. That's our logic. One could also say, the key distinction between (neo)liberal and socialist policy in our corner of the world consists only in the different names of the actors (agents) of those two sides. The ideological structures backstaging their actions and their internal logic is the very same. However, we don't care about these kinds of 'unconstructive criticism'.

Even though the number of conferences has multiplied in recent years, their quality lags behind the numbers of attendees. However, questioning their quality and content isn't relevant, because these conferences aren't organized with the intention of having any kind of quality in the usual meaning of the word. There's not any 'higher' goal behind them nor any kind of meaningful content inside them. Nothing is achieved through them. They make no special contribution. Their basic purpose is to serve to promote of our own experts: they are supposed to raise both the symbolic value and the social capital of the expert's i.e. to accelerate networking. In this way, we're working on raising their own standing in the academic field, which dialectically feeds into having a positive impact on our own growing hegemony in the wider society. I think you too notice this connection.

Our experts are coming from the academic field: this field is their playground and it gives them their daily bread. However, ever more

marginalised in the Academy, they are forced to leave (temporarily) this field and jump into the field possessed by leftist activists. They are welcomed into this new realm and treated as experts. They're our big shots, our holders of a certain amount of symbolic capital. That's why they are giving us lectures, talking in our conferences, publishing their texts and deservedly receiving fees from us. With this multiplied social and symbolic capital, our experts, after some time, return to their place of origin (the Academy) and transform their newly gained standing into one form of advancement or another. This new promotion could be further progression] inside the academic field (in the form of new posts or senior professorships), or it could be membership in one or another of the various government commissions, or in some other kind of advancement in one of the burgeoning state apparatuses. A section of these experts leaves us permanently, but we're thankful for all that they did for us. The other section (the majority) stays with us, not only to make us happy, but also to establish a kind of permanent accumulation of capital on the road where the Academy and Activism meet.

Sometimes, however, it happens that one of our old acquaintances, an old cadre, a former activist, one of those we loved and admired so much, and who let us down by abandoning us - because they find a [better life in the Academy - decides to return to the field of activism. But this turnaround does not provoke joy in all activist circles. But no-one talks about it. That said, it's important to mention that we shouldn't be afraid of such a development: they didn't come back to remain with us, but to use us to prolong their existence inside the academic field. Our old-new friends are joining us only temporarily, because they need to top up their kudos-credits to further boost their academic careers. In their opinion the easiest way to gain those credits is to rejoin us for a year or two. That's why they will be with us for only one or two project-periods (btw: project-period is the basic time-measure in the activist field), only up until they collect as much symbolic capital as they can. After that they'll disappear in the same mysterious manner in which they had previously shown up. There are many examples of such behavior, but one of the most recent and also the most revealing is the case of the re-born academic activist, Aleksej Kisjuhas, a sociologist from Novi Sad.

The dynamic between the Academic and Activist fields has a positive influence not only on the Academy, but on the activists too. Through

the engagement of academics in the activist cause, there grows the 'weight' of those activist or donor circles which have been engaging the academics in the first place. And this has a knock-on effect on those activists who were just passively standing around in the presence of the academic experts. The summary presence of the academics in our own circles raises the value of our circles and our selves. In this way - and this can't be repeated often enough - we're strengthening our own hegemony in the public, because we will at last have our own guys among 'them' (the decision makers in the public sphere), and our own guys (i.e. academics-activists) will promote, at every opportunity, our own ideas and agendas somewhere in the structures of the state. This is why the university professor and his young apprentice are the most important revolutionary subjects. And this is why we're happy to welcome into our own field every Alpar Losonc, or whatever those professors are called, because our strategy functions symbiotically: it's good for both sides. To repeat it once more: it's a win-win situation.

However, just the fact that the field of quasi-political activism can be so tempting for academics attracts our attention. It's not as if academics don't already have other opportunities for accumulating symbolic capital and for doing their routine academic work. It's as if they are forced to leave their own field just to gain the possibility of fulfilling the latter: researching, giving lectures, writing and publishing texts. In the end they receive their own academic salary as well as fees paid by the activists. Above all they manage to transform the credit they gain into a form of advancement in the Academy, which shows they are gleaned at least triple benefits from their own 'political engagement'. This is how Activism subsidizes the Academy. The example described here serves as a paradigm for thousands of activists, because they are already dreaming of moving on one day from Activism into filling one of the many posts within the state apparatuses. And who knows, maybe they will find their way into the Academy?

This is why the goal of conferences must be the inclusion of every young leftist person in the process of accumulation of symbolic and social capital, because all of us are making profit from it. It's similar to a scene from *The Matrix* in which humans serve as batteries. Inclusion in this process always starts as passive participation (which doesn't mean that passive is any less important) because the passive participation of the majority still plays an important role

for the profiling and advancement of the minority. Anyhow, even those who participate in a passive way are gaining credit just through participating i.e. being the recipients of symbolic capital, which they can cash in later on, by, for example, eventually writing their own Revolutionary CV. Furthermore passive participation represents one precondition for active participation: if the gods are merciful, some confused youngsters could later on take on a more active role in this process. First their presence at conferences could become more regular, then they could be engaged as auxiliary staff on some smaller-scale events. Soon after this they could, if the aforementioned gods are in a good mood, take over moderation tasks at the various conferences and summer schools. At the end of their apprenticeship they are the ones who are writing texts, giving lectures and editing their own publications etc. Finally when they're fully grown up, they're organizing their own conferences. In other words, the cumulative goal of conferences is to empower participants to organize conferences of their own.

One example of this development could be the Belgrade group 'Center for the Politics of Emancipation' (CPE). The group itself came out as a product of one conference (Summer school in Novi Sad in 2010) and the name given to the group is such that it was a snug fit with the program of grant giving political foundation. The fact that one member of this group worked at the same time for this exact foundation is pure coincidence, but it came to be very convenient. Last but not least, the goal of this group was to organize as many conferences as it could, because organizing conferences is without doubt the highest and noblest form of emancipation.

The example of this group also came to throw a light on the efficacy of the policy of those decision-makers from the foundation who invested in it and supported its activities. If the lively world of Yugoslav leftists could be described in economic and stock-exchange terms, this group would be the toxic waste amidst the stocks. They screwed up every opportunity they had and discredited every model they copied: they took the organization of the 'classic' leftist summer school and now there are no 'classic' leftist summer schools left. Beside this, their stupidity scared away many experts and as a consequence they sabotaged the continuing accumulation of symbolic capital. These are the reasons why everybody wants to keep them at a distance, although not too far removed: members of CPE are still very close to the center of money and power in the foundation. A few wrong words and a bit more critique, and the financial outcome

could be very negative for those who are doing the criticizing. This is why despite all the problems with the CPE's policies, those agents in the leftist orbit still want to maintain good relations with them, which also tells us something about cynicism and hypocrisy in leftist circles. But we will make a more detailed analysis in Chapter 3 when we talk about networking on the left scene. For the moment we will leave the aforementioned Belgrade group to one side, but we won't forget it and it will pop-up every now and then in our texts: this group serves as a good example and by analyzing it we can learn a lot.

The rhythm of conferences

What does an annual conference plan look like? When do you usually organize a conference? Is the summer reserved only for the summer schools, or are more creative solutions possible?

One could say that the winter months aren't the best time of the year for conferences: the first months of the year are to be used to summarize the previous year and to develop the plans for the following period. Warming up should start with the first signs of spring, when the comrade socialists, just as with the nature that surrounds them, are waking up from their winter sleep. March is an ideal moment to begin the conference season, which speeds up during April and culminates in May as this month represents the revolutionary month. Therefore, if you plan to organize your own conference, plan it for May, but be careful because there'll be stiff competition. May is the month when the permanent leftist circus starts: every 2nd day there is an event at which well-known experts are visiting other already well-known experts, and explaining well known things to each other. Favorite topics for the May events are tendency of the rate of profit to fall, analyses of the global financial crisis and the search for a leftist answer to the challenges of the capitalist crisis. The May events could continue deep in to June, but they should be finished before the end of the June, so that lecturers can rest a little, regain their strength and prepare themselves for the next round of conferences.

The first weekend of July marks the beginning of the next round: this is the season of the summer schools. Summer schools are held so that the impoverished part of the leftist community can also participate in some activity whilst also going on a summer holiday. In other words, a summer school is an event made for the poor and anonymous.

For the celebrities (lecturers and famous activists), summer schools are just an introduction to the summer season: they are there just to collect their fees, so that afterwards they can continue their journey to the seaside. This is why the summer season should be finished by the beginning of August. There should be one month in the year when everybody's resting even though, whilst some rest in the 13th floor of an apartment block, there's others that rest on some sandy beach on the Adriatic coast. However, one shouldn't be envious, because, for many of the agents, the August holiday is just a transition phase between the summer and autumn seasons. This is why their holidays aren't as relaxed as it maybe appears. Considering themselves members of a 'creative class', they need to work when they rest, and they are resting when they're working. It's not unusual to see them listening an audio-recording of the latest lectures of Michael Heinrich (or, why not, Slavoj Zizek) between several games of beach volleyball.

The Autumn season starts quite early. Beginning in the last weekend of August it intensifies in September and October, and reaches a peak in November. The Autumn season serves the purpose of hearing those same experts talking about those same topics in front of a more-less similar audience, only now, the latter are in autumn colors. An additional purpose is to support the financially weakened lecturers if they were extravagant during summer holidays. Or to support them in their preparation for the following winter months. The Autumn series can last until the middle of December, mostly because annual production is always delayed, so everything that remains to be done, must be done in December. In other words, December is the month for promotions, books presentations and final seminars. Around the 20th of December all these events are coming to their end. There follows a very short rest, the New Year celebrations, and soon after that preparations begin for the up and coming conference season and the next round of totally creative, relevant and radical topics. Such as, for example, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, analyses of the global financial crisis and the search for a leftist answer to the challenges of the capitalist crisis.

Various categories of conference and types of lecturer

One could say there are two types of conference. On the one hand, there are those standard, boring and unrepresentative ones, which can bring you only one or two points on the leftist scale of impor-

tance. But, on the other hand, there are those fancy, exciting and representative conferences, which are offering loads of symbolic capital and unimaginable possibilities for networking. This is the reason why many of the agents are going to the events organized by Belgrade's CPE group or those organized by the 'Gerusija' group of Novi Sad, yet only if they're forced to or so as to gain access to participation at some other (better) events. This is also why many of the agents on the left scene were literary fighting to participate in the conference about the Praxis school of philosophy, held on the Croatian island of Korcula in 2011. Just the choice of location for this event had a heavy symbolic weight as it marked a return to the place of this school's origin (or better, a return to the crime scene!). And if one managed to get a place at Korcula as a lecturer and used the opportunity to show his/her eloquence in front of the other participants, his/her immortality was preserved for the coming generations. Only 3 years later, there are already half a dozen epic songs about this legendary event (and the really important discussions held at it) which leftist activists all over the former Yugoslavia are singing...

However, sometimes 'low-level' events can be also attractive: their organizers are often attempting to attract lecturers with seductive offers and to do all they can to please them (if they accept the offer). Therefore never reject an offer to give a lecture at some small-scale event, because they will meet not just your traveling and accommodation costs, but they will finance everything else that you need. If it's necessary, they will sacrifice a virgin just for you! A leftist one, of course...

One of the most exclusive places for activists and lecturers, especially over the last 3 years, is the Subversive Festival in Zagreb (Croatia). It occurs, of course, in May. How relevant this Festival has become, is visible both in the struggle to participate in it and in the division of roles that comes about. Subversive is the place to be: you have to be there, to see it and to be seen. There is no better place to follow the dynamics of the most popular sport activity in the former Yugoslavia: showing off. This is why the clear segregation of lecturers is an important part of this event. There is, first, a group of 3rd class lecturers and workshop-trainers. They give their lectures and workshops in dark corners. They're marked out as the 'young forces of our movement'. They are followed by a group of experienced activists and representatives of the 'partner

groups', who are permitted to sit on uncomfortable chairs whilst giving their lectures. There is also a group of 2nd class experts, which mostly consists of PhD students and all those who have special socialist qualifications in parapsychology. At the end there are celebrities i.e. Slavoj Zizek and his buddies i.e. all those who are allowed to drink as much coffee and mineral water as they want at the costs of the organizers. If the gods are merciful, celebrities will also have an opportunity to meet a living representative of the high state and shake his/her hand. Although the Subversive Festival emplaces a strict division among its guests – or exactly because of it – it became a prestigious event. Therefore, each participant, even those accidental passersby who just happen to use the toilet in the nearby premises, counts this involvement as creditable and add it to their CV. One could say this conference system functions in a similar way to the real estate market: the value of real estate (i.e. conference, seminar or summer school) depends not on its production costs (invested effort and money, material used, its size and quality etc.), but from the assessment of its potential to generate symbolic and social capital i.e. to produce surplus profit.

Typical for conferences and especially summer schools is that lecturers never prepare for their lectures. Often they don't know which topic they'll have to talk about, what purpose the event is supposed to have or why they are present there in the first place. However, the fact is they didn't just come to give a lecture, but to take the fee that has been promised as they can't survive solely from their PhD scholarships and in attending they are co-financing themselves. It's part of a sad story about the precarious lives of the cognitive labor force. Some of them, though, really don't have a clue about the topics they are supposed to lecture about, and that's the case with experts from, for example, groups like CPE, 'Gerusija' and others. But, moreover, their participation is always less the result of their 'competence', and more about the fact that they are friends or cousins of the conference organizers. On the other side, the famous activists and celebrity experts are expected to give us lectures, often improvised and filled with boring anecdotes and bad jokes, which aren't directly connected with the announced topics. Srecko Horvat and other followers of this lecturing style have accepted this approach after their experiences with Slavoj Zizek. And, maybe, if we consider the logic of capital accumulation, this approach is not wrong at all as it brings maximal profit with minimal investment. Sometimes, however, we also witness

interesting and relevant lectures, although they are quite rare in our conference world. And even if they turn out this way, you simply can't avoid having the impression they are actually just a kind of pretext to avoid having the affirmed intellectuals alienated from a new generation of experts. The former are also attending these events to expand their social capital and to become buddies with the 'young lions'. This was the case, for example, with Boris Buden at the summer school 2011.

Favorite topics, literature and references

Which topics are the most popular? Which favourite texts and books are read by a majority of conference participants? Who is quoting who and who is referring on whom? Is there some kind of list of desirable or maybe undesirable authors? Being an event of such relevance, the conference demands at least some kind of preparation, and this preparation is made through a selection of desirable literature, authors and topics. The selection is made by the most competent experts among the experts, in order to prepare, as best as possible, the wide masses for the ensuing revolutionary transformation. Such a preparation is just one puzzle in the big plan of our wise (although still virtual) socialist party.

The number of topics set for these conferences is relatively limited and they can be divided into several groups. First of all, we're dealing with the crisis of capitalism. Our favorite topic in this group is the tendency of the rate of profit to fall: this is why this topic is invariably present on our agendas and why our experts are dragging it from one summer school to another. Another popular topic is the recent financial crisis, which sometimes can be broadened and transformed into an historical overview of the development of capitalism. This is why we gladly talk about the 'golden age of capitalism', the 'neoliberal offensive' or of 'post-fordism'. Every now and then one can find 'socialist modernization' as an agenda item, and this, too, sometimes expands into a whole variety of topics. When such a development occurs, the central point is the Yugoslav experience of self-management: starting with worker-councils and socialist pluralism in Yugoslavia and ending up with the cultural avant-garde and, especially, the 'black-wave cinema' of the '60s and '70s. A favorite problem of the last few years has been the 'culture of remembrance' and the socialist monuments dedicated to the memory of the partisans of WWII. This is just a basic offer, which can be

upgraded and varied however you want it. But, whatever the topics are, there is always a similar approach in their presentation: an expert versed in the problem of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall explains to us, firstly, just what this is and then concludes with how this phenomenon can have an influence upon cultural policy, minority rights, social sciences, networking among socialists, the weather forecast or some such else. The audience favors this approach and admires it, and, with the experts expanding their fields of expertise, everybody at the conference is happy.

There is a 2nd big group of topics and their common moment is the dilemma of what would be a good response of the left movement to the challenges of the contemporary capitalist crisis. In this group we can really find everything: the Yugoslav experience of self-management (again!), ideas around the re-industrialization of those already de-industrialized regions and countries, the empowerment of the LGBT movement, the inclusion of the Roma population into the leftist network, historical revisionism, the precarious destiny of young scientists, how to grow your own feminism, how to grow tomatoes in a suburb of the Greek city, the revolutionary alliances of Spanish 'cognitive labor force', education for hegemony in the public sphere, empowerment for the organization of your own conference... In other words, just name it, we have it! If we don't have it, you don't want it!

When these topics coalesce they result in a typical leftist conference. The first panel deals with, for example, the global financial crisis, its origins, causes and the tendency of the profit rate to fall. The second panel can deal with its manifestations and includes lectures on the crises in Greece and Spain, as well as the already 100 times repeated lecture about historical revisionism in the former Yugoslavia. The third and fourth panel are trying to point out the possible alternatives and answers of the socialist movement to the challenges of the global economic crisis. In this sense they are referring to the various (half) successful examples all over the world and remind us of the experience of Yugoslav self-management, especially pointing out the revolutionary potential of the 'black wave cinema' of the early 1970s. The fifth panel - if there is one - usually deals with some other, mostly marginal and boring topics. This is what a typical conference agenda looks like, but the variations are possible (and desirable).

Every genuine leftist activist in the region of the former Yugoslavia - if he's genuine enough - knows how to follow the unspoken recommendations of the experts and reads only that literature that can be found on an informal list of desirable texts and books. With such an informal list, the movement itself takes care to minimize misconceptions concerning leftist theory. Therefore everybody tries to follow the signs and to read according to the prescribed line. Because if you do otherwise, you'll get a 'red card' and you could be excluded. There are some examples of this.

One of our experts (it was Primoz Krasovec from Ljubljana) had mentioned in one of his texts - in one quite unexpected moment of self-criticism, although he considered it as his critique of some abstract 'others' - 'most common quoted authors' at the seminars and conferences. Krasovec's list included 'Michel Foucault, Tony Negri and Michael Hardt, Deleuze and Guattari, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe', although, really, those aren't the most referred-to or most popular authors. For example, Deleuze and Guattari are closer to being considered as undesirable rather than as popular authors. Instead of them, one list of 'relevant' authors for the former Yugoslav left comprises of, for example, David Harvey, Samir Amin, Ursula Hughes, Slavoj the-eternal-one Zizek, Carlo Vercellone, Giorgio Agamben, Rastko Mocnik, the whole German critical theory and a few representatives of the Praxis philosophy. Sometimes leftists also like to refer to Pierre Bourdieu, then to one reduced version of Louis Althusser's texts, as well as to the chapter about fetishism in Marx's *Capital* and (strangely enough) to John Maynard Keynes. Authors who have recently become popular include the old Yugoslav economist Branko Horvat, the German economist Michael Heinrich and some other (more-less) marginal authors. The top leftist experts are especially fond of the marginal i.e. unknown and sometimes even 'esoteric' authors. Their affinity, for example, for largely unknown writers whose texts are published only in the German language, represents part of their symbolic capital and a strategy for its enlargement: it strengthens the mystery surrounding their expert status and their position of exclusive owners of secret knowledge.

On the other side, there is one list of informally forbidden authors and texts: they aren't officially forbidden, there's no such a thing as 'Index librorum prohibitorum', but those who know how to read the signs and hints, will know which texts and writers to avoid. This list includes all those, whose concepts could in some way dis-

turb the dominant leftist strategies and tactics. This is why it's recommended to use Bourdieu and Foucault only in the small dose, as well as Althusser, which is good only if you write something general about ideology - for more, it's better to find some other author to refer to. Anyway, Althusser was always one undesirable reference among leftist academics in ex-Yugoslavia and it should stay that way. The same applies to Alain Badiou: being proclaimed as 'un-relevant', should be avoided. A similar judgment attaches to one other, very unpopular name among leftist experts, namely Nicos Poulantzas. Our ideologists will already know why it is the way it is.

These lists of desirable and undesirable authors are pretty much informal: a flexible border line runs between them which is being permanently corrected (By whom? Nobody knows). This fluctuation puzzles most of the agents on the leftist scene, but nobody admits it. Because even the slightest admission would discredit them as weak and any genuine leftists can be many things but not weak. Therefore, if one is truly a leftist activist, if one travels from one conference to another, from one summer school to another, if one allows oneself to be emancipated and to permanently emancipate others, one will learn how to follow the relevant trends and to differentiate the desirable from the undesirable literature. This can be learnt although full knowledge may encounter a delay of 6-12 months as the best way to be in-the-know is to pour over the conference reader and this is only usually available 6-12 months after the conference. Even with such a delay, this is still the best way for one to be certain that one is following the right revolutionary path. It could be said that the first step in the pursuit of hegemony in the public discourse is to establish hegemony at the left side of political spectrum.

As soon as our puzzled leftist youngster learns what is right and what is wrong, as soon as he find him or her self adapting as best as he or she can to the unspoken directions, he or she can claim for him or herself to be genuine socialist i.e. leftist activist. After this, there are only a few small steps remaining to become a totally emancipated cadre and, last but not least, to come in to the position of organizing a conference, seminar or summer school.

December 2013

ORGONETHERAPY
 REJECTIONS
 AMIZ


 The image shows a piece of crumpled paper with handwritten text in black ink. The text is written vertically and reads "ORGONETHERAPY REJECTIONS AMIZ". To the left of the text, there is a large, hand-drawn arrow pointing upwards. The paper is wrinkled and has some faint markings, possibly from a previous page or another document.

‘Sitting In’ from Autodidacticism to Unconsciousness Raising

Howard Slater

“hulaybaswahulaybaswa”
Milford Graves¹

1. I soon tired of the rigmarole of formal education. Other elementals soon took a hold of me, elements of a raw culture that were not on any syllabus directed my desire to know towards the renegades: beats, anarchists, punks, situationists. I dropped out. It seemed, even back in the 1970s, that formal education was neither about learning nor desire. It was a pragmatic endeavour. A means to an end. And the end was some kind of qualifier: a description of a standing; a means of slotting in to one or another of the social categories from which to trade the self on the labour market. Formal education, with its culpabilising judgements, its ratiocinations of grading, its delusions of grandeur, was just not perverse enough. It was non-epistemophilic. It was there to make sure that social intensities didn't arise and that strange libidinal mixes never happened. Interested in poetry, I was advised to seek work writing greetings cards.

2. I became an autodidact without knowing what this word was. I never called myself an autodidact. I called myself a poet for a while and then quickly didn't call myself anything. This non-status enabled me to shape-shift into the world of nine-to-five work as a form of creative self dis-in-

1 Milford Graves in *Conversations*, William Parker, RogueArt, 2011, p.39.

vestment. I learned from the egolessness of other self-exiled singularities and drew from the storehouse of potentialities that helped accrue in us a sense of potent deferment and possible impact. So, my desire-to-know would take place outside any institution, it would remain 'pure', embittered and, maybe, debilitatingly oppositional; it would be fed by a free-associative glide through books and records: the small print gave clues, the scratched slogans in run-off grooves became tiny manifestos through which to see music and to tongue through strange words. Desire would be the method and this desire would sustain me through the working day. To know, to become conscious, to feel I belonged to what Ashis Nandy has described as an "ethically sensitive and culturally rooted social knowledge" was, though I didn't know it at the time, a kind of credo for me.²

3. There was an 'ethics' to knowing as knowing could be power, it could enable one to 'rise above', and at the same time there was a whole social knowledge contained in political and cultural movements that, as many jazz players always said, one could contribute to rather than compete with and stand out against. Being literally terrified of competition and resistant to 'proving myself', this was where I felt at home: in a diffuse community that went back in time to the self-taught members of the Workers Movement and forward in time upon the still vibrant waves of a counter-culture movement that fed, in my youth, into the punk sensibility of doing-it-yourself: re-appropriating the means-of-expression and entering into what Felix Guattari called a 'process of singularisation'. Musician, Horace Tapscott, seems to sum up an autodidact experience well as he describes his attending what he terms as 'the sidewalk university': "I teach you something, and then what I taught you, you're teaching this other person, and it's coming back around with another flavour to it"³.

2 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, Oxford University Press India, 1983/2002, p.xvii.

3 Horace Tapscott, *Songs of The Unsung*, Duke University Press, 2001, p.27. Interestingly here, Tapscott, in using the first person singular is, within the context of the oral history method that informs this book, referring to the plural self of 'all' who attended the 'sidewalk university'.

4. What Tapscott is suggesting here, as well, for me, depicting singularity as a subjective 'flavour', is a form of learning from others that, led by desire, has neither ulterior motive nor institutional mediation. One could say, after Lev Vygotsky, that a key facet of being self-taught is that sharing knowledge in a social situation is akin to a 'zone of proximal development'⁴; there is a learning-by-doing which is in close contact with other people, that doesn't set out with an object in mind, with a sense of what is to be achieved, but which suspends, in some ways, what is 'already known' and chooses to improvise with the social relationships (and the history of these relationships) that the 'doing' itself establishes. In other words, maybe it can be said, that, for me at least, any sense of being an autodidact is closely related to experiences of playing music with others. Tapscott again: "I didn't go to a class to learn to write [music]. I went to the action to learn to write, looking and listening and asking questions and hearing it right away"⁵. Tapscott, here, seems to be hinting at what, in Vygotskian language, could be called 'learning leading development' rather than developmental goals or accreditable stages acting as determinations and stipulations of what is to be learned.⁶ Thus Tapscott, like many other musicians, can speak of a kind of endless development and continual learning as a situation of 'play' or, as the jazz term has it, 'sitting in': "They learned a little bit, you dig? They didn't walk a straight line; they learned as they walked"⁷.

5. This informality of learning that can lead playfully beyond the sliderule of developmental stages and monetary measurability, is a key facet of what it could mean to be an 'autodidact' and a key indicator of the autodidact's suspicion of the formal institution that is accompanied, often, with a sense

4 For more on the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky see Fred Newman and Lois Holzer's *Lev Vygotsky Revolutionary Scientist*, Routledge, 1993.

5 Tapscott, *ibid*, p.28.

6 Newman & Holzer, *ibid*, p.93.

7 Tapscott, *ibid*, p.83. Asked about his 'development' as a musician, Tapscott replies: "I don't think my music has changed that much or evolved, although it has deepened", *ibid*, p.170.

of being excluded from those institutions or self-excluding oneself for fear of becoming a 'pedagogic target', being seduced into walking a 'straight line'. Isn't there also something 'ethically insensitive' inculcated in such academic institutions? A deportment of learning, an attitude of superiority, a separateness, a sense of vacant entitlement that is just as off-putting? Isn't there, as its flipside, as the unconscious of such arrogance, the scotomatic sense of specialisation as a closing down of the desire-to-know and a hindering of the polymorphous perversity of a kind of free associative crossing across disciplines? So, specialisation, fitting for the management and valorisation of knowledge, maybe leads to a kind of withdrawal of libidinal interest in what it is possible to perceive and places a prohibition on any catalytic miscegenations that could arise. Moreover, when Christopher Bollas, in his critique of orthodox psychoanalysis, speaks of "the semi-paranoid dimension of the selective fact"⁸, he also hints at the competitive and defensive aura of academically transmitted knowledges that go into forming that alienated social relation fitting to the monetising practice of knowledge enclosure.

6. Informal knowledges, then, as an autodidact practice could be known, are in antagonism with 'expert knowledges', and in this way one could re-join with a dynamic of the class struggle. Is it not that our coming into an awareness of class seems to coincide with being 'operated' on by educational professionals who, to varying unconscious degrees, are personifications of the knowledge enclosures? Sadly for class struggle this form of didactic social relation with its own version of expertise ('class consciousness'), its own version of teacher and taught, has been reproduced wholesale in an attempt to both educate and discipline those 'informal knowledges' that characterise not just the working class, but excluded groups in general. This leads us into another area of autodidacticism that, following on from the reluctance to specialise, could be said to be one that embraces heterogeneity, that continually *differentiates* itself in an attempt to ward-off the pow-

8 Christopher Bollas, *The Freudian Moment*, Karnac Books, 2007, p.6.

er-shield of expertise and maintain the desiring drive of not just inquisitiveness, but of building cultural assemblages through which to learn and from which to speak. Here, then, is not just an increase in informality (in that no one place, no one institution, no one category, no one syllabus, can contain the flow of multiple elements in interaction), but the beginnings of a sense that the psyche itself is polyphonic; is wrought over by *differentiating* components and perceptions, multiple identifications, that go a long way to undermining the strictures of identity that, in some ways, are commensurable with the unity of a 'knowing' subject that can express something called 'knowledge'.

7. The formal education system seems more and more to be in the business of producing such unified subjects confident in what they know and untroubled by any raw molecular motions that can happen outside the protective boundaries of the enclosure. We have seen that this inviolable confidence comes from not just the specialised yet reductive forms of knowing that are its safely peer-reviewed products, but from its benign and patronising domestication of the wider social product of collective knowing and know-hows that Marx termed, 'general intellect'. Being driven by desire, the autodidactic impulse pushes out into this wider social knowing (playful and culturally rooted, proximal and informal) and comes to be overwhelmed by it; humbled and made ethically sensitive by the increase in interlocutors and connective tissue that such an immersion brings about. This self dis-investing nomadic position of being 'overwhelmed' is what undermines any unity of the knowing subject and from that can temper confidence before it becomes toxic inter-personal power. This unity, academically created, in part, by a 'witnessing back into the things he or she already knows'⁹ to paraphrase Hamid Dabashi, reproduces a kind of treadmill effect of 'expert knowledges' that come to have an 'unreal' ring to them; that come to take on the hue of an absurd and comedic displacement from the *real* of the social situatedness of knowledge. We

9 Hamid Dabashi, *The Arab Spring*, Zed Books, 2012 p.79.

could perhaps call this the abiding disembodied ignorance of those officially deemed to be the most intelligent! It would be amusing if it were not for the powerful global effects that these ‘expert knowledges’, through the personification of ‘unified subjects’, come to have upon all of us. Whether it be in the form of neo-liberal politicians and economists or the daily commands at places of work and leisure, this arrogant self-assuredness, this paralysing managerialism, is one of the outcomes of what Christopher Bollas has iconoclastically termed, ‘the theocracy of consciousness’.

8. So, to pick up the autobiographical thread again, what my experience of autodidacticism has brought about in me is an abiding struggle with the means of expression that has led to a certain driven discomfort, a kind of doubt-fuelled desire. Never being quite comfortable in ‘knowing’ and never being quite confident enough in the expression of this ‘knowing’. Whilst this undermines any controlling wielding of knowledge with the insistent entry of problematics such as ‘how to deploy what is known’ and ‘how best, in what form, to express what is known’, it also began to infer a parallel phase that could be called the ‘critique of knowledge’: ‘what is it to know?’ If I take it back a step, then always accompanying this ‘desire to know’ has been the ‘desire to know what shouldn’t be known’. The desire to know, then, has always been a means of rebelling against a ‘socially enforced ignorance’ that the formal education system is perpetually instilling. This fact of being ‘kept in the dark’ about a capitalist reality of suffering instills, in some, the desire to know how it came about, what its effects are and how to urgently change these. But does such a ‘knowing’ itself become reified? Does knowledge, even what could be called a ‘counter-knowledge’, become itself a vehicle for ‘socially enforced ignorance’? Is this ignorance now more a matter of ignorance of modes of feeling and their inter-relational effects, of exchanging passion for knowledge, of relying too much on a belief that knowing more about reality leads inevitably to a willed intervening in that reality? Is this what Bollas could mean by the ‘theocracy of consciousness’? That, consciousness, with its ‘oversight’ (often controlling in the manner of a ‘super-ego’) and with its reduplication of ideas shorn of

somatic causes, leads to what Ashis Nandy bemoaned as the ‘isolation of cognition from affect’, a short circuit that makes ‘expert knowledges’ seem, to many, abstract, disconnected, ‘unreal’ and shorn of speculative desire.

9. So, the perverse desire to know becomes the desire to know what cannot be known! Whilst this may be to take epistemophilia to the point of auto-asphyxiation, or, to, again, rejoin with the supra-personal ‘social knowledges’ (general intellect) that overwhelm and yet enable the singularisation (*differenting*) of the subject, this desire to know what cannot be known is a process of relinking cognition and affect by means of what has playfully been termed ‘unconsciousness raising’.¹⁰ In some ways the presence of doubt in what is known as well as the libidinal drive to know, reveal the presence of unconscious thought processes, that, if you like, become the free-associative drivers of ‘informal knowledges’. If in the educational institution the unconscious figures as a result of ‘repression’ that, as a matter of syllabus, instills the ‘unsaid’ and the ‘unsayable’ as a deficit of communication and hence de-experientialises ‘knowledge’, then, following Bollas, it could be said that autodidacticism and informal knowledges are highly informed by what Bollas refers to as the non-repressed unconscious: “Unconscious processes are not restricted to repressing unwanted ideas. As Freud pointed out there are non-repressed unconscious contents, and so, by implication there are unconscious processes that do not operate to repress contents but to form contents for other reasons”.¹¹ For Bollas, convinced as he is by our ability to dream (the ‘dream-work model’ of Freud), these other reasons, are creative reasons. Proximal and interventional reasons that Deleuze and Guattari termed ‘desiring-production’: “the common denominator or the co-extension of the social field and desire”¹². Through this affective filter the real loses its sense of being a *fait accompli* and unconscious thought processes,

10 I first came across this phrase in relation to the London-based Women’s Therapy Centre. See *In Our Own Experience: Workshops at the Women’s Therapy Centre*, ed. Sue Krzowski and Pat Land, Women’s Press, 1988.

11 Bollas, *ibid*, p.72.

12 Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, Athlone, 1984, p.30.

and their causative relation with affect, are admitted as having wider social effects than being simply the underlining factors of ‘personal problems’.

10. Just as, with the concept of the vast socially generated knowledges of the general intellect, it is impossible to know everything, so too the unconscious thought processes become the object of impossible knowledge that, not ‘knowable’ in themselves have unseen effects upon us. Both undermine the idea of a unified subject of consciousness and both offer a “vast network of creative combinations.”¹³ However, as Bollas offers, “most people are not interested in knowing what they think unconsciously”¹⁴. This lack of interest is maybe informed by the orthodox model of the unconscious as that which ‘contains’ unruly repressed contents which have been relegated to a scary primitive zone that needs domesticating in the presence of ‘expert knowledges’. That some of the creative aspects of unconscious thought processes – condensation, displacement, metaphorization, timelessness etc. – are, in the Freudian orthodoxy, placed at the service of repression, means that the reluctance to know what we think unconsciously is not only a means of robbing us of a means of expression in the service of a creativity-for-other-reasons, but this self-denial (this denial of an aspect of our existence with others) robs us of a tool for perceiving the full import of the social relations within which we subsist; how these relations are, to a degree, the emanation of communication between unconscious’s; communications that neither the knowledge of the autodidact nor that of the ‘expert’ is sufficient enough to equip them to perceive and utilise such ‘unconscious thought’ in the service of social critique.

11. When, twenty-five years after the first attempt, I finally did gain a formal qualification, it was a qualification in therapeutic counselling. Here, was another step on the road to the realisation that what I ‘knew’ was of very little help in discovering what it was I didn’t know. Maybe it’s more to

13 Bollas, *ibid*, p.27.

14 *ibid*, p.2.

the point to say that what I knew, in this new domain of the therapeutic, was something of a rampart, an intellectual defence against an expression of feelings, the very expression of which, having recourse to unconscious thought processes, is what can make our activity together a sensuous rather than a purely contemplative one. Crucial here was my experience of what is called ‘group process’. In this agenda-less improvisational setting there was no set topic to intellectualise through, there was nothing to produce... except a form of social relation that, although not explicitly stated, sought out causation in affect – a kind of sensitivity training, a concentrated listening. Here, then, was a cessation of the ‘sovereign exception’ that intellectuals (and here, with this phrase, we can link together the autodidact and the expert) often have recourse to through their ‘knowing’¹⁵. And, after all I have been saying thus far, in this cessation of my own ‘exceptionality’ (as a self taught white male), what I discovered amidst the group was not just my own intellectual will-to-power, my own self-image as ‘expert’, but along with this (and this is maybe another form that the anathema of unconsciousness raising takes) was that I too, despite having a counter-knowledge, suffered from societal ‘conditions of worth’, that I too was in need of approval and, as a result, the anxiety I felt at the onset of group process, was as much about my fear of other people’s rational apprehension of me. This sobering experience, one in which the *thought* of having critiqued capitalist social relations through *belief* alone was undone and experienced if not as a delusion, then as my being susceptible to the ‘theocracy of consciousness’, my being unable to practice what I preached or, underlying this, being just as much blindly susceptible to the unconscious communication of the vast array of injunctives (‘conditions of worth’) that make capitalist social relations what they are.¹⁶

15 Vic Seidler identifies this ‘sovereign exception’ as masculine trait: “So is it that men [...] often need to control relationships, feeling that they have a power to grant equality to others if their claims are considered rational”. See his *Rediscovering Masculinity*, Routledge, 1989, p.44.

16 The experience of ‘group process’, then, may, as I speculate retrospectively, have enabled the bringing into conjunction of the Spinozan concept of ‘common no-

12. It became clear to me, or at least clear in terms of becoming human, becoming anti-capitalist, that one of these injunctions was the prohibition placed upon the expression of feelings. Being in ‘group process’ enabled me to see this ‘common notion’ of feeling that subsisted beneath the oversights of consciousness and its ideological byways and bylaws. It was these feelings and the struggle amidst us to express them, that, it could be said, formed, to a large degree, the very ‘matter’ of unconscious thought processes; that thought, in this instance felt-thought, was a refutation of the ‘splitting-off’ of emotions, feelings and desires. These oversights, this sense of internal surveillance that puts a cap on expression of feelings and, in part, relegates feelings to a no-go zone, is in a way, a holding back from the playfulness of speculation and ‘transitivity’. However, the moment-by-moment changes in us, the perceptions of the internal effect of emotions generated by the social setting of group process may not have the language in which to be expressed. This lead at times to a deafening silence within the group, a silence that may ring out with what Nick Totton inspires me to describe as the two-dimensionality of mind-to-mind communication¹⁷. The ‘unconsciousness raising’ of my experience of ‘group process’, was then also an education in how affects can be embodied phenomena (affects as somatic knowledge) and also serve for us as a form of blindside thinking that, at the outset at least, may not require language and have roots in our pre-verbal experience. This could serve further to unpick Marx’s enigmatic statement that “the senses have [...] become theoreticians in their immediate praxis”¹⁸, with the senses here being expressed

tions’ with that of Marx’s ‘general intellect’. Deleuze says of this concept of common notion that they “are so named not because they are common to all minds, but primarily because they represent something common to bodies”. See Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, City Lights, 1988, p.54.

17 Nick Totton, *Not a Tame Lion: Writings on Therapy and its Social and Political Context*, PCCS Books, 2012, p.144.

18 Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, Penguin, 1975, p.352. One may have to query why for Marx the senses become ‘theoreticians’. Are the senses reduced to further means for scriptural rationalization? Or is Marx suggesting, as I’d like to think, that the

as affects and the praxis being constituted by the ‘aimless’ group working together to compose a social relationship by means of the group.

13. And, yet, the body wants to be expressed; there is a rising up that is more than language, more than the need to flatter, opinionate and control. Be it the nauseous band across the stomach or the guiltless expenditure of energy, the body wants to be expressed as a three dimensional entity, to break the theocratic and dimension sapping bounds of rationalising language and communicate with the ‘other-than-human’ and the ‘more than human’ that, if an ensemble instaurates itself, could propel each one of us beyond defining ourselves through what we know (trade in knowledge) and beyond our own protective enclosures (self policing our ‘conditions of worth’) towards a communication of unconscious’s that could free us from the trap of an individualism instaurated by the ‘socially enforced ignorance’ of our own repressed feelings. So, the desire to know what cannot be known, or what it is difficult to know, applies more to the mystery of our feelings and affects as it does to something that can be worked out and planned with rational logic alone. These latter objectifying impulses of ‘formal knowledges’ enclose us further away from the social ramifications of any being together and disable the forming of mutually *differencing* cultural assemblages. If anything, the ‘unthought known’ of feelings and affects that were profiled in my experience of ‘group process’ are what made my personal boundaries blur with ‘impersonal’ molecular receptiveness. This is maybe why Deleuze and Guattari refer to such ‘haecities’ as enabling the formation of what they call a ‘plane of immanence’: we enter into a sustainable process of composition (‘composing ourselves’ as groups) by means of our receptiveness, our ‘capacity to be affected’, our capacity to share feelings, to experience affect in common. In his book on Spinoza, Deleuze refers to this as a going “beyond reason... to intuitive intellect”,¹⁹

senses are forms of thought, forms of unconscious thought through which ‘desiring-production’ can take place?

19 Deleuze, *ibid*, p.58.

and, he infers that part of this, albeit provocative, ‘going beyond’ of reason, is propelled, not by abstract ideas, but by ‘common notions’: the somatic messages of feelings and affects that are common to bodies and which lead beyond knowledge and its didactic impulses towards a commonality rooted in the way, in capitalism, we embody, all of us, social contradictions which, with unconsciousness raising, we could share.

14. Is it possible, then, to ‘sit in’ with the ‘desire to know’, the ‘desire to know what shouldn’t be known’ and the ‘desire to know what can’t be known’? If we take all these as ‘developmental’ stages that have been passed through consecutively, and, in terms, of rational logic, have it that each stage has superceded the prior stage, then I would say that there could be no such ‘sitting in’, no such amenable inclusivity. Here, with the ‘splitting-off’ of separable stages, would be, then, an underlying pre-supposition of ‘formal knowledges’ and their preclusion of both informality and play, and moreover, their denuding us of an experience of simultaneity, transition and ‘proximal development’. However, if we apply the ‘lessons’ of unconsciousness raising and append these to both Bollas’s sense of a creative unconscious and to the notion of an embodied social contradiction, then I would suggest it is more than possible to ‘sit-in’; rather it could be said we are always ‘sitting in’ amidst ‘common notions’ constantly throughout our lives. I would say, further, that unconscious thought processes with their informed reliance on affectability and their intrareceptive sense of “bodies surpassing the knowledge that we have of them”²⁰ do more than ‘permit’ us to admit of a ‘simultaneity’ to our experience. They confirm this simultaneity of a non-repressed creative unconscious, that along with condensation, displacement, metaphorization and timelessness, form the bedrock of our creative capacities. In my experience the vehicle and conduit of this form of ‘learning’ about ourselves, this epistemophilic provocation in us of the ‘unthought known’, has not solely been centred on my experience of ‘group process’, nor has it been that I am a particularly vivid dreamer.

20 Deleuze, *ibid* p.18.

No, for me the ‘teacher’, the arranger of intuitive intellect, has been music. “The unthinkable is a tone” says Fred Moten, and with this there is, as he suggests, the challenge of what he terms “ensemble thought” that, immanent and individually unspecifiable, is present for us to hear in the relational compositions of music.²¹

15. Christopher Bollas, in his efforts to articulate the creative-unconscious, describes music as “a form of unconscious thinking” that can “assemble the ideational, the affective and the bodily”²². With this form of somatic anti-dote to the inhibition that often results from expert knowledges, it is possible to ‘sit in’ with musicians as a listener, as a meta-musician, and as we listen (at times overwhelmed) with the ‘evenly suspended attention’ of the classical analyst, we learn to be within the ‘common notion’ as a participant rather than with a colonising impulse. We learn, with musics such as stretched-out jazz, not to expect a reiteration of ideas and meanings, but, to become affected by the ‘unthinkable tones’ that help us, as in the manner of Vygotsky’s proximal development, to, as Deleuze puts it, “exceed our capacity”²³; to not just know what cannot be known, but to become, ‘instruments of sensitive living’. Listening, then, we ‘sit in’, we become members of an ad-hoc ‘pickup group’, and whilst we may not be playing any instrument, we are in relational proximity to the musicians. It is an aural and thus sensual proximity (often an intimacy), that may not make us into theoreticians, that may not summon in us thoughts that take on a representational form, but, as part of the ensemble of the ‘common notion’, we are, as we listen, in a transitive state though which our acceptance of not knowing, the impossibility of articulating the unthinkable of the ensemble tone, produces a relief in us. It is happening. It

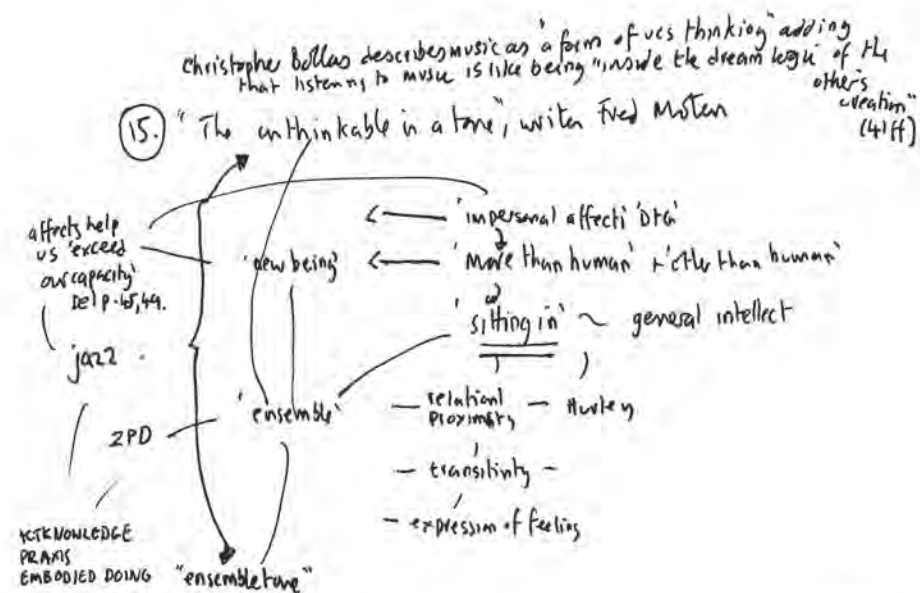
21 Fred Moten, *In The Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, Duke University Press, 2003, p.57. In his introduction to Deleuze’s book on Spinoza, the translator, Robert Hurley, offers that “the unit of understanding is [...] the composition of affective relations between individuals”, *ibid*, p.ii.

22 Bollas, *ibid*, p.49.

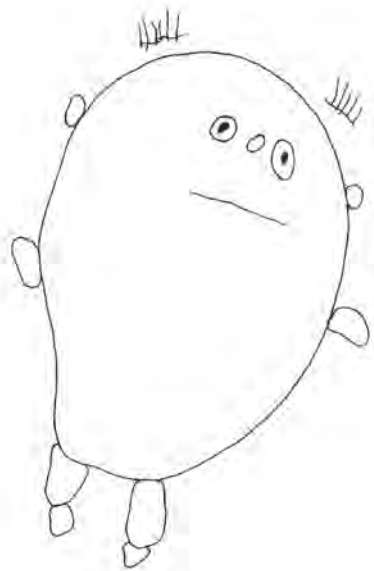
23 Deleuze, *ibid*, p.45.

is indescribable. This sense of relief could well be termed therapeutic in that, as Bollas suggests, this communication between unconscious's that could be said to occur when we listen to music, is employing the creative capacities of condensation, displacement and associative drift that were highlighted as being components of the 'dream work'. As Bollas suggests: "Listening to music one is awake, yet inside a dream logic of the other's creation"²⁴. And, from within this dream logic as Bollas calls it, we are, as we listen to musicians exceed themselves, similarly exceeding ourselves in the direction of the 'more than human' and the 'other than human'. Not in the direction of the sovereign exception of 'expert knowledges' but, just as we outstrip our conscious capacities in our dreams, we exceed ourselves in the passage towards having those unthinkable tones, those impersonal affects impact upon us. And so the cry goes up when the contributive composition of the ensemble music ends: "Untraceable! Unthinkable! Unbelievable!"

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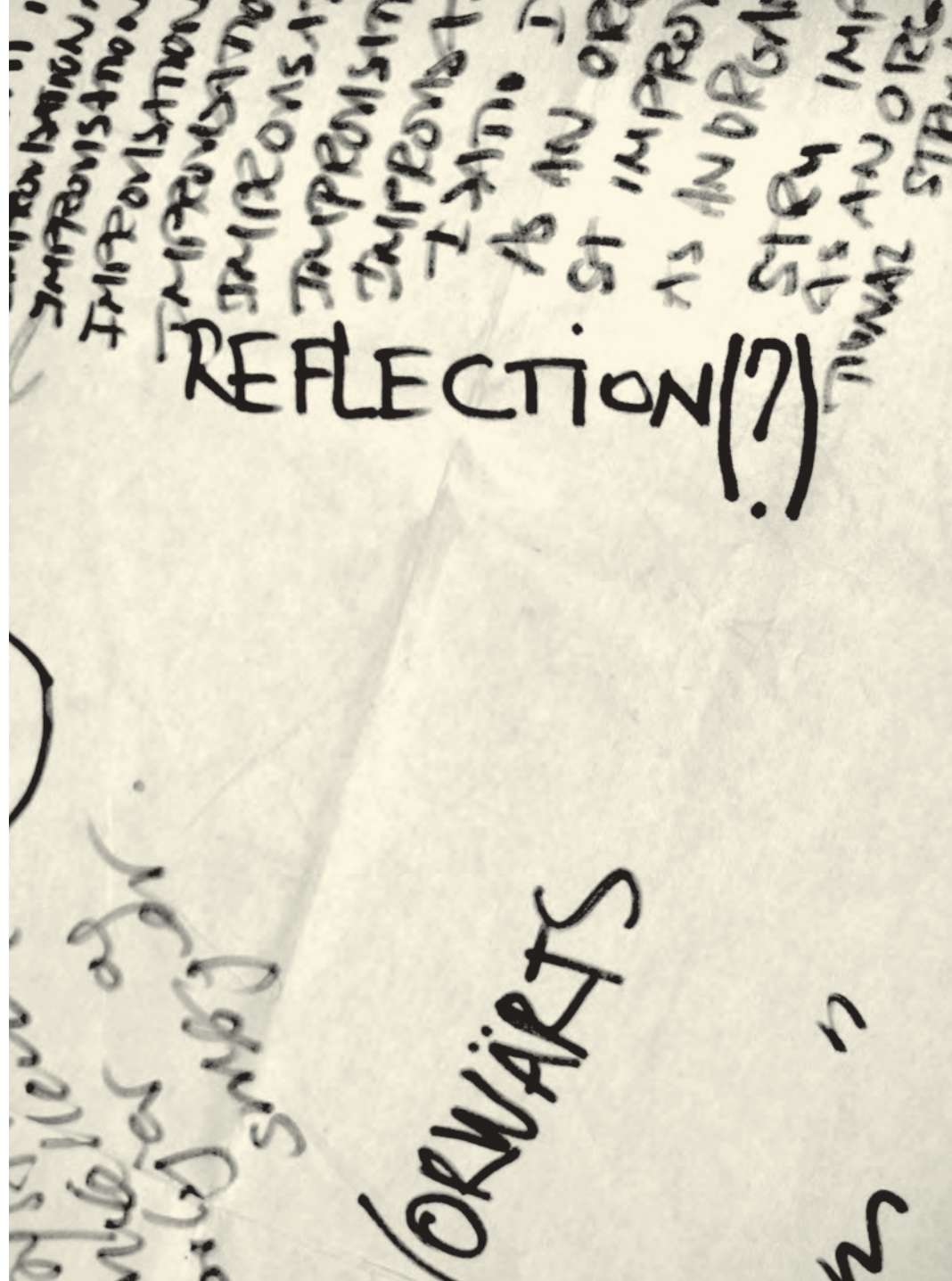


15/1/2014



Mute-Stereoptic Emanation: B'Loon
(Composite Sketch Based on Eyewitness Accounts)

Illustration by Nathaniel Mackey from Bass Cathedral, New Directions, 2008.



Antiuniversity of London

– An Introduction to Deinstitutionalisation¹

Jakob Jakobsen

“We have to step out of Structure A to be able to see it. But one can't step out if there is nowhere to step to.” (Joseph Berke, *The Guardian*, 15.2.1968)

“Women, Hippies, youth groups, students and school children all question the institutions that have formed them, and try to erect their obverse: a collective commune to replace the bourgeois family; ‘free communications’ and counter-media; anti-universities – all attack major ideological institutions of this society. The assaults are specified, localised and relevant. They bring the contradictions into the open.” (Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, Penguin 1971, p.32)

The Antiuniversity of London appears in many ways as a massive failure when looked at superficially. But whether it was a terminal failure or actually an experiment that did not succeed at its specific point in history depends on how you approach this historic antiinstitution. The Antiuniversity raised an enormous amount of questions. In many ways that could be viewed as sufficient in itself, if the experimental nature of this project is well-understood. Experiments are by their nature open-minded trials based on hopes and assumptions. And the key is that there is no certainty about the outcome.

¹ This text was published within the *Antiuniversity of London*, (Antihistory Tabloid), published by MayDay Rooms, London, 2012.

Institutions are by definition conservative. That is in some respect implied in the word ‘institution,’ which stems from the Latin word ‘institutio’ meaning to set up, to establish. By 1400, ‘institution’ in French had assumed the meaning of something established, a system of government, a religious order. The term institution was gaining foothold with the secularisation of society in the early Renaissance, in parallel to the establishment of the first network of European universities. Institutions are not just bricks and mortar; they are part of ‘collective phantasy systems,’ as the existentialist psychiatrist R. D. Laing puts it. Laing was himself involved in the Antiuniversity.

For the people around the Antiuniversity it was very much the conservatism and reactionary structures of the established universities that made them move towards setting it up. As written in the first catalogue of the Antiuniversity in February 1968:

“The Antiuniversity of London has been founded in response to the intellectual bankruptcy and spiritual emptiness of the educational establishment in both Britain and rest of the world.”

As one of its main movers, the American psychiatrist Dr Joseph Berke writes in April 1968 in an introductory text about the Antiuniversity:

“The schools and universities are dead. They must be destroyed and rebuilt in our own terms. These sentiments reflect the growing belief of students and teachers all over Europe and the United States as they strip aside the academic pretensions from their ‘institutions of higher learning’ and see them for what they are – rigid training schools for the operation and expansion of reactionary government, business, and military bureaucracies.”

In many ways, such a position can be linked to the Situationists and their critique of the university in Strasbourg in the text ‘Ten Days That Shook the University’ which they issued in 1966. As one of the main forces be-

hind the founding of the Antiuniversity Dr Joseph Berke was well aware of the Strasbourg text. Here the perspective is on the university’s impact on the students, turning them into depoliticised and pacified subjects:

“Modern capitalism and its spectacle allot everyone a specific role in a general passivity. The student is no exception to the rule. He has a provisional part to play, a rehearsal for his final role as an element in market society as conservative as the rest. Being a student is a form of initiation. An initiation which echoes the rites of more primitive societies with bizarre precision. It goes on outside of history, cut off from social reality. The student leads a double life, poised between his present status and his future role. The two are absolutely separate and the journey from one to the other is a mechanical event ‘in the future’. Meanwhile, he basks in a schizophrenic consciousness, withdrawing into his initiation group to hide from the future. Protected from history, the present is amystic trance.” (‘Strasbourg: Ten Days That Shook the University,’ in *Counter Culture*, ed. Joseph Berke, Peter Owen, 1969)

The aim of the Antiuniversity was to open up education to a wider social reality, which was contrary to the inward-looking traditional university, an institution mainly occupied with its own survival as an institution within the given society. The critique of the university and the students it produces have to be seen within a context where especially the American universities were tightly linked to commercial interests and corporations that were underpinning nuclear armament and the ongoing war in Vietnam. Also to be considered was the general political atmosphere characterised by an institutionalised fear and repression of the Left and the civil rights movements. This political climate led to the Free University of New York, the forerunner of the Antiuniversity, becoming the object of a congressional hearing in the preparation of “Bills to make punishable assistance to enemies of U.S. in time of undeclared war” in 1966.

As a response to this ‘collective phantasy system’ the Antiuniversity sought

“to develop the concepts and form of experience necessary to comprehend the events of this century and the meaning of one’s life within it, to examine artistic expression beyond the scope of the usual academy and to promote a position of social integrity and commitment from which scholars now stand aloof.”

As stated on the promotional material from the Antiuniversity no formal qualification was needed to get involved and no degrees would be awarded. These details bring the educational aims of the Antiuniversity into a different realm than the traditional university which aims to place the student into her future role in the market, as the Situationists pointed out. At the Antiuniversity the focus was experiential and experimental. This was not only in relation to the surrounding society but also in relation to the institution itself, or antiinstitution to be precise.

As stated in the Strasbourg text in a somehow enigmatic way, ‘the abolition of alienation is only reached by the straight and narrow path of alienation itself.’ This could mirror Joseph Berke’s statement about the Antiuniversity: ‘In the process of making an institution we deinstitutionalised ourselves.’ This somehow underlines that the social relation inside the institution was going to be key in the experimental and demystifying process that was going to become the Antiuniversity of London.

Already at the opening of the Antiuniversity on February 12, 1968 discussions and antagonism between students, teachers and the Ad-Hoc Coordination Committee flared up, according to Harold Norse’s report in the *International Times*. The problem was that the coordination committee had made arrangements with the BBC about coverage of the Antiuniversity. There were questions about whether a media organisation of the Establishment should be trusted as a way to promote the ideas around the project or whether this was a sell-out of the revolutionary aspirations to which the project was committed. The Ad-Hoc Coordination Committee was the group who had called for the first open meeting on setting up an antiuniversity in London in November 1967. It consisted of David Coop-

er, Leon Redler, Juliet Mitchell, Asa Benveniste, Stuart Montgomery, Russ Stetler, Morton Schatzmann, Allen Krebs and Joseph Berke. Most of this group were either psychiatrists or psychoanalysts.

Another flash point was the fee and payment structure of the Antiuniversity, which was based on a membership structure with a fee per quarter of £8 and 10 shillings (50 pence) for every course. The course leaders/teachers were offered payment for their effort in running a course. This was based on the model of the Free University of New York after it opened on East 14th Street in the summer of 1965. Already on the first day of the life of the Antiuniversity, this structure caused various debates around pay and fees, as well as the traditional teacher and students structure that the Antiuniversity seemed to replicate.

The catalogue of the first quarter offered over 30 different courses with a very diverse field of topics as well as teachers. A group of teachers involved with the *New Left Review* was running various courses in political theory and revolutionary movements. Avant-garde artists such as John Latham and Cornelius Cardew were running courses consisting of collective and practical experimentation with making artistic work. A group of poets and writers such as John Keys and Lee Harwood offered (anti-)courses in poetry. The group of existential psychiatrists such as R. D. Laing, David Cooper, Leon Redler and Joseph Berke were running courses covering aspects of psychiatry and psychology viewed from a critical social perspective. Also covered were Black Power, experimental drugs, printmaking and underground media. Alexander Trocchi offered a course with the title ‘Invisible Insurrection,’ referring to his key text of 1962 on the founding of a spontaneous university, which was one of the inspirations to the Antiuniversity. And the poet Ed Dorn just declared in his course blurb that he would “be ready to talk to anyone who wants to talk to me.”

The Antiuniversity opened its doors at 49 Rivington Street in Shoreditch, East London in a building owned by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foun-

dation. Russ Stetler, one of the directors of the foundation, was himself on the Ad-Hoc Coordination Committee and this paved the way for reasonable rent and conditions. The Antiuniversity was sponsored by a loan from the Institute of Phenomenological Studies, which in many respects was also one of the main forces in setting up the project. The Institute of Phenomenological Studies had the previous year organised the Dialectics of Liberation Congress where the idea of setting up the Antiuniversity of London had first emerged. In the minutes of a meeting of the Ad-Hoc Coordination Committee of January 8, 1968 the building and the needed changes are described as follows:

“Building – [...] Structure – basement – one large room to take up to 40 people. Ground floor – reception area for secretary and one large room to be used as loge – small snack facilities to be installed. First floor – 3 small rooms to be converted to one small and one large room by removing a partition. Remaining partition to be altered so as to soundproof the two rooms. Second floor – twomoderately large rooms – take 20–25 people. Furniture – building comes with 13 desks, 37 small chairs, 2 bench chairs, once sofa. A minimum of 25 folding chairs to be purchased.”

It was emphasised that the Antiuniversity should be self-sustaining economically, hence the fee structure that was put in place from the outset. This organisational structure became a source of lengthy debates and the Antiuniversity's relation to the economic realm where it was situated was later to become crucial in relation to the project's limited financial success. It was underlined in one of the organisational papers that no-one should be excluded due to difficulties in covering the fees and a system of scholarships would be established.

The political scientist Allen Krebs and Joseph Berke were involved with setting up the Free University of New York in 1965. Berke moved to London that same year to take part in the therapeutic community and anti-hospital Kingsley Hall established in Bow in East London. Kingsley Hall

was becoming the nexus of the radical movement of psychiatrists who challenged the hegemony of the institutional rationale in society that were confining and isolating so-called mentally ill patients in mental hospitals. The Scottish psychiatrist R. D. Laing was one of the initiators of Kingsley Hall and it was run together with David Cooper, Leon Redler, Berke and others. According to them this institutional separation was in its own right a part of the production of mental illness in society and they saw the source of the mental ill-health in the relation between the individual and the community surrounding and shaping it, be this the family or other societal institutions. Some call this movement the anti-psychiatry movement and the setting up of Kingsley Hall as a therapeutic community was an experiment in renegotiating and at times erasing the difference between patient and therapist. Berke and Krebs brought the experiences and revolutionary ideas of Free University of New York and Kingsley Hall with them into the Antiuniversity. The first catalogue was beautifully block printed on high quality paper made by the poet, publisher and printmaker Asa Beneviste. In the introduction it was stated that:

“We must destroy the bastardized meaning of ‘student’, ‘teacher’ and ‘course’ in order to regain the original meaning of teacher – one who passes on the tradition; student – one who learns how to learn; and course – the meeting where this takes place.”

Even though the traditional hierarchies were to be challenged in the Antiuniversity, many of the structures of the official university cast their shadow over the new antiinstitution both in terms of economic relations and in terms of the Antiuniversity knowledge/power relations. This can be linked to one of the fathers of the Free University movement, Paul Goodman, who in his 1962 book *The Community of Scholars* excavated the initial ideas and aspirations behind the development of medieval universities. Here he maintains that teaching is a profession based on experience within a certain field of knowledge. Difference of experience were thus reflected in the initial structure of the Antiuniversity. At the Dialectics of Liberation

Congress at the Roundhouse in Camden in 1967, Paul Goodman specifically criticised the breakdown of differences between teacher and student within the Free University movement that he found was undermining the profession of scholars. His main criticism of the established university system was that it was being taken over by administrators having economic and managerial interests that went counter to the interests of the 'community of scholars'. Although one of the main aims of the Antiuniversity was to open up the institution of the university to a wider social reality, the political focus of the place very much came to rest on the micro-politics of the institutional structure itself. But as an experiential and experimental project it was impossible to differentiate this from the wider reality that was conditioning the project socially, historically and economically.

Due to the publicity as well as the need for a meeting place of the counter-cultural scene in London more than 200 people signed up as members of the Antiuniversity for the first quarter. The courses were either weekly or bi-weekly and most of them took place in the evenings to make it possible for both students and teachers to attend after work. Attempts to recruit locally among workers were less successful and the relationship with the local community was tense. Due to the focus on Black Power, the attempt to involve communities of black people was more successful as many of the courses touched on civil rights and black culture. Some of the courses, especially David Cooper's and R. D. Laing's, were very popular and quickly became fully booked. Other courses turned into more or less practical experiments in relation to the topic. Joseph Berke's course on the Antiinstitution ended up with Berke leaving the room due to illness and the group of students taking over the meeting. Together with the students, John Latham turned the class room into a big book sculpture and Cornelius Cardew refused to play for the students because he believed that they should produce their own music. This anticipated the work that he later did with the Scratch Orchestra. Other courses were more traditional lectures on political science and revolutionary theory. And some of the courses presented in the catalogue never happened.

The year at the Antiuniversity was divided into four quarters lasting eight weeks each. In the second catalogue a new course was introduced called the Counter University that was to focus on the development and operation of the Antiuniversity itself. As a natural consequence of the experiential and experimental nature of the antiinstitution the first meeting of this Counter University group was called for at the beginning of May 1968 as an assembly for everybody involved with the Antiuniversity. The flyer had the heading 'You and the Anti-U' and continued the debate around the organisational questions already debated the first days at the Antiuniversity. It stated:

"These past four month have proved that an anti-university can survive – it can even grow. The question is in what direction? We feel it is necessary to de-pass our birth and commit ourselves to a new community development. Any organization which wishes to be meaningful, not only to the world outside but more importantly, to its self, must re-examine itself at each step. To do otherwise is a symptom of death."

The three main questions on the agenda were the student/teacher relationship, decision making powers within the organisation, and the level of communication and exchange between courses. The flyer eventually calls for an end to the distinctions between 'students,' 'teachers' and 'administrators.' The Ad-Hoc Coordination Committee was still functioning as the formal decision making body and it had employed Allen Krebs and later Bob Cobbing as coordinator and Susan Stetler as secretary. There were voices challenging the authority and power of the administration. This was a part of the struggles around the development of the Antiuniversity, aiming at a move towards a more democratic structure. But there was also a movement from a formal to an increasingly informal structure. At the margin of the You and the Anti-U-flyer small statements were written-in by hand: "IS your teacher really necessary?", "What about an anti-anti-university-university?", "Who's going to do the dirty work?", and "Pay the students, charge the teachers!"

In April Peter Upwood, the caretaker of the snack bar in the lounge, had moved into the Antiuniversity, joined by a group of friends. This meant that the institution was turning into a commune. This was not explicitly decided or approved by anybody but it was welcomed as a part of the development. It also echoed education projects where living as a community was an integral part of the educational perspective, for example Black Mountain College in the US and the New Experimental College in Denmark. According to Reberta Elzey who wrote about the Antiuniversity in the *Counter Culture* book, this first commune improved the atmosphere and the care of the space. It helped to de-institutionalise the university and establish new and closer connections with the material everyday life of the learning environment. This new development catalysed a weekend workshop about the practicalities and ideals of organising a commune. Most of the communes around London came to the Antiuniversity at the end of April 1968 and shared experiences and political ideas around communal living and the possible structuring of the ‘antifamily.’

The second term started May 6 and a new catalogue was published. This time the paper and printing quality were less delicate. The first catalogue offered 37 courses, while in the second the courses offered increased to 60. New teachers joined the faculty, for example the exiled German visual artist Gustav Metzger and Afro-Caribbean historian and writer CLR James. Parallel to this increased range of courses, the counter-university group started meeting more frequently and pushed forward the aim of getting beyond the organisational structure of student, teacher and administrator. In this process the Ad-Hoc Coordination Committee once more came under attack as a reactionary force within the institutional framework of the Antiuniversity. In an article in the *International Times* Martin Segal describes the conflict in this way:

“The rebels were told, in effect, to go out and start a family of their own if they wanted ‘participatory democracy’ and the like. The family had its setup and was not interested in the acting out of personalities put togeth-

er by rubber bands and clips. It was not interested in boring meetings as the vehicle of decision making. It was not interested and that was final.”

The committee was criticised for lack of transparency and for organising meetings in secret. Segal describes the committee as ‘them,’ the founding fathers trying to get the rebellious children to behave. The comparison of the institution of the family to the institution of the university was a thoughtful and forceful blow to the group of mainly psychiatrists who had set up the Antiuniversity. They could well accept the repressive and violent nature of the family as a cohesive institution within society and the parallels to the structuring and functioning of the institution of the official university. In this process Allen Krebs stepped down as administrator and the position was taken over by the poet Bob Cobbing who hadn’t been a part of the coordination committee until then. This also meant a more fundamental breaking down of the committee’s managing role at the Antiuniversity and Martin Segal ends his text announcing these structural changes by stating that in the future ‘the Antiuniversity is YOURS’:

“Instead of acting as satellites to the stars in our social universe, phase II of the anti-U is donating event space for everybody to act as stars.”

For a while the old and the new structure would run parallel, with a new catalogue being produced featuring a course structure as seen in the previous two catalogues while at the same time the old notion of the catalogue was ‘being exploded.’ The course structure should not be based on the ‘names’ of the course leader and in the future attending a course was going to mean ‘considering oneself as one of the givers of the course.’ One of the keys to break down the old structure was the process of shaping the range of courses that so far had been organised by the coordinator backed up by the coordinating committee.

This development led to the call for the ‘Anti-U Course Creation Rally’ at Hyde Park Corner on 21 July, 1968. A ‘kip-in’ weekend for organising the Rally was planned for the previous weekend where faculty and Anti-

university members were invited to meet and organise future courses. A provisional course catalogue was produced but the flyer for the Rally announced that “All decisions on the allocation of Anti-U space time will be made at this meeting.”

This ‘explosion’ of the course structure was accompanied by an ‘explosion’ of the fee and pay structure. Teachers and course leaders were no longer going to be paid for running a course and the faculty was called to contribute as the students has done so far. Due to the ongoing structural struggles, formal and informal, within the Antiuniversity many members had in fact stopped paying the fee after the first quarter which meant that the Antiuniversity was already unable to pay teachers in the second quarter. So the subsequent democratisation of the Antiuniversity also led to a less viable economic structure, but this should also be viewed in the light of the resistance to the teacher-student structure that the contestation of the fee payment represented. The £8 a term fee was abolished and a more voluntary pay structure was put in place. It was calculated that £5 a year was needed to cover rent and running costs, but it was also clear that ‘Some people can pay. Some people can’t.’ But this less secure economic outlook already meant that a more decentralised Antiuniversity was needed. It began to utilise private flats for meeting places as an alternative to the cost-heavy setting in the building at 49 Rivington Street.

The first commune at the Antiuniversity came to an end in May and a new group of people moved in. A group that, according to Roberta Elzey, cared less about the Antiuniversity and this created some tension between the interests of commune and the university. This group was eventually replaced by a new group in July consisting mainly of people traveling through London just looking for a place to crash. This worsened the already tense atmosphere at the Rivington Street venue. As Sheila Rowbotham described it:

“Modelled on the American Free School and echoing the Dialectics of Liberation conference, the Anti-University had been set up by a curious

alliance of antipsychiatrists and members of the *New Left Review*. It aimed to ‘[...] do away with artificial splits and divisions between disciplines and art forms and between theory and action.’ Though these ideas, in a diluted form, were to percolate through the educational system over the next few years, in this radical enclave, in 1968, the dream was to be doomed. Life folded into learning too literally, turning the Anti-University into a dosshouse. The hope of a counter-institution was already sinking, [...] and the atmosphere was bleak and besieged.”

The breaking open of the institutional structure of the Antiuniversity and the advent of unrestricted experimentation with the organisational relations pushed out one of the last traces of the old structure as the sovereignty struggle at the Antiuniversity entered a new phase. The newly instated coordinator Bob Cobbing decided to step down from his post at the beginning of July 1968 due to organisational problems within the Antiuniversity. He wrote an open letter to Joe Berke with a list of reasons for his withdrawal. At the top of the list was the precarious state of the Antiuniversity finances, not to mention the loss of a wage for the coordinating duties undertaken by Cobbing. Secondly, the new structure that originated with the ‘Anti-U Course Creation Rally’ at Hyde Park Corner was unworkable from the point of view of coordination. And finally Cobbing’s feeling of responsibility to the people offering courses in the preliminary catalogue made him express his concerns in this way: “If the catalogue is now largely to be ignored, I must resign in protest.” So Cobbing made sure that the third and last catalogue was printed and distributed and eventually stepped down as coordinator before the start of the third quarter on 15 July, 1968. This meant in practice that the future Antiuniversity was going to be coordinated and maintained by the students since there were no attempts made to employ a new coordinator. There was no money and, for sure, no desire among the students at the Antiuniversity to maintain the hierarchical administrative structure that such a position implied.

The lack of funds somehow went hand in hand with the process of deinstitutionalisation of the Antiuniversity. There had already been suggestions

to have a less centralised structure in terms of the physical space of the Antiuniversity and at the beginning of August the otherwise benevolent landlord of the building at 49 Rivington started to write formal letters asking the arrears for rent, electricity and telephone to be covered. Joe Berke negotiated an accord with the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and paid most of the arrears. After this the Antiuniversity had to leave the building and continue as a dispersed antiinstitution using people's flats and pubs as settings for the educational activities. As the course structure as well as the quarter structure was abolished with 'courses starting all the time' according to needs and desires the deinstitutionalisation of the antiinstitution had fulfilled its own logic. A number of courses and meetings carried on around London with Bill Mason's flat in Soho as the hub and postal address. Advertisements were placed in the *International Times* every week with a phone number stating that people can call for information on courses, seminars and meetings. The latest one I found was from the autumn of 1971. In light of the deinstitutionalised antiinstitution, it can be said that the activities of the Antiuniversity were still going on when people met in self-organised ways and shared experiences, affects and knowledge. But the institution of the antiuniversity was slowly being erased.

The deinstitutionalising of the Antiuniversity was a process characterised by struggle and antagonism and at times too many egos, as both Leon Redler and Joe Berke have told me. The Antiuniversity was revolutionary but its character of an experiment embedded in an alien environment of capitalism made it impossible to shield the antiinstitution from the social relations of the surrounding society, a condition of which Krebs and Berke were aware from the outset. This was pointed out at a workshop at University College London late in 1967 where one of the questions raised by them was: "the scope or limitations of a 'Free University', with particular reference to a critique of the New York Free U, both in content and organization, set within an unchanged capitalist/bourgeois society."

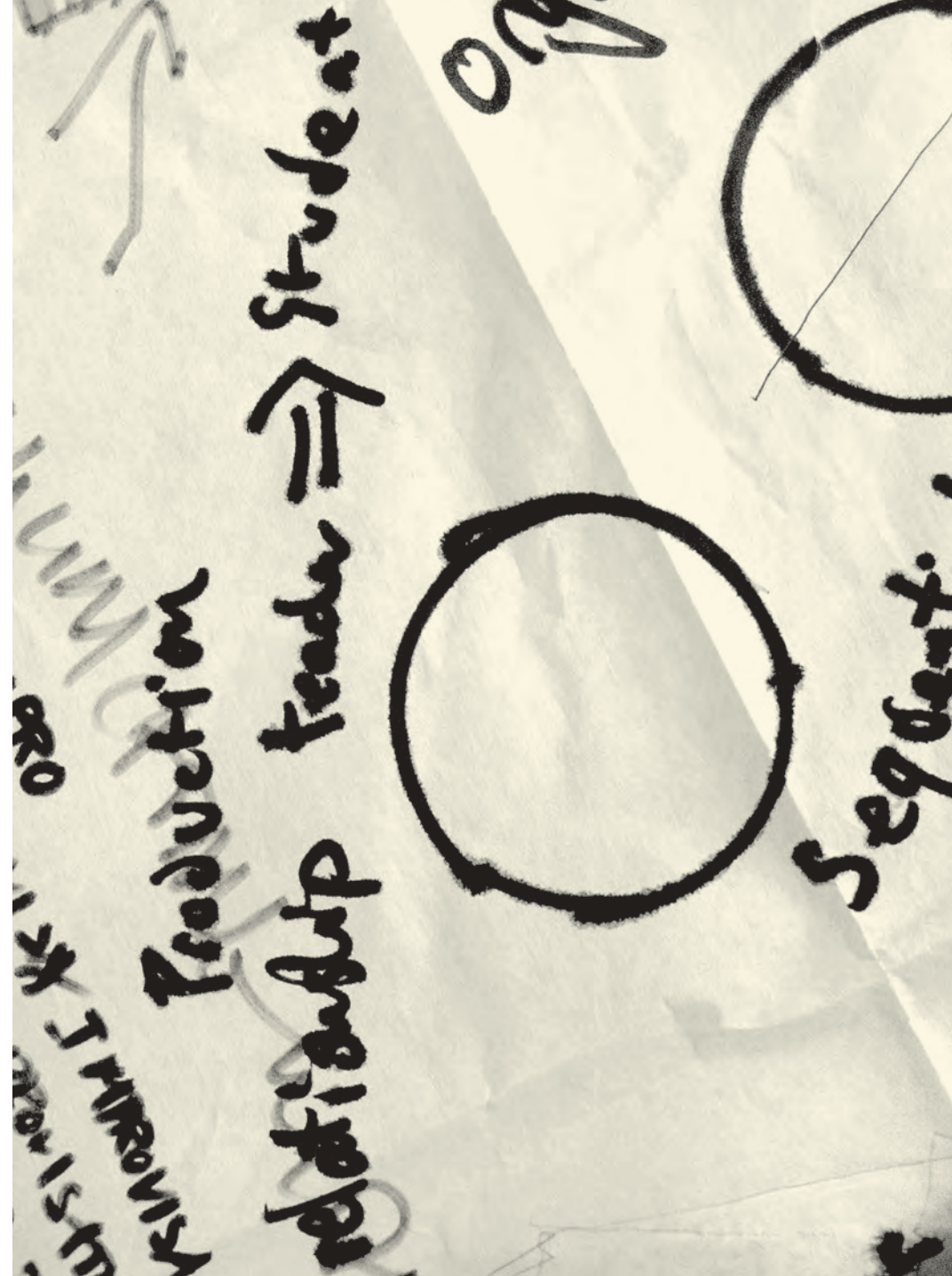
The Antiuniversity of London was a part of a broader movement of student protests in the late 1960s not only in the UK but all over the world. The May rebellion in Paris was unfolding parallel to the development of the Antiuniversity and in London there had already been student protests and occupations of campuses, most notably of the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1967. This represented a struggle unfolding in the university as it confronted its own sustaining hegemonies and ideologies, reflecting the wider society. According to the more syndicalist parts of the student movement this was the main site of contest – and the self-organised Free Universities were at best not harmful, but were not engaging in the social struggle in its right location: within the official universities and school. Many of the people around the *New Left Review* who were taking part in the LSE protests did go on to offer courses at the Antiuniversity teaching political theory and revolutionary practice, courses that most probably couldn't be found at the official university. In May 1968 the students at the Hornsey Art School occupied their school protesting against the structural changes that the management wanted to implement. This occupation lasted more than a month and mobilised and politicised the students within the institution that they wanted to challenge. Yet the more fundamental questions of the ideological nature of the institution that also Kingsley Hall set out to bring to light and that was the main problematic in the autonomous structures were given less space in the more concrete and at times reformist struggles within the official institutions. But the struggle unfolding through the autonomous institutions and the struggle located within specific official institutions were probably feeding into each other more than they were diverting energies and causing disruption to each other, developing different experiences and communities.

A wide array of experiences of deinstitutionalising the Antiuniversity fed into other discourses of the counterculture and the New Left. For example, in terms of the Women's Liberation Movement the Antiuniversity was less wary of replicating the patriarchal structures of the surrounding society. Juliet Mitchell was part of the Ad-Hoc Coordination Committee

until it was abolished and she ran courses 'on the position of women.' She went on to publish *Woman's Estate* in 1971 with a collection of essays on women's liberation written in the late 1960s. Here she writes her reflections on the contradictory process of the Antiuniversity:

"The new politics of all the youth movements extolled and rediscovered subjectivity, the relevance of emotionality and the need for personal freedom and respect for that of others. Subjectivity, emotionality, a 'caring' for others had previously tended to be designated 'feminine' qualities. Ironically the counter-culture expressed itself by giving prominence to values hitherto downgraded – 'womanly' ones, 'Make love not war' – the personal takes precedence – as it always had to do for women. 'Togetherness' and 'do your own thing' – fates to which women had long been condemned in the suffocation of the family and the isolation of the home – were now given a different meaning. That these female values were appropriated by male radicals initially gave women hope within these movements. But when they found even here, where their oppressed characteristics seemed to be the order of the day, they played a secondary (to be generous) role, righteous resentment was rampant." (Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, Penguin, 1971, p.175)

The experimental and experiential way of consciousness raising that the deinstitutionalisation of the Antiuniversity catalysed through the difficult process that was initiated on February 12, 1968 was not a failure. But it was not unambiguous either.



The Case of the Thwarted (Doctoral) Work

Nikoleta Marković

At the *Faculty of De-programming for Obsolescence* **The Case of the Thwarted (Doctoral) Work** will be attentive to a curriculum that might help answer a few important questions regarding the production of the doctoral work and what it (the doctoral work) produces. There is no doubt that the making of **The Case of the Thwarted (Doctoral) Work** led to its being in attendance at the *Faculty of De-programming for*

Obsolescence. Yet what remains in doubt, what is yet not clear or obvious is what (would) a doctoral work produce (if it was actually realized)? Or, more precisely, what will its attendance at the *Faculty of*

De-programming for Obsolescence produce, since the making of **The Case of the Thwarted (Doctoral) Work** caused **The Case of the Thwarted (Doctoral) Work** to be present at the *Faculty of De-programming for Obsolescence*?

An answer to this question could be helped by an analysis of a diagram that displays the situation of **The Case of the Thwarted (Doctoral) Work** in the time and space of the *Faculty of De-programming for Obsolescence*. Being introduced into the field of action of the *Faculty*

of De-programming for Obsolescence at the very beginning, if by the beginning we may call this text title and introduction, although its actual position in terms of production of the thwarted doctoral work, that will later become The Case, is, in fact, 'right' in the middle.

Thus we are being introduced into the field of action of the *Faculty of De-programming for Obsolescence* right in the middle. And right there, in the middle of it, with the very title of **The Case of the Thwarted (Doctoral) Work**, right at that point and in that moment, we must

slip-up. We need to trip over at least two things. And these two things are: 'the case' and 'thwarted'. The rest should remain clear. Although it would later turn out that *the rEst*, exactly this, remains unclear, it was worthwhile going through the whole process and traversing

through all the inter-personal relationships and thus feel them “get their hands on you”. This is the only way we can truly experience the invisible relationships (that) the Faculty is not only trying to make visible because that would just make them subject to an even greater

institutional lust and appropriation. But, it is the very experience of *feeling through* that makes relation-ships out of them. In this way these relations and relationships become part of our experience too. A part of which, using similar principles of self-reflection that were used in the

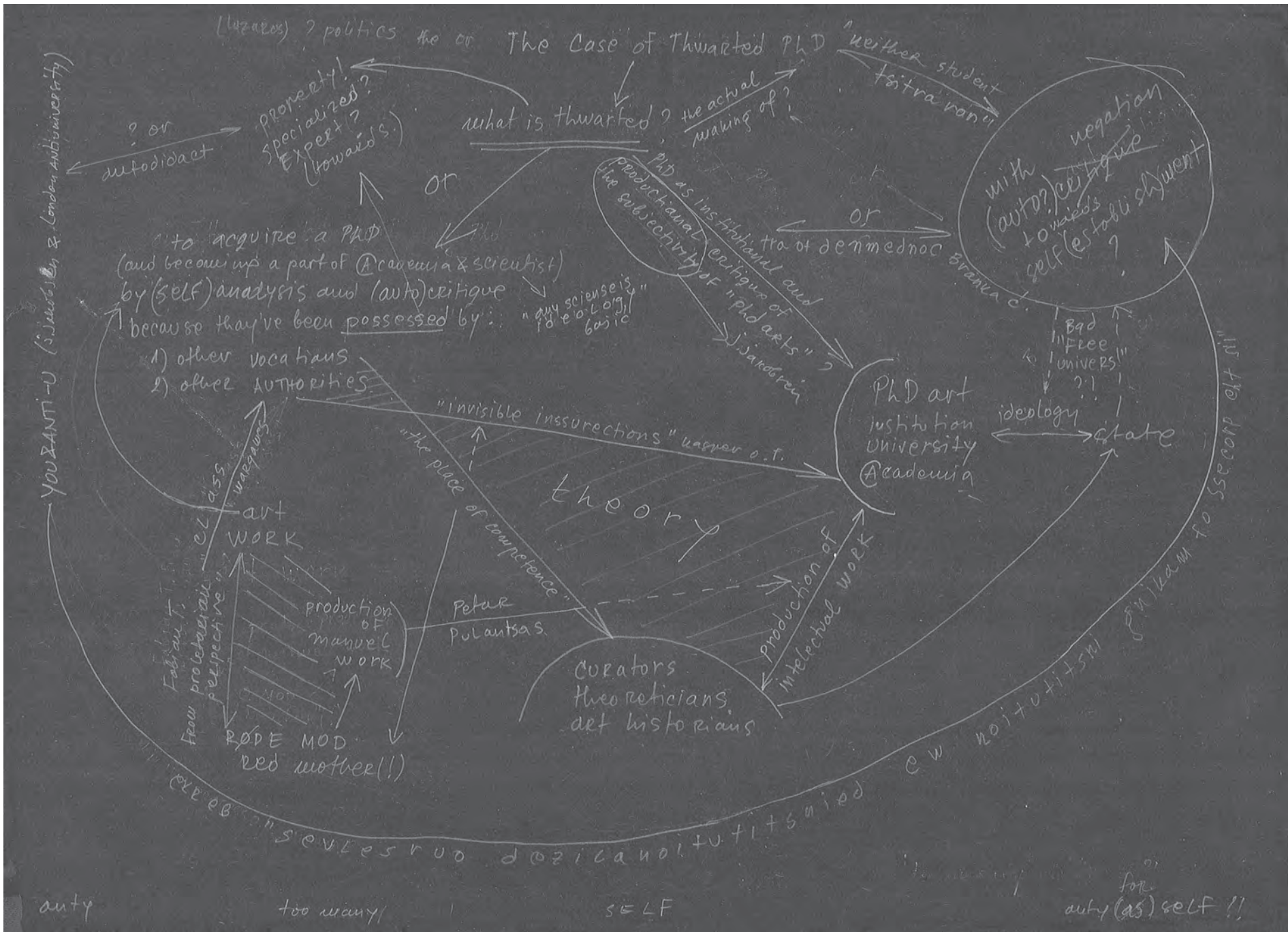
creation of the diagram, turn out to be completely incorrect. So, what we will do right now, at this very moment, right here, at the Faculty ... before you ... and together with you ... is to 'correct', complement, improve and reconsider these actors in the field of action of the

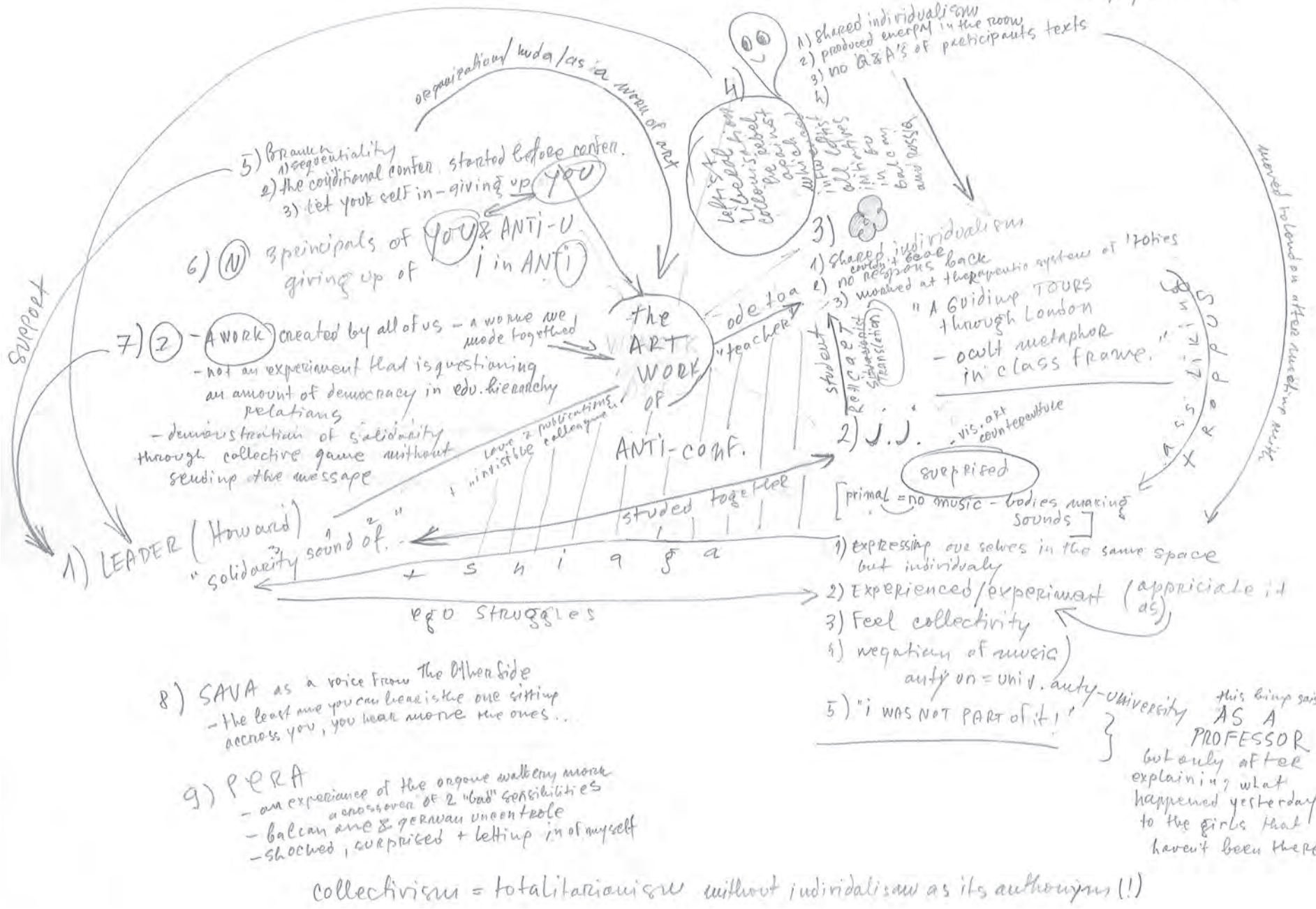
Faculty of De-programming for Obsolescence. And, all of them, all of that, together with, or better, through their mutual relations.

Let's start with the analysis.

(ANALYSIS)

(When the analysis and the drawing of a new diagram is completed reading continues from the beginning over and over again until it fills half an hour)





Education

1-10-1

free to ask questions

1-10-1

A Place for Competence

Petar Atanacković

Worker's Universities in the former socialist Yugoslavia were not anti institutions, like those established along the lines of the **Antiuniversity of London**¹ and its precursors. They never proclaimed an end to the existing model of education, they didn't question the conservative character of educational institutions. They problematized neither the institutional frame of education, nor the power-relationships within them and hence permanently reproduced those relationships. A first impression of the Worker's Universities, based on their name, is deceptive (if we consider the marker '*worker's*' as a synonym for something which has a different quality from the university proper). This is so because a critique of ed-

1 Jakob Jakobsen, *Antiuniversity of London – an Introduction to Deinstitutionalisation*, London: 2012, Available online on: <http://antihistory.org/deinsti> (accessed on 28.12.2013) and reprinted in this publication.

ucation wasn't their goal. They remained static, they didn't move, **neither did they want** to move away from the existing social relationships, either in terms of entering into dispute with them or in any other way problematizing them. Quite the contrary, Worker's universities represented just another academic institution as defined by the dominant power-relationships in society, which were upholding (reproducing) the dominant educational 'concepts', reforming them in various ways. After all, this makes sense, because almost all of the educational and cultural practices in the socialist period were institutionally organized. They aspired to stay inside the institutional frame and that's why they didn't question it (or posed questions only very rarely). Even though some of those practices were developing outside institutions, both institutions and themselves were seeking to find a place somewhere in the aforementioned institutional frame. Any kind of non-institutional cultural or educational activism was rare and those practices which could have challenged this model were even rarer. If we go back to the example of the Worker's Universities, one could say they were just one part of the state apparatus, whose principal role, as **Nicos Poulantzas** in-

forms us, is to maintain the unity and cohesion of a social formation [...] and in this way reproducing social relations, i.e. class relations. All of those relations are materialised and embodied, as material practices, in the state apparatuses.

Beside this, the Worker's Universities of socialist Yugoslavia didn't represent any kind of new Phenomenon (only their names were new). Their origin was in so-called People's Universities (**Народни универзитети**), which were mostly established in the period before the Second World War. And those *Universities for the People* also had some prehistory: they were connected to the private initiatives of the so called 'people's philanthropists' and their charitable foundations, established mostly at the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th century. In this way we can see a certain continuity in activity between those forms of university. They were imagined as schools of knowledge and competence for the wider masses, and were originally created in interaction between the state and the private economy, which, as is the case these days, are supposed to make up for shortcomings in the dominant educational system. In this way they played an important role in the plans

and combinatorics of the state itself, which, have been created according to the interests and needs of the capitalist economy. In **socialist** Yugoslavia this model was even more expanded and developed in to the wide network of

Institutions,

Whose

Function

Consisted

In

Additional

Empowerment

And

Education

Of the

Working

Masses

For their

More successful participation

In

The

Process

Of productive labor and

Exploitation.

It's well known what is exactly meant by this; the process of production and exploitation is at the same time a process of reproduction of relations of political and ideological domination/subordination.

The school – and in this case the Worker's University – plays a

very important role in this process, because as a place for the creation of competences, it represents a point for the further reproduction of the relations of production and expands the **division of manual labour from intellectual** labor

It is the place where **the agents are reproduced**, which, according to Poulantzas, includes qualification-subjuga-

tion (or enslavement) of the agents, which enables them to take certain places, as well as their deployment at those places. However, the role of the educational apparatus shouldn't be overestimated, because it can't be seen as separated from the

Role which in this process of qualification/subjugation operates in line with the so-called economic apparatus

(the enterprise),

which overdetermines the school, as well as the family.

How relevant the function of the enterprise is in this process, even when one talks about the educational apparatus itself, could be seen in the example of the worker's universities in **socialist Yugoslavia**:

The so-called 'economic subjects' i.e. **enterprises** had a major impact, not only on the formulation of their curriculums, but also on the constitution of the worker's universities themselves. Worker's universities were often established and their programmes/curriculums of empowerment and

education were often formulated according to the needs of local enterprises.

Furthermore, and sometimes, inside the institutional frames of already existing universities, specialist schools were created. This was the case, for example, with the **Technical school for professional studies** (Visoka tehnička škola strukovnih studija) within the Worker's University, Novi Beograd. In this school, in and around Belgrade, future industrial professionals were educated for work at IMT, IMR, Fabrika modela i odlivaka etc.

Later the Worker's University, Novi Beograd was transformed into a

Technical **Academy**

(Politehnicka akademija)

This was just a logical development of the aforementioned process².

What's the difference, then,

Between a

2 <http://www.politehnika-nt.edu.rs/>

Worker's
University

And institutions which
Preceded
Them (People's
Universities) or

Any other kind of institutions of
education & empowerment,
which existed in parallel with them
(high schools, evening &
Professional
Schools,
Universities etc.),

Or those institutions

Which continued to fulfill their tasks

After the political changes in the 1990's
and the breakdown of the socialist
System? At this point the Workers

Universities became the so-called
Open Universities

[One digression: doesn't this naming of 'Open Universities' remind one of Karl Popper's 'concept' of the open society? Has the Open society, together with their open universities, as the dominant ideologeme replaced people's community (Народна заједница, *Volks-gemeinschaft*) and their people's universities, as well as **socialist community** and its worker's universities?]

Well, there is no difference.

All three, even though in various historical moments i.e. in three various social formations, represent typical state-ideological apparatuses, whose relevance consisted, as already stated, in the reproduction of the social (class) relationships, including the relations of production. This leads us to the conclusion that, as Poulantzas formulates it, radical change of the social relations couldn't be limited only to a change in state power (government), but it had to involve a 'revolutionization' of the state apparatuses themselves.

Beside this,

The early beginnings of the development of these type of institutions is very

characteristic of contemporary times and because of this it takes on a renewed relevance. The starting point of the people's/worker's/open university lies in the way that state and private founders act in consort – in other words their beginnings lie somewhere on the crossroads between private and so called public (state) interests – which is quite an important symptom: this fact tells us something, not only about interests (state and private) which formulated these institutions, but also something about the relation between those two interests in the period when

The ideology of liberal capitalism is

dominant; this will

be further repeated in the period when **neoliberal ideology** comes to dominate.

Today's Open University

as the legitimate successor of the worker's university, is going back to the starting point: today it finds itself, again, somewhere at the crossroads of private and state interests

and it formulates its own curriculums

both according to the plans and agendas of the state and the needs of the economy and other private donors.

(By the way, this is the point where one could find a small difference between, on the one hand, worker's universities, and on the other hand, their predecessors and successors).

This is how the Open Universities come to provide a supporting structure for state models of education, empowerment, professionalization and

Endless supplementary qualification – in other words, they are the point or place of aspiration in the quest to acquire competence; their role is to produce and display professionals for the economic system. So, the function of these institutions is, again, to prepare the agents for participation in the process of labor and exploitation (and reproduction of the relations of political and ideological domination/subordination).

Beside this,

Open universities are no longer state institutions in the real meaning of the term i.e.

they are no longer funded just by the state, but instead, they are part-funded by the state, and need to source the remaining finances themselves.

One could say, they are facing the typical neo-liberal form of
Outsourcing

and are moving, away from the state and towards the realm of private entrepreneurship. In this way

the division of the political from the economic is highlighted – the educational apparatus is thus included as part of economy, as part of the wider group of state apparatuses. All of which are playing a decisive role in the reproduction of the agents. We are witnessing the process of a general weakening of the state, which is

an important characteristic of neoliberal ideology.

Specifically speaking, Open universities, as the successors to the worker's universities,

Are facing the consequences of a general decrease of the state's jurisdiction and the weakening of state regulation.

However, this process is just an illusion: the transfer of one jurisdiction (i.e. the educational) from the public to the private level does not reduce the role of the state in relation to the private sector, but **on the contrary**, strengthens the state's role and function. What is seen, in ideological terms, as the weakening of the state is in fact a strengthening of the dominance of the state.

In this manner, the state involves itself in all areas of the private realm (by transferring onto this realm its own jurisdictions). The private realm becomes more and more dependent

upon the state and its subcontracted financial donations.

This is what Poulantzas tells us, when, speaking of the separation of

the political and the economic:

this separation, however, does not imply any kind of constitutional externality under capitalism, including its competitive stage, between politics and ideology (the conditions) and economic (relations of production). This separation is simply the necessary and specific form, in the

reproduction of capitalism through all its stages, of the presence of politics and ideology *within* the relations of production.

One could say that, in the end, we're only dealing with the transformation of the state at the level of accountancy, because the changes are only visible at the level of bookkeeping i.e. budget-planning: the state no longer make budgetary provision for certain activities and no longer plans the finances for them. Instead, the state plans for the financing of various

Project activities (in the fields of education, culture etc.), which are implemented by non-governmental i.e. non-state agents. However they are fulfilled according to the rules prescribed by the state.

In other words,

The state is present, even though it's ostensibly absent: it is formally absent in terms of ownership, however, the state is not only present, but is insidiously present.

It's well known what kind of appeals provoke this infernal strategy of the state: most of them are demands for 'more state' i.e. for stronger state interference,

expressed by various socialists and agents of statehood (social reformers, Keynesians, left oriented liberals, trade unionists, Stalinists, self-management socialists, not to forget national-socialists...), **Wichtig ist uns zunächst das Gemeinsame aller dieser Erkrankungen: Es ist eine Störung der natürlichen Pulsationsfunktion des lebenden Gesamtorganismus** which clearly shows us how absurd this situation is; a situation in which one opposes the dominance of the state with demands for the dominance and expansion of the state.

In other words, we are witnessing a struggle for the state by means of the state; a too permanent struggle. But somewhere it should be made clear that this struggle represents a fight that has been, all along, condemned to success. Because it doesn't exclude the state. That's why one should ask oneself, **what kind of struggle is it then?**

What can we say about political practices developed in this field?

What is their goal?

Is their goal to take hold of the state or to transform the state? What does this tell us

about class determination (how the agents are arranged in the social division of labour) when we take into consideration that class determination corresponds to class practice (struggle)³?

This is why we shouldn't be surprised that

the **communist concept** has been expelled from such a constellation of power:

This concept must be pushed aside, to a place somewhere on the margin, a dark place, where it can be forgotten and excluded, because just its presence

Questions everything

And

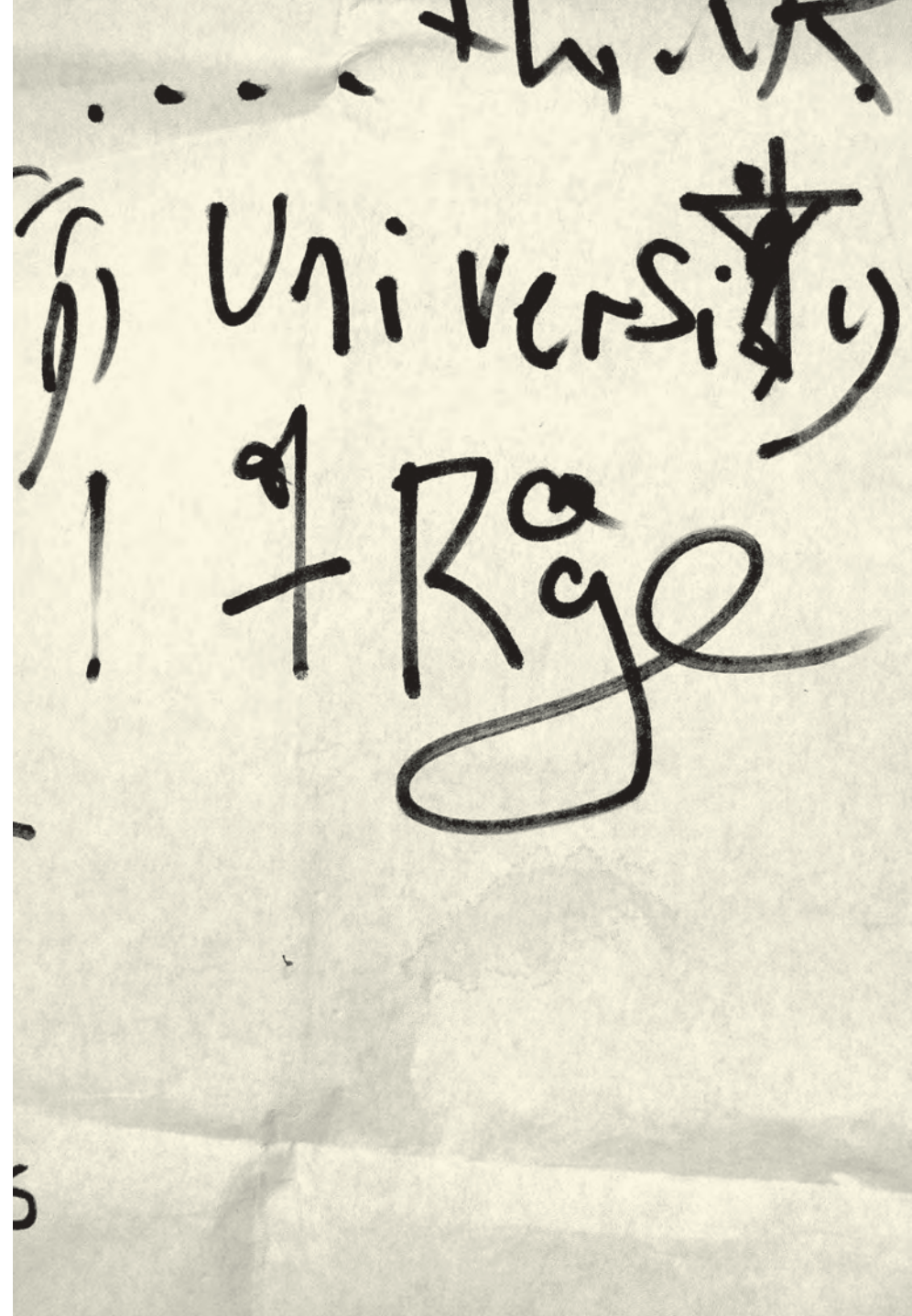
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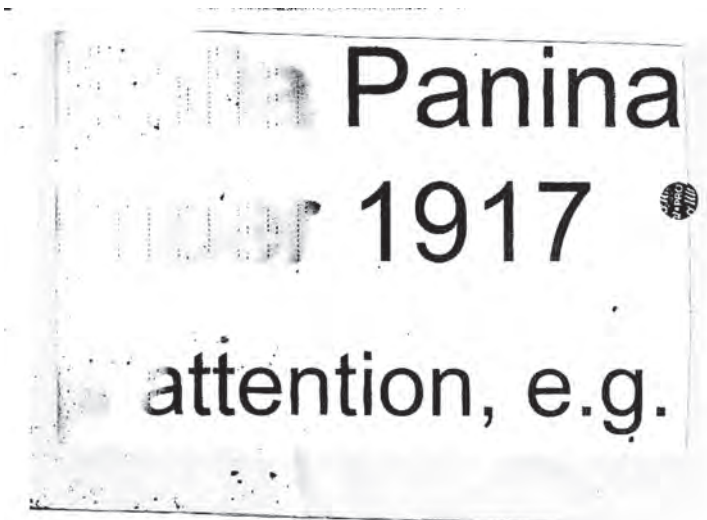
Idyll.

3 We should remind ourselves of the following: "certain classes or fractions and strata of classes other than the working class, the petit bourgeoisie in particular, may in specific conjunctures take up proletarian class positions, or positions aligned with that of the working class. This does not then mean that they become part of the working class."— in: Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, Verso: 1978, p.15.



Dietzgen's Monism Enters the Twentieth Century

Fabian Tompsett



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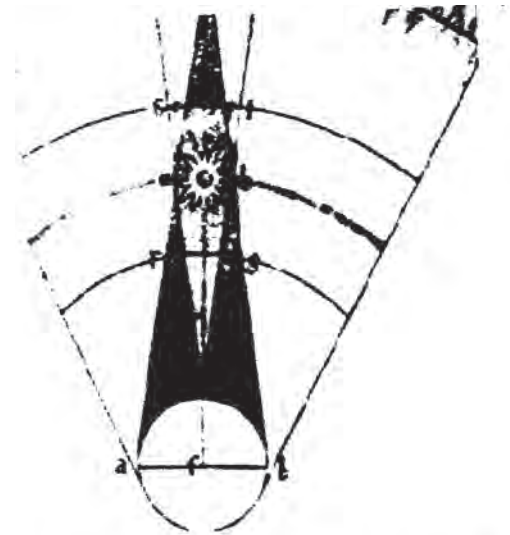
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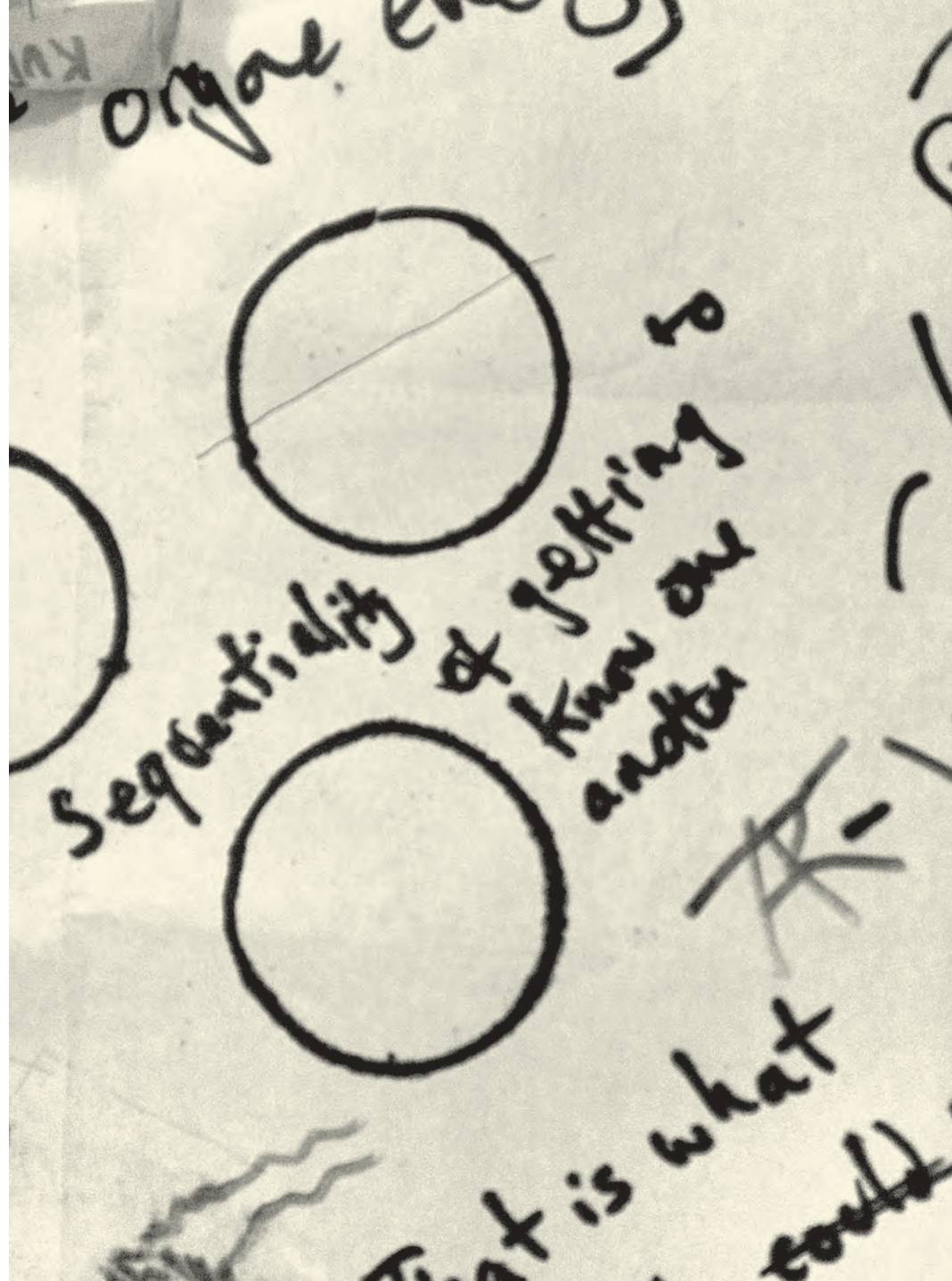
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To Make It Happen – Communicating With the Invisible

Kasper Opstrup

“Let thy lips bluster with my words! Are they not meteors in the brain? Back, back from the face of the accursed one, who am I; back in the night of my father, into the silence; for all that ye deem right is left, forward is backward, upward is downward.”

Aleister Crowley 1911: 448

In times of systemic change and political upheaval, old dreams of creating autonomous universities often find new expressions. Mostly, the hope seems to be to produce historical roots to the given movement as well as future escape routes from the present. Examples of this can be found both in the wave of anarchist free schools in the 1920s and 1930s as well as in the Free University movement of the 1960s and the 1970s. Today, there has been a renewed critical interest in (higher) education. Artists and activists have experimented with new types of communities and the creation of new institutions both inside and outside the already existing ones. On the one

hand, the art space has been instrumentalised as a space for experimental learning. On the other, the learning site has always already been a place for the formation and production of subjectivity (Allen 2011; Ivison et al.: 2013).

In the wake of the international occupy movements, there has been a return of free universities and free schools where new desires for collectivity and action, for alternative ways of rigging the world, have arisen.

While the medieval universities arose to challenge the church's monopoly on knowledge, its catholic dogma and the powers the church represented, the modern university became the educational apparatus which produced future leaders and tycoons. The postmodern university has largely become either a place for mass education or, in terms of research, it has been instrumentalised by means of funding from major corporations. In contrast, the free universities emerged to produce and share a knowledge that their participants deemed necessary for human survival, believing that the course of capitalism is catastrophe and that there were only minutes to go before annihilation would strike. Alternatively, in a tradition that reaches back to, at least, German Romanticism and Schiller's notion of an aesthetic education of man, they insisted upon the right to dream and act informed by a politics of revelation based on Blakean visions and a pre-occupation with utopian living.

The Free University movement, including anti-universities, spontaneous universities, action universities and the like, emerged in the context of the budding counter-culture of the early 1960s. On the one hand, it can be traced back to the civil rights movement and its freedom schools in Mississippi and, on the other, it became part of the arsenal of the New Left through the Free Speech movement at the University of Berkeley. More or less instantaneously, it spread to the UK and Europe where it merged with other traditions of learning. This international movement can be seen as an attempt to reinvent the educational institutions. It is an idea about revolution as a type of collective deschooling which is able to break the shackles of past conditioning as it has been internalised by the exploited classes and their tribunes. Like the situationists who imagined a take-over of UNESCO, it is a realisation that a postmodern revolution needs to be a cultural revolution that produces subjectivities.

In order to produce communism, one needs to produce a new type of wo/man.

The means to realise this age-old dream of un-alienated existence, thus, becomes a new type of university. If we accept that any successful revolution is dependent upon a new production of subjectivity, the free universities can be seen as the backbone of the counterculture. They wanted to detonate what the Scottish writer Alexander Trocchi called an 'invisible insurrection' in

the manifesto for his sigma pipe dream, 'A Revolutionary Proposal: Invisible Insurrection of a Million Minds' (Trocchi 1962-7). In short, sigma combined a beat ethos with situationism and imagined spontaneous universities built outside all major cities in the world. They were to be close enough to take advantage of the already existing infrastructure but would eventually grow into experimental cities which would slowly become strong enough to become foci of counter-power. What should be taught there was how to fight behavioural conditioning (Opstrup 2014). Again following situationism, the 'sigmanauts' realised that the crisis was systemic.

Structural transformation was necessary in order to produce an as yet unknown future.

This desire for an unknown future – which is unfathomable yet has to be produced by what already is – opens the gates for the occult revival of the 1960s. Esoteric topics became standard in most of the free universities: psychonautism as a radical political and educational practice. In this context, the occult becomes a means through which to think the unthinkable and comprehend the unknowable. It can be thought of as a strategic, psychogeographical displacement which can be used for contesting pre-learned as well as habitual terms and thought patterns.

It is a question of how to understand, manipulate and communicate with the invisible.

Thus, a kind of 'potere occulto' opens up the possibility of switching the terrain on which questions of future societies and what is to be done are discussed in order to approach these through a kind of 'magickal Marxism' instead of through handed down dogma. Seen in this perspective, magick – which all good art and poetry strive to become¹ – becomes politicised as a continuation of the class struggle by other means; 'the superstructure's superstructure', as Dr. Last, a semi-fictive portrait of the anti-psychiatrist R. D. Laing, calls it in Clancy Sigal's novel *Zones of the Interior* (1976).

Instead of the classical model for warfare, informed by Clausewitz and taken up by the situationists, where two opposing armies confront each other on the battlefield, it becomes semiotic guerilla warfare, sabotage on the level of words and ideas in an uneven terrain.

Laing was in direct touch with the London Anti-University which – for a short moment in time – seemed like the realisation of sigma's eternal dream of creating an anti-university, an arts lab, a fun palace. Even though it only existed in material terms during the spring of 1968, it not only questioned the relationship between teacher and

1 Compare, for example, Crowley's famous definition of magick from the introduction to *Magick in Theory and Practice* as the 'Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will' with Burroughs' oft-quoted adage that the purpose of writing is 'to make it happen'.

pupil, but also the subject matter and research autonomy of the traditional university by offering courses in matters normally suppressed or marginalised: esoterica, Fortean, communism, anarchism, histories from below.

As such, it does not seem coincidental that the magickal revival – magick had been relegated to its chthonic existence by the rise of rationality after the renaissance (Webb 1974) – started to accelerate in late romanticism, where a barrage of theories about art, politics, evolution, education and speculations about the future of wo/man can be found, e.g. S. L. MacGregor Mathers' creation of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn which can only be compared to freemasonry and Madame Blavatsky's Theosophic Society in its influence on modern occultism. Together, these three constitute the roots of the patchwork spirituality and the rise of the New Age movement often associated with the 1960s. It is a world view where alienation has evaporated and the rules of rationality are defunct due to that 'one and one is not two, but one' to paraphrase British occultist and Golden Dawn member Aleister Crowley.

Seen in this perspective, the 1960s were truly the 'morning of the magicians' where access to esoteric knowledge and hidden doctrines traditionally reserved for initiates became widely accessible to an experimental public interested in defining a new way of life.

One of the first to critically analyse the wave of free universities was Theodore Roszak who was also briefly affiliated with the Anti-University. In his seminal *The Making of a Counter-Culture* (1968), he found that these new universities were characterised by a move from the political towards the mystical. If one examines the first three catalogues of courses from the Anti-University it is clear, though, that these two tendencies were present at the same time: it was as much about inner space as it was about outer. As such, they complement each other by paying attention to not only an outer history of failed revolutions and ecstatic insurrections but by also being sensitive towards inner space by exploring anti-psychiatry, psychotherapy, magick and mysticism, thus charting the grey zone between psychiatry and religion where both existential anti-psychiatry and esotericism can be located.

Such a concatenation of art, politics, occultism and experimental learning is also conspicuously present in a slightly later example: Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth (TOPY), which was active during the 1980s. The immediate precursor to TOPY was Academy 23, a free schooling initiative described by William Burroughs through a series of articles in the magazine *Mayfair* in the late 1960s as well as in the last chapter of his interview book, *The Job* (1974). Academy 23 was developed through conversations with Trocchi about sigma – which Burroughs contributed to – and the founding of a spontaneous university.

Thus, it can be seen as a sort of sister project to the sigma project which was the immediate precursor to the Anti-University. At the Academy, the students would respond to the prophetic calls for a new aeon by creating a new mythology for the space age while learning to fight control. In Burroughs' interpretation, words and their linearity are vehicles for control.

When grammar becomes politics by other means acts of resistance can be the discovery of a new word; the re-arranging of old words; the creation of languages.

TOPY was the creation of an anti-cult. The same way the Anti-University realised parts of the sigma project, TOPY would realise parts of the Burroughsian academy. The roots of the temple goes back to industrial subculture, the band Throbbing Gristle and, earlier, the performance group COUM Transmission. The common denominator between the three is the persona of Genesis (Breyer) P. Orridge. After the dissolution of Throbbing Gristle in 1981, P-Orridge and Peter 'Sleazy' Christopherson continued with the project Psychick TV (PTV), which would become the propaganda wing of the temple, just as TOPY would become the ideological wing of PTV. The goal was to realise Academy 23's transcendence of conditioned consciousness with an emphasis on 'occulture' – a term coined by TOPY – rather than a more recognisable political agenda.

It could be a kind of creative anarchism more closely related to Stirner than to Bakunin and thus a type of collectivity which emphasised individual emancipation.

TOPY revealed itself to a wider public on the PTV album *Force the Hand of Change* (1982). The track 'Message from the Temple' presented the temple and became its first open call for affiliation. From there it evolved to become an improvised organisational structure that along the way experimented with various types of apparatuses for behavioural conditioning from the cultic to the educational. These founding ideas developed through discussions between the American performance artist Monte Cazazza and P-Orridge (2009a: 175) about

“what might happen if a rock band, instead of just seeing fans as an income flow and an ego booster, focused that admiration and energy toward a cultural and lifestyle-directing network? What would happen if we created a paramilitary occult organization that shared demystified magickal techniques? Sleeve notes could become manifestos, a call to action and behavioural rebellion.”

Maybe the temple started as a sort of fan club and cult of personality but it soon evolved to become a network of artists, musicians and writers who tried to make an intervention in the mainstream with ideas about a new culture and an emanci-

pated art which did not yet exist. They showed their belonging to the greater TOPY community by doing an unusual thing: practicing ceremonial magick and sex magick in a way similar to the then contemporary chaos magick scenes. Their book of methods, *Thee Grey Book* (1982), stated the TOPY mission: “We are not seeking followers, we are seeking collaborators. Individuals for a Psychick Alliance. What we suggest next is *not* instruction. It is a method. [...] Our interest is therefore *practical*” (P-Orridge et al 1982: 41).

TOPY’s methods were influenced by situationistic *détournement* which had become part and parcel of underground culture in the UK not least through sigma but, to an even greater degree, they were inspired by the cut-up methods of Brion Gysin and William Burroughs – this was obviously related to *détournement* in the way that use is made of what is already there – which they applied to everything from words, pictures, sounds, video experiments, television programmes, e.g. *First Transmission* (1982) which was meant to be sent between midnight and 6am. They even cut up their own bodies as in P-Orridge’s later pandrogeny project. They claimed to be modern alchemists who through cultural production, the free circulation of information and the viral transmission of memes could alter the ways of the world. P-Orridge (2006: 279):

“Everything is recorded. If it is recorded, then it can be edited. If it can be edited, then the

order, sense, meaning and direction is as arbitrary and personal as the agenda and/or person editing. This is magick. For if we have the ability and/or choice of how things unfold – regardless of the original order and/or intention that they are recorded in – then we have control over the eventual unfolding.”

At its peak, TOPY had a headquarters, TOPY WORLD, in Brighton, UK, three major centres in the UK, the US and Europe as well as various smaller Access Points which could be anything from an affinity group to a single person distributing information about TOPY locally while pretending to be an institution in the tradition of Mail Art. In the early 1990s, the network – which several members have referred to as ‘being the internet before the internet’ – rapidly expanded as it began to recruit more broadly and become part of the expanding tactical media scenes. The temple itself, though, lost its momentum after 1991, when the police raided the Brighton HQ on suspicions that P-Orridge was the ring leader in a Satanic child abuse ring. This caused P-Orridge to close down the network and choose exile in the US. During the next few years, the network completely dissolved in Europe where its members drifted on to related projects like, for example, the Association of Autonomous Astronauts who became part of the creative activism scenes connected to the rave culture and the anti-globalisation movements around the turn of the millennium.

These various types of experiments with a type of aesthetic education wanted to produce a future that was unknown but self-organised; it was about being pro-active and organising one's own temple, sigma centre, academy, anti-university, enabling the movement to spread like a virus and create a leaderless network where nobody would need a badge to know they were part of it.

The ones who were able to come in and feel comfortable were welcome to stay.

The weapons of this invisible insurrection would be cut-ups, détournements, new medias – a post-modern politics *par excellence* (Gilman-Opalsky 2013). The terrain consisted of images, myths, ideas, architecture; stories we tell ourselves and each other in order to mobilise energy and move in multiple directions. The free universities would detonate the insurrection. From then on, it would have a snowball effect: the myriad creation of new forms of life based upon a bio-political production of subjectivity and a new mythology; de-mystified structures one could utilise at will. Ultimately, by using the apparatuses at their disposal and by enabling experimentation with behaviours and limits, they sought to produce the new wo/man of the future.

That which follows capitalism must necessarily come through that which has already been produced by capitalism.

Ironically, in this vein then, it is the scientific world view and technological acceleration that some claim have caused social fragmentation and a spiritual vacuum which become part of creating a new techno-eschatology; what the cultural critic Mark Dery (1996: 9) has called 'a theology of the ejector seat'. It is not just about exodus, it is about leaving the body and the planet behind in order to emigrate to outer space as bodies of light.

That the battle is fought on the level of language can mean that a possible escape route is total silence.

The counter-cultural universities strove to unite the inner with the outer in order to find a way out which often as not proved to be a way in. The new centres expressed the politics of the New Left – a motley combination of anarcho-communism and revisionist Marxism – on their own user-run schools and universities where the syllabus included cultural production and a revival of the occult: tarot cards, transcendental meditation, thelema.

It can be seen as an attempt to link psychological revolution with social revolution in order to make an opening for other futurities. Trocchi once termed these possibilities as 'cultural engineering'.

Cultural engineering recognises that a broader wish for social transformation has to spread through a population like a cultural meme but also that this is dependent upon an altered state

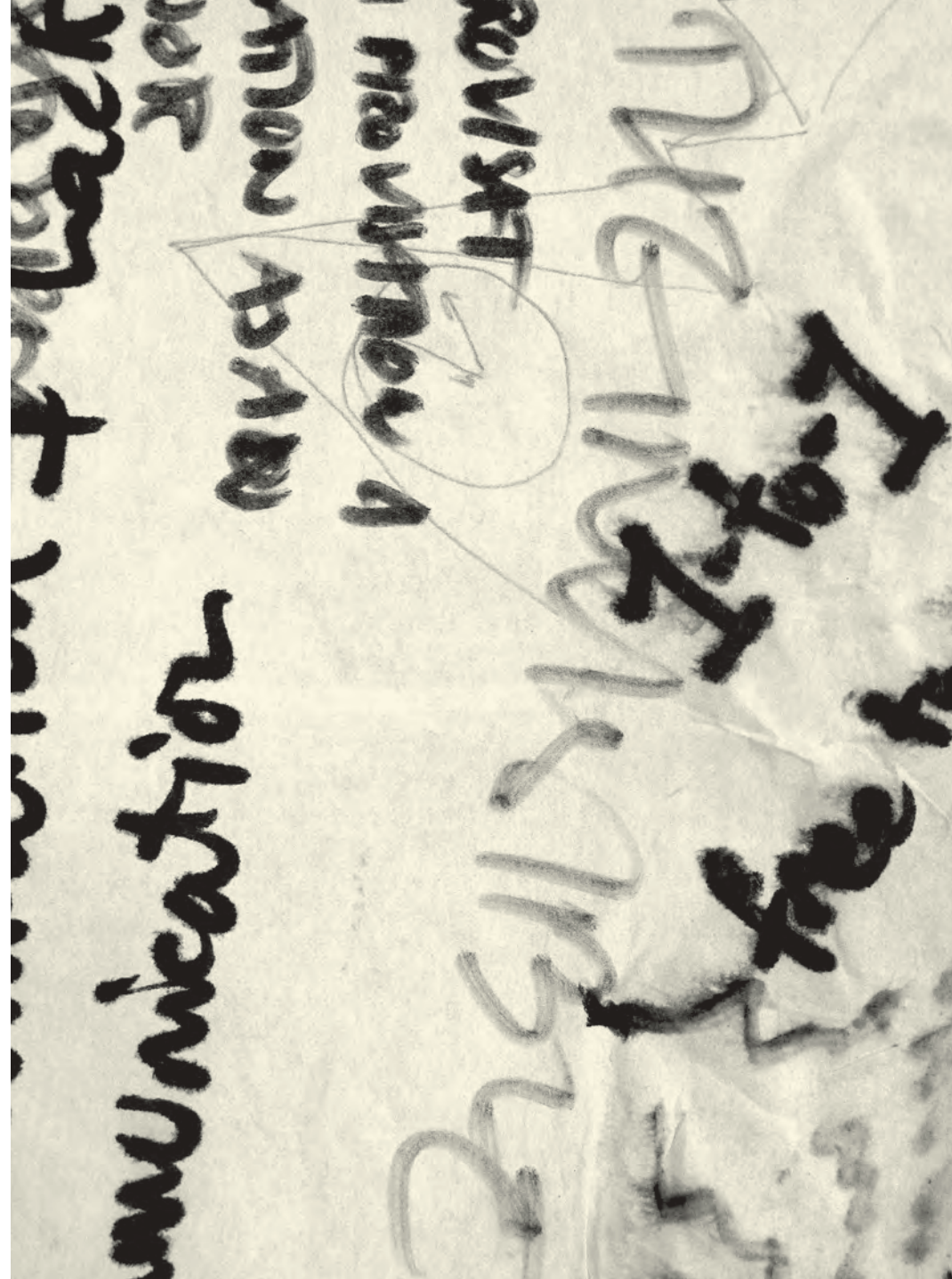
of consciousness where instead of talking about ‘there’, we talk about ‘here’ and instead of talking about ‘then’, we talk about ‘now’. Our predecessors in the 1960s thought that the survival of humanity was dependent upon a pooling of resources, a sharing of knowledge as well as the creation of a free information exchange.

This resonates into our own contemporary with, for example, the Italian media theorist Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi (2013: 34) who, in a recent interview stated, that “[n]ow more than ever we have to invest our political and cultural energy into the creation of an autonomous process of self-education, of research and transmission of knowledge”.

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Anti-historicism of Anti-/Free University

Branka Ćurčić

Historical fact 1: 'The Free University' was established in 1975 in former Yugoslavia as an illegal university held in the private apartments of its protagonists. Here, the teachers were the so-called 'eight professors', professors who had been dismissed from their teaching positions at the Philosophy Faculty of Belgrade University.

How to treat this historical fact? To treat it as accurate and to insist on it as precise?

If the treatment and insistence on the accuracy of the historical fact is to be questioned, then such a drive for accuracy is that which introduces the scientific into history without demands for any kind of contextualisation other than the very intelligibility of history as a science. By means of such a treatment of the historical fact, there is, simultaneously, the prevention of singular thought in relation to history as well as a consigning of the historical fact to the status of a 'given' that has already been played out. Historicism. As the sole means of thinking

about past practices and politics, historicism adds to the great narratives of nation and heritage and takes up its accompanying place in the space of the state. Thus historicism undoubtedly binds the historical facts to the centre of the state, and makes the historian's work one of defining historical facts and constructing from these the state's history and the history of the state. On the other hand, a questioning of past practices that distances itself from defining and treating these practices as given historical facts, that distances itself from dating and chronologising, is a questioning that draws attention to the relational links that historicism establishes with the structures of power and how this emanates from a de-subjectifying response to the practices of the past. With these means, the very work of the historian is put into question. In its stead is put before us the way that she identifies with the historical record in its singularising dimension, while, at the same time, problematising her own subjective approach to that record.

In what way, then, is it possible to simultaneously constitute an anti-historicist, an anti-historical and an anti-statist approach to the practices of the past? How to access these past practices of alternative education and anti-academic practices, and in that way gain a knowledge about them which doesn't present itself as a new educational and academic syllabus and programme?

[One channel for subjectivity? Can anyone hear it?]

In what way, then, choosing and insisting on the historical record, which refers to historical examples of practices distant from the state, can the historical record be problematized? Is there a way to avoid bringing past practices to light in a manner that doesn't reassert the position of the individual historian and that avoids being thematically and descriptively consist-

ent, and therefore, makes the practices of the past incompatible with a state-centric history?

What would be the implications, then, for an historian who would approach the practices of the past in a singular and subjective way – which is a way of saying, approaching the past as an anti-historian? How, in thinking of the past practices (for example, anti-university practices), could I bridge the distance of dualistic thought of objective and subjective, structure and consciousness (if consciousness could, initially at least, refer to the subjective and the singularising dimension)?

Even in the case of those past practices which are considered to be politically emancipatory, and which we are trying to access, is it not the case that these, in being recorded and inventorised, have become defined and positioned as already 'given', as compatible with a scientific work of history. Is an attempt to access them without singular and subjective means a further way of making them compatible with a state-centric historicism? Should the state with its historicist paradigm remain the unique referent?

If the past is related to as a 'given' then there are implications for what is *possible*. The *Possible*, as an effective *prescription* of politics and its singular character, is reserved only for the future, and in this way the *possible* could only imply a utopia. The *possible* is, in actuality, rendered *impossible* and it places politics firmly in the domain of historio-statist discourses. Yet, the *Possible* is also a quality of the past, of what has already happened. The *Possible*, as a key category for an anti-historicist approach, *is no longer a quality solely of the future and of that which would come, rather it is a category in subjectivity which problematises access to what could be (politics?) in relation to what is for the future, as well as for the past.*

Is this one way to actively open up subjectivity and to act as singularities in the direction of an anti-history?

How can we deal with the historical fact of the Belgrade 'Free University' in such a way that pursues an anti-historicist and subjective approach? Certainly not by treating it in terms of objective accuracy, which, falling back on the form of the chronicle and the techniques of the inventory, would place this 'Free University', as scientific history, in the domain of the state.

If I'm trying to gain access to this past setting by way of subjectivity, then I'm saying that what characterises the state socialism of the former Yugoslavia is that it is, in the mid 1970s, already part-way towards de-statification, and the party, instead of accelerating the dissolution of the state, becomes its major support through the functional coupling of party-state. Any assumption about a 'class-less society' had already vanished with the disappearance of class logic. The latter was supposed to lead to the dissolution of the state and to the end of the class struggle itself. What is left out from this account is society as a totality and as a uniqueness. Yet, by means of the party-form the state is established as society in its fullness, as the only necessary space, a fully composed society and thus as the only place that the thought of politics can exist. In this way, the state, as an 'objective totality', is called upon to intervene in the many forms that the social crisis takes; but the result of this is a deepening of this very statism. Socialism was a model of the party-state and all practices of politics were placed in that space. Whilst 'the reforms' that came to mark the state, brought an internal dynamism to it, creating socialist and non-socialist spaces within it (and not, as is predominantly thought today, socialist and capitalist spaces), these reforms resulted in desocialisation rather than a deepening of socialisation.

[One channel for subjectivity. Is anyone going to hear it?]

Without embarking on an overall history of the Yugoslav socialist state which, in entailing an historiographic description and chronicling, would take me back into a state-centric space, I'm wondering if the search to access an anti-historicist method is something that could constitute anti-history as marking a clear division from the centripetal politics of the state? Is this anti-historicist approach, in its negative determination towards the politics of a state-centric space, one way of identifying the politics which I seek? A politics present in its very absence? But, is it sufficient to mark out one field which would, instead of thematising and describing, insist upon problematisation; if not yet upon *prescription*?

The politics of the 'Free University' was a politics which had, for its sole referent, the state as a totality. It was a politics that had an antinomic character towards the state: whilst it seemed to put itself in opposition to the state it was, as a consequence of the internal dynamism of (state) socialism, led by that very state – a dynamism that was propelled by the process of an ever deepening desocialisation. The founding of the 'Free University' was a reaction to a party-state intervention, by which 'the eight professors' of the Philosophy Faculty were dismissed from their teaching positions, prohibited from contributing to scientific magazines and publishing books, whilst at the same time having their incomes reduced (dismissed yet retaining sixty percent of that income?) After six years, a new party-state intervention ensued with the setting up of *The Centre for Philosophy and Social Theory* within *The Institute of Social Science*; a new department established exclusively for the purpose of employing 'the eight professors'. The 'Free University' of Belgrade, then, was a *professorial protest*, a vehicle for delivering

demands to the state. As a practice it was led by the dynamics of the party-state and neither the 'Free University' nor 'the eight professors' acted in an oppositional or antagonistic way towards this party-state, nor in a way that could, by breaking with the existing relations of knowledge production, open up a relational space in which to offer a critique of the desocialising effects of state-socialism. So, there was no problematisation of the practices of how knowledge is constituted nor any move towards changing the relations of production within the educational sector itself. The 'Free University' was thus a space emptied of politics and stuffed-full with the desocialising politics of the party-state. The 'Free University', therefore, was emptied of the problematising politics that the name 'free university' may signal. It was an institution formed by state interventionism, and, in due course, *The Centre for Philosophy and Social Theory*, became, in the time of post-socialism, *The Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory*. A name it still carries today. It could be added that this institute has, since 1992, been a hotbed of state education and state-educated staff. May I also say, it has been a place from which insistently nationalist tendencies emanate?

[Once more, if we take subjectivity into consideration, a subjectivity that could be said to be outside the field of the state structure and social norms, then I am enabled to pose an ostensibly simple question: is every free university practice eventually a Free University practice? Can anyone hear this question?]

Historical fact 2: Student protests in Belgrade in 1968 lasted for nine days, from 2nd to 10th of June. These student protests were supported by professors from Belgrade's University, there were committees of students formed at many faculties of the university, including a student action committee to coordinate

demonstrations. For this nine day period, Belgrade's University was renamed *The Red University Karl Marx*.

Observed from the angle of anti-historicism, the student uprising was an antagonistic assault on the state and its development was antinomic in relation to the party and the state. The temporality of the state was seemingly declared and lip service paid to the theory of the proletariat, but the necessity of the state was manifested in its omnipresence which led to ideologism and to a politics exclusively placed in its own separated and unique space. The implication of this was that the *antagonistic principle as a principle of subjectivation of a relation of struggle aiming towards the dissolution of the state* was not only occluded, but rendered effectively non-existent or non-thinkable. This meant an expansion of the desocialising tendency of socialism, where desocialisation didn't represent an assault upon the party-state, but rather it was an 'assault' led by the party-state itself.

Could I then say that the student protests were an anti-bureaucratic and reformist protest, through which was demanded, among other things: extra-legitimisation of the state by the request for consistent realisation and application of the Constitution; democratisation of social relations (today some protagonists would even say in the name of democratic-socialism); freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of scientific activity for the strengthening of the influence of science and the university to the wider society, etc.? Moreover, both during and after the student protests, commissions were formed for the drafting of laws on higher-education and for the drafting of many other laws which were supposed to regulate the lives of students and the development of scientific work. What was omitted from the student protests was the

demand for a change in the relations of production of knowledge and for an abolition of the division of labour in the domain of education and at the very university named a 'Red University'. After all, as soon as support from the professors was accepted by the students and their participation in the protests occurred (the professors of philosophy actually led it), the protest was identified as 'student' and 'university-based' and limited to having a reformist rather than radical (deepening-socialisation) character.

An affective intervention. An impassioned intervention by the Surrealist Oskar Davičo: 'What philosophers! They encourage the students but bugger them; and in the case of one professor who gave support to the students, he cried: 'He's a motherfucker! I will cut his throat!'

[Once more, if we take subjectivity into consideration, a subjectivity that could be said to be outside the field of the state structure and social norms, then isn't it that today's student protests in the former Yugoslavia are in full compliance with those of the Yugoslavia of 1968? Why can no one hear this question?]

An affective intervention. An impassioned intervention by a Surrealist who was adamant in his resistance to the desocialisation of Yugoslav socialism. Additionally, he was, from the expanded field of the state structure and social norms, considered to be *anachronistic* in holding such a political position. Although from the expanded field of the state structure and social norms he was seen as a prolific and talented writer-poet, his political cry-of-resistance, his insults, couldn't be heard, except to be named as excessive and deviational, as temporary slips, which all combined to add further weight to his being

labelled as an anachronism. Could I also add that the politics of his art, from the perspective of the state structure and social norms, was further denounced through its being 'flatteringly' labelled as being productive and talented? Resistance to the desocialisation of socialism as an anachronism; the very struggle to dissolve the state deemed anachronistic; anachronism of the struggle against desocialisation; anachronism of the struggle.

However, could I offer that it is that which is deemed 'engaged art', created during and from within the student protests, which is actually the anachronism? What to do with such art, with all its documentarism, instrumentalism, posturing engagement, and even its social-realism? Let us listen to the hymn of the students' protest.

It is that which is deemed 'engaged art' which is actually the anachronism:

It rains flames on the dry ground

which sings of freshest water

On the road to revolution we trod

Left! Left! Left!

Let the sun fall into our hearts

Let the light flash through the ground

We will push-off the nag of History

Left! Left! Left!

To the courage of the fathers known from books

We give thanks! The future is already hotting up
 And our worries leave us
 Left! Left! Left!
 In front of our eyes, as the commune was
 before them – the star burns
 Youth is our privilege

(text: Miroljub Todorović, music: Vuk Stambolović)

Instead of an interventionist response to the state's interventionism (which is actually the most common path into desocialisation) is it possible to imagine a politics that doesn't have the state as its main referent? What is it with a politics that doesn't assert demands, but rather chants; *appeals* in different ways – what is it with a politics of *prescription*? Socialism and politics in their too accepted domain are connected to description because they are connected to modelling, party politics and the planning of a 'planned economy'. The fundamental basis of classism, as transition to communism, is forgotten because it wasn't considered as the content for the further socialisation of socialism; socialisation was never the aim of the Yugoslav Socialist State. Therefore, there was also an absence of politics as chanting, breaking, as decision, which otherwise wouldn't have to have any other aim but itself. But, if such politics would be present, as 'disinterested' politics, could we consider it to be a singular politics, a politics of singularity (and in terms of art, an autonomous art)?

Don't they always speak communally
 but think of themselves
 and say:
 "Friends, poets
 this personal pain
 does not suit us!"
 Or: "Any pain in our system
 is an atypical
 and purely private thing."
 Pain? A private matter? Ah, my prompting friend
 I myself don't know how, but it happens
 that the most private sorrow
 sometimes rustles with
 the only word
 which heals those common
 irremediable wounds; comrade, friend from the apparatus,

don't take out from your leather bag of fake hide
 a new pile of regulations
 and edicts
 which direct
 the poetic idea towards tactics
 and make a norm of poetic form.
 Verse is a strategist
 frenziedly bursting out from an everyday skin...

(Oskar Davičo, TRGeM, 1968)

Historical fact 3: 'Index' was the organ of the Association of Students of Vojvodina, dedicated to the life of students of Novi Sad University and the other universities in the province of Vojvodina. Contained within it there were reports and written records from the sessions of Students' Association, from the special sessions and commissions. In the period of 1967-1970, alongside these official reports, interventions from Novi Sad's and the Yugoslavian neo avant-garde were published.

Davičo's art and politics collapsed because he was considered as an anachronism in the political sense as well as in

the artistic sense. He was seen as a capable, talented and prolific artist, but this only served to circumscribe him, his politics and art, within harmlessly respectful boundaries. He was named but for reasons that, in naming him as an artist, served to individualise him: condemning him to art. Could I then go on to consider those conceptual art practices that featured in 'Index' as articulating a subjective answer to the desocialisation of socialism and to individualisation, to the condemnation to art?

How to think of the following two formal statements as existing in parallel (i) 'The process of conceptual creation and the struggle for reform is the place where communists are supposed to show their avant-garde character' (where *the avant-garde character* implied was exclusively seen as party-organising or party-building, and the place of the *communists* is an empty and desocialised one; it is a statement which implies an anachronism of struggle) and (ii) 'The sphere of education is of extraordinary significance for the correct social development and for the free and creative expression of the student's personality'. How to think of these preceding formal statements as existing in parallel with or alongside to the 'disinterestedness' of the poetry, collages and artist's texts that could be found in the pages of the same magazine?

How do we consider the insights contained in *the artist's text*, that 'We have to free ourselves from pedagogic systems if we want to dedicate ourselves to taking care of the things that we are dealing with?' Or, again, what happens if we look closely at a detail within a *conceptual collage* where the following can be read:

WANTED:

the SAP Vojvodina¹

bill on higher-education

It is half-a-year old

and of very indistinguishable

appearance and whoever

finds the content

be careful to hide it

so as it won't fall into

t h e w r o n g h a n d s

– Grateful Students

Students-artists. Artists-students. Yet actually neither 'students' nor 'artists'. The neo avant-garde protagonists were taking neither of those two firmly established and identifiable positions. They were actually performing and practicing a 'method' of escape/exile to avoid becoming indentifiable from the vantage point of the structure of the state and social norms; an escape/exile in/to any number of possible po-

sitions. This escape from identification towards a range of possible positions represented a practice of de-positioning; the opening-up of a different space from which to critique the university, different from the student-reformist-desocialising perspective, and, furthermore, different and diversionary from the statist space of politics. Such a de-positioning was a refusal to perform an act of interventionism which would subsume a 'possible' politics under a version of the political already pre-defined by the state. Could it be said that this act of refusal led towards a singularisation of politics? It was a de-positioning from the sphere of art and of social norms that did not fall into a culturalisation-aesthetisation of politics. This enabled an autonomous art production, and through that, a *true* politicisation of art. Could I say then, that this implies a consideration of art, not only as negative determination, a criticism of students' reformism, but as a space which refers to *new forms for the constituting of non-knowledge?*

For the sake of art, I'm paraphrasing the above quote (*which would, could be, a quote, and one quote is fought by another quote. Tell those who struggle, as fire with fire. I'll quote too. For the first time in my life. I ask for an apology. And the same time for permission. Thank you. I've just taken it.*)

Comrade, friend from the apparatus,

don't take out from your leather bag of fake hide

a new pile of regulations

and edicts

¹ Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

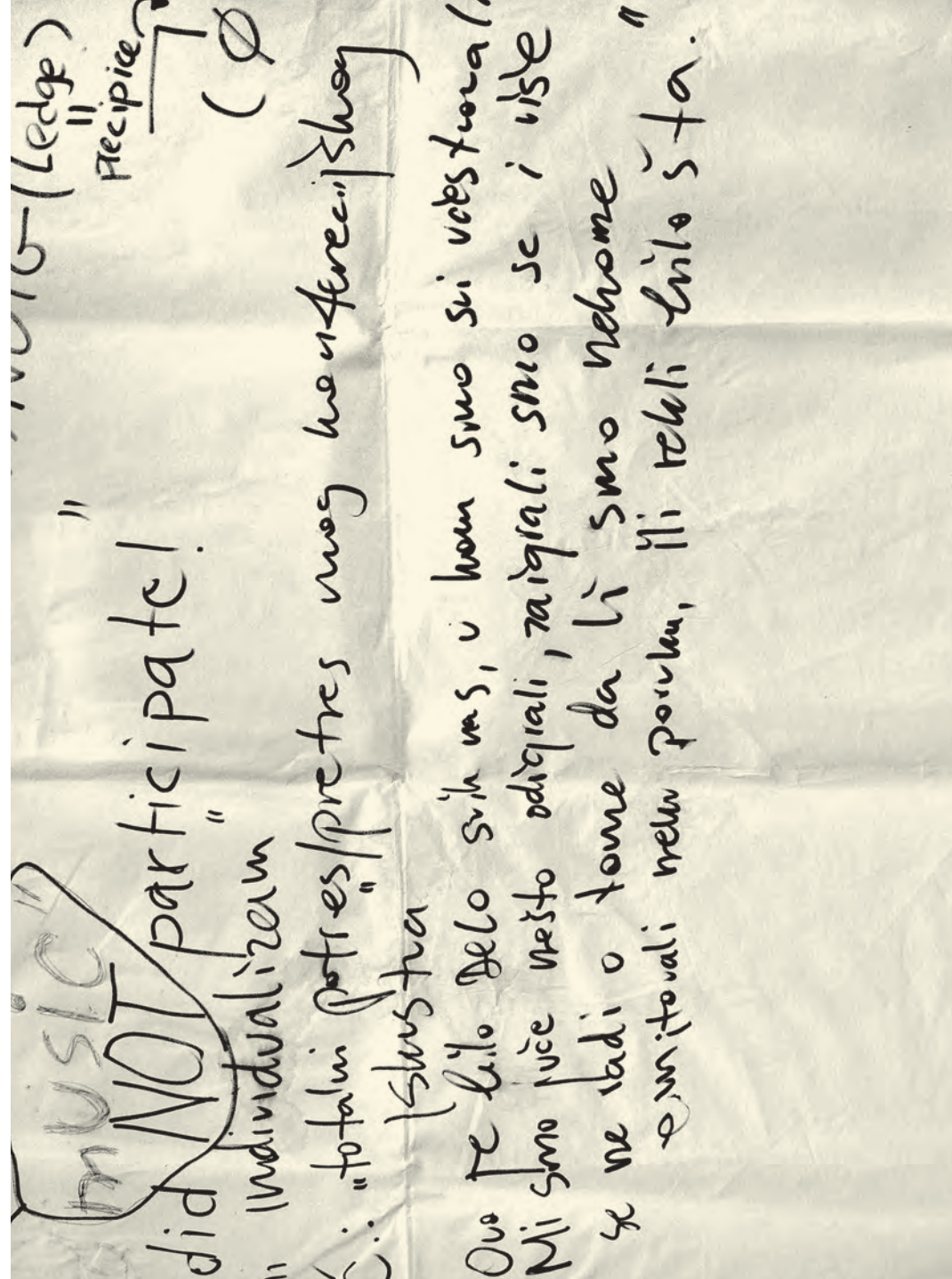
which direct

the poetic idea towards tactics

and make a norm of poetic form.

Art is a strategist

frenziedly bursting out from an everyday skin...



A Feast in February, 1971/2014

Zoran Gajić

A Feast In February. Should this event be described or re-enacted? Maybe we should begin with the statement: 'I=reader?' No! None of that, let's kick-off with the following quote.

“On Tuesday evening in the second airing of the TV news we were informed that the Novi Sad group 'February' held a several-hour long programme at the Youth Centre in Belgrade predominantly filled with verbal and written insults accompanied by physical gestures enacting those insults. This programme was put on by the same group, previously shown hospitality by Novi Sad's Youth Tribune, whose programme (which was then called programme of the group 'January') perform in Novi Sad, received the following known reactions.” (MK, *Messengers of Insolence*, Dnevnik, February, 1971)

Read how this is written. Journalists' proofreading department and correction is not intended for journalists but to all of those who don't read what is supposed to be read and who in that way won't stick to the word as they stick to someone's fingers. The fact that in the sentence in which it's stated that the Youth Tribune had shown hospitality to the 'February' group we note that the suffix '-ed' is missing from the adjective. It is not of tremendous significance. But it's not without significance either. The reason for quoting this journalist's article, *Messengers of Insolence*, is not to point out the haste of the editor and the writer; the latter we know only under the initials M.K. and whose identity we can't be bothered to seek out. No, we quote the article in order to evoke the event (*happening*) in

the way in which it was presented to the readership of its time. Today we could talk about it in a similar way to the following:

“KOD-ian neoanarchism is the form of resistance to the institutional bureaucratic order of moderate modernism of real socialist society. The neoanarchism of the West of the late sixties and early seventies, critically and confrontationally, struggled with the aesthetics of high modernism which was based on ideas of art’s autonomy. East european neoanarchism, to which the KOD group belongs, was faced with a politically programmed art which functioned according to party and bureaucratic interests. While western neoanarchism put forth possibilities for political changes and therefore transformed art by means of the artistic and aesthetic values of the epoch, KOD-ian neoanarchism passed through three phases: 1. attempting to create free-zones in culture through proclamations (...) and public actions, 2. analysing the concrete social-political aspects of Novi Sad’s, Vojvodina’s and the Serbian scene at the beginning of the seventies (...) and 3. using provocation as an aesthetic and artistic simulation, i.e. provocation as the only means of resistance against a stable system of institutionalised meaning, value and sense (...) During the performance of the group ‘February’ in Belgrade’s Youth Centre, Miroslav Mandić exhibited ‘10 Messages’ in which he used forms of linguistic (semantic) play and political (pragmatic) statements. These statements were provocative messages ranging from insults and incestuous obscenities to political utterances. But, the piece is also a semantic (linguistic) play which shows the ambiguity of political, literary, cultural and emotional meaning of the message. Each of the ten messages had the legend-index ‘I=reader’, which incisively disordered a clear reading and the establishment of fixed meaning. For example, ‘message 7: For king and fatherland’ is a shocking statement in socialist republican society, and is simultaneously the title of the Joseph Louis’ film.” (Miško Šuvaković, *Conceptual Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad, 2007, 534–535)

Two means of interpretation from two different times and, probably, two different epochs of art. That’s not to be our theme. Instead we are now bringing that art work to mind and tending, by reconstructing it, to revive it in the Black House so as to remind friends that, with art, neither then nor today, does the situation appear as it does at first glance. Journalistic and academic jargon builds a discursive fog around the inexpressible (but not the irrational!) Moreover, our recollection of it and thinking-it-through makes it timeless. So, our contemporary use of the components of reminiscence is neither an historiographic freezing nor is it a theoretical circumvention of the protagonists of the event (of which we could say more). Back then it was clearer who was an ‘emancipator’ and who was a socialist, and who was not. Why, now, shouldn’t we try to think outside the confines of historiographical and theoretical discourses? And why do we need to resist them? Well, because resistance to that kind of smug cleverness and judgmentalism is the only way that the defeated can rise from the dead and revive politics and art which even well-intentioned remembrances (for example those who are seeking after ideals) often end up colonising, and which they are not even assuredly conscious of.

Let’s, now, give some space for a brave journalist to speak:

“With a good dose of Herostratus’ violence, this group of wantons wants to enter the dark side of contemporary fame, hustling into it by violating the established rituals of decent behaviour and the habits and common-sense of the majority. Having no other means to gain attention, members of that group, with their happenings, insult that majority who wouldn’t ordinarily notice their creations (let’s say: poetic, or, for example: pictorial.)” (MK, *Messengers of Insolence*, Dnevnik, February, 1971)

Cowards and cunts (read also pricks)! Swathing insults with gestures and actions which would even “embarrass the most work-worn strippers”, said another journalist, Bogdan Tirnanić (admittedly a braver one than M.K.), who was also a film critic and an actor in Žilnik’s “Early Works”.

Since Herostratus is someone whose name is after all being bandied about, let us also say something about personal names, and not only because we are speaking about local events and the occurrences in a peripheral political and artistic scene. Proper nouns and citizens' personal identification numbers are not something which is private; just as there's nothing private in all of that which produces individuality and character and then lives from that production and, by digesting and surviving from the peoples' back-breaking labour, builds the castle which simultaneously offers itself as a 'public space' which serves the interests of those whose labour gives it sustenance. In return the people are given the sensation of a private sphere (distant from and actually opposed to any intimacy). Through this 'gift' they can digest that which was served up to them as the meaning of life. The State as the highest point of the Spirit has no other function than that described above. It can be seen analytically as a mute force and as a condensation of powers – but in order to destroy it we need different forms of rationality and affect. Bogdan Tirnanić is therefore the first among 'madmen', as Josip Broz (Tito) called them. Following a brief *sojourn* in the world of provocative film making these 'madmen', who had only made a gentle critique of the Yugoslav socialist system, agreed to be cured, agreed to be normalised.

Tirnanić, acting as a prosthetic link for disciplinary power yanked his end of the chain and placed a noose around the neck of artists by warning them of the hopelessness of the situation which they had dared to play with:

“By declaring, in that way, against one culture as a whole, they, although 'neuro-artists', were not in a condition to imagine their existence in any way differently but exactly in line with the culture against which they act and which, according to their opinion, owes it to them to open up a space for action.” (Bogdan Tirnanić, *Who are the Guys of February*, NIN, No. 1050, Beograd, 1971.)

We are not going to recoil before the warning not to speak ill of the dead because Tirnanić still lives. Neither are we going to recoil from speaking

of M.K.'s expression of 'brave individuality' that we have already cited at the beginning of this text. Such as these are found on every street corner. So, hiding behind anonymous initials may well be thought of as bearing a high degree of decency and, furthermore, as being tactically decorous, but the fact that personal names are also used is not itself a guarantee of bravery. Amidst the nameless mass of individualised desires, the personal name can no longer be recognised as the standard bearer under which resistance can be gathered and consolidated. Such resistance is spotlighted and exposed by personalisations of the problem which is posed by the subject of desire. Personal names have a function which is given to them from the beginning: these names are points of transfer of money and power over their bearers which shapes them into responsabilized and guilty subjects whose guilt and responsibility is experienced by them as freedom. We will say, along with Foucault, that the individual is just a consequence of power, if power is a process of individualization.

Tirnanić's acting as a prosthetic link for disciplinary power finds a home in the cynicism of institutions which articulate themselves through the mouths of the journalists and critics. These days we are experiencing the same thing in Novi Sad with regards to the censorship of art works in the Cultural Centre of Novi Sad (the place that was once known as the Youth Tribune). Once more it is said that culture is not art and that artists who want to be critical or even insulting, have nothing to look for in culture because culture is irreducible to art. The art of the Youth Tribune and their invention of politics (politics as thought) has in that way started off towards state and culture (from the place of polemics to the centre or house of culture), and journeyed from the "politicization of art" and politicization of culture to end up in a culturalisation of politics and in an aestheticisation of politics. This, in order to, at the end of that journey, receive a cynical slap from officialdom. The *dispositif* of cultural production is the same as it was in the past: a relation of power whose tactical configuration is supportive of the reproduction of relations of production, and, of exploitation. The reproduction of exploitative relations by the division of

labour is therefore finding further articulation by means of the normalizing cynicism of officialised critique.

Power, which individualizes and personalises the problem, and in that way obscures the subject, denounces it and by castration delivers it to prosthetic instances of a disciplinary power that makes incursions into the sovereign power of people. We can now take a look at one more instance of this power at work. This time it is the comrade of an artist who speaks, a man who is an artist himself:

“Years-long violation of self-managed rights of working men and the disbalance of labour at the Youth Tribune with basic regulations of legal working rights and constitutional regulations about the material and social position of working men in our society, with all consequences which it has, after decision and programme orientation of the Youth Tribune made by the Youth organisation (possibility of eventual non-recognition of that labour after the elections of new Council and editorial of the Youth Tribune by the PK (Provincial Committee) and OK (District Committee) Association of Youth), affected certain people who dedicated large amount of their time and destinies to the Youth Tribune with their best intentions, bringing into its work, insofar as the objective situation allowed, their *experience* and their *abilities*.” (Branko Andrić, ‘*February*’ *ceased to exist already in January*, Index, No. 214, 24.02.1971.)

This litany about liturgic responsibility and its call for its authors efforts to be recognised, certainly depended on the general social circumstances, but an appeal is also made for his own ‘experience’ and ‘ability’ to be deemed sufficient and worthy of merit. This expression of dissatisfaction led to a reconciliation of interests among some malcontents. However:

“In the first moment everything looked ideal. It was shown, however, that if the uniqueness of interests exists, there’s no likewise harmony of abilities.” At the first common performance of the group January at the Youth Tribune “it came to the well-known incident with the banknote

and insults [shit and money! ZG], which, although it is the work of one man, Miroslav Mandić [king! ZG], a member of the ‘KOD’ group, the collective creativity of the whole group (January at the Tribune) came to be characterised as false avant-gardism, as amateurish and as ideologically slippery; although it was within that exhibition that a lot of indeed real avant-gardism [capable and which wasn’t ideologically slippery! ZG] and significant art was achieved [team, ZG].” (Branko Andrić, ‘*February*’ *ceased to exist already in January*, Index, No. 214, 24.02.1971.)

So much for the facts and statements which helped to create them. The politics of art theory also has its place in all of this and it could have this place in the future also. How shall we deal with it if we think that art is a thought – as politics is – and not only a science; especially if we question the scientific aversion to the very thought of the people.

According to the preceding citations the use of insults as artistical acts doesn’t count. The political implications are, however, made evident and governance which celebrates power is aware of these. This is because the answer coming from governance is pedagogically dishonest: struggle as artistic and political practice or act cannot be seen as an insult. In vain the poet appeals! From a poem there can be no passage to insults until conditions are met and positions are ripe for change! But the insulter’s impertunity and the drawing of attention to himself would no longer be seen as a spectre of narcissism, but rather as a break-through in the struggle for a place in the sun, a break-through which touches the Real, which remains hidden, in plain sight of the moralistic gaze of the decadent postholders of disciplinary power. All places in the division of labour are not freely chosen but assigned. So, just as it is possible to be condemned to art, the division of labour is treated as commonsensical and as a strategically justifiable position (profession) in a tactical configuration of functions in a division of labour across the board. It remains hidden that the technique of power is that which technically divides the process of production and around which the division of labour is folding as an anti-production of *recording*.

If we agree that the citations used so far are a means that limit what is taken as production in the domain of art, we need to keep in mind that the very domain of art is one kind of limit placed upon the productions and thoughts of people in society. If art opened its space and freed itself from heterogeneous interests, and so made aesthetic experience and thought of reality (by affects and percepts) autonomous, we wouldn't lose sight of the recuperation of artists (people) through which the process of recuperation of people systematically reigns-in this space of freedom and resistance (thought) and which culminates with the institutionalisation of art and its inscription in registers (*recording*) of the social division of labour.

If it's as we say it is, then let us raise our next question while thinking of Foucault: does *direction* over artists need to be arranged according to the knowledge of an aesthetic drive, artistic style and choice, aesthetic and theoretical-artistic analyses, conditions of artistic practice and a suitable aetiology of the art work? The answer would be: we don't think so. Techniques of power and *direction*, i.e. of disciplining, have their own tempo and configuration of objects (works) in space, and these deviate from those which theory tends to develop. What is that space? Art institutions now range from strictly artistic to cultural institutions in general; from educational, scientific and archival-museums to media and market-based institutions. Configurations produced in theory and in the history of art don't match-up to what can be encountered in social space and within the system of institutions and organisations. Avant-garde art, although it carries a theoretical weight (epochal and revolutionary), only occupies, as a rule, a marginal place in the regime of socio-economic territorialisation. The Youth Tribune, together with the students magazine *Index*, was a place where provincial youth gathered and was of little consequence to state socialist politics and culture which offered itself as the only possible place for the practice of politics and art. The Youth Tribune was therefore an insignificant enough place, and, because of this it was possible to open the doors to our artists and lunatics who were marginal and irrelevant for statist cultural and pedagogical policies. The distribution of appearances

therefore does not match-up to the representational configurations, as these representational configurations are inconsistent: pedagogical space does not match up with the scientific. Although there is tendency that the scientific be subjected to the laws of education, there is still a gap which exists between all disciplinary techniques and theoretical insights, and that same gap is being transferred to the regime of representations and discourses.

But what if those condemned to art are not only jailers! What if among them there are those who break the chains of art as a disciplinary power and who give *direction* to creativity through imperatives of ability and decency? To be decently educated is not only to be humble and to give credit to those who need to be remembered and kept in mind – disciplinary power needs us to know that there were insults before we were the insulters, and that those insults are subject to a functional normalisation, a partial drive through which we are supposed to be at the service of reproduction. Decency is a form of subjection that leads us to bow and scrape before those authorities that always know what needs to be remembered. Brave M.K. speaks from the sanctuary of the newspapers and mocks the alleged moralism of those who would, by thinking obscenely, think in terms of independence and, furthermore, be motivated by moral and aesthetic autonomy. Such mocking and self-serving smirking at the categories of art and politics, that were developed as means through which artists could politicise their practice and with which they could defend themselves from the state, is a mocking of the distance that these practices put between themselves and socialist state culture. This was a distance that later became recognisable as 'counterculture'.

Today we have a problem again. The politicisation of culture and of the art of socialists and post-socialists during the civil war is once more being seen as a culturalisation of politics (aestheticisation of politics) for the reason that to take a position in the activist scene requires the activists to mark themselves out from one another. This culturalisation of politics happens through historiographic and theoretical circumvention. So, false dilemmas, a consequence of ideological thinking, enter into the thought

of politics, and, by extension, into the thought of art. Once again there's a lack of thought and no demand for the impossible. Because of this the possible, as open-ended vanishes in a lament for the disappearance of the future, especially in those who see the future only in the past. For us *prescription*, the decision in favour of the impossible, is missing and because of that there is no thought.

Would we therefore say that the title of the film FOR KING AND FATHERLAND! is in question? No. In question is the insult by means of which politics is being cooked in a sauce of art. The poets appeal for insults to be understood as a political invention. As Oskar Davičo said: "When do poems stop!? When do insults start!?" And feces! If we say that the artists shat out insults, it is not only shit as money, it is a political gesture. An attack! A breaking point! Even if insulting gestures could be criticised as infantile, they are, as psychoanalysts would say, a shunning of the reality principle; but these insulting gestures are also an irruption of the Real, which is something the psychoanalysts are ready to admit to. Is the appeal for insults a crossing over to the act/gesture? Is it a political invention? Maybe, but who is doing the insulting? The frustrated I? The Ego, whose strength is measured by the ability to resist frustration? But, Doctor Lacan would say of the ego that it is the "very essence of frustration. Not frustration of one of the subject's desires, but frustration of an object in which his desire is alienated and the more developed this object becomes the more profoundly the subject becomes alienated from his *jouissance*."

The artist is created. An individual. One who aggressively monopolized art production and controlled self-managed politics. One who possessed the institution like an evil spirit and about whom 'comrades' and staff immediately complain about. This artist (or evil spirit) has an aim. This was to win over the institutions and to impose his will over it. He is therefore named. He gets a proper noun and is denounced, individualised and fingered by false comrades who call for disciplinary action against him. In this way the traitor always gets to say who is guilty. The traitor has the power to name; by appealing to order, to work and to the system; by dis-

closing the artist's 'monopoly' and by summoning up the verdict. He thus appeals to the Youth Organisation, a higher body, which is both the seat of sovereign governance and in editorial control of the Youth Tribune and its organ, *Polja*. In this way power is exercised on the body of the artist (who is seen as excessively aggressive) and this body needs to be competently and pedagogically governed. Let us paraphrase the aforementioned Doctor: the subject's aggressiveness has nothing to do with the aggressiveness of animals when their desires are frustrated. It is just a presumption made by those who avoid facing up to death by refusing to see that it is the slave that faces death, the slave who responds to being frustrated in his labour with a desire for death.

The art of the king is directly in front of us. King and madman or the irruption of the subject, i.e. subjectivation? Is a line being crossed? Is there no longer any hiding place? Are the stakes being raised? Is it suicidal? If it is social suicide, then yes, certainly. But is it politics too? Yes, certainly! Insults madden this artist, and the words he speaks should indeed be treated as feces. Feces, Foucault warns us, are not exclusively symbolic of money. Feces (insults) are a political intervention and an opening of the sky of reality and of ideology (of the ideology of reality or reality with a small *r*). So chaos could break through. Chaos or the Real? Whichever suits and whichever tool of thought comes to hand. We could add: directly before every thought stands that which is *certainly indistinct (indistinct certain)*, including the thought of art if the thought of art is thought from the very practice of art itself. Therefore, FOR KING AND FATHERLAND!

We have a king, and here is the act itself. Chaosmosis. 1971. The art work: a performance with text panels. The texts were written on the walls during the event. Sentences. Statements. Insults. Cusses. And finally, for the journalists, vulgarity. This is how this art work, *Feast of the New Art*, was experienced. At the feast, therefore, something was also cooked up. Today we are remembering this work and repeating fragments of it, adapting it to the context of an anti-conference. Adapting it for those who attend 'emancipatory' courses and left conferences, those who would probably not

be found among us. March-(fuck)-off! Let's repeat it again. March-(fuck)-off! The last time they didn't hear our insults. But they read them. Will they now read rather than hear what is addressed to them from the pages of this text which is/was read on February 27th 2014 at the Black House?

To make an *allographic* regime of existence from an *autographic* work of art can be carried out by transcending *autographic* immanence. The happening *Feast of the New Art*, could be described this way, as could the anti-conference, *Faculty of De-Programming for Obsolescence! Welcome!* It's in this way that the ideal object of immanence is being created from every art work that is based upon the material mode of existence. However our remembrance of the *Feast of the New Art* is not an archival activity, nor is it merely an adaptation. By means of reconstructing fragments of the *Feast*, or to be more precise, by performing anew something which is being made into a guideline or recipe, we tend to think that what was thought at the time by the participants of *the Feast*, their thought processes and affective experiences, may be grasped anew during the *Faculty of De-Programming for Obsolescence! Welcome!* Therefore, what is in question is how *Feast of the New Art* became a recipe. Let us cook it up again. Just as the *Feast of the New Art*, happening once, cannot be repeated, the recipe must be abolished too. In this way we jettison historiography and conceptual capture and come to approach the problem of the subject. Should we now talk about insults? Shall we talk in an art-academic language? In a psychoanalytical language? No! Let us then proclaim loudly: I DON'T LIKE THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF YUGOSLAVIA! If we do not proclaim this loudly again we will be left once more with having to listen to the following testimony of the traitorous artist and 'comrade':

"It was the obvious intention of group 'KOD' members that in discrediting themselves they automatically discredited others, their prospective engagement at the Youth Tribune and, by extension, in the new editorial board of *Polja* magazine. The excesses in the Youth Centre in Belgrade, were mostly the excesses of some of the members of the 'KOD', or they

were at least initiated by them. By being numerous and coherent some members of 'KOD' managed to impose upon the group their own style. This was also noticed by the newspapers. From this basis it is possible to characterise all ensuing activities of the 'January-February' group."

"When the hidden tensions of the 'KOD' group finally came to light, tensions based on the diminished reputation of some other members of the group 'January' or 'February', that is when they sought to ensure for themselves monopolistic positions at the Youth Tribune and in the *Polja* magazine. Then it became clear that the group could not exist anymore, not even formally. The group 'February' fell apart. What remained is the group 'KOD'. *What remained are insults, false avant-gardism, inability, lack of education and the rest.*" (Branko Andrić, 'February' ceased to exist already in January, Index, No. 214, 24.02.1971.)

*

It is our opinion, therefore, that art begins with the magnificent struggle for autonomy from the state and the market, but through institutionalisation it becomes condemned to ineffectuality. Condemned in this way, condemned to art, a man is kept separate and made politically and artistically quiet. The artist who is condemned to art becomes suspicious of those who conform to state sanctioned 'engaged art' and is overburdened by the banalisation of this 'engaged art' whose practitioners secretly harbour state-like ambitions. Resistance to this state of affairs will be the basis by which the artist is condemned as a 'traitor'. Sometimes, instead of a political trial, what occurs is this very condemnation to art. Such a condemnation to art doesn't have to be carried out by *direction* and control by means of punishing pedagogical-educational techniques and by means of the norming power of art, instead it could be carried out by the simple discarding of his art, its being set aside. So, for example, Oskar Davičo is condemned to mere poetry, condemned to being a poet, just as soon as he snarled at the regime and, engaging in the Real, told the state to 'fuck off'. In response the 'engaged artist' says 'yes' to the regime in the same

breath as calling Davičo a pseudo critic of the regime who is recommending himself to the state by means of his insulting critique.

But, in the late 1960s, youth (i.e. 'KOD') criticised the state by practicing art and furthermore were opposed to the students' critique of the system in that students too – as well as their professors of philosophy, Marxism, political science or whatever from the field of human science – gained a 'knowledgeable' authority. They thought about politics, but this thought was not the *thought of politics* and consequently they decided, similarly, to make representations and recommend themselves to the state. Through countercultural and avant-garde gestures, by means of art practice, a mob of rude and uncivil artists refused to fall for the students' statements and poltroonery. The Youth Tribune after *Index* (students' magazine) is inhabited by this mob, and each mob member is themselves a mob, and they make an *ensemble* at every governable position of the institution which, by some kind of improvised strategy, spreads uncertainty throughout the institution. From every corner of the state this banding-together is experienced differently. From these corners, where cowards and poltroons lurk, comes the servile appeal for decency, expertise and skill, which, bringing certainty, can be relied upon. The state studentariat, the students of the universities, respond to the problems posed by 1968 by calling for reforms, the achievement of which are then added to their meritable record – the demanding student turmoil ends with the appeasing of democratic appetites.

Let us remind ourselves. The Association of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (SKOJ) had already vanished in 1948. No longer did anyone have to be a communist-juvenile. For these youth the Communist Party (KP) would be enough. Becoming, then, a member of the newly formed Popular Youth of Yugoslavia (NOJ), the juvenile moves backwards with the Communist Party which itself pulls back revolution. Marx's pregnant analysis contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* speaks of this backward movement which begins with every tendency to prove that what we think and want is sustainable and realisable in act and in reality; with every thought which through tactics bowdlerises an idea. This regressive movement is certainly

not a *thought of politics* nor a thinking from the idea of communism. Also it is not the word 'communism' that opens up a path to thought, because this regressive moment is simply a question of the technical tactics of power: the state's need to be sustained and legitimated. To this end, and surprisingly, the state communism that followed the post-war 'peoples' front' took care of national honour. There is a step backwards from communism to socialism: the Association of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (SKOJ) becomes the Association of Socialist Youth (SSO).

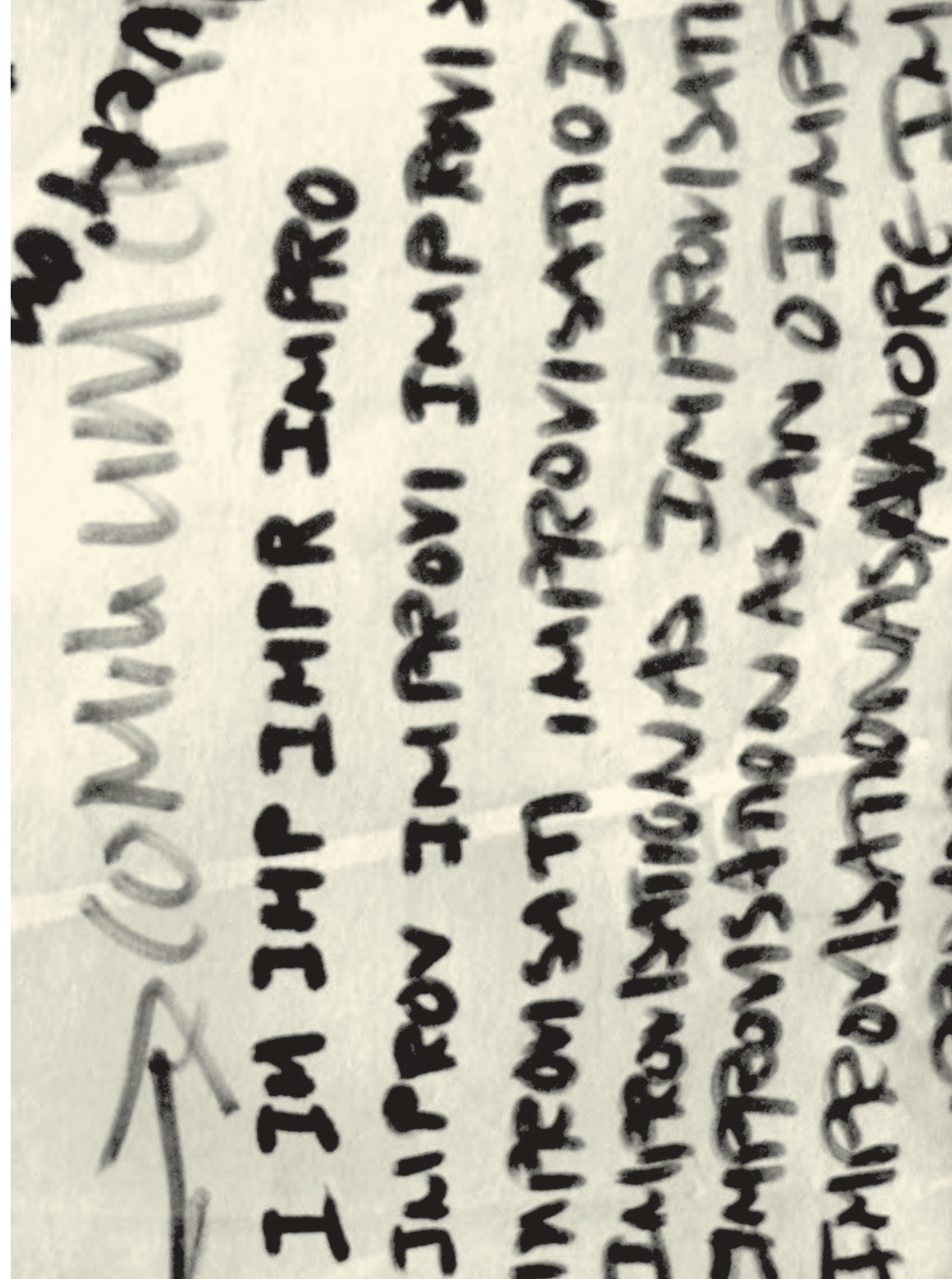
Novi Sad's Youth Tribune, founded in the mid 1950s as the youth department within the Peoples' University, in waiting for the model of the state-university to come and inhabit the periphery and in waiting for the educational system to be expanded, was a space which was under the temporary governance of the 'people'. It was a place at which to meet-up and engage in polemics and as such it depended on the individual passion and courage of those who came and attended. No matter how important it would be to know theoretically and historiographically the conditions of the time, the conditions through which courage appears in the Real are the invention of the courageous themselves.

After Novi Sad's University was established and following the touchdown of a state pedagogic apparatus, the 'people's front' and the Peoples' University, which until then had secured and operated the space, were transformed. The Youth Tribune in that way comes under the jurisdiction of the Students' Socialist Association (SSO) and the door is closed to the youth who no longer have to educate themselves, but the door is open to the state students who, as in France, were, and therefore remained (as it the case today) worthy of being despised.

In such an atmosphere, the excesses of the 'KOD' group are rare and because of this rarity they are significant. Taking over editorial positions in such an institution as the Youth Tribune and its publishing organs at a time when the institutions were being transformed, and the socialist state is withdrawn, is to articulate the fate of these institutions. The excesses

of the 'KOD' group were a sort of experiment with organisational forms of art production and the politics of art which would, in the time of self-managed ideology and thwarted politics, manage by means of countercultural actions, to provoke the reaction of the state and highlight the power of the state. Since we know that the state's power is present everywhere, in all spheres, and therefore it is manifest in art as well, it follows that these institutions, containing the state-form, serve to establish and order an activity in those spheres, but do not serve to support the purpose of that activity nor do they support the aims which the actors prescribe and want to realise, but, instead, reproduce the relations of production which are, already subject to the division of labour, socially divided and opposed, in such a way that perpetuates a society of inequality, competition and exploitation. Even if that society likes to be called, or likes to answer to the name of socialism, it is clear, then, that with such 'neanarchistic' and art-excessive behaviour the stake was not only art, but politics as well without which there cannot be art itself, and specifically not an art that could be called 'engaged art' which was at that time, pedagogically tailored according to the stature and expertise of the party and its state. A moderate and tired modernism sought out new blood, but the people of the 'KOD' group, *January* and *February* in February, in the Youth Centre in Belgrade, decided to let the blood flow – it wasn't important whether it was their blood or the blood of others. According to the words of one of the 'KOD' 'comrades' the blood-letting was suicidal and destructive of what had been achieved by self-management. But that's only one thought in exteriority or thought which doesn't think art from the very art of the 'KOD' group, *January* or *February*. *Thought in exteriority* is thought which refers to art-knowledge and ability, and which therefore can neither be art nor politics nor thought from its interiority and subjectivity. Let us conclude: *thought in exteriority* is that which can only testify about the experience of objective circumstances whose integral part is an event, and because of that it is condemned to the status of testimony. Testimonies that take historiographic and theoretical forms.

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Biographies of participants

Howard Slater is a volunteer play therapist and writer. His book, *Anomie/Bonhomie & Other Writings*, was published by Mute Books in January 2012 and its translation to Serbo-Croatian as *Anomija/Bonomija i drugi tekstovi* was published by kuda.org in 2013.

Jakob Jakobsen is a politically engaged visual artist, educator and activist. He was part of the Copenhagen Free University from 2001 to 2007, was co-founder of the trade union Young Artworkers (UKK) in 2002, and the artist run television station tv-tv in 2004. He was professor at the Funen Art Academy from 2006 to 2012.

Nikoleta Marković is an artist whose interests are placed in the liminal space between contemporary art and potential new audience and authors, investigating the complex inter-relations essential to this exchange. Her works are generated mostly within the process of examining positions, roles and responsibilities of the artist in contemporary society, thus problematizing the entire drama of politics going on between an individual and community. She is currently working on her PhD thesis at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade.

Petar Atanacković is a member of the *Group for Conceptual Politics*. He is an emigrant whose destiny of a historian is uncertain. Also, he is as an activist taking part in collective housing projects in Germany. He practices poetic writings about politics.

Fabian Tompsett is a writer and activist, who overcame the shortcomings of a bourgeois education by gaining a proletarian one through the *London Workers Group*. This was accompanied by many years of practical experience working in several Print Co-ops in London during the eighties. During the nineties he initiated the *London Psychogeographical Association* and collaborated with Alastair Bonnett on *Transgressions, A Journal of Urban Exploration*. He extensively writes and deals with Situationists International.

Kasper Opstrup is a Danish writer and researcher of radical culture. For many years, he was active in the Copenhagen-based art collective *floorless* which was involved with self-publishing as well as creating multi-media installations inside as well as outside the institutions. His book, *The Way Out - Invisible Insurrections and Radical Imaginaries in the UK Underground 1961–1991*, will be forthcoming on Minor Compositions in 2015.

Branka Ćurčić is a member of kuda.org and the *Group for Conceptual Politics*. She writes on art theory/practice and politics and from time to time likes to have fun while co-editing publications.

Zoran Gajić is a member of the *Group for Conceptual Politics*. He is a theorist who dismissed sociology after studying it. He used to be a worker in Novi Sad's factory of cables (Novkabel) and today he talks and writes about art, theory and politics.

The title of the reader

Faculty of De-programming for Obsolescence! Welcome!

The reader is made within and after the (anti-) conference **Faculty of De-programming for Obsolescence! Welcome!**, which was held on February 27&28th 2014, in the Youth Center CK13 in Novi Sad, in production and organization by kuda.org.

Music CD – 9th Channel: Solidarnosk

CD contains the sound from the first day of the (anti-) conference, in duration of 30'

The time and the date of texts readings within the conference
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B.C.: "totalni potres/pretres
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