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Dr. David A. J. Murrieta Flores

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Abstract

The Situationist International was a radical artistic organization that existed from 1957 to 1972, and whose internationalism was modeled on the avant-garde attempt to transform the world's conditions. Though based in France, it sought and had adherents in diverse countries across Europe and even the US, but, like Surrealism before it, the organization became notorious for its exclusions. The first collective expulsion was in 1962, when Dutch artist Jacqueline de Jong created an alternative form of the Situationist International with its "exiles" under the banner of the magazine *The Situationist Times*. In a manifesto-styled inaugural text, de Jong emphasized the width of the situationist project, calling it a "movement" based on the heterogeneous nature of transnational cooperation. This essay will compare the internationalisms of both groups, taking as vantage point the difference between "movement" and "organization", which configures the manners in which artists and writers from different countries participated in each. Thus, the networks they established framed the form and content of their respective journals; *The Situationist Times*, for example, was a multilingual, labyrinthine production anarchically directed by de Jong, whereas *Internationale Situationniste* was monolingual and programmatically structured by the SI's Central Committee.

Keywords

Situationist International. 1960s avant-garde. Neo-avant-garde. Artist collectives. Artist journals.

Resumo

A Internacional Situacionista foi uma organização artística radical que existiu entre 1957 e 1972, cujo internacionalismo foi modelado na tentativa vanguardista de transformar o mundo. Embora sediada na França, buscou e teve adeptos em diversos países da Europa e até nos EUA, mas, como o Surrealismo antes, a organização tornou-se notória por suas exclusões. A primeira expulsão coletiva ocorreu em 1962, quando a artista holandesa Jacqueline de Jong criou uma forma alternativa da Internacional Situacionista com seus "exilados", sob a bandeira da revista *The Situationist Times*. Em um texto inaugural no estilo de um manifesto, Jong enfatizou a amplitude do projeto situacionista, chamando-o de "movimento" baseado na natureza heterogênea da cooperação transnacional. Este ensaio compara os internacionalismos de ambos os grupos, tendo como ponto de vista a diferença entre "movimento" e "organização", que configura as maneiras pelas quais artistas e escritores de diferentes países participaram de cada um. Assim, as redes que eles estabeleceram enquadraram a forma e o conteúdo de seus respectivos periódicos; *O The Situationist Times*, por exemplo, era uma produção labiríntica multilíngue, anarquicamente dirigida por Jong, enquanto a *Internationale Situationniste* era monolíngue e estruturada programaticamente pelo Comitê Central da Internacional Situacionista.

Palavras-chave

Internacional Situacionista. Vanguardas dos anos 1960. Neovanguardas. Coletivos de Artistas. Revistas de Artistas.

Introduction

The Situationist International (SI) was born in the intertwined context of Cold War escalation and European economic integration, its formation coming to coincide with the Treaty of Rome of 1957. Like other avant-gardes before it, such as Futurism, Dada, or Surrealism, the SI attempted to bring together artists with radical aesthetic and political commitments under a revolutionary project meant to transform the world. Its founding was the result of various other internationally oriented vanguard collectives fusing together as many of their members exiled themselves from different groups. The most important were the Lettrist International and the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, both of which already had connections beyond national boundaries¹. One of the key texts presented at the congress of the organization's founding at Cosio d'Arroscia, Italy, was the "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the Conditions of Organization and Action of the Situationist International's Tendency", authored by Guy Debord, and which roughly functions as an outline and manifesto for the SI's future direction. Under the shadow of international economic blocs and their necessary positioning towards superpowers seen as polar opposites, the situationists, as did various strains of leftist movements and intellectuals of the 1950s and 1960s, saw beyond the discursive construct that held said opposition together, stating that "bourgeois thought lost in systematic confusion, Marxist thought profoundly distorted in the workers' states, [thus] conservatism reigns upon East and West, mainly in the domain of culture and customs"² (Mosconi 1997: 692). Against the institutionally backed forms of international cooperation between artists in both blocs of the Cold War, which meant more often than not falling into the machinations of state propaganda ("international modernism", on one side, and "socialist realism" on the other), the "Report" proposes "an accord for a united action of the revolutionary avant-garde in culture" that must be "carried out on the basis" of "[eliminating] what survives of the recent past" (*Ibidem*: 700). The Cosio d'Arroscia congress and its documents, as a founding pact between artists from various parts of Europe and from various smaller collectives, functioned as the integration of a new organization founded not upon the directives of institutional policy (like the European Common Market) but upon the crossing between aesthetics and politics through which the collective would enact "the most liberating change of the society and life in which we are entrapped" (*Ibidem*: 689). The "Report" made the "construction of situations" the central aspect of the new group, around which every technique and idea would systematically be articulated, including, for example, the project of unitary urbanism, the practice of psychogeography, and a "new application of techniques of reproduction" that would later become *détournement*. In principle, beyond the shared commitment to revolutionary (artistic) praxis and its orientation by the construction of situations, there were no unmovable tenets or doctrines, even though the "Report" does conceive of the SI as a political organization. As Frances Stacey has written,

The SI stated that they should not be understood as a model of revolutionary organizations as such, with dogmas, leaders, and disciples, but rather as a specific organization, made up of a loose association of autonomous individuals committed to shared revolutionary perspective and precise tasks (Stacey, 2014: 3).

The "Report" projects the SI at a global level, opposing what they view homogeneously as "the ruling culture" with a "revolutionary alternative" that would include "the most advanced artists and intellectuals of all countries", which would then ideally establish a network with which to conduct "common action" (Mosconi, 1997: 701).

The SI thus projected itself as a "revolutionary front" in the same language as the "radical tradition"

(Gombin, 1978) which they intended to continue, singling out three operative factors that would prevent it from being appropriated by artists ultimately uninterested in its political commitment. The first was an insistence on “a complete accord among the persons and groups that participate in this united action” against “careerists” (“*arrivistes*”) that would use the SI as platform for a better position in the art world; second, that in practical terms “the only valid experimental proceeding is founded upon precise critique of existing conditions and their deliberate supersession”, once again, against artists whose experiments would not accord this view; third, an opposition to “sectarianism, opposed to the unity of action with possible allies for specific goals and prevents our infiltration of parallel organizations” (Mosconi, 1997: 697). All three maintain the strong, yet fluid relationship between aesthetics and politics that all avant-gardes acted within, and while relatively specific, they all point towards a rigorous form of openness. “Real actions”, the text reads, “should be the sole criterion on which we join with or separate from comrades” (*Ibidem*: 697).

As the organization grew and developed both in terms of membership and of the concepts and techniques outlined in the “Report”, however, it began to shift towards less flexible stances regarding its revolutionary perspective. In the Fourth SI Conference in London, in September 1960, the members voted for the creation of a Central Committee, structuring the SI in the manner of a vanguard party (*Ibidem*: 21-22). Like in the rest of the avant-garde’s historical fluidity with regards to politics, this act had deep consequences in terms of the collective’s self-conception, simultaneously distancing and affirming its projection as an open platform to transform the world. The constitution of the Committee itself seemed to have instituted a practice of majority agreements about the *character* of the SI, thus beginning a tense relationship between the organization, its theoretical underpinnings, and the practices towards which it would lead each individual or group within. Among the first tensions was one raised by the German avant-garde which had been embraced by the SI in 1959, called Gruppe SPUR, precisely in the same London conference of 1960. Threatened with penal action and censorship by the German government, the media, and local reactions to their work, the Germans argued for the dismissal of the proletariat as the primary agent of revolutionary activity, which the SI, ever since the “Report” and its intent to re-appropriate Marxist thought from the USSR, held as part of its theoretical background. SPUR offered *artists* as a new agent of revolution, on the grounds of their own experience as well as what they referred to as the deep roots that fascism had in German culture, strong even in the working class. Overruled by the majority and then the Central Committee, SPUR’s position was the source of a conflict regarding ‘the artist’ and ‘art’ that would lead to the first important series of exclusions from the SI in 1962.

Situationist International: From Movement to Centralized Organization

Danish artist Asger Jorn, who was one of the founders of the SI, collaborated closely with Debord in a variety of projects, and contributed to the journal’s finances even long after his resignation from the organization in 1961, noted in the London conference that: “The movements of social groups are determined by the character of their desires. We can accept other social movements to the extent that they are turning in our direction (...). [We should] act with other organizations that, outside of ours, seek the same path” (*Ibidem*: 166).

The characterization of the SI as a social movement is an important indicator of how, right at the moment of its functional reconceptualization as vanguard party, it was still seeking to be the nexus of a relatively open-ended revolutionary network. Of course, “our direction” and “the same path” generate a tension with that openness, which in the SI’s case would be resolved in favor of an equally functional dogmatism

that eschewed variant positions on certain key questions such as that of the proletariat or that of art. The federative idea of a national autonomy of groups associated to the SI, established by the initiative of the Italians in 1957, was abandoned, and a centralized form of self-governance, in which “national sections” would participate either directly or by means of representative nomination was instituted in the form of the Central Committee. The small-scale bureaucratization of the SI further disarticulated its anarchist tendencies, replacing individuals and self-styled groups like SPUR with Sections to which individuals belonged. By 1962, the structural transformation of the organization was complete, and it expelled the Germans and those who came to their defense. Among the agreements reached by the Committee were certain unmovable concepts such as the revolutionary agency of the proletariat, and the initial anti-organizational impulse of the SI as seen in texts like the “Report” – its conception of itself as a *social movement* – gave way to a rigid organization that constantly struggled with definitions, identity, and membership.

This moment has been cemented in the historiography of the SI, generally speaking, as the point at which the SI stopped being an “artistic” organization and started being solely a “political” one. As argued by Stacey (2014), this is a misleading idea that obscures the SI’s continual engagement with aesthetics, but it also obscures the formation of a para-situationist corpus of works and theories on the part of those who were expelled in 1962, Jacqueline de Jong among them. The fullest, most elaborate response to the organization’s rigor, which was also an attempt to affirm its initial revolutionary openness centered on the concept of “movement”, was *The Situationist Times* (ST). De Jong had proposed the creation of an English-language journal of the SI before her expulsion, and the resulting project was ST itself (Rasmussen; Jakobsen, 2011: 191). The very first difference is the name of the journal itself: whereas the SI’s magazine was projected as the *organ* of the avant-garde, the ST appropriates common English press names that suggest having captured the present through the lens of a zeitgeist (from *Time* to *The New York Times*). It encompasses much more than the organization alone, situating it in a context and a modernist framework of thought that hints much more openly towards the general, towards a totality. ST overtly and aggressively asserted the mantle of the Situationist *movement*, its first number opening with de Jong’s show of support for Gruppe SPUR, which at the time was undergoing a judicial trial for blasphemy in Munich, and her own manifesto, entitled “Critique of the Political Practice of Détournement”³. This free-form, expressionist text-drawing affirmed the multiplicity of the situationists and rejected the SI’s expulsions as an act of *law*, an *ordered* approach that set limits not only upon the possibility of interpretive diversity but also upon the very use and abuse of techniques – like *détournement* – that the SI had developed in common as revolutionary weapons. The vagueness of common situationist terms by 1962 rendered them prone to distinct interpretations, and although the organization had reached an accord to publish a sort of dictionary or guide to terms and theories for what de Jong calls *similar* use across the SI, the ultimate settlement on exclusion highlighted a major problem in its structure. She saw the act as one of authority instead of mutual agreement, as a way to ensure continuity from above instead of working from the contradictions appearing below. Her position, articulated in English, instead of the standard French used inside the SI, is worth quoting in full:

Misunderstandings and contradictions are not only of great value but in fact the basis of all art and creation, if not the source of all activity in general. The entire institution of society is built upon these facts. And it is only in political activity that they are considered to be: A) the basis of all politics B) the means to be used in politics C) the danger to be avoided and denied. IN FACT REAL politics consists of all three points simultaneously, and interplays

with the last two points (B+C) as best seems fit. And that is exactly where we are today in the IS. In our protest we do not attack the movement and its theory and action. We do indeed not even attack one single point of the IS. All we protest against is the organization which four members of the IS [the Central Committee] have tried to establish into what we have always and will always consider as Situationist, the movement of the IS (Rasmussen; Jakobsen, 2015: 80)⁴.

With this work, de Jong opened various fronts in the claim to the term “situationist”: first, by using English as the primary (but not the only) language of the journal, it mirrored contextual developments in international relations, from the globalization of English as a language after World War I and the establishment of the League of Nations to the drafting of the Treaty of Rome in the languages of all member states as a form of “progressive European integration” and the prohibition of “any form of national discrimination” (Felici, 2010: 154). This suggests that the identity of “situationist” should belong to everyone, regardless of whether one is able to read or write in French, and that situationist praxis can take place in any language⁵. Second, by conceiving of contradictions and misunderstandings as politics (and society) itself, the manifesto applies the dialectical materialism widely adopted as theoretical basis by the SI to the organization itself, which the other members had avoided in favor of the formulation of a type of party line. At this point, in 1962, the collective was still *struggling* to define various positions, but by 1967, when the English Section was expelled in a similar fashion for supporting potentially opposing discursive elements to those in the French SI program, the struggle had ceded to an adherence to principles that seemed to be fixed. This is one of the keys of the difference between “organization” and “movement”, in the sense that de Jong’s project *defines* “situationist” and other elements from the early SI’s praxis but does not see them as transcendental definitions, which is what the rationalist dictionary of situationist terms did. Instead, they are to be defined within struggle, within the practice of politics, and are thus subject to constant change. As will be seen below, it also associated de Jong with positions she was not truly in agreement with, but that she nevertheless framed within the political impulse of ST. Finally, and consequently, she suggests that the Central Committee are reducing a widespread phenomenon into a monolithic construction. She takes the anti-organizational hues of very early texts like the “Report” to a logical conclusion, but also the open-ended rigor manifested by the confrontational stances of the first numbers of *Internationale Situationniste*.

The regular practice of expulsions made “exiles” out of many situationists, which led to the adaptation and formulation of para-situationist groups which operated without the approval of the Central Committee, like ST. The articulation of a situationist “periphery” was the result of all these exclusions and in-fighting, meaning also the hardening of the movement into an organization. Adopting concepts and techniques freely from the SI, later groups like King Mob (UK), whose members had once formed the English section, developed practices rooted in situationist ideas about aesthetics and politics. Examples like these are many: the polemic within the 1967 student occupation of Strasbourg University was led by situationists who would be disavowed from the organization as the event ran its course; the Black Mask group in the United States would mobilize situationist concepts like the “total revolution” by 1966 only for the SI to attack its members over a dispute of theory and personal character in 1967; even Gruppe SPUR would continue radicalizing its positions with situationist-styled texts and ideas that would later directly impact the formation of the Red Army Faction in Germany (Scribner, 2007: 30-55). All these “exiles” from the SI who had once participated in yearly conferences of the organization were now practicing what they had learned and achieved within it in their own contexts and without the directives of the Central Committee. These multiple strains of *heterodox* situationist thought were what de Jong

was referring to as the true situationist movement, which, summed together, could achieve what the organization could not due to its restricted, centralized, bureaucratized nature.

How that movement would come together was at the heart of the opposition between de Jong, her supporters, and the SI. The ambiguities of what exactly was the constitutional drive of the collective were exploited by both ST and the SI for competing interpretations that were made concrete in the 1962 controversy. In “Theses on Cultural Revolution”, from *Internationale Situationniste #1* (1958), Debord states that “an international association of situationists can be considered as a coalition of workers in an advanced sector of culture, or more precisely as a coalition of all those who demand the right to a work that current social conditions impede; hence as a tentative organization of professional revolutionaries in culture” (Mosconi, 1997: 21). In the same number, Michèle Bernstein ends her confrontational article “No Useless Leniency” by stating that many of those who have left or who have been asked to leave the SI could return, and that “it is true that a common project such as the one we have undertaken, and that we are pursuing, cannot avoid being accompanied by friendship. (...) But it is also true that it cannot be assimilated by friendship, and that it should not be subjected to the same weaknesses. Nor to the same modes of continuity or looseness” (*Ibidem*: 26). A collective text from *Internationale Situationniste #6* (1961), titled “Instructions for an Insurrection”, furthered these points in what seems to be a more concrete manner but that reiterates its basic ambiguity:

The SI does not want to recruit disciples or partisans, but to bring people together capable of applying themselves to this task in the years to come, by every means and without worrying about labels. This means that we must reject not only the vestiges of specialized artistic activity, but also those of specialized politics (...). We don't claim to be developing a new revolutionary program all by ourselves. (...) Whatever may become of us individually, the new revolutionary movement will not be formed without taking into account what we have sought together (...) (*Ibidem*: 203).

When in late 1961 the organization voted to consider all artistic activities yet inscribed in the art world as “antisituationist” it furthered the tensions between the two possible interpretations of claims and statements like the above, in which collaboration with the SI is staked upon a very thin line between simple alignment (de Jong) and the partisanship it (in principle) rejected (the Central Committee). After the appearance of ST and de Jong’s manifesto, the SI answered with a long collective text called “The Counter-Situationist Campaign in Various Countries” (1963), a petty effort to render its critics as counterrevolutionary, but in which it also attempts to wrestle the term “movement” back from de Jong. However, it understands *movement* as something yet to be built, as belonging to a future which its Marxist philosophy of history deems inevitable, a result of dialectical processes that do apply to the organization itself, but that do not clearly exist beyond rhetorical grounds. All these problems within the SI are performatively erased from the journal, in the sense that they are mostly referred to in terms of dismissive reports and texts like “The Counter-Situationist Campaign” which function as the expression of a singular, collective voice of agreement. The kind of internationalism practiced by the SI, articulated across its magazine, is based upon centralized cooperation that continually filters and subsumes content to a relatively unclear revolutionary program that ends up being in constant need of policing. The dialectical processes that inform this cooperation are not based upon the recognition and equality-based resolution of discursive contradictions, which is what de Jong’s use of “movement” would suggest, but upon majority agreements and the performative dismissal of dissent. The starkness of these positions

and their performative documentation in *Internationale Situationniste* is such that the exclusions of 1962 would come to historiographically mark a before/after in the organization, even when the SI attempted to reconfigure its relationship to art and aesthetics through the 1963 exhibition *Destruction of RSG-6* (Stacey, 2014: 44), the fundamental aesthetic elements of the concept of the spectacle deployed by Debord in 1967's *Society of the Spectacle*, or the situationist contributions to the graphics of the 1968 revolts in terms of graffiti and slogans. In any case, the issue of rigor within the SI was seen by de Jong as one of *authority*, an authority that was made concrete in the structuring of an organization instead of a movement, subjecting revolutionary discourse to a form of control. For her, what the Central Committee was doing was to move the SI away from politics and into the field of what it had called “the vestiges of (...) specialized politics” in the quote above; its contradictions were not being resolved collectively, through acts of cooperation, but through acts of authority.

What she offered with ST was completely opposite, and it emphasized openness as well as rejection of any authoritative voice. “Everybody who develops theoretically or practically this new unity [of Situationist praxis] is automatically a member of the Situationist International and, from this perspective, *The Situationist Times* is made. The IS is a movement declared publicly as an anti-organization. The reason why Debord wanted the exclusion of the Gruppe SPUR was a pure question of discipline in an organization which has absolutely no rules” (Rasmussen; Jakobsen, 2015: 84). Thus, the type of networks configured by the SI and ST were distinct, and yet both pointed, at their respective ends, towards dissolution. The SI was closed and structured, meaning that collaboration would be closely regulated and filtered by members; its operative anarchism (in its insistence to have no leaders) was continually at odds with the role played by the Central Committee, which institutionalized the organization's decision-making with the view to standardize certain principles and agreements. Communication relied on letters, telegrams, and yearly conferences, and while most of the members were able to participate in one way or another in the organization, Paris did function as the main nexus. As the SI broadened its search for membership, it also generated inherent tensions with its various Sections inasmuch as the major discursive line was articulated and projected from Paris outwards. This left the Sections with almost no space to develop their own approaches, and when they did, the center of the network usually ended up expelling them from it. The decomposition of the American Section in 1969 is paradigmatic in this sense: having directly inherited the rigor and structure of the network, it proceeded to exclude one of its own members over issues of participation. However, the French Section (which included most of the Committee and functioned as the main nexus), according to the Americans' account, reacted by simply excluding the excluders (Chasse, Elwell, 1970). Regardless of the minutiae of these events, even after various attempts throughout the years to delineate the democratic, horizontal functioning of the organization (see the 1966 “Provisional Statutes”), the French and the Committee always held ultimate executive functions. The result was homogenization and the exhaustion of *difference* within the network over time, to which Debord reacted with relative surprise almost at the end of the SI's life in 1970. In “Remarks on the SI Today”, an internal document, he states:

This deficiency of *collective* activity (...) is mainly noticeable – in the French section – by a sort of general aversion to any critique aimed at a specific fact or at one of us. (...) But almost everyone manifests a strange reluctance when it comes to judging anything about a member of the SI. They are visibly uneasy even when someone else of us does so. (...) The *apparent* break in our habitual comfort happens this way: a critique is made or a defect of our action is pointed out. Everyone goes along with this critique, often *without even*

bothering to express themselves about it; the point seems clear and undeniable, but boring (Debord, 1970).

Debord attributed it to a critical lack, in terms of a theoretical stagnation that led to a mismatch with situationist practice. His proposed solution in that text was to promote discussions between individuals, to ground the dialectic principles of the organization into something concrete that would help dispel the “abstraction” plaguing the SI as a collectivity. However, tracing the historical form of the SI as such, focusing particularly on the challenge posed by de Jong and ST in 1962, it is arguable that rigor was often also hardness. The internationalism of the SI, which in theory would promote heterogeneity and provide plenty of dialectical opportunities for the network’s consolidation, or, in other words, would provide the network with various nexuses of development across the world, became functionally static. The formation of the Committee and then the primacy of the French core created a center of authority over the discourse of the SI to the point that no other active section survived beyond a couple of years after creation. Collaboration meant, in the end, homogenization of distinct positions, and the unanimity with which the SI acted by 1970 was, among other factors like disappointment after the 1968 revolts, the product of its attempt to articulate an international avant-garde through completely centralized means.

Situationist Times and the Alternative Situationist Movement

De Jong’s alternative, by emphasizing heterogeneity, articulated a wide network of collaborators that sometimes even had but a single article or work in *The Situationist Times* and never appeared again. That did not mean that de Jong was unconcerned with the coherence of the situationist movement, but that she dealt with the issue not through *organization* but through the ST’s *organ*, the journal with which its discourse was constructed. Anchored on the early SI’s program and concepts like “the situation” and *détournement*, the ST’s endeavor became a fully-fledged variance of situationist praxis. It was deeply informed by Asger Jorn’s writings⁶, who “conceived the true avant-garde not as a set of professional specialists, but as a collective social force made up of amateurs seeking new ideas and techniques through constant experimentation” (Kurczynski, 2014: 5). This position aligned with de Jong’s principle of acceptance of any and all works sent to ST, through which she then repurposed/détourned them to fit the purpose of the revolutionary construction of situations. This fundamental openness also welcomed many different types of works, which is why de Jong chose Noël Arnaud⁷ to co-edit the first number of the magazine. The 1948 journal that Arnaud had edited, entitled *Surréalisme Révolutionnaire*, was for de Jong “a magazine which was international and which had all sorts of disciplines in it” (Kugelberg 2013: 26), therefore becoming an alternative model to *Internationale Situationniste*, which imitated both the look of mass periodicals and the format of older avant-garde journals like *La révolution surréaliste*. It would seem that the emphasis that de Jong and her companion editors put into making sure the covers of the multilingual *Situationist Times* contained the descriptor “International Edition” suggests the possibility of the eventual existence of “local editions” of the magazine. They also played with these wordings, as in the third number, subtitled “International British Edition”, establishing an internationalism that is nevertheless connected to the local, a juxtaposition of terms that reveals, in the best of surrealist and Dadaist tradition, a counter-intuitive connection that dissolves the thesis-antithesis relation between “national” and “international”.

Still, the anarchist, open-ended directives of de Jong would lead her to include in the second number of ST (1962) an aggressive manifesto by Scandinavian ex-members of the SI written in English, who

founded with it what they called the Second Situationist International (SSI). In a note in the third number of the magazine, and in retellings decades later (Rasmussen; Jakobsen, 2011: 195) she expressed her disagreement with the manifesto; comparing the style of her “Critique” with “The Struggle of the Situcratic Society”, as the text was called, aggressive rhetorical posturing is much more characteristic in the latter, whereas a confrontational, even philosophical engagement with statements and principles permeates the earlier. “The Struggle” effectively assumes the points made by de Jong in her own manifesto, but gives them a violent edge:

The Situationists’ action programme – at the intellectual level – is suffering from a cancer. The root of this cancer lies in the adherence to old-fashioned, classical and ultra-rigid patterns of organization. To avoid the disruptive consequences of this disease, the Dutch representative Jacqueline de Jong proposed in *The Situationist Times* to go ahead with the Situationist programme of anti-organization by dissolving the central organization. Now anyone is free to become a Situationist without the need for special formalities. It is up to the individual to fulfill the Situationist ideology in the best way that seems fit (*Situationist Times* #2, 1962: 60).

De Jong’s distancing from this text possibly begins with its decisively authoritative point of enunciation, which correctly identifies her reasoning while instrumentalizing it for the purposes of treating the “cancer” that the authors of the manifesto saw as affecting the entirety of the situationist project. Furthermore, the reasons that the text gives for the foundation of a Second Situationist International are confusingly based upon a “folk” essentialism in which Scandinavian and Latin cultures are distinguished as opposites, attempting to save dialectics by stating that “our two outlooks are incompatible, but they can be made to supplement one another” (*Situationist Times* #2, 1962: 61). How this supplemental relationship is to work is left unexplored, which means that the distinction between cultures is continually affirmed; the text suggests cooperation at most, an internationalism that is undermined at every turn by cultural difference conceived as absolute. At odds with de Jong’s own understanding of international collaboration, this kind of network would have multiple nexuses that would somehow (so much is not even suggested by the authors) come together into a new project after enough growth. This is just another form of closure, perhaps even more extreme than the SI’s, in the sense that each national unit would develop a unique understanding of situationist practice, creating an aggregate of movements that would somehow come together into one, but if incompatibility is the standard, then that final moment of upheaval becomes impossible, as each movement would be *essentially* isolated. The text opens up, however, the issue of the SI’s multilateralism, in the sense that the SSI’s imitation roughly describes the actual struggles of the SI regarding its own sections. Mirroring the historical institutionalization of both socialist and state international organizations after World War II, the SI could never really grant full freedom to its sections as the SSI manifesto projects. It was continually at tension between its horizontalism and seeing in the autonomy of its sections the potential to negatively deviate or even represent the organization as a whole, which the SSI attempted to “fix” by simply granting full autonomy to every section, closer in spirit to de Jong’s own horizontal principles but distant from her preoccupation with coherence.

Her acceptance of this text for publication in the ST journal, as well as her rejection of it, signal her adoption of a literal interpretation of common situationist anti-copyright statements in which “all reproduction, deformation, modification, derivation and transformation” (Rasmussen; Jakobsen, 2015: 195) is welcome. This is the heart of the idea of the avant-garde as *social movement* (or force, according to Jorn), as against vanguard party/professional revolutionaries. For ST, the question of who or what a

situationist is comes to be answered simply as everyone who *wants* to be one – it is a matter of desire, as the early situationist texts had suggested. The journal provided a path and a platform for the fulfillment or rejection of such a desire, instead of any kind of programmatic inclusion or exclusion from an organization, which was what would grant coherence to the movement. This led to a great amount of contributions from many different artists and writers of various origins across Europe, individually marking their work within the magazine. While the SI also practiced individual signatures of certain texts, in many others it opted for collective anonymity, promoting its horizontality differently to that of the anarchist style of the ST. Nevertheless, most of the SI's individually signed pieces were the work of members from the French section, whose scope was already international inasmuch as it included writers and artists from Belgium, Hungary, or Tunisia, but it was definitely the French members like Guy Debord who were the most stable personnel of the organization. In contrast, since for ST the nexus was not a place or social structure but a journal whose potential circulation was worldwide, it allowed both regular and incidental participation, framed always as situationist by coincidence more than by explicit commitment. The most extreme version of this type of collaboration was the ST's very last number, published in 1967, after which it disappeared. After the original distributor failed to come through in financial terms, de Jong decided to make "something funny, frivolous", based on Walasse Ting's 1964 book *One Cent Life*, which compiled his own writings with contributions from a wide set of international artists (Kugelberg, 2013: 31). She made a selection from artists already belonging to the ST network directly or indirectly, and intended to "make something (...) modest, (...) less expensive, in a smaller size [than Ting's book], in a way as a document of what was going on among artists in our surroundings in Paris at that moment, to provide a sort of image for later on. It would be a snapshot of that moment" (Rasmussen; Jakobsen, 2011: 204). De Jong unified artworks of different sorts by Jorn, Wifredo Lam, Roberto Matta, among others, into the format of the magazine, in a sense equalizing their differences into the periodical. The frivolity of a "journal exhibition" of sorts reinforced the ST's character as a flexible coalition not of professionals but of amateurs who were figuring out the historical processes upon which they would intervene, and in which a measure of play was allowed. The internationalism of ST was, then, the product of desire in coincidence, of something that remained beyond the control of a singular or collective authority made concrete, for example, in an organization. This radical openness meant that without the journal, the movement as such also ceased to exist – the distributor of the last number of ST kept all the money for itself, bringing de Jong's project to a final, complete halt (*Ibidem*).

Conclusion

Ever since its foundation, the SI struggled with the nature of its identity and internationalism, and it would be a feature of its history even at the end: still in 1969, an article in *IS* #12 entitled "What is a Situationist?" would state to readers and allies that they should not confuse those who were actual members of the SI and those who called themselves situationist in agreement with the organization (Mosconi, 1997: 651). Its internationalism was seen to be the product of correctly aligning with the demands of the organization and its expression in the *IS* journal, which was mostly an expression of the French section's discourse. Most – if not all – potential derivations of SI praxis were outrightly rejected, constantly struggling to confine the meaning of "situationist" to the designs of the SI as an organization centered upon the French. The monolingual character of its journal, while in principle one more periodical in a wide array of situationist publications but in practice the unifying center of situationist thought, prevented the participation of its various adherents across Europe and beyond. When said adherents, formally integrated into "Sections", attempted to articulate variants of situationist discourse in their own journals,

they were usually excluded as a result. The only consistent magazine to survive these expulsions was *Situationist Revolution*, which, remarkably, produced little original content and was normally limited to translations of texts taken from *IS*. Thus, the international character of the SI was constrained by its structuring as a vanguard party meant to be at the forefront of revolutionary praxis, giving the core group a weight that would come to stifle activities elsewhere. The network it created surrounded the single nexus of Paris while practically preventing the formation of full new nexuses, even if theoretically they were being encouraged.

The constant tensions between the SI's projected horizontalism and its centralized functioning produced a notorious record of in-fighting and exclusions, of which one of the most important resulted in the creation of ST in 1962. Thanks to Jacqueline de Jong's more anarchistic political position, ST would welcome those who simply called themselves situationist, articulating an open-ended network that would also end up with a single nexus in periodical form. Emphasizing the "situationist movement" over its organization, de Jong's collaborators conformed individual connections across Europe that nonetheless never formed nexuses of their own. Instead of a multiplication of *Situationist Times*, the project consistently remained in de Jong's hands, thus attempting to project and build a movement that would never become concrete. Its multilingual character and its suggestions of local and international editions of the magazine meant that ST was much more capable, in a sense, of spreading its ideas across the continent than the SI, but its failure to incite local projects signified that ultimately the movement was also centralized, albeit in a different manner. Still, its international character was much clearer than the SI's, and it was effectively integral to the magazine's discourse, which presented itself as a labyrinth of ideas from all over Europe. The last number showcased the breadth of the network while simultaneously bringing it to an end, and while it cannot be compared to the amount of connections procured by the SI over 15 years of existence, it is of note that in only 4 years ST had achieved articulating a network of about 50 participants from distinct countries (some of them listed below). The numbers for a "movement" were perhaps there, but it never really came together as such.

Both projects had an international bent, although ST is more precisely trans-European. The SI, which attempted to create sections (unsuccessfully, more often than not) in North America and Northern Africa, was modeling itself upon the history of the relationship between the avant-garde and politics, from the left-wing Internationals of the late 19th and early 20th century to the internationalism of Dada, Futurism, and Surrealism. Its expulsions, usually carried out from Paris, where the Central Committee was based, led to the articulation of a wide network of ex-situationists of which the ST was but the largest, most coherent attempt of unity. The ST brought together artists and writers from the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, among others, at a time when many of them were moving across borders to settle in countries different from their origin. The members of the failed attempt to create the SSI, for example, who were from the UK, Denmark, Sweden, and Ireland, had all settled in a farm at Drakabygget, Sweden, intended to be a "Situationist Bauhaus" even by 1961 (Rasmussen; Jakobsen, 2011: 114). Other cases included Wifredo Lam (Cuba) and Roberto Matta (Chile), both Surrealists and both living in Paris at the time they contributed to the last number of *Situationist Times* in 1967. This kind of wide projection is what de Jong intended with her idea of a situationist movement, connecting artists beyond geographical constraints, but since it ultimately relied on personal networks, it was not able to reach beyond the European continent. The SI, in contrast, was able to reach beyond Europe, even if in a limited way, thanks to its self-conception as being beyond personal relations, calling for example, "representatives" those members who would visit different

countries to attempt to establish contact with local radical groups. Its structure, in the end, was what granted it a much longer life than that of the more personalized ST.

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Notes

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² The Lettrist International had members from France and Algeria, for example, while the Imaginist Bauhaus had members from Denmark and Belgium.

³ All translations are my own, but I leaned and relied on Ken Knabb's English translations compiled in the *Situationist International Anthology* (2006).

⁴ Détournement is one of the pillars of situationist praxis. Since this essay is focused on the forms of internationalism, transnationalism and cooperation of these groups, I will only give a cursory, necessary definition of it. Suggested as an artistic technique ever since 1956 in a joint text by Guy Debord and Gil Wolman entitled "Mode d'emploi du détournement", détournement can be succinctly defined as the appropriation of discursive elements of capitalism in order to use them against the logic that produced them in the first place. It was commonly aimed at what Adorno & Horkheimer called the "culture industry", which is why détourned images of comics, advertisements, and cinema came to populate situationist pamphlets and journals.

⁴ Due to the difficult spiral form of the original text, a transcription, contained in Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen and Jakob Jakobsen's compilation *Cosmonauts of the Future*, was used.

⁵ While it is arguable that the SI did not limit itself to French in the period after 1962, it did operatively rely on the idea of peripheral publications that were de facto subsumed to the French journal. The only two to bear the same (translated) name was *Situationist International* (US) and *Internazionale Situazionista* (Italy), both responding to a certain opening of the organization in 1969, both having a single number before disappearing. While *Situationist International* and *Internazionale Situazionista* did contain original texts, the only other Central Committee-authorized publication was *Situationistik Revolution* (published by the remaining Scandinavian member), which was composed almost entirely of translations of texts from the French journal.

⁶ De Jong and Jorn had a very close relationship from 1959 to 1970. It is expressed and documented in the recently published *The Case of the Ascetic Satyr: Snapshots from Eternity* (2015), in which notes and ephemeral artworks between the two lovers are compiled.

⁷ Arnaud was a member of "Main a plume" in occupied Paris, the Surrealist collective that endured and opposed fascism from 1941 to 1944. He was, later on, a founding member of the Revolutionary Surrealist group, with which Jorn had some involvement in 1947-1948. The commonality between Jorn, de Jong, and Arnaud lied in their rejection towards official and officialist communism, which for Arnaud meant secession from the main current of Surrealism.

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