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# On Social Repression in Culture

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(TRANSLATION) ■  
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Individually, the artists of the modern era who do not simply reproduce the permissible mystifications have all clearly been more or less rejected to the fringes of social life. This is because they are obliged to pose — even through illusory or fragmentary means — the question of the meaning of this life: the question of its use; while it remains without meaning, it has no lawful use outside of passive consumption. By its very nature, then, it signals the wretched conditions of an uninhabitable world. And their personal exclusion from the world — by the comfortable or attractive separation of tragic elimination — is produced naturally, so to speak.

On the contrary, avant-garde groups — or individuals among them — who formulate a definitive program for changing all of these conditions come up against a consciously organized social repression. The forms of this repression have changed a lot since, say, forty years ago, with the development of society itself and that of its enemies.

In the Europe of the 1920's, fingers were pointed at whatever scandalized the permissible social and cultural values; the avant-garde was considered ac-

cursed. In the society that has developed since the second world war, there are no longer any values whatsoever, and as a result the accusation of not respecting a particular convention can no longer find an audience among the backwards sectors of the public, and remains attached to a rather outmoded system of coherent conventions (much like Christian conception). For those who carry on the project of creating new values, the controllers of culture and information no longer stir up scandal: they tend to be the unshakable organizers of silence.

These new conditions of struggle initially postpone the work of a new revolutionary avant-garde; hindering its formation and then slowing its development. But they also have a very positive sign: modern culture is empty; no solid force can be opposed to the decisions of this avant-garde, from the minute it is successful in making it known as such. The sole task of this avant-garde must be to impose a day of reckoning before it compromises its discipline and its program. This is exactly what the Situationist International intends to do.

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