

KING MOB: TWO LETTERS ON



STUDENT POWER

**No more Latin
No more French,
No more sitting
On the old school bench.**

Old English revolutionary song.

For us there is only one real 'educational' problem today: how to appropriate all the means of real material mastery of the world accumulated, at a terrible price, by several centuries of bourgeois rule - means that today are kept out of our grasp by both the systematic mystification of specialists and by the systematic violence of cops.

Moreover, we believe that the university has a particularly privileged role to play in this process - a role whose nature no one has yet even intimated, let alone investigated.

At any rate one thing is very clear both tactically and strategically the fate of the whole student movement hangs on its ability to answer a single problem: How to use, straight away, to the full, any university property (space, time, information or equipment) that falls into the hands of rebel students.

At the moment it is in a complete cul-de-sac. For the recent number of 'Private Eye' concerned with the adventures of Von Arm Bendit and the toddlers' takeover of the Clapham Day Nursery it was just a sitting duck. Sit-ins and occupations have become ten a penny, and at the same time their fundamental indecision has become perfectly clear. Every face mirrors the same question. What are they all meant to be doing there? Why in Christ's name did they ever bother even to take it over? The circumstances, it will be admitted, are hardly congenial.

At the same time the whole 'free' and 'anti' university bit seems to have gone completely, and definitively bankrupt. The little articulate theory it produced - Trocchi's 'Invisible Insurrection', say - makes the reasons clear enough: everyone concerned sees the role of the anti-university as being essentially cultural, and this has merely landed them in something even more decadent, disoriented and generally suspect than the university itself.

When, for example, Trocchi maunders on about his 'cultural jamsessions' one isn't so much struck by the rapidity of his conception of revolution as by his complete ignorance of all that was really accomplished by modern art. Doesn't he know that it's dead? Doesn't he know about the whole cultural revolution of the twenties, the revolution wrought by the Futurists, by Dada, by Surrealism? The idea that all previous art has merely provided an imaginary world to compensate for the deficiencies of this one, and that today, in modern society, art is rapidly becoming one of the mainstays of the whole social and economic system it purports to reject? The idea that imagination and creativity are present, though repressed, in everyone, and that if

liberated they would create really the life only dreamt of in art; architects, concretely, in the flesh, of the world of Kanadu, the world of 'Les Illuminations'; storm the garden of earthly delights.

The 'cultural revolutionaries' of the twenties knew that there was only one possible basis for their new heaven and earth - revolutionary seizure of all the epoch's accumulated scientific knowledge and actual technological power - and their use, initially, to stamp out work; later as the real tools to liberate desire, to stamp out reality.

For, in the last instance, the whole incapacity of the modern mind, its chronic inability to ever get to grips with anything, is expressed by one mammoth dichotomy: the division of civilisation into two antagonistic cultures: the culture of reason and the imagination; the culture of science and real material transformation. Separated, the former merely provides an imaginary balm to assuage the real deprivations of the other.

So far as we are concerned, the only real role that an anti-university could play would be a systematic attempt to bridge, to annul this division: to allow poetry to discover its technology and technology its poetry.

This seems incompatible with any type of cultural hegemony. It is science and technology, not art, that must be brought into play.

Modern art ENDED

with a radical reappraisal of creativity, with the Berlin Dadaists and the Paris Surrealists, with the first real experiments in an essentially new form of activity. The death and transcendence of art is already a fait accompli. Once the essential transition involved is understood there is little more to be said. What, on the contrary, can only be taught - the only information that can only be transmitted, the only classes that can only be organised hierarchically - is an unscrambling, a vulgarisation of scientific knowledge and a series of introductory experiments in its application to the future: to guerilla and civil war.

The function of an anti-university seen along these lines would be to enable as many people as possible to understand, to be able to reproduce and to turn to the ends of revolutionary war the entire mechanical basis of this civilisation. A school for Crime.

To turn our attention to science, not art, is the only way to avoid an unbalanced take on reality; not only would almost all artists be turned on to the hidden poetry of science; it would also provide, by liberating their their own individual imagination, all scientists and technicians with the best possible 'introduction to the meaning of modern art'.

This proposal isn't as raving as all that. France has already been on the verge of one of the greatest potential breakdowns of the century. The United States is being shaken by more and more savage underground explosions: "America's police forces are preparing to fight guerilla warfare in the streets. They are ready for civil war" 'Observer', September 1st 1968.

DEPRESSED ?



Contraindications: Marked anxiety, tension, agitation. Contraindicated in patients with glaucoma and with epilepsy, except to combat lethargy induced by anticonvulsant drugs.

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-Ad. from 'The Practitioner' 1968

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The atmosphere in this country could be cut with a knife. People eyeing one another, furtively, wondering what they really feel; sick at heart with all their nasty little lies, their cowardices and their mediocrity; the brink of the abyss into which we must jump...And at the same time, the State taken off-guard, forced to react, revealing more and more clearly its total inhumanity.

Obviously no one can tell what is going to happen over the next few years, but one thing has become very clear - we are all totally unprepared for any real social crisis, whatever its nature. We must start to get ready for everything that is possible - and start now. Organise ourselves in groups and networks. Organise our immediate economic problems collectively. Equip ourselves. Learn how to toughen ourselves up. Learn how to fight... That is to say: kick any analysis, any paper, that isn't produced solely for specific tactical reasons. Kick them: they are the treadmill of the mind: the opium of the student. The farce of all these people - from Oz to International Socialism - who call themselves 'revolutionary groups'. What would any of them do if they were forced to go on the run, let alone if they were caught in a situation of real revolutionary violence? Comrades, we don't know one fucking end of a gun from the other.

Photo from Budapest '56: two adolescents, maybe sixteen or seventeen, caught up against a wall, hurling rocks at the Russian tank coming down on top of them...

Concretely then, how can any university become as totally illegal as we are suggesting and not get bust straight away?

Two main suggestions: (a) the anti-university must be invisible while it actually exists within the official university, (b) the anti-university must disappear and move elsewhere as soon as its presence is detected by the enemy. Straight old-time guerilla. Paris poster: "the revolutionary movement needs no temple".

The enclave of relative freedom offered by the university must be exploited to the hilt. No other sector of society is less surveilled, surveilled by the cops - than the university, and forced, if it is to continue to play its present role, to continue to be paternalistic and permissive. This same vulnerability is expressed in terms of urbanism. The university is still society's chief microcosm: nowhere else is so much information and equipment gathered together in one place; nowhere else is it so easy for so many people to meet so frequently without detection.

This is the site for our invisible parallel university. An original cell either evolves spontaneously or is introduced by those famous foreign agitators. They could start with plain atmospherics: sheer iconoclasm, gradually casing out and involving more and more people in a mounting, but cool, agitation. The actual subjects studied become a pure front: behind it the real research, synthesising all the facilities offered by the university, is developed.

A broad front covering up the activity of a growing number of people will have to be developed. Normal tokens of assiduity - essays or whatever - should be dashed off collectively. Methods of cheating in exams, of conning grants and scholarships, must be systematically updated. This will be much easier if the initial cell contains at least one member of staff: pincer movements. In a general sense,

bureaucratic chaos should be encouraged whenever possible: anonymity means mobility, which means the infiltration of elements foreign to the university...

It is in this context that smokebombing the man from Dow Jones or taking over the botany class should be judged. Obviously every kind of tactic can be used but most cases to date seem purely histrionic. If a university has been really taken over then this type of gesture is largely redundant - sooner or later there's bound to be a punch-up and a big one at that. At this point everyone can only decide whether or not it's worth gambling on a real open takeover: massive con-



Wordsworth and his exquisite sister are with me [this was in June 1797]. She is a woman indeed: in mind I mean, and heart; for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her ordinary; if you expected to see an ordinary woman you would think her pretty! But her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. In every motion her most innocent soul beams out so brightly, that who saw would say 'Guilt was a thing impossible in her'. Her information various. Her eye watchful in minutest observation of nature; and her taste a perfect electrometer. It bends, protrudes, and draws in, at subtlest beauties and most recondate faults.

Coleridge: letter to Joseph Cottle.

frontation, disintegration of the liberal front, nationwide scandal, etc. Real in this context meaning real enough to get time for, not just kicked out...

This means fortification. Most conceptions to date are just pale reflections of the military establishment - crash-helmets and karate-suits - blottingpaper down the pants of a ten-year-old. Les Malheurs de la Vertu. Publicity - presuming the present friction between the cops and the media continues - is a better means of defence: frame up the bastards with fake shots of their 'brutality' etc.

Barricades? Bakunin, during the 46 Revolution, broke into a museum in Dresden and propped a row of Old Masters in front of an ineffectual barricade someone had built. No one dared fire a shot at it. In May 1968 the Beaux-Arts students showed they had not forgotten the lesson. So: threaten to burn their labs and libraries, blow up their computers, etc., if a cop so much as sneezes. The chemistry dept should be able to produce some gases: LSD gas, laughing gas, itching powder gas, etc. The Beano is, all in all, more pungent than Debray - and we don't want to alienate the general public do we?

The whole question of liaison with the rest of society. The famous workers-students-unite bit doesn't just seem platitudinous and hollow: it seems completely misleading. In the first place, in the most highly industrialised countries all young students are well on the way to being no more than young workers - and vice versa - they are becoming one and the same thing. Even now the real disparity lies not between those who made and those who flunked university but between both groups and the rest of the proletariat. In immediate, tactical terms there would seem to be a far richer and more promising point of contact: with that darkening twilight zone on the brink of which the university rebels are already poised - Sargasso sea brimming with every Ph.D. on the dole or the building site - the new lumpen - the new dangerous classes - the swarming, petty criminal no-people of the ghetto.

Close links between the university and the whole drop-out community already exist: we must try to make them one.

The disintegration of the university and the drop-out ghetto pile-up are two stages of the same process. The dregs of society have much to teach those who still half-believe themselves to be some sort of privileged social effervescence: more especially since, only a few months before, most of the former still took themselves to be the latter. From Crabbe and Kierkegaard to the North Thames Gas Board.

Stuff knocked off from the universities should be shuffled quietly down the networks - and all possible technical advice and information along with it. Radio, tv, cameras, presses, duplicators. All types of machine shop equipment. Chemicals. The dope on fake grants. Later, actual military hardware. The Underground, in its turn, can feed back information of the latest developments on the street and backroom level. Succour everyone sent down. And, in due course, send back to the surface, new, hideously dressed lecturers and students.

As for the rest, we can state, philosophically, hammer in hand, that education has absolutely no future.

History is precisely the nightmare from which we are all trying to awake, and once we have awoken, awoken to the whole of our alienated real power, then the past, its precedents, its boundaries and its quotations, will no longer have the slightest hold over any of us. Down with School. Anarchist 'education' will be an

indissoluble part of the rest of life - practical adventure and experiment, not geometry or trigonometry - a life swayed by forces unutterably different from the murderous dead weight systematically grinding everybody's face in the shit today:

"Freedom is fire, overcoming this world by reducing it to a fluctuating chaos, as in schizophrenia; the chaos which is the eternal ground of creation. There is no universe, no one way. Thank God the world cannot be made safe, for democracy or anything else" (Norman Brown, 'Love's Body').

-Chris Gray.

This is poetry all right. Revolutionary Tactics Designed to be Read as Literature. And that has its point -

most of the RSSF know as little about Crabbe and Kierkegaard as about the North Thames Gas Board, and the absolute dreariness of their vision shows it. The familiar objection that our theory isn't practical or tactical is beside the point - as if there were a chance of tactics without a redefinition of the aims and language of the revolutionary project. But I squirm, all the same, at some of your aims, language and tactics.

The cultural anti-university is shit, of course - Cabaret Voltaire on ice. But what does your anti-u mean if not mass karate for the new guerilla, plus study groups on the anti-social responsibility of the scientist? You say, rightly, that the separation of art and science is the enemy, but a lot of your prescriptions don't break specialisation: that phrase about "vulgarization" of science gives me the creeps; Koestler, Bronofski, Ugh... "Turning on to the hidden poetry of science."

But this is just Trocchi's cultural insurrection stood on its head. It was your underlined poetry - it's fast becoming a hectoring word with us, we're supposed to do obeisance to the concept for all the old reasons. There is nothing poetic about science or revolution: the notion of poetry and the poetic is dead along with art.

Your view of a liberated science is not after all Utopian enough; after the build-up it is close to bathos. Unnecessarily so. All the guerilla activism bit is crap - reach for your Che Guevara chemistry set, learn to tell one end of a gun from another: SO FUCKING WHAT? As if the problems are going to be military, or para-military. What about the cops inside your head? Is the anti-u going to be anti-YOU meaning anti-I meaning anti-EGO? This is where science really comes in: towards a new science of persons, towards the dismantling of the Ego, the destruction of unconscious life. Sure, this is pie-in-the-sky apart from the social technics; the re-organization of production so that we can destroy our selves. But both scientific projects must start together (for the same reason that a revolutionary group must attack hierarchy within the group

at the same time it organises to destroy hierarchy in society). The anti-u seems a good place to start.

Food for thought: in the October occupation, it took the odiously puritanical LSE students precisely three days to set up a mini-state, and throw out the bums and anarchists without whose help they could not have kept Adams out. They programmed the whole thing from beginning to end, deliberately restricting its possibilities of development. They censored slogans and posters which might soil their media image (unless of course a Paris pedigree gave them a magical sanctity: "Indulge untrammelled desire" my arse!). They locked doors and patrolled corridors and, above all, they cleaned and washed and scrubbed. How spick and span it was for the return of the AUTHORITIES! Those guys wash their hands two hundred times a day!

In any case your university of the forests stuff is predicated on "a great social break-down to come", which you indicate but hardly analyse - we're not going to substitute waiting for the great freak-out for waiting for the final crisis of cap, are we, for Gods sake?

What, after all, is the most we can hope for from the universities? I don't believe that the university "has a particularly privileged role to play" in the revolutionary process. THE UNIVERSITY IS NOT WHERE IT'S AT. It is still a minor cog in the machine of socialization - it looks and is marginal alongside the real big wheels of mass repression, Family, School, Organized Work, Re-socialization via the welfare state apparatus. And there is plenty of reason to believe that these bases of social conditioning (to put it crudely, the places where the continuing battle is fought against the re-emergence of proletarian consciousness: the areas where class consciousness and class conflict are continually dismantled) are IN CRISIS. The fight to put Humpty together again always was a losing one. That is what delinquency is about; that crisis lies behind the spiralling figures of the "mentally ill"; it is one reason for the improvisation of new means of emasculation in the media, the cult of commodities, the myth of Youth as the ideal consumer.

In the end, the real revolution will come from the collapse of social conditioning - the hypertrophy of the media, the revealed absurdity of the family and its norms, the desolate sadness of school and welfare, the fucking irrelevance (and the progressive disappearance) of WORK. A world of social workers with schizophrenia, mothers giving birth to TV sets, state-run apprenticeship - schemes in total idleness (how to get the best out of LSD, courses in vandalism, a prize for the guy with the best perversion of the week). That's the future.

The most we can expect from the universities is feed-back towards the areas of real confrontation which already exist, sketchily. I mean feed-back in terms of example - how easy it is to operate unreasonably, in this reasonable society. "The strongest guard is placed at the doorway to nothing, as the condition of emptiness is too shameful to be divulged." -

'Tender is the Night'. But if the guards know, ultimately, that they are defending Nothing, they'll soon fraternise with the enemy. "The last two weeks have been the best of my life" - any Liberal professor on any puerile university crisis.

Feed-back also in terms of people. The "best students" are those who leave university having learnt that life is impossible outside, in the system. They are going to where the action is. Once they have abandoned the money-grubbing scum of the official Underground (and that is already happening, fast) there is no identity left except as part of the class of the un-socialized. It stretches from the depressive in Finsbury to the Diggers in Hyde Park (via

**Brixton,
sheer beauty, Speed, smashed
every single Saturday night.**

It is a class with a future, a class which is growing, and becoming conscious of its own despair - call it the new proletariat if it makes you feel better, on more familiar ground. It will do the same work.

Alongside this, the university crisis is only a nuisance. Let's be there, by all means. A free university could do something for the eternal constipation of the Left. Physical confrontation of the "revolutionary groups" with the drop-outs - Sedgwick and Anderson versus the Cream. Compiling a dictionary of abandoned terms (Alienation - Consciousness, Raising or Lowering of - Contradictions, Fundamental - Working-Class - Critique etc.) the biggest revolutionary swear-box of them all. And, yes, the technics you talk about.

It won't yet be revolution - it won't be in the right place - but it'll be a gas, and like all disturbance it may spread. That has happened already in France, even though the drivelling Leninists of I.S. are breathing a sigh of relief and talking about the 'failure' of spontaneity. Of course there are lessons from May, but the first is that revolution will only begin from the situation you're in, not from an arid identification with unknown workers and Uncle Ho. (The October fiasco proves that, if proof were needed). The identification, and the alliances, remain to be made, in the fight against repression, wherever it is tangible, wherever it is experienced not just talked about. The universities are one such place - they are where we start from - the future is wide open now, it's flames for certain, from here on.

Richard Muelken
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SUPPLEMENT TO KING MOB ECHO
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