

JEAN TOCHE'S STATEMENT TO BE READ AT THE OPEN HEARING OF THE ART WORKERS COALITION AT THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS ON APRIL 10, 1969

FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT THE ACTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED AGAINST ALL MUSEUMS AND ALL ART INSTITUTIONS, AND ESPECIALLY AGAINST THOSE - WRITERS, CRITICS, COLLECTORS, CURATORS... - WHO DIRECT, BEHIND THE SCENES, THAT ART ESTABLISHMENT.

SECOND, I BELIEVE THAT THE OBJECTIVE SHOULD NOT BE TO OBTAIN A SERIES OF REFORMS FROM THE MUSEUMS, BUT TO GET EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE RUNNING OF THESE INSTITUTIONS IN THE SAME MANNER AS, TODAY, STUDENTS ARE FIGHTING FOR THE CONTROL OF THE SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE DIRECTORS AND CURATORS OF THE MUSEUMS HAVE NO REAL POWER, BUT MAINLY CARRY OUT THE POLICIES OF THE MUSEUMS' PATRONS.

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REGARDING THE STRUCTURE OF THE ART WORKERS COALITION, IT IS EVIDENT THAT WE NEED SOME KIND OF ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO FUNCTION EFFICIENTLY. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE IT SHOULD TAKE THE FORM OF A COMMUNE, AND NOT OF AN AUTHORITARIAN CENTRALIZED HIERARCHY.

THEREFORE I WANT TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS:

1. NO LEADERSHIP AND NO HIERARCHY IN ANY FORM.
2. ALL IDEAS AND CURRENTS AMONG THE COMMUNITY MUST BE RESPECTED AND EQUALLY GUARANTEED, EVEN IF THEY REPRESENT ONLY A MINORITY OF THINKING.
3. ALL DECISIONS ARE TAKEN BY VOTE IN A PUBLIC ASSEMBLY, OPEN TO EVERYBODY, TO BE CARRIED OUT BY ACTION COMMITTEES.
4. ALL ACTION COMMITTEES ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND THEIR MEMBERS CAN BE REPLACED AT ANY TIME BY THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY. HOWEVER, THE ACTION COMMITTEES SHOULD HAVE A GREAT FLEXIBILITY OF ACTION, ESPECIALLY AT THE LEVEL OF EACH DISCIPLINE REPRESENTED, IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND IMMEDIATELY TO ANY URGENT SITUATION.
5. ANYONE CAN CALL A PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AT ANY TIME, ON 24 HOUR NOTICE. THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY SHOULD MEET AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK AND, IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, FUNCTION ON A 24-HOUR BASIS.
6. ANYONE CAN ATTEND THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY, MAKE SUGGESTIONS, AND VOTE.
7. AN INFORMATION COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FORMED, FOR GENERAL RESEARCH, TO DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION, AND TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY OF ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS.
8. A VIGILANCE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FORMED, ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND WITH ACCESS TO ALL COMMITTEES, TO REPORT ANY ATTEMPT TO CONTROL INFORMATION OR ACTION, OR ANY ATTEMPT OF ANY KIND TO ESTABLISH AN AUTHORITARIAN DICTATORSHIP.
9. SPOKESMEN FOR THE COMMUNITY SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY POWER OF ACTION OR DECISION. THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY FOR WHAT THEY SAY AND WRITE, AND THEY CAN BE REPLACED AT ANY TIME BY THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.
10. A NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FORMED TO SUPPORT AND COLLABORATE WITH SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS OF ARTISTS, STUDENTS AND WORKERS FROM OTHER CITIES AND ABROAD.
11. AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FORMED TO COORDINATE ALL INFORMATION AND ACTION, AND TO PERFORM SECRETARIAL DUTIES. HOWEVER, THIS COMMITTEE SHOULD HAVE NO POWER OF DECISION.
12. A TREASURER SHOULD BE SELECTED WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND CAN BE REPLACED AT ANY TIME BY THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.
13. A LIBRARY SHOULD BE CONSTITUTED, OPEN TO ANYONE AT SPECIFIED TIMES, WITH FREE ACCESS TO ALL RECORDS OF THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND OTHER DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION.

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TOCHE

AS TO TACTICS, OUR FIRST OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHO CONTROLS, BEHIND THE SCENES, THE POLICIES OF THE MUSEUMS AND OTHER ART ESTABLISHMENT INSTITUTIONS. WE SHOULD THEN PROCEED TO TARNISH THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE IN ORDER TO FORCE THEM TO PROVE PUBLICLY WHO THEY REALLY ARE, THAT IS, THE BOSSES OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH MANIPULATE PEOPLE AND ARE BASICALLY AT THE SERVICE OF THE REPRESSIVE FORCES OF SOCIETY. WE MUST NOT FORGET, FOR INSTANCE, THAT THE BIG BANKS OWN A GREAT DEAL OF SOUTH AMERICA AND ARE THEREFORE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME OF THE MISERY AND SLAVERY OF THE WORKERS IN THOSE COUNTRIES. THE PATRONAGE OF THE ARTS BY SUCH INSTITUTIONS AND PERSONALITIES EXPLAINS THE VERY PROCESS OF ALIENATION OF THE MASSES BY THE ART ESTABLISHMENT, ITS USE FOR PROPAGANDA, ITS CORRUPTION, AND ITS SEGREGATION OF BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ARTISTS. WE CAN ONLY DO THIS BY DIRECT CONFRONTATION. BY DOING THIS WE WILL GRADUALLY GET THE SUPPORT OF OTHER ARTISTS AND OTHER PROGRESSIVE REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS. WE SHOULD ALSO PARTICIPATE, WHENEVER, POSSIBLE, IN THE ACTIONS OF THESE OTHER GROUPS IN ORDER TO EXPAND OUR EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH SUCH ACTIONS AND TO DEVELOP A BINDING COMMUNITY SPIRIT.

A SECOND OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE THE UNIONS OF THE MUSEUMS, WHICH ARE FASCISTIC ORGANIZATIONS AND VERY MUCH PART OF AND AT THE SERVICE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT. THEIR MEMBERS SHOULD BE PERSUADED TO IGNORE THE ARBITRARY ORDERS OF THEIR UNIONS AND TO JOIN US IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ALL ART ESTABLISHMENT ORDER, IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE FRENCH WORKERS REVOLTED AGAINST THE CGT AT THE TIME OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION LAST MAY.

A THIRD OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE THE FEDERAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHICH FINANCE THE PUBLIC MUSEUMS. THE PROLONGATION OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM WILL HAVE, AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE, A CUTBACK OF FUNDS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS CULTURAL FUNDS, AND THE EVENTUAL CLOSING OF ALL PUBLIC MUSEUMS. TO FIGHT FOR CONTROL OF THE MUSEUMS IS ALSO TO BE AGAINST THE WAR IN VIETNAM.

ANOTHER OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE A DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF ARTISTS IN THE ART PRESS, I.E. THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ALTERNATIVE BY ARTISTS TO WHAT THE CRITICS WRITE. THIS SHOULD LATER BE EXTENDED TO ALL THE PRESS MEDIA (DAILY PAPERS, RADIO, TELEVISION...). HOWEVER WE WILL NOT OBTAIN THAT OBJECTIVE BY CAJOLING THE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND BY HIDING WHAT WE REALLY ARE. WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT THEY ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE AND WILL ALWAYS TRY TO TWIST, IGNORE, OR DESTROY WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR. ON THE CONTRARY, WE MUST TRY TO INVOLVE THEM DIRECTLY IN OUR ACTIONS, THAT IS, MAKE SURE THAT THESE REPORTERS ARE NOT IMMUNE TO THE REPRESSIVE PRACTICES OF THE POLICE ANY MORE THAN WE ARE. ONLY THEN WILL THEY BE ON OUR SIDE, AS HAPPENED IN CHICAGO AND DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION LAST MAY.

FINALLY, WE SHOULD HAVE A GOOD SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATIONS (TELEPHONE, VOLUNTARY MESSENGERS...), ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF CRISIS, AND WHENEVER WE EXPRESS OURSELVES WE SHOULD USE A DIRECT APPROACH, AND NOT A LITERARY ONE. (BIG POSTERS PRINTED CHEAPLY BY SERIGRAPHY WITH THE HELP OF ART STUDENTS...)

JEAN TOCHE  
APRIL 9, 1969