Persecution and Self-Persecution: The SPUR Group and Its Texts: The Neo-Avant-Garde in the Province of Postfascism

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Heimrad Prem.
***Bildschirm*, 1961.**

Persecution and Self-Persecution: The SPUR Group and Its Texts: The Neo-avant-garde in the Province of Postfascism

DIEDRICH DIEDERICHSEN
TRANSLATED BY NOAM M. ELCOTT

In many respects, the work of the group SPUR—founded in Munich in 1957 and comprising the artists Lothar Fischer, Heimrad Prem, Helmut Sturm, H.P. Zimmer, and others until it disbanded in 1965—appears closer and more intelligible today than it did twenty years ago, when I first came to know it. Although inspired by COBRA (in particular Asger Jorn), Jean Dubuffet, and other contemporaries, the group of painters and sculptors cultivated a unique vocabulary. Despite the recognizable styles of each member, SPUR was marked by the spirit of collectivity and, even more so, by the constant production of texts, pamphlets, and magazines. This published material will be the focus of this essay; it now appears fully comprehensible in the wake of a situationism revival that has familiarized the art world with late-1950s European neo-avant-garde discourse to such a degree that its broad effects have completely overshadowed the contemporaneous reactions provoked by these groups. Indeed, this recuperative reading of SPUR texts has overlooked the material that cannot be explained with respect to the Situationist International (SI), in particular the Jorn wing, or the conflict with Debord.

We have learned to appreciate how insufficiently networked and international the art world was in the 1950s—in particular, the avant-garde and nonconformist currents from Paris to Vienna. We have recognized the enormity of achieving the foundation of international structures carried out by COBRA and the situationists, as well as by the German section of the SI, represented by SPUR until 1962, and above all the reestablishment of contemporary art in the context of the international avant-garde on the soil of the former Third Reich. We have finally accepted just how hostile West German society was to every form of bohemian

and youth culture, indeed to every aberration from the norms of a Fordist disciplinary society. And yet we have failed to grasp one aspect of this hostility because it is too distant from the state of affairs of contemporary art and was no better understood at the time; namely, that the artists believed they were persecuted.[1]

Tortured Artists?

The trope of the "tortured artist" is all too familiar in the history of art. The pose is assumed by individuals who attempt to wear great suffering on their sleeves in order to aggrandize their significance. In this mode, artistic worth is determined by the degree of exertion spent combating inner and outer demons or transforming them into works of art. Such a pose bears little, if at all, upon the case of SPUR, as indicated by the openness with which the persecution was exclaimed, the endless opportunities for reprisal offered by the members of the group through their habitual declarations of persecution. SPUR was in fact persecuted—albeit only after its members, in manifestos and in the magazine *SPUR,* defined themselves and the authentic contemporary artist as persecuted.

Around 1960, the force of the "normal" was experienced as so massive that artists had the impression they were being pointedly persecuted. This was more than a slogan or an invention offered up to a small public; even less so an early discovery of the now modish claim to victimhood articulated from a state of comfort while taking out vengeance on the entire world. Instead one clearly hears the seriousness of the situation in the tone of the pertinent remarks in the group's texts and recognizes it in the prevalent themes in SPUR productions, as in the increasingly important motives of martyrdom and passion.

The belief that the artist—now a beloved public figure and widely touted model for entrepreneurs and politicians, indeed, the Lord Privy Seal of that essential economic resource "creativity"—was deemed an enemy of the state, persecuted, even "driven to suicide," was not too long ago an authentic impression devoid of vain paranoia or grandiosity. The first manifesto of the German section of the Situationist International, also signed by the fatherly friend of SPUR Asger Jorn and the befriended painter and theorist Hans Platschek, mourned the loss of casualties like Jackson Pollock, Wols, Dylan Thomas, and so on. This was, however, still expressed in a jocular tone that, in the later SPUR publications, would become progressively more embittered.

When in 1960 H.P. Zimmer addressed the theme of persecution in his diary, he could not have known that SPUR artists as well as others in their circle would take their own lives: Heimrad Prem committed suicide in 1978, and Uwe Lausen, who was intermittently close to the group and took over the German section of the SI after SPUR was thrown out, killed himself in 1969. The SPUR trial,

following the confiscation of the sixth issue of *SPUR* on the grounds of desecration of religion, and other reprisals at the hands of the Bavarian authorities were likewise still to come. The reprisals proved post facto not only that the feelings of persecution were not made up in order to valorize the marginal status of the artist but made evident that the group's declared goal—"to seek out contact with history and the international community"[2]—was hardly an innocuous cultural contention in 1960. Instead, they clearly encountered massive resistance from the part of the (state) powers that positioned itself for the continued hindrance of contact with German history or non-German lands.

History and the International Community!

As much as the two goals of contact with German history and with countries beyond its borders appeared imperative for an artistic eruption on German soil, and as much as they seemed justified by the fierce resistance they provoked, their juxtaposition involved a contradiction, a paradox that definitively shaped the work of SPUR.

Foreign lands *(Ausland)* signified an engagement with the international art scene that circumvented all the disadvantages engendered by a shortage of information, lack of initiation into the art world, and involuntary provinciality. *"Ausland"* meant a break from a postwar German art world rendered trivial by German history: to continue where Jackson Pollock left off and the Informel faltered. The SPUR texts are not short on youthful belligerence—"No more quivering painting from the garret studios of a dilettante like Wols."[3] But as they strove to overtake the international avant-garde in a great push forward, they had to deal daily with detestable and reactionary forces whose doggedness functioned less like an elderly obstinacy than an all-encompassing normality.

History, conversely, was precisely what separated the SPUR artists from other countries. At the time the group was founded, the recourse to history entailed at least two contradictory aspects: on the one hand, the attempt to make public the history of Nazi Germany that had largely been repressed in the fifties; to work

H.P. Zimmer.
Drei Wichtige Leute,
1963.

through it; to name, fight, and denounce the officials and institutions that adhered to its values. On the other hand—and this was particularly pertinent for SPUR—the recourse to history involved the reconstruction of the development disrupted by the Nazis. This dictated that they not acknowledge the degree to which their own work was marked—negatively—by the Third Reich and its continuity and instead link their production to earlier German visual arts so as to enter the ranks of the international avant-garde with a specific aesthetic contribution.

In contrast to the painting of the "nonpolitical" artists surrounding Markus Lüpertz and Georg Baselitz that emerged shortly thereafter, SPUR was unable (and this was its great advantage!) to develop a new German style through the fusion of an internationally recognized contemporary gesture with what was allegedly available from the 1920s. Over and over again in the work of SPUR, the fact surfaces that "those nineteen-twenties," addressed by Theodor W. Adorno in an essay of that name,[4] were not only unavailable but were hardly that which was sought in their hasty revival; namely, a better Germany with which to carry on. The much vaunted hand of the artist, guaranteeing the historically untarnished wholeness of the artistic subject, as cipher for an ahistorically whitewashed expressionism representing German art par excellence, would fortunately find no place in the painting of SPUR. Instead, such a model collapses amid their antics, kitsch, and childlike creativity—slanderous associations for all who aspire toward a sovereign art in a sovereign state. Considered outside the myth that surrounds those years, the twenties were not only the decade whose production was destroyed by the Nazis but the very decade that produced or at least was unable to hinder them. The 1920s, therefore, are not only victims but perpetrators.

Nevertheless, the attempt to make contact with history was not abandoned; instead it became the goal of an artistic project. SPUR explicitly attached itself to a conception of art that would not come to terms with its specialized function in the compartmentalized social system of the 1950s. Instead, they aspired toward the "complete human being" and its "complete work"[5] and the realization of a society advanced already by the avant-garde fifty years early; that is, around 1910. This argumentation, often tempestuously and indirectly propounded, is strongly reminiscent of the famous first sentence of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics,* composed shortly thereafter: "Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed."[6] For the members of SPUR, painting—which they promoted in these years in catalogue texts, manifestos, and the pages of their own magazine—was similarly unrealized. Its relationship to the times was not that of an achievement long suppressed and so in need only of discovery and revival but rather that of a still open promise that could not be

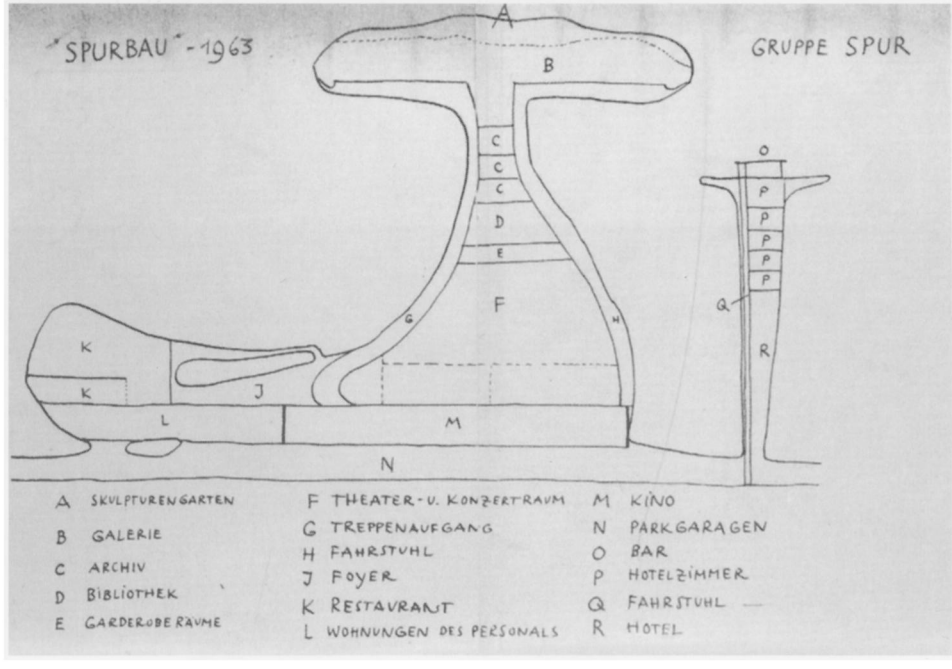
Gruppe SPUR.
***Dokumentationstafel Zum SPUR-Bau,* 1963.**

met through another, newer promise, dutifully catalogued in the history of the arts and its movements but rather only through its very fulfillment.

Our Own Society with Our Own Morality

One year later, in the first issue of *SPUR* magazine, this motto became their explicit program. The artists openly declared their quest to create "our own world," or, as they themselves called it, "our own society"[7]—a formulation that anticipated latter slogans like that of the Berlin band "Mutter" and their oft-quoted, quintessentially subcultural solution, popular in the 1990s: "Our own society with our own morality." The philosophy of history employed here fuses Adorno's directive—namely, to reflect "on the necessity of continuing without compromise that which was suspended from within and without, and also on the limits of historical recourse"[8]—with Asger Jorn's particular reading of the situationist concept of "détournement."[9] What for the situationists generally meant the targeted diversion and redesignation of representational means became, in the hands of SPUR, the revaluation of values—values that, for this purpose, first had to be established. Accordingly, this referential dialectic understood the twenties not as a reservoir of available practices so much as a set of values that could be revalued, values absent from the 1960s and so in need of appropriation. This simultaneous adoption and rejection became a problem: on the one hand, it was relatively clear to SPUR that no other assertion of continuity was tenable for the German avant-garde; on the other hand, the position, thus described, was too abstract to become a modus operandi in a hostile environment. Thus, the repeated need to fix and stabilize the program whether in an empathic concept of nonconformism or through quasi-essentialist references to specific manifestations of the artistic subject.

Another strand of the argument was followed through much more stringently and insistently by SPUR than were their various attempts to situate themselves in a philosophy of history; namely, the affect against—let's call it—instrumental reason. Here, science and technology claim dominance over aesthetic practice—a claim that, in the eyes of the SPUR artists, implies a false conception of the



avant-garde that, when implemented and realized, extends the hegemony of technoscientific intelligence over the arts. The originators of this "beautiful new world"[10] in the tradition of the Bauhaus and De Stijl had their contemporary followers in the form of the revived Bauhaus in Ulm and the scientistic aesthetic of Max Bense, directly attacked in a famous SPUR action.[11]

These rationalists and functionalists joined forces with the agents of historical oblivion and repression in the "persecution of artists"–themed fourth issue of *SPUR*. Technocrats and progress mongers pursued the same goals as the forces of repressive historical stupor in post-Nazi Germany—even if differently motivated toward the depreciation of historical thinking. Artists, as envisioned by SPUR, were a thorn in the side of both parties in that they refused to deny the importance of history in the present at any level of their work. In the course of systematizing the persecution of artists, this becomes even more subtle:

> Today artists are persecuted with invisible needles, i.e., arguments whispered to them on the street, in bed, in the forest, everywhere: take up another profession, emigrate, go to a psychiatrist. . . . All this is the pressure exerted by politics, which feels threatened by the sheer existence of a playful freedom that generates uncontrolled values.[12]

That the persecutors limit themselves to arguments, one might object, is a point in their favor. Artists must be able to dispute such arguments. Indeed, counterarguments can be helpful. But what Zimmer here describes is not a discursive engagement that takes place in a nonhierarchical discursive sphere but a form of double ideological encirclement. One could name these voices, following Louis Althusser's concept of "ideological interpellation,"[13] the voices of reason: addressed from a position of power to the subject in order to bind its becoming-subject to humble and loyal self-identification as a functionally differentiated specialist.

The certainty of these rational arguments conceals a pernicious duality in the rationality of 1960. The silence over history and the technorationalism of the

present turn out to be, from the perspective of SPUR, allies that shoot down every form of protest, whether historical-antifascist or utopian-nonconformist, in a *single* gesture. Death-dealing fascist irrationalism—in league with and elevated by a false instrumental reason—could disappear into history. At the same time, instrumental reason could declare as obsolete the need to address fascist irrationalism, which has neither a future nor the prospect to return in a glistening, rationalist world. In relegating fascism indubitably to an irrationality that had ostensibly been overcome, technorationalism took its leave of history.

Even when lived through, the logic of this structure was hard to understand without the corresponding concepts. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*—published in Amsterdam in 1947 but which began to circulate again only twenty years later in pirated copies—was not available to counter a model of brainwashing, which, while far too concrete and science fiction–like, functioned perfectly as a metaphor. The figure of the opponent (or enemy) was difficult to conceptualize for those individuals whose thought was subsumed by artistic rebellion, because this model was already anachronistic but appeared legitimate as long as it still generated scandals.

> The important works of that epoch [the 1920s] owe their force in no small part to the fruitful tension with something heterogeneous to them, to the tradition, against which they protested. . . . With the attrition of the tradition, many of the constraints that inspired those works were lost. Freedom is complete but threatens to run dry without its dialectical counterpart, a counterpart which determination alone cannot conserve.[14]

The artists of SPUR were forced either to develop without a concrete counterpart—that is, resisting the pressure and repression of a construct without name—or to invent a name, if not the very concept, themselves. They could try to construct it out of their own mold, that of the rebellious artist—revolutionary, radical, hedonistic, and embroiled deep in the bohemian tradition. But such a counterpart was composed through the fusion of their own tradition and that of an older, prefascist order that no longer existed in the "administered world" of their present. In the same fourth issue of *SPUR,* Heimrad Prem wrote a strange, somewhat self-mocking text in which he wished for a "painting ban."[15] "At least then someone could be blamed for all the world's harms"—which was precisely what SPUR was always after. "Why is there no madhouse or concentration camp for the 'unserviceable,' for the artists?"[16]

As much as this text can be read as a satire of the search for an enemy, it also raises a problem that is anything but amusing: the impossibility of attacking the "administered world" with the old tools of the avant-garde and, simultaneously,

H.P. Zimmer.
Weekend-World,
1964.

refusing to give up completely on the Romantic-confrontational concept of art and allowing themselves to be functionalized as aesthetic service providers. In the eyes of Jorn and SPUR, the Bauhaus, especially its revival by Max Bill, exemplified the false union of art and life, one subsumed by the consumer society. They therefore had no choice but to embrace the older model of a revolutionary artist and hope to generate new contours for it through experimental confrontations with concrete representatives of the world they rejected—like the action against Bense and the clashes with the reactionary Bavarian judiciary, embodied in the legal theorist Judge Maunz, who was deeply implicated in the Nazi period.[17]

Situationists and Communards

After their initial and unequivocal rejection of Communism—at a time when, like so many young intellectuals in the Cold War climate of the mid-fifties, they were searching for a "third way" beyond capitalism and Communism—SPUR began studying the Marxism of the Situationists. H.P. Zimmer stated to me in an interview that there could be no equivalent in Germany to the lofty claim of an artist-worker alliance that had a certain legitimacy in France.[18] The SPUR painter found little of the working class within the ranks of German workers but instead—and here he spoke with political and biographical concreteness rather than analytic precision—distinguished above all bourgeois pedants and old Nazis. Nevertheless, under situationist influence they began successfully to deploy Marxist concepts, into which they further infused multidiscursive texts and arguments. Zimmer began to discuss the artist in terms of a Marxist conception of labor: the artist represents unalienated, nonspecialized, preindustrial social labor. But instead of inferring from that the persecution of the artist, as one might have expected, he immediately calls for the abolition of labor, per se, without explication. In the sentence that follows, however, he argues that the persecution of artists proceeds from their belief that "work is fun," whereby they represent an alternative model of labor. What grates here is the simultaneous reception of an obliterated and lost leftist tradition and the perception that even with it, one is unable to approach the present outright. But there is also a substantial problem with the degree of philosophical abstraction employed by the elegant Hegelian-Marxist Guy Debord and the concreteness of the postwar German society that obscured the conceptual view of the SPUR members. Their struggle and attention lay precisely in the concreteness of German history, lost to postwar, ahistorical rationalism—as opposed to Debord, who was interested in the current and developing forms of spectacular global capitalism looming within the abstractions of this rationalism. Ultimately, SPUR's (undeveloped)

Gruppe SPUR with Kunzelmann and Saura in the Hofbräuhaus, 1961. Photo: Monika Mayer (Prem).

relationship to the working class and Debord's general and increasing skepticism of artists and their requisite dependencies led to the 1962 expulsion of SPUR from the SI.

The highly talented and dynamic group organizer Dieter Kunzelmann (born 1939), often named the originator of a generation of sub- and counterculturally inflected communes and collective living models, competed in these years with the inapproachable Guy Debord as a nonartistic catchphrase provider and friend of SPUR. His boisterous tone could be recognized when the group once again tried a neo-dada, folksy approach in an attempt toward a total "jamboree" in 1960. Here, the hard work of reflection existed side by side with the relaxation of merriment in a way that would not be tolerated later by an art world fixated on a consistent demeanor. In particular, the writings of SPUR—more than the members' appreciably and ever-increasingly individualistic works of visual art—remained a unique form of production through varying constellations and juxtapositions. Kunzelmann split from SPUR in 1962 because of "ideological differences"—he wanted a more actionist approach. He accused SPUR of not drawing enough attention in their work to the multitribunal SPUR trial that was at the center of their current confrontation with their enemies and of having abandoned their artistic model.

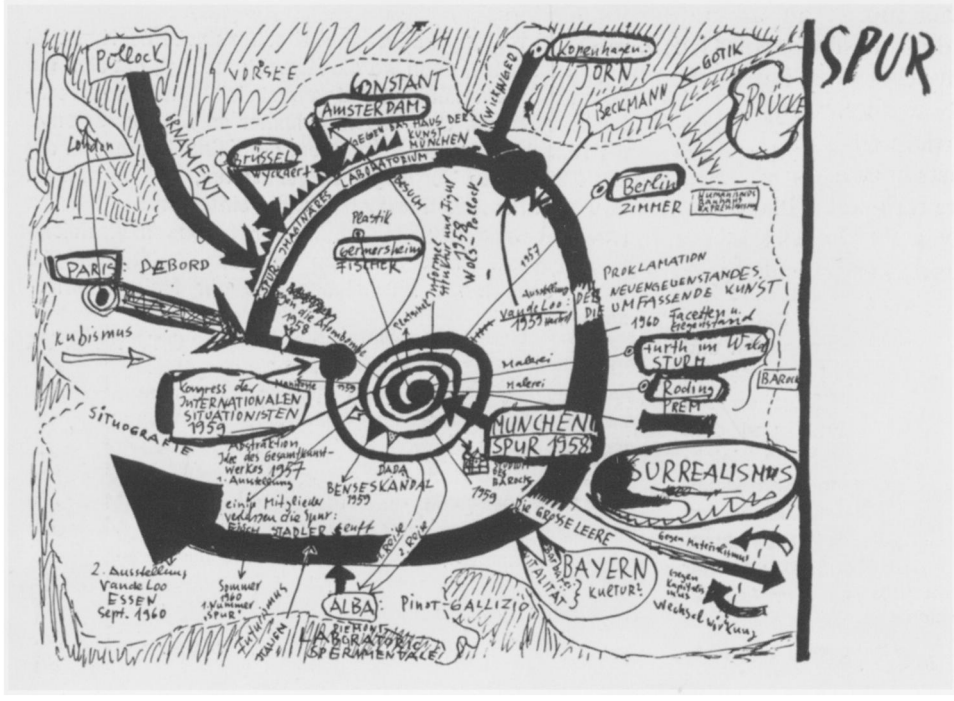
Kunzelmann then founded, along with Christof Baldeney, Rudolphe Gasché, Frank Böckelmann, and others, the "Subversive Action" group that in many respects ran parallel to the SI. As in the SI, contemporary daily life provided the group with the occasion for a radical critique of culture. Mass tourism, sexual permissiveness, and epiphenomena of the German "economic miracle" formed the basis of assessments that supersede traditional Marxism and the Frankfurt School and that often sound like the statements of the Debord wing of the SI:

abolition of the obligation to work (Kunzelmann in "Topless as a Symbol of Bondage," 1964[19]) and settling accounts with avant-gardist visual artists and, therefore, with one's own past. As several members of the Subversive Action group wrote:

> Anyone who goes on the art market as an avant-garde movement or withdraws from the market in the hopes of being discovered in the public limelight as an unrecognized genius, savior of national treasures or cantankerous intellectual, must be unmasked as even more tenaciously entangled in the existing order as their opposition takes place within the lawful sphere of a well regulated "freedom of expression."[20]

After several relocations and transitory stations, the Subversive Action group settled into the prerevolutionary West Berlin of the mid-1960s and became a precursor to the SDS;[21] that is, the most influential organization in the German leftist student movement. Rudi Dutschke, their "leader" was shot in 1968 and later died in 1979, and Bernd Rabehl, who today argues from the radical right, both came out of Subversive Action to become the leading figures of the SDS. Kunzelmann quickly aligned himself with other organizations, including ones not fundamentally averse to armed struggle. In his later biography, he emerged as a provocateur and humorous actionist. More recently, he has been encumbered by several documents that emerged in the investigation of anti-Semitic aspects of German leftist radicalism in the 1960s.

Kunzelmann got caught in the crosshairs of debates concerning perennial anti-Semitism within the thought of the German 1968 leftists, of whom several, like Horst Mahler or Bernd Rabehl, in fact landed in the radical right.[22] He allegedly adopted not only anti-Israel but also anti-Semitic positions and was involved in a 1967 bombing of a Jewish community center in West Berlin. These claims allow one to speculate that over the course of the 1960s, his admiration for the vitalism practiced by SPUR and his affect against abstraction consolidated



into a classic anti-Semitic archetype: the identification of abstract (finance) capital with the Jews. But this must remain speculation. The connection between the artistic avant-garde and the Tupamaros West-Berlin,[23] the group that committed the questionable attack, was no stronger than with any other 1968 group. The similarity between the artistic avant-garde and various radical leftist groups capable of anti-Semitism, much discussed in Germany in recent years, consists primarily of the shared attempt to force an open enmity with a social enemy disguised as a great slumber or ennui. But there the comparison ends. The types of antagonisms as well as the various designations of enemies differed substantially as did the objectives behind the action: The desire for a clear and concrete opponent, an *image* of the enemy, ultimately led again and again to reactionary and simplistic answers that emerged all too easily from the lips of some actionists. Nevertheless, parallels in structure between any search for a concrete and specific enemy and the psychological makeup of anti-Semitism, on the one hand, and parallels in content between a certain new and emotional German anticapitalism and its traditional anti-Semitic version, on the other, converged in several unpleasant ideological constellations between 1967 and 1989. But because the antifascist stance of the New Left was taken for granted, these parallels remained all but invisible.

A Tone of Eloquence and Presumption

I was born the same year the SPUR artists met for the first time and so today am twice as old as they were then. I am in the peculiar position of being both their junior and senior, a strange feeling. In the eloquence and presumption of their texts, one recognizes a tone familiar from one's youth. The recognition is uncanny because it clearly runs contrary to the pride that emanates from both their texts and one's own memory. The singular ecstasies negate themselves as one effortlessly identifies them with a youthful genre. Nevertheless, alongside the gravitas and the rather desperate attempt at humor is something different and foreign in the texts: a fluctuation of voices creates the unmistakable impression that more than one author, more than one audible tone, is present—not only is the argumentative and discursive style of H.P. Zimmer always just beneath the surface, but an acerbity that must be ascribed to Heimrad Prem and other layers that appear equally attributable to a single individual are present. The whole exceeds the actual participants.

Today, artists once again write a great number of texts; above all, theoretical ones. They are trained for it and, not without reason, situate their work discursively. This was not always the case. In the first half of the twentieth century, artists preferred to express themselves in manifestos whose form and content

H.P. Zimmer. Diagram made for the SPUR exhibition in Essen (Gallery van de Loo), 1960. Also reproduced in *SPUR*, no. 2.

tended more toward coercive communication than a superior command of the discourse. The manifestos of the surrealists and the essays, glossaries, and polemics of the situationists were certainly accomplished literary works—yet they rarely were composed by visual artists. Instead, they were authored by the artists' literary companions in leadership positions, like Guy Debord or André Breton. Nearly all the other pronouncements penned by visual artists in the first half of the century were eruptive, emotional, fierce, nearly coercive. The texts by SPUR stand precisely between these two poles: on the one hand, the literary and polished or postmodern and theoretical texts; on the other, vehemence and vigor.

Thus, the purely literary approach does not prevail but neither does an essentialist "voice of art" opposed to conceptual thought. The demand to be *a complete human*—a mandate that today appears pathos-ridden, hopeless, and romantic—is realized in the SPUR texts not through a cult of the genius, which would become the centerpiece in other later accounts, but rather dialectically in the collective and necessarily incoherent production of the group members.

Polyphony, Self-Production, and Psychic Surplus

SPUR's production methods all but directly open up to a number of contemporary links. *Reena Spaulings* (2004), a novel penned collectively by the New York art group Bernadette Corporation in cooperation with several dozen authors, mostly visual artists, attempts to attain the totality of a person through a multiplicity of voices—that is, in the negation of the traditional literary conception whereby this whole is to be reached only through individual introspection.[24]

Further links are found less in the tone and generally unsettled quality of the text or their production methods than in the intentionally and markedly unfinished discursive structures. A small cybernetics satire at the end of the fourth issue of *SPUR* invokes a machine that no longer absorbs "psychic surplus" but releases it as "self-production."[25] Where creativity and artistic production, "thinking outside the box," and adaptability are all essential resources for post-Fordist capitalist production, this (satirical) utopia is hardly distinguishable from the (contemporary) reality.

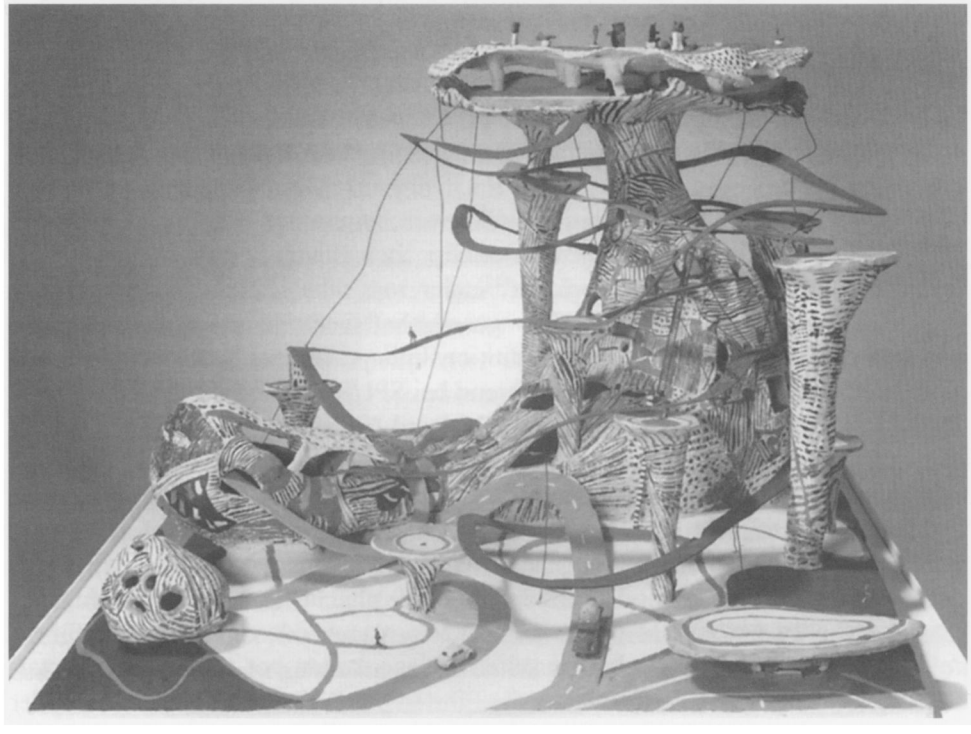
The persecution of artists thus takes on a whole new meaning, shifting from hunting to livestock raising and zoo keeping: one no longer pursues artists in order to harm them but instead to exploit their lifestyle, one that produces a stimulant that circulates as currency in our event culture and still exemplifies the *complete human* as a potential and aspirational way of life. The illusion of this potential requires a form of production that no longer depends on acquired skills but rather, as is the case today, on personalities—those very *complete human beings*—who no longer submit to disciplinary imperatives but rather

SPUR (Lothar Fischer/ Heimrad Prem/Helmut Sturm/H.P. Zimmer), *SPUR-Bau*, 1963.

place their whole virtuosity at the disposal of the corporation in the form of self-production.

The sociologists Eve Chiapello and Luc Boltanski have demonstrated that the artistic critique, as they call it—namely, the objections raised against capitalist production, primarily against repression, division of labor, and inauthenticity, in line with the classic situationist demand "Never work again"—has been fulfilled, only in a negative sense as compulsion rather than potential. One must now achieve self-realization in order to earn a livelihood.

SPUR was not only the first voice in Germany to articulate the artistic critique, so productive for 1968 and its aftermath, they also immediately sensed that this critique, once isolated, would help mastermind new forms of exploitation and self-exploitation. The current brisance of the group lies in the insistent presence of this misgiving, the heterogeneity within their own voice. Connecting to this spirit also means addressing the aporias of the artistic critique—working toward its attainment without entirely forgetting its initial validating impulse.



Notes

An early, shorter version of this text appeared in German in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker and Pia Dornacher, eds., *Gruppe SPUR* (Munich and Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2006).

1. Thus, in 1961, the fourth issue of the magazine *SPUR* appeared as a special issue dedicated to "The Persecution of Artists."

2. Emil Kaufmann, "SPUR-Gespräch," in *Gruppe SPUR 1958–1965: Eine Dokumentation,* 2nd Ed., ed. Galerie van de Loo (Munich: Galerie van de Loo, 1988): 16–46.

3. "Katalogtext von 1959," in SPUR, *Ein kultureller Putsch: Manifeste, Pamphlete und Provokationen der Gruppe SPUR* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 1991), 27.

4. Theodor W. Adorno, "Jene zwanziger Jahre" (1962), in *Gesammelte Schriften: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft II,* vol. 10.2, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 499–506.

5. Adorno, "Jene zwanziger Jahre," 25.

6. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (1966), trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1995).

7. SPUR, *Ein kultureller Putsch,* 38.

8. Adorno continues: "It is self-evident that one cannot simply pick up and carry on thirty or forty years after the total rupture at which everything was brought to a halt." Adorno, "Jene zwanziger Jahre," 505.

9. "Katalogtext von 1959," 27.

10. "Katalogtext von 1959," 20.

11. One of the most famous SPUR actions was a January 1959 satirical attack on Bense. SPUR organized and publicized a lecture by Bense at which, of course, he did not appear. SPUR read aloud the reply from Bense, who sent an audio recording in his place. The recording was, in fact, assembled by SPUR as a more or less nonsensical collage of Bense utterances that H.P. Zimmer selected, read, and recorded himself and into which he inserted coughs and snuffles with cabaret-like conspicuousness. Nevertheless, no one present doubted the authenticity of the recorded lecture.

12. Was geht hier vor? (H.P. Zimmer), "Die Verfolgung der Künstler" *SPUR* 4 (1961).

13. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971).

14. Adorno, "Jene zwanziger Jahre," 505.

15. The Nazi *Malverbot* (painting ban) was issued widely against individual "degenerate" and Jewish artists during the Third Reich.—Trans.

16. Heimrad Prem, "Ohne Malverbot," *SPUR* 4 (1961).

17. The confiscation of an issue of *SPUR* on the grounds of pornography and blasphemy, followed by legal action against its authors by the Bavarian justice department, resulted in a blunt confrontation with the still potent Nazi forces at work in the Federal Republic of Germany.

18. Diedrich Diederichsen, "Interview mit HP Zimmer," in *Gruppe SPUR 1958–1965 Lothar Fischer, Helmut Sturm, Heimrad Prem, HP Zimmer,* exh. cat., ed. Christa Schübbe (Cologne, Düsseldorf/Mettmann: Galerie Christa Schübbe, 1991), 53–75.

19. Dieter Kunzelmann, "Busenfrei als Symptom der Unfreiheit," in *Richtlinien und Anschläge—Materialien zur Kritik der repressiven Gesellschaft,* ed. Albrecht Goeschel (Munich: Hanser, 1968), 69.

20. Christofer Baldeney, Rudolphe Gasché, and Dieter Kunzelmann, "Aspekte und Konklusionen," *Unverbindliche Richtlinien* (Nuremberg) no. 2 (December 1963), quoted in Goeschel, ed., *Richtlinien und Anschläge,* 51. [The German refers to "Narrenfreiheit"—literally, the freedom of the fool, which is what an emptied-out freedom of expression has become.—Trans.]

21. Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund: the German Socialist Student Union was closely allied to the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, West Germany's leading socialist party, from the 1946 founding of the student group until it was expelled from the party in 1961 in response to its increasing radicalization.—Trans.

22. Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005).

23. The Tupamaros West-Berlin were the first underground group in West Germany to wage armed struggle against the state in the wake of the 1968 student uprising. The name *Tupamaros* was borrowed from the like-named underground militant group active in Uruguay from 1963 through the 1970s.—Trans.

24. Bernadette Corporation, *Reena Spaulings* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).

25. Cybernetics—which had become a fashionable conceit closely associated with Bense—was intimately connected for SPUR to its ideas of a dominant instrumental reason. This instrumental reason, in turn, repeatedly came to a head in science fiction concepts as developed, among others, by William S. Burroughs.