

# Remarks by Donald Nicholson-Smith

Received by Gérard Berréby

22 June 2014<sup>1</sup>

The exclusion of the situationists Timothy Clark, Chris Gray and myself (Donald Nicholson-Smith) at the end of 1967 was formally ratified by Raoul Vaneigem, then a delegate to London. It then became unavoidable. The deep motivation for it came from disagreements about the type of relations that each person wanted to maintain with the American groups, such as Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker, Anarchos and the one lead by Robert Chasse and Bruce Elwell. The three of us wanted to maintain friendly relations with them, even though the majority of the Situationist International, *a contrario*, envisioned breaking with the first two organizations and making Chasse and Elwell members [of the SI] entirely apart. There was no compromise possible. Things being nice and clear, everything was settled amicably. Thus we were excluded,<sup>2</sup> and Raoul was the one who came to formalize the break. All three of us no doubt were sad, and Raoul was a little embarrassed, I think. But a real difference, one that concerned the very organization of the SI, was at the basis of this break. At the time, Chris Gray wanted to send a statuette of the three monkeys of wisdom – “Hear nothing, see nothing, say nothing” – to Paris without making any further commentary. I think that this significant gesture was never performed.

Nevertheless, I must make it clear that, all the same, the exclusions quite often possessed a provisional character and didn't forbid any subsequent collaboration. Such a phenomenon was already visible in the internal functioning of the Surrealists, but rather rare among true Stalinists! One must never forget that the Lenino-Stalinist aspects of the conduct of the situationists were somewhat bogus. Each member constantly hesitated, consciously or not, between a sectarianism that wanted to be rigorous, and a sectarianism of a playful character.

In 1983, in my preface to my first translation into English of the *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes generations*, I wrote that, “this break seemed to me at the time and still seems to me completely justified on both sides.” In that

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<sup>1</sup> Published in French in Raoul Vaneigem and Gérard Berréby, *Rien n'est fini, tout commence* (Paris: Editions Allia, 2014). Translated by NOT BORED! 29 October 2014.

<sup>2</sup> See the “Circular to all the sections,” dated 21 December 1967: <http://www.notbored.org/debord-21December1967a.html>.

preface, I also recognized the support of Raoul Vaneigem, as well as help from Bruce Elwell . . .