

In introducing this first session of the Congress, at which Ronald Laing will deliver his address, I would like to tell you something of the background of thought and action that led to our arranging this occasion.

X The small group of people who set about organizing the Congress work mainly in the field of psychiatry or, as some of us prefer to call it, Anti-psychiatry. We have been concerned to understand that what is socially stigmatised as madness is perhaps one of the less contorted and less violently eruptive forms of consciousness in our age. That madness, in a far truer and also more scientific sense, resides not in socially victimised schizophrenic patients, but in the socially powerful but really impotent manipulators of our society. For someone to be put away as mad and then subjected to a series of annihilative techniques in the benign guise of psychiatric treatment, a whole range of group action and inaction is necessary. People, on the basis of their terror of themselves, get into urgent interaction with others impelled by a blind terror of themselves. The effective result of this momentary chaos, that must in its nature be desperately resolved, is always that one person in the group is devastatingly shut up. He may be cured in some nonsensical pseudo-medical sense, that is to say he may no longer ever again disturb other people by his presence in the world, but the essential truth of the whole scene is lost, probably forever.

X We recognised that this essential truth was a highly valuable truth, but felt fairly powerless to deal with this on any adequate scale. We could each of us see only a few people in this situation in the course of a day. The origin of this curious problem clearly lay beyond our immediate field of action, and we had to question how this origin might be reached and affected by our efforts.

X We realized that similar problems were being faced by workers in other disciplines and other fields of action. Having passed the limits of socially possible change within existing structures of the National

Health Service and other institutionalized groupings, we saw that other people were straining against the limits of their own forms of social encapsulation. Teachers could no longer consent to the vicious deformation of their students, that would lead to little more than a required conformism in the society that legally and bureaucratically controlled their work. Political activists saw through the mystifications operated against them, that they in turn were supposed to operate against the supposed electorate. I mean, conditioning this electorate to the belief that they were making real, effective choices when they voted - as if the immense, blind conditioning and self-conditioning system of mass communication did not exist at all. And there were many other people similarly placed - people who wished to extend their awareness and the awareness of the actual others with whom they were engaged: Musicians no longer content with neo-classicism and the rigid segregation of players and audience, with the definition of sounds that are supposed to be musical and sounds that are supposed not to be; theatre workers who no longer had the discretion to keep their sounds, colours, smells and touch to themselves, but shared them with people in the auditorium, who in turn shared theirs with them - but at the same time never departing from the possibility, if not the fact, of the structure of disciplined classical theatre.

At the bottom of all this is the need to overcome the differentiation of experience that gets lost in defensively erected categories; the need to re-establish contact with the source that precedes and transcends this categorization of experience.

Assembled here today and during the next two weeks are some of the most eminent human scientists in the world. One of the main questions we have to try to answer is how we bridge over from the expert knowledge of individuals, families and networks to the knowledge that we have of mass social collectivities - the realities of class, party and nation. So, amongst other things, we shall be considering here how things are mediated between the anonymous large-scale social event and individual persons, and then how this mediation may be altered in various ways that may be liberating

to actual living people - which is very different from the abstract freedom or unfreedom of a whole society. We recognise that radical change in the organisation of a state does not automatically entail radical change in actual persons.

We should allow ourselves no illusions as to what we may hope from this occasion. We can hope for, perhaps, little more than the introduction of ourselves to each other (although of course even that would be a rare enough achievement). But perhaps we can evolve a transnational network, based on whatever expertise each of us has, that will make possible a concerted system of influence on governmental policies that are patently not based on this sort of understanding of human reality.

X Let us take this opportunity to discover what we can do in the way of developing a guerilla operation, that will in some sense meet the form of struggle going on, say, in VietNam, and Bolivia, but which will be posed in our relevant terms. Let us learn how we, acting in relation to each other, can transform the various situations in which we work in the sense of making them places where awareness is enlarged rather than restricted, or distracted, or murderously stilled. Each school, university, hospital, theatre, concert hall, studio, may become the centre of a transforming consciousness of this sort. Let us remember that both violence in the Third World and violence here has its origin in the consenting act of indifference. Indifference is the act that pretends not to be an act, and is the act that is always the condition of the possibility of violence.

Lastly, let me attempt the fairly impossible ^{task?} talk of defining some terms that may be unfamiliar to some people here:

X Dialectics is the fact of change conducted through the confrontation of oppositions, contradictions, conflicting elements within a person's life, or within a group or collectivity. It is also a method of study that attunes itself to this reality of change.

X Phenomenology is a form of study involving reflecting on, experiencing and making personally real the pain of the change that I have called dialectical.

X Liberation involves the full acceptance of the pain. Liberation is not ideal or Messianic or "progress" - it is not even "better" - but it is real. It is our guarantee to ourselves and to each other that we shall survive as persons in this age. This means that we live out the duality exploiter/exploited. That we refuse the relief of having the simple identity of the exploiter, and that we shall no longer be the exploited.

Date: 29. 7. 67.

pg 3 Related to this, there is one image from this Congress out of many impressive images that will always remain pre-eminent in my mind. Stokely Carmichael was being repetitively criticized for his frank and total abandonment of white liberal support and the support of the so-called moderate black leadership. Stokely stood there, shaking his finger at the questioners, asking over and over again: "What have you done?" What have you done? What have you done?"

Of course he was accused of not answering the questions, but we should now begin to realize that the answer was his question.

Our task, as this had been exhaustively spelt out, is not to try to help him but to effect the erosion of what he calls white power. There is nothing racist about that if one realises that there is in the world a contingent but not necessary identity of white power and imperialism. This, I think, is absolutely crucial to the difficulties that many people seem to have with Stokely Carmichael's stance. It is on the basis of a misunderstanding of this pivotal distinction that some people have concluded that the ideology of Carmichael's position is a sort of counter-racism. The essence of Stokely Carmichael's position is, I think, fairly clear to us now. It is the passionate recognition, reinforced by detailed analysis of the situation, that the condition of black people in the U.S. is in a relation of direct continuity with the condition of people in the third world struggling towards their liberation.

pg4 When we become conscious of our oppression we have to invent the strategy and tactics of our guerilla warfare. We de-racinated white intellectuals, we who are bourgeois and colonizing in essence

even though some of us wear the spurious label of "working class origin" - we must realize that we cannot pretend to engage in clandestine operations aimed at subverting the system because we have not been bred in that sort of struggle. Certainly, we may have to keep some secrets, but on the whole our scene is illuminated by all the forms of artificial lighting that issue from our culture.

What we have to do quite simply is to deploy all our personal resources in attacking the institutionalisation of experience and action in this society. We have one advantage over our rulers - we have a consciousness, although only marginal at times, of what is going on in the world; we see through their mystifications - the mystifications that mystify the mystifiers but need no longer mystify us. By a transactional network of expertise, we can transform each institution - family, school, university, mental hospital, factory - each art form, into a revolutionary centre for a transforming consciousness. We recognise that the socialist countries in Eastern Europe are in much the same case as us (most of us here, I suppose, western Europeans and North Americas). It has been repeatedly emphasized at this Congress that revolution in the sense of the socialist transformation of economic life and social forms does not automatically entail changes in actual persons; the same alienations carry over, the same murderous bureaucracy continues - often in a caricatured form as in Stalinism. Externalised revolution does not entail inner revolution. We can take over the state apparatus and effect socialist changes and yet feel no better for having done this - no feeling of liberation, beyond the transient liberating feeling of the struggle to do this. It seems to me that this is a self-concealed recognition of this truth that has stopped some powerful European working-class movements from taking power - this plus the confusing diffusion of oppression into the third world; the praxis that has pushed the European working class out of their true class position.

If we persist with the theme of transformation of our institutions into revolutionary centres of consciousness, we have to be clear about why more has not been achieved by what we have ~~have~~ ~~already done~~ in this way. The most immediate answer is that we have become victims of a very old colonizing technique - the technique of divide and rule. So there is a sense in which we belong to the third world too. Innovators in the fields of education, psychiatry; all the arts and sciences, have been atomized, split off from other people doing much the same thing in some other area. In this way we lay ourselves open to the strategy of engulfment into the monolithic bourgeois bureaucratic system, with the consequence that we get ourselves invalidated and suppressed if we carry innovation "too far".

To move out of this position we have to realise certain elementary truths about how we unconsciously perpetuate this structure that castrates us. We seem to have some curious paranoid passion to convert certain unlikely people into being the regulators of ourselves, so that we can hate and despise them as the bureaucrats who frustrate our genius. So we have to recognise that their power, the power of governments in the first world and, to a significant extent, in the European socialist world - their power is nothing less than our power; Our power, that we have perversely put into them, because we choose impotence.

If we re-interiorise our exteriorized power by uniting in our cultural revolution, we shall soon see what is left of them. We shall see little men who have dehumanised themselves and would further dehumanise us. We shall see grey, frightened little men - men who are terrorised by the vision of human autonomy and spontaneity.

So we see governments that we have to destructure and then lead in the direction of our liberation and incidentally theirs. This is what we have to do about the third world - we have to liberate not them, but us. No doubt we shall suffer in doing this but I think we shall have the compensation of the surprising

pg6 Each of us is composed of a series of dualities that run through every level and form of our existence - from social persons, through the biological to the metaphysical and the mystical. These dualities include: subject - object; white - black; oppressor - oppressed one; coloniser - colonised; torturer - tortured; murderer - murdered one; psychiatrist - patient; teacher - taught; keeper - kept; the cannibal - the one who is eaten up; the fucker - the fucked; the shitter - the stitted upon.

Now the ideal possibility here is that we contain all these oppositions and learn to bear both the pain and the joy of this act of self-containment. But, because of the historical situation, for which we are each of us totally responsible, we have each of us split any number of these dualities within us and have externalised these split-off aspects of ourselves into others. This supreme irrationality, which consists in blinding ourselves to the divisions that we achieve in ourselves so that we can extrude some painful bit of ourselves into others, this is the existential basis of colonialism, for instance, or institutionalised racism, or conventional psychiatry, or ordinary University education.

9 I was very impressed yesterday with that story that Herbert Marcuse told us. During the Paris Commune, before they started shooting at people the Communists shot at the clocks, at all the clocks in Paris, and they broke them. And they did this because they were putting an end to the time of the Others, the time of their rulers, and they were going to invent their own time.

As I look around me now, I see a vista beyond your see of faces, going way out there I see a vista of broken clocks. And now, I think it is our time!