GATECRASH
YOUR OWN BEWARE OF FANTASY.

BLACK MASK
& UP AGAINST THE WALL MOTHERFUCKER

BURN IT ALL DOWN

FLOWER POWER WON'T STOP FASCIST POWER

A GRIEF WITHOUT A PANG

VOID, DARK, DEEP
A STIFLED DROWSY
UNIMPRESSSioned GRIEF

THE STORY OF A SMALL, UNDERGROUND 1960s REVOLUTIONARY GROUP IN NEW YORK CITY
CHAPTER REPORT ON THE S.D.S.
REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MARCH 10

A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL IS A BOTTLE FILLED WITH
THREE PARTS KEROSENE AND ONE PART MOTOR OIL.
IT IS CAPPED AND WRAPPED WITH COTTON
SOAKED WITH GASOLINE.

TO USE—LIGHT COTTON
THROW BOTTLE
FIRE AND EXPLOSION OCCUR
ON IMPACT WITH TARGET.

A "WHITE RADICAL"
IS THREE PARTS BULLSHIT
AND ONE PART HESITATION.
IT IS NOT REVOLUTIONARY
AND SHOULD NOT BE
SHOCKED AT THIS TIME.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED
UP AGAINST THE WALL
MOTHER FUCKER.

'We're looking for people who like to draw'

I DON'T BELIEVE IN NOTHING &
FEEL LIKE I ought to Fray down the wall
JUST LET IT BY

THE KIDS WILL HAVE THEIR fuckin' SAY

DOWNHAPPY
DESTROY THE MUSEUMS. OUR STRUGGLE CANNOT BE HUNG ON WALLS. A NEW SPIRIT IS RISING. LIKE THE STREETS OF WATTS WE BURN WITH REVOLUTION... October 10, 1966. A handful of young guys and girls, having stalked up from New York's Lower East Side scattering leaflets calling for the closure of the Museum of Modern Art, are stopped just outside the Museum entrance by a whole phalanx of cops and crashbarriers. The story had leaked, and the cops, on the ball as ever, had sensed a new and very real type of threat months before anyone else: the cops at least have got it clear just whose side Art is on... The Director of the Museum (largest collection of Dada in the world) out on the steps, wringing his hands, almost in tears, only too anxious to please: “Why are you doing this? We haven’t done anything...” The group, unheard of before this, called BLACK MASK... Next, early one morning, black balaclava hoods pulled down to their eyes, cracked rictus skulls skewered on stakes, BLACK MASK, swollen to 15, marched from Canal Street down Lower Broadway to Wall Street. Throwaways reading Traders in stocks and bones shriek for New Frontiers... Bull markets of murder deal in a stock exchange of death... WALL STREET IS WAR STREET... The cops and the overdressed corporation errandboys plain dumbfounded; the only people to get really uptight were, predictably enough, alas, a group of straight proles who showed up... A relative flop, all in all. Too much sub-Committee of 100 stuff - Grosvenor Square = Genocide Square, etc. In fact all BLACK MASK’s early experiments with Provo-type tactics were far more trenchant and original when applied to the culture scene. It was official ‘experimental’ art rather than official leftwing politics that they’d broken out of. And they loathed its guts...

That first year BLACK MASK seized every possible opportunity of fucking up culture. They moved in at a moment’s notice and improvised as they went along. They heckled, disrupted and generally sabotaged dozens of art congresses, lectures, exhibitions, happenings... For a group that hailed Futurism and Dada as its only forebears this type of shit was diametrically opposed to the permanent, multi-dimensional revolutionising of immediate experience demanded by all the highpoints of modern art: See what you can make with a cathedral And a little dynamite. Probably their most notorious escapade was the wrecking of the 3-day marathon seminar on Modern Art sponsored by the Loeb Student Centre. Howls of ART IS DEAD, BURN THE MUSEUMS, BABY, and POETRY IS REVOLUTION. Tables kicked over, windows smashed, scuffles breaking out. Larry Rivers roughed up a bit in the best Futurist...
Johann Baader: schizophrenic, becomes the key figure of Berlin Dada. He is Tzara's 'idiot' transcended: the idiot / madman / guerrilla in life – the man without aim or prospects, the 'lowest' of all, the shit of America. Tzara, the man of letters was horrified because Baader is for real. Confronted with the non-intelligence of Baader, Tzara who said 'intelligence' is to be found on the streets was appalled. Hugnet wrote: 'Baader's was a special case of coming to the revolution through individualism and madness.' Baader rides a white horse into Parliament. Baader derelicts death (death the most potent form of social coercion) in a magnificent flight from taste and personal responsibility: Inviting 3,000 people to his wife's funeral (whom he loved dearly), smiling he shaves off half his beard while her body is lowered into the grave. This act is equalled only by Fritz Jung's hi-jacking of a German battleship as a present for the embarrassed Russian Bolsheviks. This is Berlin Dada. Like everything else it was forced to die when the revolutionary prospects died and its energy was diverted into the forced acceptance of old forms. BLACK MASK

BERLIN DADA

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They grasped, almost intuitively, the crux of the 1910-1925 art crisis: that the content of modern art, the vision of a totally recreated world stemming from the first Romantics, was potentially the most vitriolic attack on bourgeois civilisation ever made; while, on the contrary, its FORM straitjacketed it within a purely reactionary role. Taken literally it is dynamite. Taken culturally it is one of the system's main supports. Kubla Khan can be taken and used as a metaphor, a blueprint, of a real paradise; Kubla Khan can be taken and used as a fantasy, a means of evading the real hell in which we live, a compensation for it. Everything depends on whether it is related to one's own everyday life or whether it is related to the labyrinth of our Byzantine culture, where no road leads to Xanadu. The quick of the 20th century cultural crisis: creativity must break free of all its previous fetters and forms; it must stop being the creation of a separated and imaginary world and become the transformation of real experience itself. Thus Tzara: 'Life and Art are One. The modern artist does not create. This is why BLACK MASK was more advanced than the relatively more sophisticated 'Rebel Worker' or 'Resurgence Youth Movement', or, for that matter, the great Marcuse himself. From the start they demanded complete identity of theory and practice and really tried, whatever their fuck-ups, to create an organisation in line with this.

Which at the be left only one force with which they could identify: the post-Watts BLACKS. Only the Blacks' rejection of everything was as high-handed and demonic as their own. Only the Blacks were in a position where they had to really DO something, not just sit on their asses and talk. BLACK MASK, along with the French Situationists, were the only whites at the time who really grasped the revolutionary feeling coming to the boil in the US 'race' riots: understood that there was a really positive content to the looting, arson and tentative gunplay, sensed the real joy and affirmation in what the whole Left shrugged off as complete nihilism. They quoted a couple of newspaper clippings: 'At times, amidst the scenes of riot and destruction that made parts of the city look like a battlefield, there was an almost carnival atmosphere.' 'New York Times' 16/7/67 and 'Said Governor Hughes after a tour of the riot-blighted streets... “The thing that repelled me most was the holiday atmosphere... it's like laughing at a funeral...”' 'Time' 21/7/67. One reporter from Detroit described suddenly seeing a huge bunch of girls, skinny and skipping through the rubble. As it passed a 7 or 8 year old negro kid poked his head out of the middle. "I'm a sex maniac" he yelled and disappeared among the gutted buildings. What is this if not the consumption of modern art; its death and rebirth: DADA! And what 20th century avantgarde vision of Utopian architecture can hold a candle to the barbaric, almost elemental splendour of Detroit in flames? Playing with fire - purely aesthetic, of course! Hallucinogens, for example, is still submerged under the sales talk of the '67 psychedelic merchants. Their rudimentary de-individualising, partial ego-dissolutions properties and stripping bare of the social structuring of perception - these have still to be appropriated by revolutionaries and put into terms of 'practical sensual activity' (Reich). But the role of catalyst has its drawbacks, and the group has now reached a turning-point. With the International Werewolf Conspiracy there is both an attempt to grapple with the problems of a large-scale decentralised network and an unequivocal desire to get at least a major part of the whole organisation well out of the limelight. Personal audacity is of the greatest possible value in ending this bloody nightmare - is it me or them that's insane? - in parading what one really feels - but putting the finger on oneself the whole time can only end up with the bastards sitting outside your door all day, setting you up for a five year stretch. Some of the least cool Motherfuckers are beginning to disappear from the front line - disappearing to reappear with a changed name, a changed address, a changed persona. One day a scruffy weldyed git, the next a flashy executive with aerosol DNT in his briefcase, and a week later a mild-mannered union official quietly fucking up the union comptometer... The whole vast problem of structuring open and closed organisation. The depersonalisation and anonymity of bureaucratic civilisation is the jungle of the urban guerrilla.

At the same time the Motherfuckers seem to feel a marked dissatisfaction - viz. the acid - with their previous reduction of therapy and, for Christ's sake, what else is it all about? - to open violence, violence pure and simple. Obviously violence has an enormous abreactive power, but as Reich underlined time after time, a flood of pleasure, anxiety and fury merely indicates the sweeping aside of the first major level of inhibition, of character and body armour. One's sense of an enormous underlying manic-depressive swing with the Motherfuckers would seem to confirm Reich's claim that the fundamental question is one of reconnected desire on a more serene and inexorable trip. The case of the Mothers raises the question of the aims, imperative and pitfalls of a revolutionary affinity group. Behind a hard, imaginative and identifiable front, an occult network of resistance. Along with breaking through to the deepest and most intoxicating levels of our real selves, a nonstop and intelligible harassment of the prevailing organisation of reality. War, therapy, community. No part of the project can be separated from the others. But these are practical problems, and they can never be solved on a blank page covered with pieces of paper. 'FULL STEAM AHEAD THROUGH THE SHIT' NECHAEV

THE END.
September, they blew up the Berkeley water supply as a reprisal raid for Chicago. They were the unknown terrorists who since January have, deep in the country, at the dead of night, been dynamiting California's electricity grid (electricity, the basis of the real power that keeps the machine running... without it nothing can work... 'black anarchy...'). UP AGAINST THE WALL / MOTHERFUCKER began to pay for the notoriety: Did a good nites work pig did / Got his rocks off swinging clubs or being frustrated all Friday / Arrests a member of UP AGAINST THE WALL MOTHERFUCKER for standing on the street. Charge: conspiracy in the 4th degree. Arrests a girl for protesting his arrest. Arrests a Yippie for standing on the street corner. Charge: disorderly

conduct. Arrests 8 people on Sixth Street for trying to block the street to traffic after a kid was hit by a car. Arrests a guy carrying a drum for carrying a drum. Arrests a guy for backing up his car after getting 4 tickets. Charge: trying to run over a cop. Arrests a girl trying to get up ball to get out the others arrested... the police are coming down heavy on motherfuckers.

By the end of the summer their hard core was up on countless criminal charges, with penalties ranging from 10 days to 10 years - the worst of which was late July when Benn Morea was done for having knifed a couple of servicemen - a Maljine and an airman - going on at this minute... The paranoia the whole time, and the uproar, the filth and neon, the sense of being trapped. Politics or dope. It feels like they're backalley and laid into them with bricks and clubs. His trial opened in November and is still on. The 'tactical' ruminations of the Maoists' straightfaced absurdities with the wild laughter of real aggression against a real enemy. And their extemporisation has paid off as a catalyst: in the realm of atmospheraica they have changed the tenor not only of the whole post-Fower Power underground but also of ASD. And there is still a great deal to be done in this field. The positive aspects of the major

Sweet fuck all is happening. The latest goods and the latest poses are being exhibited, envied, bought and exhibited again. As the Situationists have said, IT'S ALL A SHOW. A show that can only go on because everyone pretends to be enjoying it - because everyone thinks that he alone is the total misfit. Conformity is a reign of terror. The Beatles, Zappa, the Crazy World of Arthur Brown. Shit, the lot of it, products like these mark nothing more than the furthest frontiers yet of consumer society. Its most gratuitous, decadent and self-destructive products: its most snobbish pre-release. And no more than its pre-release. What is today the opium of the rebel will tomorrow be the opium of every now and then the enemy. And their extemporisation has paid off as a catalyst: in the realm of atmospheraica they have changed the tenor not only of the whole post-Fower Power underground but also of ASD. And there is still a great deal to be done in this field. The positive aspects of the major
is to distract everyone's attention away from the terrible fucking state they are in themselves. The whole Third World bit has come to be no more than the crudest monopolisation of the meaning of the word poverty. Poverty is only allowed to mean hunger, disease, exposure, etc - the poverty of imperialistic exploitation or of the last remaining pockets of 19th century western industrial poverty - while the atrocious modern poverty of the over-developed countries - this sexual and general energy / pleasure frustration produced by a totally self-destructive and anti-life economy, these universal conditions of passivity, isolation, boredom and general crack-up in every direction - this poverty has become something completely intangible. The idiot Left has allowed the specific objective phenomena of modern social alienation to be passed over in terms of purely subjective neurosis. Practically, they tried to turn demos into riots. To turn everyone on to the complete shit of everything, the cars, the buildings, the goods for sale, every aspect of their immediate experience. To turn them on to the physical excitement not only their minds. To turn everyone on to the fact that the only possible value, or pleasure frustration produced by a totally self-destructive and antilife economy, these universal conditions of passivity, isolation, boredom, nausea and general decay in every direction - this poverty has become something completely intangible. The idiot Left has allowed the specific objective phenomena of modern social alienation to be passed over in terms of purely subjective neurosis. Practically, they tried to turn demos into riots. To turn everyone on to the complete shit of everything, the cars, the buildings, the goods for sale, every aspect of their immediate experience. To turn them on to the physical excitement not only their minds. To turn everyone on to the fact that the only possible value, or pleasure.

"These smut sheets, are today's Molotov cocktails thrown at respectability and decency in our nation... They encourage depravity and irresponsibility, and they nurture a breakdown in the continued capacity of the government to conduct an orderly and constitutional society." Rep. Joe Pool (House Un-American Activities Committee)
friendship is made on the battlefield’. Raids on the Fillmore East Theatre are going on at the moment: mobs of longhaired gits regularly smashing their way in, reasserting Its new name friendship Is made on the battlefield. Raids on the Fillmore East Theatre are going on at the getting’ stoned, discussion of tactics, organisation, free karate classes, etc. Moreover, their blind alley. lead naturally through more and more far-'iung connections along a sketchy but thoroughly real national network. The ghetto Is fast becoming one of the most vital- nerve worklngelass delinquent street ·gangs all put right on the same intolerable spot. Not only did alliances with other dropout communities all over the States spring up, but for the first time a group of young whites really got across to theBlacks; were accepted as having identical

BLACK MASK saw themselves as a catalyst: a small, tightly-knit guerrilla unit, Its tactics preplanned, Its objective to precipitate a state of mass hypnosis into a Reichian outburst of anxiety, anger and festivity. They began to be in and around SDS and were one of the groups most involved in the initial experiment with mobile tactics – the first steps towards any future urban guerrilla – taking place at that time. The first time they were involved practically in illustrating the enormous tactical superiority of small autonomous groups over huge remote-controlled crowds was during the big Dean Rusk demo organised by SDS in November: roving bands blocked the main traffic intersections, took confrontation right off the area designated by the cops, jumped isolated cops they’d lured down sidestreets, etc.

No millin’ at Macy’s (a huge department store) during the Christmas shopping rush was even more effective. Large numbers of people, either alone or in small groups, flooded the store at its peak hour. None of them looked like demonstrators, and they were free to impersonate normal shoppers, floorwalkers and staff in various configurations. They moved goods around in a businesslike way. They soiled, broke, stole and gave them away. Half-starved dogs and cats were let loose in the food department. A hysterical buzzard flew around the china section smashing more and more hideous crockery as equally hysterical salesgirls either tried to catch or escape from it. Decoys with flags and banners planted themselves in the middle of groups of straight middle-class shoppers who were promptly roughed up and hustled outside by cops and floorwalkers. Utter chaos... With hindsight one could say that it was at about this time, winter 67 / 68 that the whole atmosphere of the States began to change. A longtime underground process began to break out into the open. And, as Burroughs remarks somewhere, whatever it is that has seeped and crawled its way out is enough to make an ambulance attendant puke. Perhaps even 18 months ago it was possible to have some illusions. Not any more, not with suburban housewives practising in the rifle-range, not with cops patrolling every subway train. America is on the brink of a disintegration unparalleled since the collapse of the Middle Ages. And, in this cardhouse world, its fall will almost certainly flip the rest of the planet over with it, global night and fire.

To specify in terms of the ‘avant-garde’, the ‘youth revol’, or whatever. Politically the fiasco of the huge Whitehall demos in December (panavision version of the October 27 panto in London) not only spelt out the futility of mass demonstrations in general but also that their futility couldn’t solely be put down to their tactics. The New Left was reduced to zero. Even the pretense of an avantgarde subculture folded up, and really folded up, at much the same time. It wasn’t even nihilistic or vapid any more. It just wasn’t anything at all any more. Just another commodity, like lilacs or beans on toast. And we all know about the last days of the drug scene – the twilight of the garlanded· TWA expense-account shamans, behaviourist lushes and Calcutta airport hustlers trying to make the big time; the soft drugs gone about as soft

forms of experience into one - ‘Because when the smack begins to flow I really don’t care any more / About all the tensions in this town / And all the politicians making crazy sounds / And everybody putting everybody else down / And all the dead bodies piled up around.’ This convergence is a real process and has expressed itself concretely in the formation of the Ghetto. The ghetto: an ambiguous and dialectical phenomenon par excellence. Negatively it stands for the dissolution of everything. It’s no transitional experimental station or enclave: no Tangier, no Big Sur. It’s pure hell. One window, one door, four walls. A dead end. The ghetto: the place you go when there’s nothing else left to do, when there’s nowhere else left to go. The prison without bars. The lonely bin so big no one can even see its there. Backrooms and endless night. Neurosis, inertia. The abyss opens... the horror, the horror...

Yet, at the same time, disidence becoming conscious, an organisational problem, a problem of actual city space. Isolated individuals gathering into a mob, a mob in a distinctly desperate and ugly mood, and gathering permanently, everyday, so it can’t be busted that easily just for loitering. A state of mind claiming its own real space, its physical interplay and thus, oddly enough, the first step towards a revolutionary concept of the city, of life together: a
aggressive — to build up general iconoclasm and agitation in a more systematic manner than anyone before them. ATMOSPHERICS: revolutionary technique designed to exacerbate the contradiction between what people apparently feel and what they really feel: to invert all the symbols and stereotypes in any given area. They 'shot' (with blanks, also) the 'poet' Kenneth Koch as he was giving a reading in a local church to what he actually referred to as his 'congregation'. Theyumbered an entire invotory down to St. Marks Place and held a community 'shit-in' which proved highly popular until a squad of infuriated, blushing, highly Protestant fuzz arrived and, perfect symbolical end of a perfect symbolical evening, literally beat it to pieces with their nightsticks... They triggered off militants demonstrations outside the precinct nick every time anyone was bust for drugs (at the same time spacing out the more inane heads and dealers all over town in search of phantasmal deals they had set up). They infiltrated the kitchens of the most fashionable arty cafes and bars, spiking the more expensive drinks and dishes with an assortment of drugs, violent emetics, sleepers, hallucinogens... A couple actually having to shut...

They spearheaded the city's first real Hippy riot (during which they fought their way through a throng of cops guarding a squad car in which one of the Motherfuckers was locked, wrenched the lock, freed him and all got away)... They organised some 400 Lower East Side dropouts in the storming of the Museum of Modern Art for putting on an exhibition 'Dada, Surrealism and their heritage' (heritage being the usual crock, Rauschenberg, Funk et al). Struggling, dishevelled and distinctly unbeautul people screaming obscenities, hurling paint, flour and smoke bombs at the First Night crowd and the cops defending them... They printed invitations from one of the major ghettos stores offering, at a specified time on a specified day, as many free goods as their customers could carry away, 50 of the Motherfuckers settling the ball rolling... They had been training in karate for over a year and had further refined their street tactics with hot copies of the National Guard manual 'How To Deal With Civil Disorders' (particularly attracted to the idea of unleashing Alsatians with handgrenades strapped to them). They were terrifying when actually in action. They would break out of the main body of demonstrators like gressed lightning, smashing windows, kicking over trashcans and roadsigns, firing anything that would burn, setting off a series of intersection traffic jams to disperse standard cop dispersion procedures, and then pick them off one by one. They waded in using karate chops, brandishing knives and slashing with bicycle chains strapped to their wrists, screaming UP AGAINST THE WALL / MOTHERFUCKER... They baptised this mercurial street guerrilla DIAL-A-PIG or IF YOU'RE TAKING TWO STEPS BACK / FOR EVERY STEP FORWARD / TURN AROUND / AND GO THE OTHER WAY...

Their basic tactic in all was sticking their neck right out — then trying to work with anyone attracted by their extremism. In this way they hoped to pull the most desperate elements of the Lower East Side together: to create an embryo community. They hustled the bread to set up a 'free store', The Rathole, run less well than liber Digger lines — the latter having been written off long since as a mere 'hip Salvation Army' — than as a general coordination and meeting point for both the Motherfuckers (by now 30 hard core with a further 300 In and around) and anyone else who cared to fall by. An experiment in reoccupying a fraction of the land that has been stolen from us. A move to erode the whole system of isolation that is the basis of hierarchical power — a grid system holding itself together by holding us apart — the objective aspects of which are unified and summed up concretely in the structure of the city. Irradiating from this they tried to reinforce the dropout's new belligerence and to ward off the chill police heat it was calling forth. They tried to infiltrate the local social services, to use them as a front to shelter real militancy which, as it grew in strength, could afford to shatter them and expose the purely repressive role they play. They became embroiled in tenants' struggles: rent strikes and the idea of street and block committees. They helped set up a number of crashpads. They tried to turn hustling — dog eating dog — into more organised libertarian forms of crime: working out steady illegal supplies of everything from food and medical supplies to actual hardware... Here as elsewhere coherent self-defense proved inseparable from actual aggression...

They steered up the typical ghetto tension over public use of what are nominally public places: turned them into a combat zone, a field polarising all those who blunder into them. True