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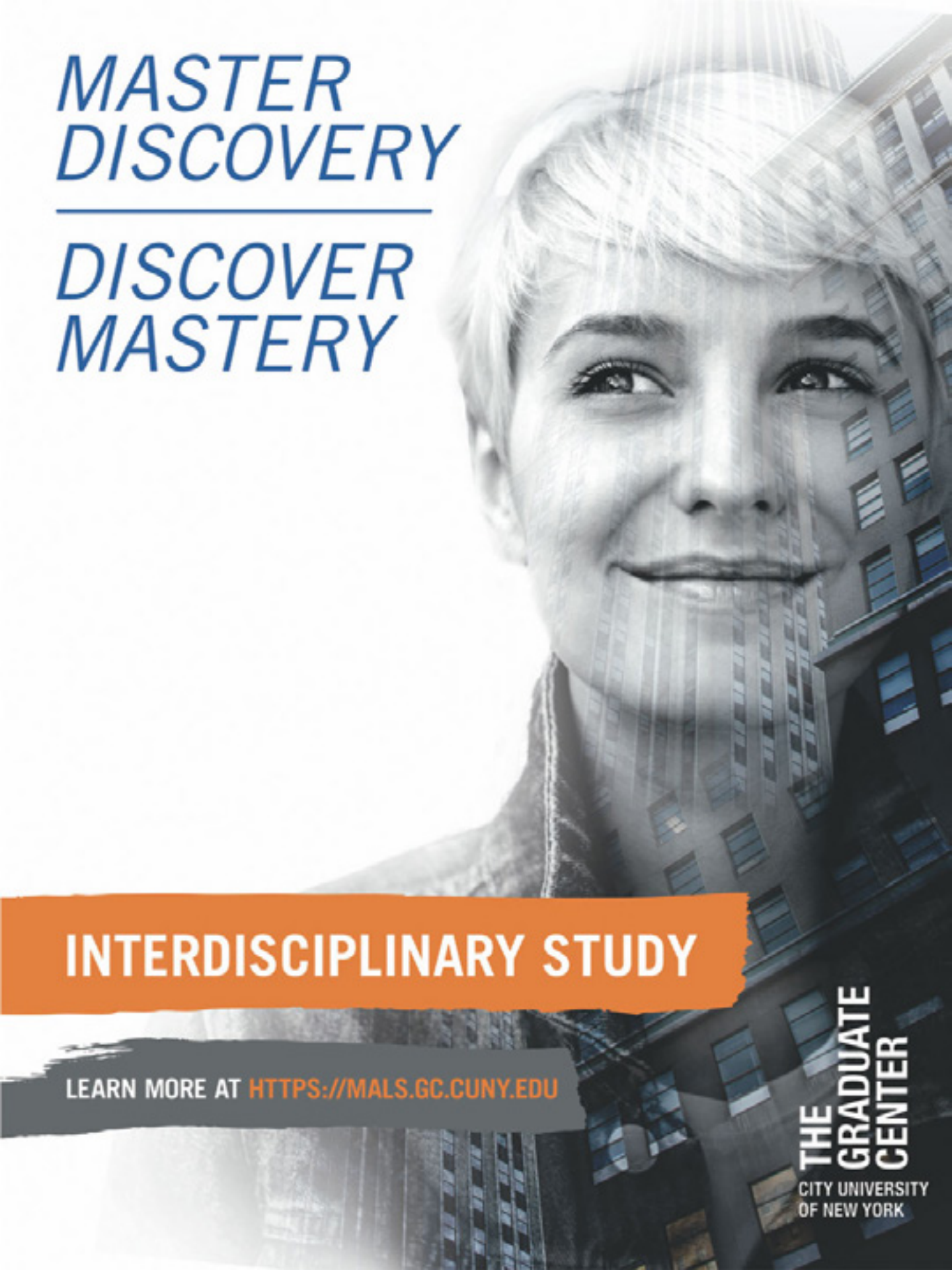
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Between us we can change this rotten society. Now, put on your coat and make for the nearest cinema. Look at their deadly love-making on the screen. Isn't it better in real life? Make up your mind to learn to love. Then, during the interval, when the first advertisements come on, pick up your tomatoes or, if you prefer, your eggs, and chuck them. Then get out into the street, and peel off all the latest government proclamations until underneath you discover the message of the days of May and June.

Stay awhile in the street. Look at the passers-by and remind yourself: the last word has not yet been said. Then act. Act with others, not for them. Make the revolution here and now. It is your own. *C'est pour toi que tu fais la révolution.*

— Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative*

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Features

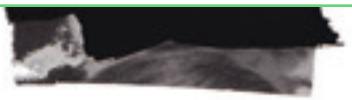

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Photo Attributions — Page 32 "Strikes in France. Urban dirt along the pavement" — Eric Koch / Anefo, Nationaal Archief. **Pages 50, 51, 53, 54** All images courtesy of Interference Archive. **Page 75** "Vietnam War protestors march at the Pentagon in Washington, DC on October 21, 1967." — Frank Wolfe / Lyndon B. Johnson Library. **Page 82** "John Hejduk: The House of the Suicide and the House of the Mother of the Suicide, Praha, Alšovo nábřeží." — Jaro Zastoupil / Gampe. **Page 85** "During the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovaks carry their national flag past a burning tank in Prague." — Photo from "CIA Analysis of the Warsaw Pact Forces: The Importance of Clandestine Reporting" / Wikimedia Commons. **Page 86** Image courtesy of *Il Manifesto*. **Page 95** IISUE/AHUNAM/Colección Incorporada Manuel Gutiérrez Paredes/58-Mitin-Glorieta-Simon-Bolivar-sept-1968/MGP2874. **Page 97** IISUE/AHUNAM/Colección Incorporada Manuel Gutiérrez Paredes/58-Mitin-Glorieta-Simon-Bolivar-sept-1968/MGP2875. **Page 98** "A deluxe meal available in Austrian Airlines' economy class for an extra fee, payable in advance. Food shown: boquerones, olive tapenade, sun-ripened tomatoes and fresh basil in olive oil, jamon, manchego, fuet, chorizo, grilled vegetables, chocolate mousse, fresh strawberries, and freshly baked bread basket." — Austrian Airlines / Wikimedia Commons. **Page 113** "COLOGNE, GERMANY — MARCH 12: Joschka Fischer speaks about Europe during the lit. Cologne at `WDR Funkhaus` on March 12, 2015 in Cologne, Germany." — Ralf Juergens / Getty Images.

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L LEFTOVERS

FRONT MATTERS

THE ALARM CLOCK RINGS: FIRST HUMILIATION OF THE DAY.

May Belongs to Us

For most Americans today, 1968 is about sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Depending on your views of such things, it was either a triumph of liberation or a period of moral decay.

When thinking more politically, most liberal commentators regard 1968 as a brief interlude on the road to the "end of history." Paul Berman sees the "radical exhilaration" of the year as the first phase in a process of maturation, an "awkward modulation," that in 1989 would lead to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the triumph of liberal democracy.

At *Jacobin*, we remember the student and worker revolts of 1968 as part of a radical movement for democracy. In the United States, they were shaped by the decline of postwar anticommunist repression, by the war in Vietnam, and by the civil rights struggle against Jim Crow segregation.

In Western Europe, where the socialist left was much stronger, radicals viewed the dominant social-democratic and Communist parties as barriers to their agenda. And yet these parties also influenced the course of the movements that emerged during these years. Where social democracy was strongest, the movements tended to be more restricted to student milieus, and produced less dramatic confrontations in the workplace. Where the Left was dominated by official Communism rather than social democracy, as in France and Italy, the student mobilizations triggered more dramatic explosions in the working class.

In many places, the movements of '68 continued to reverberate in the years that followed — in parts of Europe, for instance, it took another decade for the Left's rising fortunes at the polls and in the workplace to crest. And yet, in the long run, all of these movements were defeated, with devastating consequences.

Could another outcome have been possible? This question, which has been a source of contro-

versy on the Left, is, of course, unanswerable. It's clear that in the United States and Western Europe, hopes that revolution might soon be in the cards were always misplaced. Not even in France did the Left pose an immediate threat to the capitalist state.

But we could have gotten a better present. The circumstances faced by the Left varied from place to place, but in general we can say that it might have emerged in a stronger position had it entered '68 with greater clarity and organization. In the United States, that might have looked like a radical social-democratic reform movement of the sort advocated by Martin Luther King Jr. In Western Europe and Latin America, it could have meant a revived socialist movement that avoided the twin pitfalls of bureaucratic conservatism and radical self-marginalization.

Whatever the failures of 1968, this anniversary should remind us that even under conditions of democratic capitalism, the possibility remains for explosive challenges to the existing order. ■

Letters

Mail Truck, 1968.
From the Jonathan Abel Collection, Marine Corps Archives & Special Collections — Library of Congress.

The Spirit of '45?

As a British citizen, I was very interested to read your account of the National Health Service (NHS) last issue. I am 78-years-old and for the last two years have been in poor health with mobility problems. I have had a month in hospital, undergone various tests and procedures and received pieces of equipment, such as walking frames. Despite spending cuts I have always found the NHS staff to be competent, helpful, and friendly. And all this cost me nothing.

I am old enough to remember stories of life before the NHS. If you couldn't afford an optician you chose a pair of spectacles approximating to your needs from the counter in a supermarket. If a tooth needed removing you tied a piece of string round it, attached the other end to the oven door, and slammed it sharply. And worse … much worse.

So you're correct that the NHS was "one of the great proletarian victories of the twentieth century." But we should not romanticise the 1945 Labour government.

Within a week of coming to power it sent troops to break a dockers' strike in London. Between 1945 and 1951 the army was used to break strikes on no fewer than eighteen occasions. And in 1945 Labour prime minister Clement Attlee sent British soldiers to Vietnam to hold that country until the French were ready to reoccupy their colony. Without British troops Vietnam would have become independent, and two long and bitter wars, with two million dead, would have been unnecessary.

1945 was good — but it could have been so much better.

— Ian Birchall, London, United Kingdom

In Defense of the VA

I'm a subscriber, and I work for the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents over 700,000 federal employees.

"The Health of Nations" issue had a lot of good content, but I was disappointed that not a single word was written about the largest publicly funded, fully integrated health care system in the US — the Veterans Affairs (VA).

Founded during the Civil War in Lincoln's words "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and orphan" today the VA provides care to close to ten million veterans, dealing with health issues ranging from battle injuries, issues related to aging, mental health, and more.

Studies show that the VA provides better care, and frequently has less wait times than the private sector, and that veterans prefer their care at the VA. The system isn't perfect, but it's worthy of more serious attention on the Left.

— Matt Muchowski, Chicago, IL

The Internet Speaks

Because communication is at the heart of any good relationship.

I Think We've Found a New Business Model

There will never be anything that makes
me happier than unexpectedly seeing a picture
of Wallace Shawn.

— Glen Carpenter, Laramie, WY

Brazilian Hip Hop Still Has a Ways To Go

The Jacobin Mag's feeling blue
'Cos The Workers' Party is through.
Killed by Moro, a jurist
(While you're just a tourist)
No one buys your bullshit about "coup"

— Elton Msquita, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

What's Going on in Brazil?

This Jacobin article is exactly the type of mind virus
that turns people into weaklings.

— Wikair Lopes, São Paulo, Brazil

We Do. You're In It. Drink More Acai Juice.

Why DOESN'T jacobin have an advice column?

— @floozyesq

Jacobin: "Nationalize the Pubs" Readers:

The most leftist thing about this article are the comments
demanding a different article.

— Matt Stenovec, Seattle, WA

Computer Center, January 1968.
Ron Kroon / Anefo — Nationaal Archief

So More Ja Rule Memes?

Jacobin, stay away from these silly gimmicks; your
content is good enough to not have to resort to memes
that can alienate people.

— Eduard Swanepoel, Cape Town, South Africa

The Yacht Socialist Collective

a very large percent of socialists don't believe in taxes.
please stop speaking for all of us.

— Chris Luft, A Golf Course

We Will Do Better

a few hours after each jacobin article is posted i see a
thread that is like "hey! i've got severe milk protein
allergy. when a jacobin editor writes that kids enjoy milk
and cookies, they are literally putting my life in danger.
here's a thread about inclusive snacks. [1/24]"

— @getfiscal, Toronto, Canada

And Yet Here We're Using It To Publish a Shitty Magazine

Socialism is also a tool of genocidal power

— Carly Laing, Troll Lair

BY SHAWN GUDE

The Tragedy of Bayard Rustin

How one of the greatest American socialists ended up on the wrong side of history.

Staughton Lynd was incensed. Here was the anti–Vietnam War movement, growing into something that could challenge LBJ's murderous campaign, and Bayard Rustin — Bayard Rustin! — goes and sullies the largest antiwar protest to date, accusing it of harboring Communist elements. Lynd, a Yale professor and prominent antiwar activist, decided to make his fury public.

"You must know in your heart that your position betrays your essential moralism over the years," Lynd wrote in an open letter to Rustin in April 1965. "The lesson of your apostasy on Vietnam appears to be that the gains for American Negroes you advise them to seek through coalition within the Democratic Party comes at a price.... The price is to make our brothers in Vietnam a burnt offering on the altar of political expediency."

Acidic words not exhausted, Lynd took to the pages of ***Liberation***, a radical publication that Rustin himself had helped found, to further excoriate this "labor lieutenant of capitalism" that was in "coalition with the Marines."

Underneath the outrage had to be a sense of hurt. Rustin — in addition to his decades toiling in the civil rights trenches — had opposed World War II and the Korean War on pacifist grounds and long pronounced his socialist convictions. He'd befriended anticolonial leaders in Africa and forged ties between liberation struggles and pacifists. How could he now turn around and give ammunition to the forces of American imperialism, red-baiting a movement actually fighting it?

Lynd wasn't alone in asking such pointed questions. "Perhaps no one in American politics was so maligned by radicals in the peace movement as Bayard Rustin," one biographer notes.

Rustin never out and out supported the Vietnam War. But his fidelity to a particular strategy of radical transformation led him to mute his criticisms even as antiwar sentiment built to a deafening crescendo.

Bayard Rustin was born to a black Quaker family in West Chester, Pennsylvania on March 17, 1912. Raised by his grandparents, Rustin's talents were recognized from a

Bayard Rustin speaks in 1965. World Telegram & Sun photo by Stanley Wolfson — Library of Congress.

young age. He was a handsome track star, a gifted student, a precocious tenor. But it was through activism that Rustin would distinguish himself.

Following a brief association with the Young Communist League, Rustin stepped into the milieus that would mold him for the next couple decades: the pacifist movement and the civil rights struggle.

Rustin's first major role was as a youth organizer for A. Phillip Randolph's abortive 1941 March on Washington, which ultimately forced Franklin Roosevelt to issue an executive order barring discrimination in the defense industry. From there, as a field secretary for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), Rustin threw himself into the unpopular task of spreading the pacifist gospel. He traveled to college campuses, organized pacifist groups, visited imprisoned conscientious objectors, helped Japanese Americans held in internment camps, and schooled people on the ins and outs of nonviolent direct action.

In the first eight months of 1942 alone, Rustin logged ten thousand miles and traversed twenty states. Speaking in a studied British accent — an idiosyncrasy he'd consciously picked up as a boy — Rustin would lay to rest the nagging doubts of skeptics and summon the moral force of absolute nonviolence.

His work with FOR also took him into the crucible of the early civil rights struggle. Years before the movement could warrant the name, Rustin participated in sit-ins at segregated establishments and "freedom rides" on segregated buses, all the while making the case for nonviolent resistance. Over the subsequent decades, he would advise Martin Luther King Jr behind the scenes on nonviolent tactics, and — linking freedom struggles at home with those abroad — support anticolonial movements in India (through the Free India Committee), Ghana (where he conferred with Kwame Nkrumah), and Nigeria (where he met with Nnamdi Azikiwe). He was a fierce internationalist, a socialist critic of both major world powers, a dogged antiwar activist who was jailed for his principles.

In the early 1960s, when planning for the March on Washington began, it was natural that Rustin would be tapped to lead it. Rustin, a gay man, had experienced homophobic bigotry that resulted in a number of career setbacks. But Randolph trusted him completely. After the successful demonstration, *Life* magazine splashed the visages of Rustin and Randolph across its cover and praised the pair of socialists as the "leaders" of the march. For once, Rustin wasn't in the background.

By the mid-1960s, the Civil Rights Movement had won a series of hard-fought battles against segregation in the South — battles that culminated in the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights and 1965 Voting Rights acts. With de jure Jim Crow all but toppled, Rustin and others in the movement turned their sights to the economic forces ravaging the lives of workers and poor people.

"The Negro today," Rustin wrote in an influential 1965 piece, "From Protest to Politics", "finds himself stymied by obstacles of far greater magnitude than the legal barriers he was attacking before.... They are the result of the total society's failure to meet not only the Negro's needs but human needs generally."

Attacking these ills would send the movement careening directly toward the foundation of the American economy. It demanded nothing less than the conquest of political

power. A formidable task — and the black voter couldn't do it alone. For Rustin, that meant solidifying the coalition "which staged the March on Washington, passed the Civil Rights Act, and laid the basis for the Johnson landslide — Negroes, trade unionists, liberals, and religious groups."

As his strategy took shape, the Democratic Party loomed especially large. At the time, the party housed both Southern racists (Dixiecrats) and Northern liberals. Rustin — as well as others in and around the Socialist Party — saw an opening. If liberals and labor could take over the party, he reasoned, it would become comparable to a European social-democratic party — a coherent social force with the interest and ideology to push through massive investments in health, education, and employment.

Their strategy was called realignment. Their plan was the "Freedom Budget." Released in 1966 under the auspices of the Rustin-led, AFL-CIO–funded A. Phillip Randolph Institute — and bearing the signatures of a wide range of civil rights leaders and liberal luminaries — the eighty-four-page document laid out a radical plan to lift up the immiserated. Poverty would be banished within a decade. Full employment would be the law of the land. The US's political economy would be transformed.

Fatefully, the budget also declined to take a position on the Vietnam War.

Two months before the document's launch, Socialist Party leader Norman Thomas had fretted about the omission: "I don't see how we can avoid reference to what effect the Vietnam War may have on the Budget," he commented. "There is already a 'real' as well as a psychological strain on the economy due to the war." Others, including Rustin, argued that disagreements over the war shouldn't scuttle the coalition behind the Freedom Budget. The US could have its guns and its butter too, even if Rustin preferred to dispense with its guns.

But over the next couple years, as the body bags piled up and protests erupted, the war assumed center stage and the Freedom Budget receded from the political agenda. The AFL-CIO leadership, never much interested in offering more than nominal support, grew even less willing to prioritize it. Many liberal congressmen — the elected officials who were supposed to compose the majority of this newly progressive Democratic Party — dismissed the plan as unrealistic.

"He seems to have sold his soul completely to the Democratic Party."

Without a mass movement to pressure recalcitrant legislators, Rustin and his compatriots had little recourse but to try to paper over tensions and hope for the best. In 1964, they had seen in Johnson's resounding victory the coming of a new majority, one that would usher in the second phase of the Civil Rights Movement. They would stick with LBJ and liberal allies to the end, even if it meant staying on the antiwar sidelines.

Though less important, another factor informed Rustin's actions: his deep anticommunism. Like others in the realignment camp, Rustin shook his head at the demonstrators who cheered for a Vietcong victory. His democratic socialism couldn't countenance the elevation of ideas he saw as ending in tyranny. And he couldn't see a movement attracting a mass following if it permitted such stances in its ranks.

Already many young radicals had written Rustin off. After all, this was the man who had accepted the notorious compromise at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, which failed to fully seat delegates from the anti-segregationist Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. "He seems to have sold his soul completely to the Democratic Party," civil rights activist Julian Bond lamented at the time.

Rustin's jabs at antiwar activists seemed to them just further confirmation of his ignominious drift.

More sympathetic observers have portrayed Rustin's shift as the inevitable result of descending into the muck of policymaking. As he moved from "protest to politics" — as he migrated from the ethereal realm of nonviolent activism to the corrupting world of political sausage making — purity had to go.

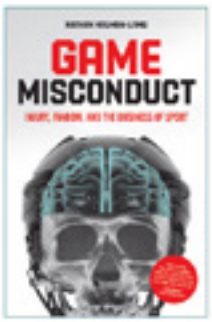
This shortchanges Rustin's brilliance. No political naïf, he thought deeply

about the landscape of US politics — what fissures in elite circles could be widened and exploited, what actors had the interest and heft to push through concrete programs, what strategies could improve the lives of workers and the oppressed while opening up more radical possibilities. He knew politics meant coalition building and compromise. But it's a mistake to assume that hardheaded politics demanded Rustin's quiescence as more and more bombs went off.

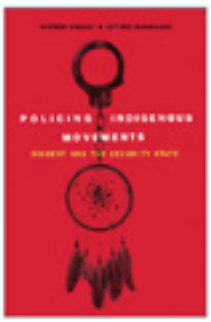
As scholars Paul Le Blanc and Michael Yates point out, the strategy Rustin himself laid out in "From Protest to Politics" didn't propose dropping protest entirely in favor of backroom dealmaking. Left unresolved, however, was whether street politics would play an essentially adjunct role to a Democratic Party freed of Dixiecrats, or whether it would provide its own impetus, challenging party bosses up to, and including, Johnson himself.

Same with the labor movement. "I certainly do not look for an alliance which would include the AFL-CIO per se," Rustin wrote in 1964. But by the time the Freedom Budget was unveiled and the Vietnam War had stepped up in earnest, Rustin had drifted closer to pro-war labor leaders. Martin Luther King Jr publicly denounced the Vietnam War. More progressive unions grew increasingly antiwar. Opposition spread from the campuses to many working-class constituencies. Yet Rustin stayed the course.

And therein lies the tragedy of Bayard Rustin: one of the most adept tacticians of his generation, one of the most impressive American socialists of the twentieth century, ultimately saw the best in the Democratic Party and the worst in the antiwar movement — not in service of a budget that transformed the country but a war that ended only after more than a million perished. ■



Game Misconduct
Injury, Fandom and the Business of Sport
Nathan Kalman-Lamb
"Lends a very important perspective into the microcosm that is sports and what it may be saying about humanity."
— Royce White, NBA and NBL player



Policing Indigenous Movements
Dissent and the Security State
Andrew Crosby & Jeffrey Monaghan
A comprehensive account of contemporary government surveillance. Crosby and Monaghan examine the intensified surveillance and policing of Indigenous activists in Canada.

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Alain Deneault
"Unveils the scope of the problems created by tax havens, and documents the many ways in which they are weakening the very bonds of our society."
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The Second Emancipation

Until his assassination in 1968, Martin Luther King Jr led an unheralded struggle for economic justice.

March on Washington, DC, 1963.
Warren K. Leffler / Library of Congress

You have a new book *To the Promised Land* about Martin Luther King Jr and economic equality. Can you talk about that? How central was economic justice to his vision of freedom and equality?

I want to reacquaint people with King. We tend to misremember him as primarily a civil rights activist when his agenda for change went beyond civil and voting rights to changing the structures of racism, poverty, and militarism that still oppress us today. From an early age, King was a radical egalitarian who looked at the whole system. So the way that I communicate this is to take King's own framework, opening the book with his speech to striking sanitation workers in Memphis on March 18, 1968, when he went to the first big strike meeting that he attended in Memphis. In that speech, he says that the freedom movement has always been about economic justice in the largest sense. King says that getting civil rights and voting rights from 1955–65 was just the first phase of the movement. It restored rights that we had won during Reconstruction that should have been the rights of every American to begin with.

People forget that what we call King's "I Have a Dream" speech at the August 28, 1963 March on Washington was timed to remember 100 years since the emancipation of the slaves in 1863. That first emancipation included racial equality in the law and voting rights, but got overturned by the Jim Crow laws, voter suppression, and especially by economic inequality that put black

workers at the bottom of every possible workplace or no workplace at all. And so the slogan in 1963 was for jobs and freedom.

By 1965, the Civil Rights Movement had won the Voting Rights Act and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It included Title VII, making employment discrimination illegal. That clause opened up employment for minority workers and women. The first phase of the movement made great strides. But a few days after President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, the Watts Rebellion happened (in August '64) which brought mass chaos into the streets of Los Angeles. Police and National Guard units killed dozens of black people and set the pattern of violent suppression for every summer from '64 onwards, as these rebellions continued to break out. In response, King pivoted, saying the second phase of the movement has to be for economic justice. That's the context for his Memphis speech and 1968.

Can I can read a quote from that March 18 speech?: "With Selma and the voting rights bill, one era of our struggle came to a close and a new era came into being. Now our struggle is for genuine equality, which means economic equality." This I think is what you're talking about. This sense that okay, one phase is done and now we have to fight around economic inequality.

And the setting for that speech is a strike, which is highly significant. Most people don't recognize that King was a lifelong supporter of unions, going back to when he was a teenager and he had some terrible summer laboring jobs where blacks and whites were both exploited. At Morehouse College, where he went to school in the forties, his professors remained highly aware of the independence struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Throughout his student days and early leadership of the movement in the fifties he always talked about income inequality and the harsh inequalities of US capitalism. He was always pretty radical and anticapitalist.

People often say, oh, from '65 to '68, King got radical. But he was always like that. Criticizing racism, poverty, and militarism was not new for him. It's just that by '65 he thought the movement was ready to shift gears. He supported the economic bill of rights for the disadvantaged, which labor leader A. Philip Randolph helped to sponsor. And so by the time he came to Memphis he was putting this framework into practice by supporting specific movements for job and income equality. King was talking about unions from the Montgomery Bus Boycott to the Memphis strike, and said the best anti-poverty program for a worker is a union.

President Lyndon B. Johnson and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, 1966.
Yoichi Okamoto / LBJ Library

Can you talk a little bit about King's focus on organized labor and what was driving that? I mean, how much of it was a strategic understanding of where power was, and how much of it was about wanting to cement this alliance for the Civil Rights Movement? How much of it was this commitment to opposing inequality in general? For example, in that March 18 speech, I think he calls for a general strike in Memphis. That suggests that he had this view of labor as being very strategically located.

At King's time unions were very strong and represented about a third of workers in the private sector. AFSCME (the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) was also taking up, throughout the sixties, this huge battle to unionize public employees, people who work for government. That's the union that was involved in the 1968 Memphis strike. But going back further, King saw the alliance between the Civil Rights Movement and the labor movement as strategic. He explained that point in a 1957 speech before Highlander Folk School, which was the great incubating place for Rosa Parks in 1955 and for the industrial unions going back to the 1930s and 1940s. King called for a strategic alliance and made strong connections with the United Packinghouse Workers' union, which had a strong African American component and antidiscrimination program, and other unions. And he just kept going, working with whatever union would invite him to speak or to join picket lines of striking workers.

Yes, he was trying to raise money for the Civil Rights Movement, and unions then had money. But he was also cementing alliances with Walter Reuther and the United Auto Workers, with 1199 hospital workers in New York City, a retail wholesale and department store workers union called RWDSU, and the National Maritime Union and the International Longshoremen's union. He was well known to the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and leading unions of the time.

His idea was that if you could get the unions and the Civil Rights Movement on the same side, when unions represented about a third of the American workforce, you had a winning combination that could then use the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act to overturn Jim Crow and create an economy of living wage jobs, health care, housing, anti-poverty, etc. He also saw organizing workers in the South as absolutely strategic to ending Jim Crow.

I am a man, sanitation workers strike, Memphis, Tennessee, 1968.
Ernest C. Withers / Library of Congress

Poor People's March at Lafayette Park and on Connecticut Avenue, June 18, 1968.
Warren K. Leffler / Library of Congress

Can we go through the last year of King's life? When you talk about the understanding that you have to move on to a new phase of the movement — that really coalesces for him around the Poor People's Campaign, and then around Memphis.

It must be said that from '65 to '68 two things caused him to think differently about the strategic alliance of labor and the Civil Rights Movement. One was that when the rebellion broke out in the cities up North, there was the so-called white backlash, which the newspapers and all the media played up tremendously. King said a lot of white people been backlashing against civil rights since we first got here, this isn't new. But in the 1966 elections the radical Republican right led by Ronald Reagan in California emerged, while segregationist George Wallace from Alabama gained support in Wisconsin and Michigan and other places in the North. The swing of Congress toward the right
after that '66 election undermined his strategy of an electoral alliance that he hoped would open the way for better government policies.

So that was a huge blow. Second, there was the Vietnam War. He saw the war sucking up all the resources that he thought should go into ending poverty in America, as Lyndon Johnson cut funds for the anti-poverty programs in order to raise money for his war. And also the war causes this huge schism with labor. The AFL-CIO continued to support the war. George Meany and his associates, older white men from the skilled trades, were rabid anticommunists and they opposed these more left-wing unions that King worked with. King's relationship with unions was more with the left unions than any other group, and a lot of those unions had been kicked out of the CIO in the early fifties. King keynoted a trade union conference against the war with many of these left unions in 1967, and about 500 people came.

So King and those left unions were in sync with each other, but they were out of sync with the AFL-CIO leadership. The labor-civil rights electoral alliance was in danger, because white working-class and middle-class people were starting to listen to people like George Wallace and Ronald Reagan. Secondly, King's opposition to the war brought a chorus of condemnations. King gave his famous speech at Riverside Church on April 4, 1967, where he

delivered the most penetrating critique of the Vietnam War that any major leader issued during that time. So then he came under tremendous attack for his antiwar position.

One of the things I bring out in *To the Promised Land* is that the right wing in America always hated King. This included the KKK, the White Citizens Councils, white property owners' associations in Detroit and Chicago, people following George Wallace, anti-integration advocates in places like Boston, and so on. So, there was this reaction against King all along. The American Nazi Party tried to kill him. You know, we think of King today as a hero to America, but he went to jail thirty times during his life and was attacked physically numerous times. And, of course, in the end the right-wing crusade helped to kill him.

In this polarized context of 1968, King came up with what he thought would be a new strategy. He had first thought that an alliance with the antiwar movement would give the movement more strength, but he started realizing that a lot of the unions were not going to be the strong pillar that he thought they would be. Then, so many people criticized him for coming out against the war that it started to create a rift within the Civil Rights Movement. He didn't change his position on the war. But the Poor People's Campaign was his way of trying to put back together this strategic alliance that he'd thought would include unions, civil rights, academic people, students, middle-class white folks, and religious people. He thought we could build up a majority coalition around ending poverty. But in order to do that, you also have to build a movement of poor people. And that was the really hard thing to do.

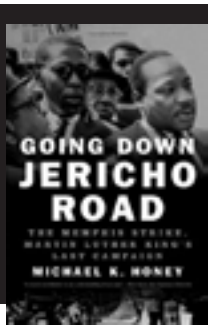
In your last book, *Going Down Jericho Road*, you have this beautiful description of King's involvement in the Memphis sanitation strike. You describe how he saw the struggle in Memphis as something that he had to be involved in, but that he got a lot of resistance against that from some of his advisors. Others in the movement said don't go to Memphis, it's a mistake. What drew him to Memphis and why was there resistance?

First of all, James Lawson was a key advisor on nonviolent organizing: he lived in Memphis and was the black minister who was leading community support for the Memphis sanitation strike. He was the one who called King twice, asking him to come to Memphis, where they had a great movement going on. King automatically wanted to support that. These were the working poor, who added a new dimension to the Poor People's Campaign.

I documented all this in *Going Down to Jericho Road*: *The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign*. I wrote that book because most people don't realize that this movement in 1968 was as important in some ways as Montgomery (1955) or Birmingham (1963) or these other campaigns. The Memphis movement brought together labor and civil rights in the way that King was trying to do. As you mentioned, he even went so far as to call for a general strike. The reason Jesse Jackson and some of the advisors around him opposed going to Memphis was not that they weren't in favor of supporting the strike, but they worried he was getting involved in a whole new campaign when he supposed to be organizing the Poor People's Campaign. So it was really a tactical issue.

Of course, they were right. That's exactly what happened. He did get involved and it finally took his life, and sort of destroyed the Poor People's Campaign once he was killed. But King's argument was, look, I've been talking about unions all my life and I've been talking about the working poor; how can I not go to Memphis when the working poor call on me to come support them?

King and his organization were trying to organize poor people and having a really hard time doing it. Organizing poor people is one of the hardest things you can do; they hardly make enough money to live day to day, much less to go do political action. How do you organize them into a movement? And he wanted to bring in Native Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, poor whites, Puerto Ricans. He wanted a rainbow coalition. So they were trying, and it was a tremendous thing to try to do that.



Once he came to Memphis and spoke at this huge mass meeting on March 18, King said we're going to start the Poor People's Campaign in Memphis. Before, he had been talking mainly about the unemployed poor people in Mississippi who were mechanized out of the cotton economy, who had no jobs at all and were starving. But in Memphis he supported organizing people who had full-time jobs, but like he said, they got full-time jobs at part-time wages. King argued that it's a crime in this country for people to be working sixty and eighty hours a week at starvation wages. So his support for the Memphis strikers brought a whole new component to the Poor People's Campaign.

Can you describe Martin Luther King's understanding of what a just society would look like? An economy that gave everyone a job, redistribution of wealth and resources?

Well, you just spelled it out. He said that first of all, the richest country in the world can and should abolish poverty, it just needed the will to do so. We're in the same situation now. The argument is always, we can't abolish poverty because it's too expensive. And he said, well, is the Vietnam War too expensive? Abolishing poverty would have been a lot cheaper than pursuing this foolish adventure in Vietnam, which he said was morally wrong and shortsighted. And what about now? The six trillion dollars spent on the Iraq invasion and the subsequent destruction of stability in the Middle East could have ended poverty and provided jobs. Unionization could have created middle-class incomes for working-class people. But the people currently in power continue to drain society's resources with tax cuts, funneling money to the already rich and powerful, while ignoring our needs for education, housing, health care, and jobs.

King wanted to shift the priorities of the US government from war to economic justice and he organized the Poor People's Campaign to do that. He felt like he couldn't stop the war by itself, that the country had to come to its senses and realize you can't spend all your money on war and still have a just society. It seems we are in that same place today. ■

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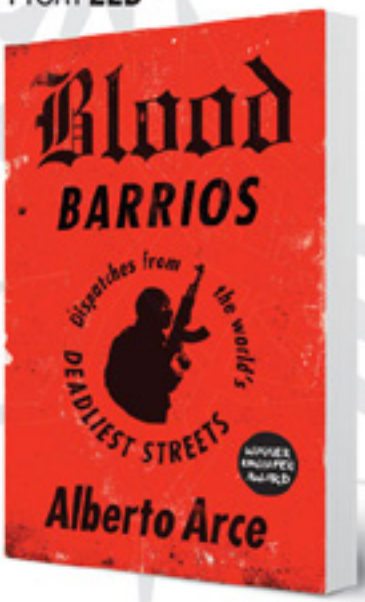

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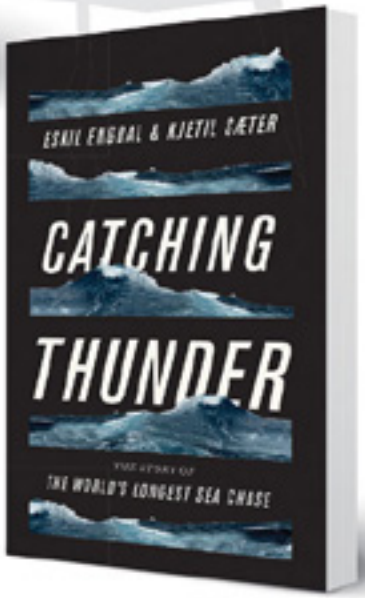

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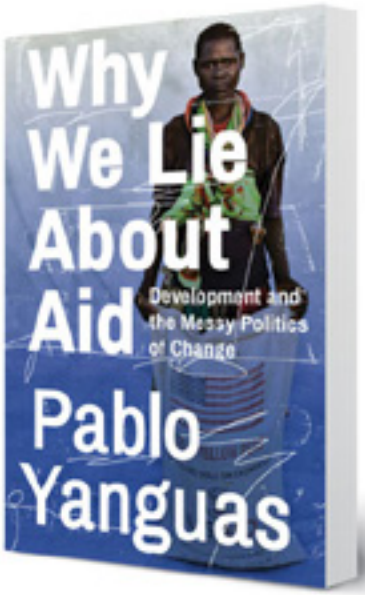

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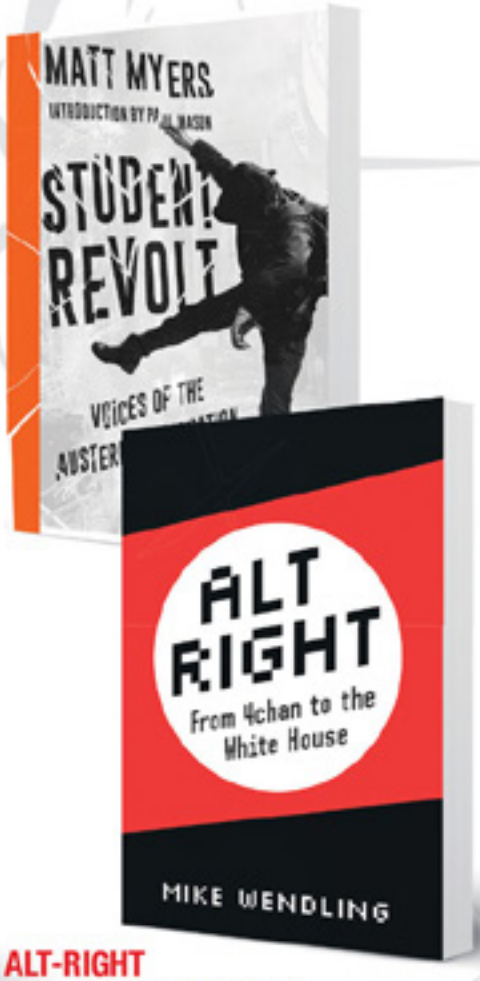

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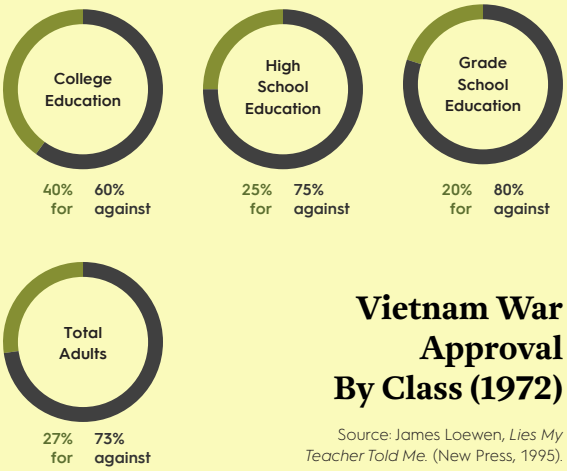
MEANS OF DEDUCTION

IMAGINE: THERE WAS A WAR AND NO ONE TURNED UP!

A Poor Man's Fight

As the Vietnam War dragged on, soldiers took matters into their own hands.



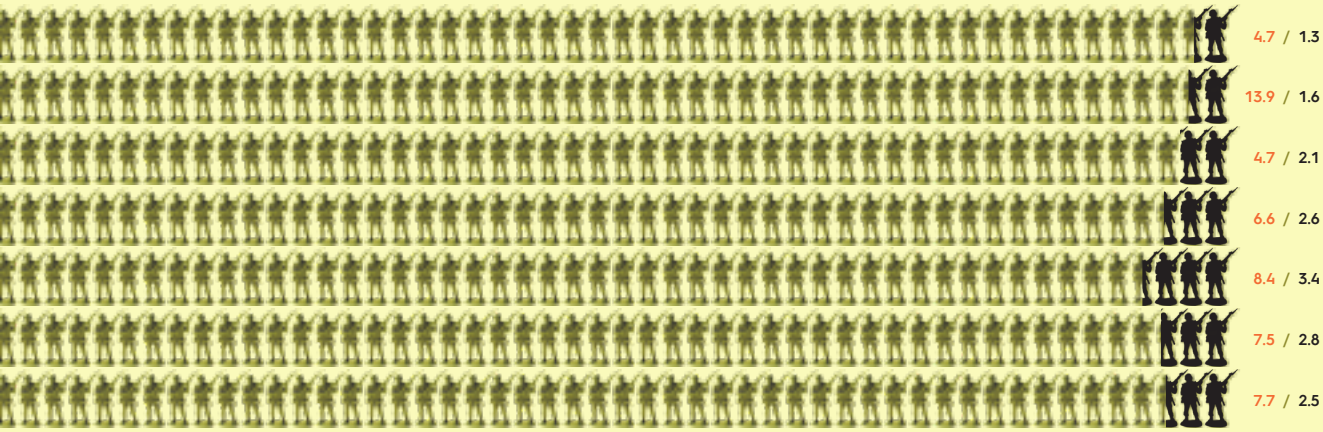
Vietnam War Approval By Class (1972)

Source: James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me.* (New Press, 1995).

A fragmentation grenade may wobble silently for about six seconds before it detonates. When it explodes, scores of razor-sharp projectiles spew outwards, shredding tent walls, shattering munitions canisters, puncturing cans of water and fuel oil – and, if you rolled it right, killing your commanding officer before he has time to lift his head from his bed.

The Vietnam War inspired opposition even from within the ranks of the military. In 1971, a US Army colonel wrote, "The morale, discipline, and battleworthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at anytime in this century and possibly in the history of the United States. By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and non commissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous."

Roughly one-third of privates were draftees. Unseasoned officers freshly drawn from elite military schools and Reserve Officer Training Corps programs sometimes found themselves commanding combat detachments full of men who had grown tired of following orders. We may never know the scale of desertion, refusal to fight, and officer "fragging" that took place in Vietnam, but these numbers tell part of the story.



1 Soldier

AWOL

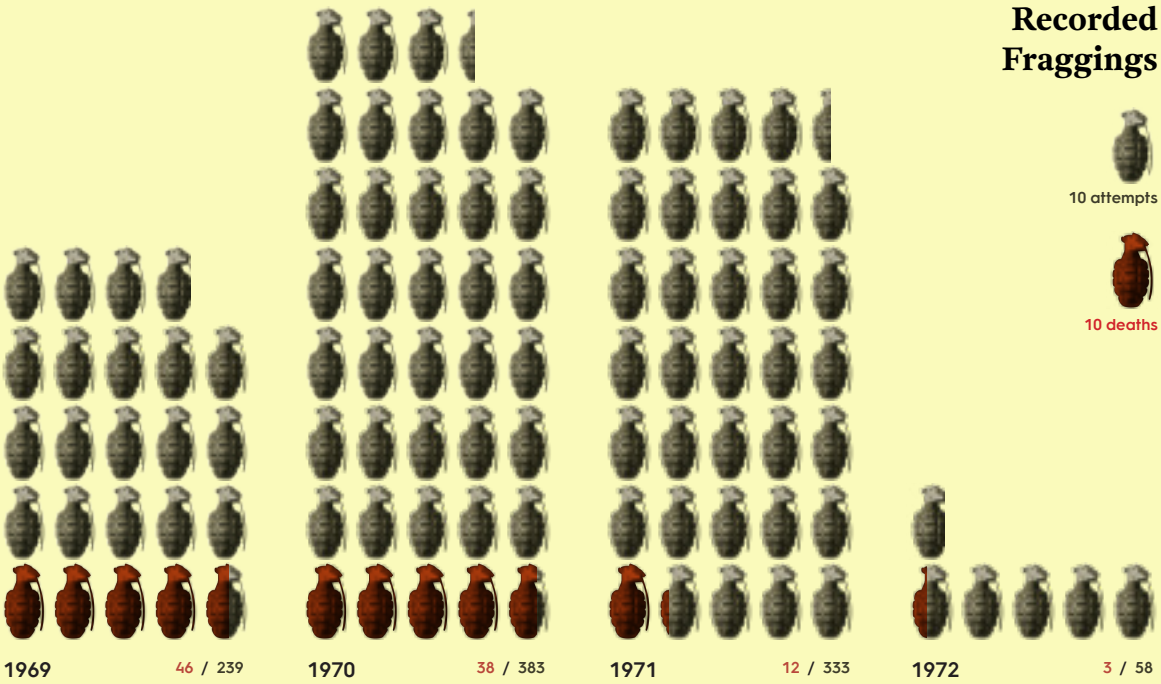
Desertion

Rate of US Troop Compliance

Recorded Fraggings

10 attempts

10 deaths



Source: Lepre, George. *Fragging: Why U.S. Soldiers Assaulted their Officers in Vietnam*. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011).

March 1950

• Harry Truman approves National Security Council Memorandum 64, declaring that the US would not allow French Indochina fall to communism.

September 1950

• Truman sends the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to Saigon to assist French forces.

1952

• US starts paying for more than one-third of the French war.

September 1956

• Eisnehower signs NSC 5612/1, committing the US to stopping the Vietminh.

July 1959

• Two US soldiers killed in a guerrilla strike on a MAAG compound.

May 1961

• John F. Kennedy sends 400 Green Berets to theater and steps up aid to South Vietnam.

August 1963

• Washington signals its approval for a coup to remove Diem.

February 1964

• Lyndon Johnson, now president, starts a covert program to destroy "targets identified with North Vietnam's economic and industrial well-being."

June 1964

• Johnson begins a secret, nine-year-long bombing campaign of Laos.

March 1965

• First US combat troops arrive in Vietnam.

March 1965

• Alice Herz, 82-year old member of Women Strike for Peace, burns herself to death in Detroit in protest of conflict.
• Martin Luther King calls for an end to the war at Howard University.

April 1965

• SDS organizes a 25,000-strong march in Washington against the war, the city's largest antiwar rally.

October 1965

• 15,000 in Berkeley and 20,000 in Manhattan march against the war
• David Miller, a Catholic, pacifist, becomes the first person prosecuted for burning his draft card.

November 1965

• 35,000 antiwar protesters march in Washington. • Baltimore Quaker Norman Morrison burns himself to death outside defense secretary Robert McNamara's Pentagon office.

January 1966

• SNCC formally adopts an antiwar plank; the Georgia State Legislature votes to bar civil rights activist Julian Bond from his elected seat for his opposition to the war.

October 1967

• National draft turn-in day held. 100,000 protesters march on the Pentagon.

January 1968

• Tet Offensive — US and South Vietnamese tactical victory, but deals a punishing blow to American public opinion.

February 1968

• For the first time half the public views the war as a mistake.

4

1960 1961 1962 1963

peak US combat deaths: 16899

January 1953

- Dwight Eisenhower takes office and ratchets up aid, within a year the US is paying for 80% of France's war.

May 1954

- France loses the battle of Dien Bien Phu and begins withdrawing.

April 1955

- Washington decides to give "wholehearted" support to South Vietnamese prime minister Ngo Dinh Diem.

1962

- Operation Ranch Hand — the spraying of herbicides, including Agent Orange, on the Vietnamese countryside — begins.

February 1962

- First deployment of napalm. 388,000 tons would be dropped in the region

1963

- JFK is killed. • Lyndon Johnson takes reigns of war effort

August 1964

- Gulf of Tonkin incident takes place; the resulting Congressional resolution becomes the legal authorization for war.

November 1964

- Johnson wins election in a landslide, pledging not to send more troops to Vietnam.

February 1965

- Johnson approves Operation Rolling Thunder, a massive, sustained bombing campaign.

May 1965

- 122 colleges and universities hold a "national teach-in" against the war.

July 1965

- Johnson sends 150,000 more troops; he tells the public the much lower figure of 50,000.

August 1965

- Northern California's Vietnam State Committee members try block troop trains by lying on tracks; 350 are arrested in Washington.

January 1967

- The US launches Operation Cedar Falls, its largest action yet, decimating the heavily defended jungle region known as the "Iron Triangle."

April 1967

- Martin Luther King Jr. delivers controversial Riverside Church sermon against war. • The "Spring Mobilization" sees 300,000 march from Central Park to the UN building.

- Muhammad Ali is stripped of his heavyweight title for refusing army induction. • 50,000 antiwar protesters rally in San Francisco.

March 1968

- Eugene McCarthy beats Johnson in New Hampshire. Antiwar Robert Kennedy joins the Democratic primary.

- Johnson withdraws from the election race and announces a partial halt to bombing; the Paris peace talks begin.

- A US platoon rapes and kills villagers in My Lai and My Khe, leaving hundreds dead

1964 1965 1966 1967 1968

April 1968

• Martin Luther King Jr. is killed.

June 1968

• RFK is killed. • General Westmoreland is relieved of his command.

August 1968

• Antiwar activists protest at the DNC, which descends into chaos.

March 1969

• Nixon begins secret carpet-bombing of Cambodia.

May 1969

• *New York Times* reveals the secret bombing campaign, enraging Nixon, who begins wiretapping his staff.

June 1969

• Nixon withdraws 25,000 US troops from South Vietnam to curb public anger.

April 1970

• Nixon announces an invasion of Cambodia.

May 1970

• Ohio National Guard shoot and kill four protesting students at Kent State. • Student Strike across hundreds of campuses

August 1970

• 25,000 Mexican-American protesters stage the Chicano Moratorium, the largest ever antiwar rally in Los Angeles; police kill three.

April 1971

• Fred Branfman reveals the secret bombing of Laos in the *New York Times*. • Vietnam Veterans Against the War hold week-long protest in DC.

June 1971

• *The New York Times* starts publishing the Pentagon Papers.

February 1972

• Nixon goes to China, reversing two decades of US foreign policy.

December 1972

• Operation Linebacker II, an intensive bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, begins and ends in disaster for US forces.

January 1973

• The Paris Peace Accords are signed. • The draft is abolished.

March 1973

• The last US combat troops withdraw from Vietnam, though advisors and Marines remain and support for the South continues.

January 1975

• National Liberation forces launch a successful attack on the South, with no response from the US.

March 1975

• The North launches several more successful offensives.

April 1975

• The South surrenders; more than 1,000 US personnel are air-lifted out of Saigon.

October 1968

- Candidate Richard Nixon, tipped off by Henry Kissinger, secretly scuttles peace talks in order to win the election.

- Johnson halts all US bombing of Vietnam five days before the election.

November 1968

- South Vietnam mysteriously walks away from negotiations one day before voting; Nixon narrowly wins.

October 1969

- Hundreds of thousands of Americans across the country take part in National Moratorium protests.

November 1969

- A second Moratorium takes place, the largest antiwar demonstration in US history.

- S. Hersh publishes his account of the My Lai massacre.
- Nixon withdraws 60,000 troops and cancels draft for the rest of year.

September 1970

- For the first time, the US establishes a withdrawal timetable in peace talks not joined to demands for the North's withdrawal.

February 1971

- Nixon backs a South Vietnamese invasion of Laos. They retreat within three weeks.

May 1971

- Half a million Americans march against the war in Washington; 14,000 are arrested.

April 1972

- Napalm attacks hit their peak.

May 1972

- Nixon launches Operation Linebacker, increasing bombing of the North. • Nixon signs an arms limit agreement with the Soviet Union.

November 1972

- Nixon wins reelection.

July 1973

- Congress cuts off all funding for combat troops in Indochina.

November 1973

- Congress passes the War Powers Resolution over Nixon's veto.

August 1974

- Nixon resigns to avoid impeachment.

American Conflict Deaths

SOURCE: home.mweb.co.za/re/redcap/vietcrim.htm

Total number of missions by area

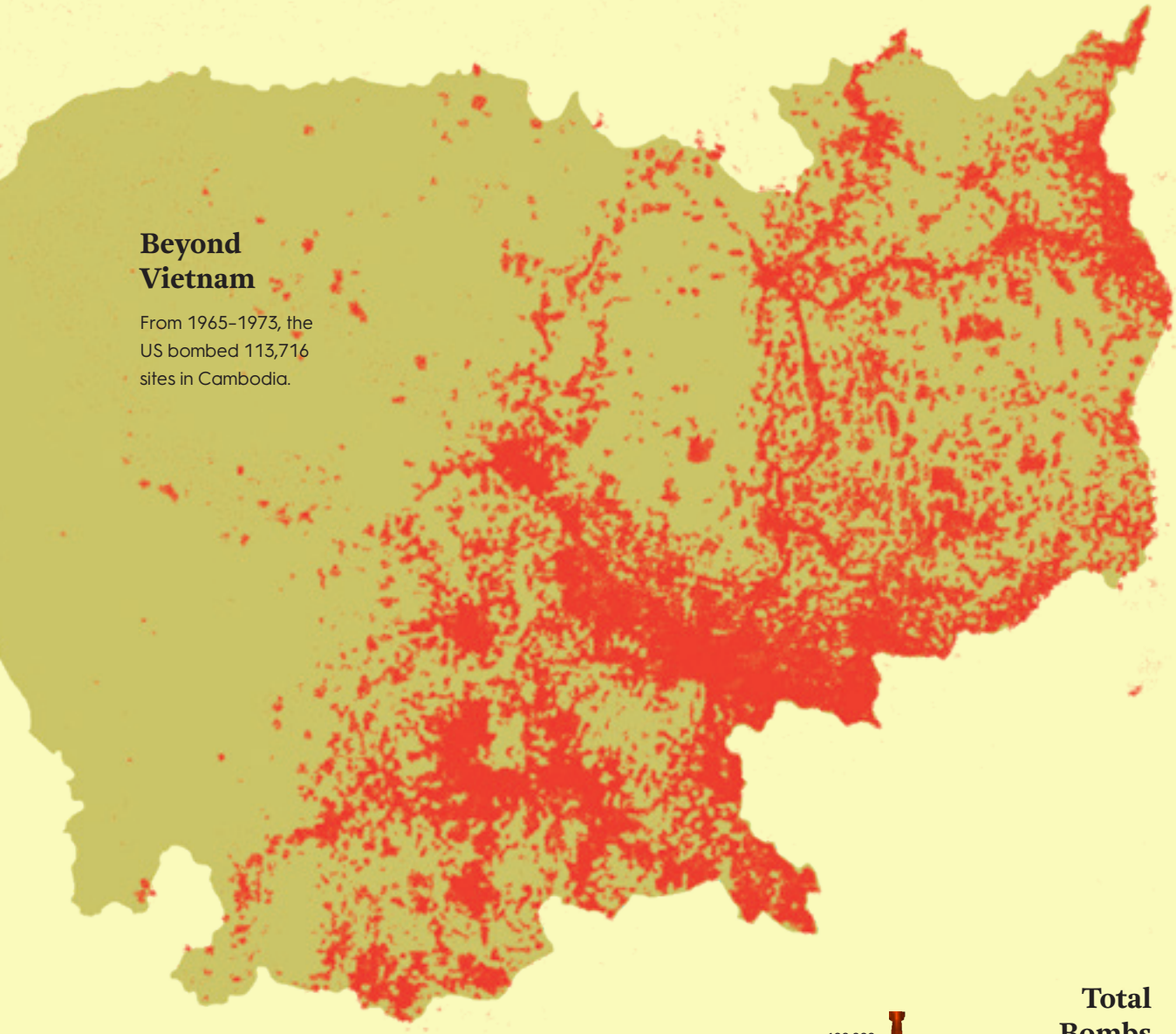
Bomb Anything That Moves

More than triple the bombs dropped in World War II devastated Southeast Asia

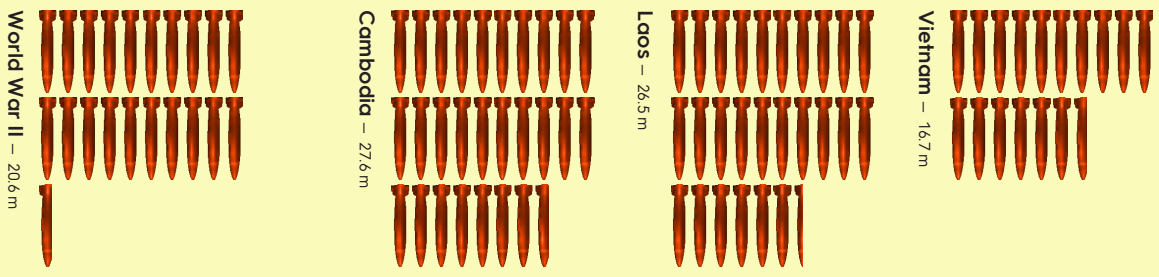
SOURCE:
data.world/datamil/
vietnam-war-thor-data

Beyond Vietnam

From 1965–1973, the US bombed 113,716 sites in Cambodia.



Total Bombs Dropped




ACADEMIE NATIONALE DE MUSIQUE
GRÈVE ILLIMITÉE SATISFACTION A NOS REVENDICATIONS

How Beautiful It Was

For a few brief weeks in France,
not just a government but an entire system
was called into question.

by Jonah Birch

ON MAY 10, the "Night of the Barricades," Belgian socialist Ernest Mandel was in Paris, addressing student protesters about to face down riot police in the Latin Quarter. Mandel finished his speech and wandered backed to his car, only to find it on fire. His response? He climbed on top of the nearest barricade and shouted as loud as he could, "Ah! Comme c'est beau! C'est la revolution!" ("How beautiful it is! It's the revolution!")

Of course, Mandel wasn't actually witnessing a revolution, and today his story might be turned into a clever car insurance ad. But in his strange joy, we can see the spirit of May '68. The revolt, which spread from the suburban campus of Nanterre University to every corner of France, produced a new left that would have a mighty influence. In the end, May wouldn't just belong to the students.

Today, our image of France in 1968 revolves around meetings at the Sorbonne, or the occupied Odéon Theater, where student revolutionaries and left intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre denounced capitalism, bureaucracy, and the forces of order. We remember May '68 for the writings of the Situationists; the indelible images printed on giant posters by the art students at Beaux-Arts; the popular slogans painted on walls across Paris: "Under the paving stones, the beach!" "Run comrade, the old world is behind you." "Be realistic, demand the impossible."

Yet this picture is incomplete. The entrance of workers into the movement in mid-May led to factory occupations, which sparked a weeks-long general strike of as many as 10 million workers (the largest in European history). In 1960, the number of workdays lost to strikes in France was an already impressive 1 million. By 1967, it reached 4.2 million. One year after that, the figure was 150 million. Often, these stoppages were led by workers affiliated with France's powerful Communist Party (PCF) and its allied trade union confederation, the Confédération générale du travail (CGT), or its rival federation, the Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT), an ex-Catholic union now committed to workers' "self-management."

By the end of May, the situation was spiraling out of the government's control. On May 29, French president Charles de Gaulle, shaken by his failure to contain the movement and hoping to shore up his position with the military, fled the country to meet secretly with his army leaders across the border in West Germany.

Eventually, de Gaulle was able to restore order, and the movement came to an abrupt end. Its defeat was compounded by the results of elections called by the government in late June, in which the Gaullists managed to take advantage of confusion and infighting on the Left to score a decisive victory. Yet, even now, May '68 remains a potent political symbol of the Left's hopes for a mass movement to challenge capitalism. Nowhere else in the Western world over the past half century was such a threat to capitalism posed.

Les Trente Glorieuses

THE ORIGINS OF THE MAY movement lay in the postwar reconstruction of the shattered French economy and state administration. In the years preceding 1968, France had experienced rapid economic growth, embodying the favorable climate of *Les Trente Glorieuses* (or "thirty glorious years," as the era is known in France). Yet at the dawn of 1968, French society remained a profoundly undemocratic and unequal society. During the 1950s and early '60s, factory workers had seen their average weekly work-hours increase substantially as employers rushed to fill the labor shortages

The Odéon Theater, occupied by students and artists, May 1968.
Nationaal Archief, Eric Koch / Anefo

produced by rapid economic growth. By the mid-sixties, many routinely worked upwards of fifty hours a week. Similarly, for women inside and outside the workplace, de Gaulle's France was a highly repressive society: the rigid enforcement of traditional norms around gender and sexuality meant that it was not until 1965 that women were granted the right to work without their husband's permission. Even then, they could not legally get an abortion under any circumstances, and their access to birth control was strictly limited.

Politically, France was a highly centralized state committed to a type of conservative modernization that strictly limited democratic rights. Economically, a state-directed and heavily regulated capitalism had produced impressive economic growth and industrialization. This system was, above all, the creation of General de Gaulle, hero of the Liberation, who led the opposition to the Nazi-backed Vichy regime.

During the 1950s, de Gaulle had been out of the national spotlight, while France was ruled by the parliamentary regime of the Fourth Republic, in which one unstable coalition government after another governed while the country floundered through two bloody colonial wars, first in Vietnam, then in Algeria. By decade's end, the political crisis resulting from France's failed effort to hold onto Algeria, the last citadel of its crumbling empire, compelled him to return to politics. With backing from the army and much of the Right, de Gaulle returned to the Élysée Palace in 1958.

De Gaulle entered office a hero of France's vocal pro-colonial lobby. His return came after an attempted coup in Algiers, initiated by segments of the military and led by General Jacques Massu, whose use of torture in Algeria was legendary. For the right-wing officers who participated in it, the putsch was meant to block proposed negotiations with the National Liberation Front (FLN). Once in power, however, de Gaulle quickly enraged his supporters on the Right by moving rapidly to negotiate an agreement for Algerian independence. By signing the 1962 Évian Accords, de Gaulle earned himself the unvarnished hatred of the pieds-noirs — hundreds of thousands who chose to depart for the mainland rather than remain in an independent Algeria. At the end of the 1950s, right-wing opponents of Algerian independence had formed a terrorist group, the OAS, with the aim of overthrowing de Gaulle, who on several occasions narrowly escaped their assassination attempts.

But if the Gaullist state was at war with the far right, its true enemy was the Left. The President had always been strongly anticommunist, and his nationalism had no room for an independent left or labor movement to challenge the state's authority. When he returned to power soon after the coup in Algeria, many on the Left had denounced him as the representative of far-right elements in the French military. In the early 1960s, the CRS (national paramilitary police) were led by holdovers from the Vichy era. Unsurprisingly, given this background, they engaged in repeated acts of violence against leftists, immigrants, and other enemies, notably, a massacre of Algerian demonstrators in 1961 that left hundreds dead. That incident, and another deadly police attack on protesters the following year, meant that the government and police were often reviled by the Left as crypto-fascists.

De Gaulle, however, was not just another right-wing authoritarian. Despite his anticommunism, he tried to buck American hegemony by carving out an independent foreign policy. In the field of economic policy, de Gaulle was no proponent of free-market policies, but advocated for the muscular statism that came to define postwar French capitalism. This approach reflected de Gaulle's commitment to a French national revival, as well as his desire to counter the influence of the Left.

Throughout the postwar *Les Trente Glorieuses*, the French government directed production and investment priorities, and set targets for imports, prices, employment, and wage growth. It controlled a large collection of state-owned enterprises, and utilized its control over credit allocation to engage in "indicative planning," a strategy in which its planning agencies designed multiyear investment plans and funneled credit to firms in favored industries. The early Fifth Republic saw an expansion of this planning regime, which de Gaulle called an "essential obligation." In France, state planning wasn't a means of sidelining private capitalists, but of supporting them. That was especially true for de Gaulle, whose government closely communicated with

But if the Gaullist state was at war with the far right, its true enemy was the Left.

leading industrialists and business officials. The relationship between private and public interests was so close that one observer described the French planning regime as a "conspiracy between big business and the state."

This system provoked strong opposition from organized labor and the Left. During the postwar decades, that opposition was led by the Communists and their trade union allies. Lionized for its role in the resistance, the Communist Party emerged out of the Second World War as the most popular party in France, winning more than a quarter of all votes in National Assembly elections. Throughout the late 1940s and early '50s, the PCF continued to claim 200,000 members. The PCF also controlled the main trade union federation, the CGT, which at war's end had nearly 4 million members.

In 1956, however, the Communist movement was thrown into crisis by the combined impact of Khrushchev's "secret speech," which detailed the repression of the Stalin years, and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. In France, well-known public figures denounced the invasion and distanced themselves from the PCF. The party found it was unable to convince some of its militants to pass out leaflets supporting the Soviet government, and it lost thousands of members. Nonetheless, the PCF would recover from that setback, and by the 1960s, it had emerged as the leading representative of Communist "orthodoxy" in Western Europe, opposing the "revisionism" of the Italian Communist Party (and those internal dissidents who were dismissed as "Les Italiens").

At the same time, the PCF was being sharply criticized by forces to its left for its tepid opposition to French colonialism in Algeria. French Communism had few remaining allies. Cold War divisions and official anticommunism ensured that even if the PCF enjoyed deep reservoirs of support and a large membership base, it could not break out of its isolation or garner an electoral majority. Yet the party's hegemony on the Left would shape the events of May '68.

The PCF's attitude toward the movement reflected its hostility to the young radicals who led the student protests, viewing them as unreliable, middle-class provocateurs, and it initially stood aside from their protests. In early May, for instance, CGT General Secretary Georges Séguy famously responded to a question about the protests by asking, "Cohn-Bendit, who's that? No doubt, you are referring to this highly publicized movement which, in our view, has no other objective than to drag the working class into adventures by relying on the student movement." PCF leader George Marchais would later write an article in *L'Humanité* where he denounced "the German anarchist Cohn-Bendit … whose agitation is contrary to the mass of students and favors fascist provocations." Marchais concluded, "These false revolutionaries must be unmasked because, objectively, they serve the interests of Gaullist power and the big capitalist monopolies."

At the same time, Communist influence within the labor movement politicized workers in ways that helped push them toward confrontation with the boss. Drawing on the legacy of the June 1936 strike movement, PCF and

Female workers by the occupied factory, May 21, 1968.
Nationaal Archief — Eric Koch / Anefo

CGT members helped to spread the sit-down strike tactic. In many cases, their efforts eventually put them at odds with Communist officials. Yet despite these disagreements, workers joined both the party and the union in large numbers during the May–June strikes.

Throughout the crisis, the PCF and leading currents within the non-Communist left pushed for de Gaulle to be replaced by a left government, led by one of two forces — Pierre Mendès-France, a former Radical Party leader and prime minister, now associated with a small socialist group called the Unified Socialist Party (PSU); or, François Mitterrand, former presidential candidate against de Gaulle in '65, representing the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (FGDS). Yet differences between them remained, and those differences would have significant consequences for the Left's deteriorating fortunes as the movement progressed.

These dynamics paralleled developments inside the labor movement, where divisions between the Communist and socialist left, hardened by the Cold War, had also shaped the organization of French trade unions. Traditionally, unions were split between competing confederal bodies.

The largest was the Communist-led CGT, followed closely by the increasingly radical, but non-Communist CFDT; and the more apolitical Force Ouvrière (FO), a Cold War split from the Communist union.

For labor, de Gaulle's France was not a friendly place. Through a system of industry-wide bargaining, French unions were able to negotiate over matters like minimum wages. But they had little workplace power, and were always subordinate to state control. Low union density went hand-in-hand with labor's lack of influence within the state.

This system contributed to the constant conflicts between workers and management that made French industrial relations so volatile. For instance, during the 1960s, French capitalism was plagued by high strike rates. In the absence of institutional channels for reaching compromise agreements with employers, workers tended to settle disputes with the boss through unauthorized strikes, walkouts, or other disruptive job actions. Grievances were often resolved through temporary work stoppages, which were rarely called by the unions and were often only approved by union officials after the fact.

This had important consequences. Unable to contain shop-floor militancy and labor's wage demands through consensus bargaining, officials instead opted to provoke a slowdown in economic activity to limit the growth of pay, and thus of inflation. The result was a "stop-go" pattern that saw the French economy swing between periods of rapid expansion and bouts of government-engineered recession. In September 1963, for instance, Finance Minister Giscard d'Estaing announced a "stabilization plan," designed to counteract inflationary pressures by reducing financing for industry, raising taxes, cutting government spending, and freezing prices for selected consumer items — an approach that did, in fact, lead to an economic slowdown.

This economic model produced rapid growth after World War II. But it also generated serious instability, which would later help drive the revolt of May '68. By the second half of the 1960s, France had experienced repeated bouts of stagnation, including one that hit just before May 1968. Between the spring of 1967 and the end of that year, the number of jobless workers increased by more than a quarter, and nearly 500,000 were unemployed at the start of 1968 — an unprecedented figure for the postwar era, when France enjoyed close to full employment.

Students in Revolt

However, it wasn't fallout from the economic slowdown, but rising tensions within the universities that would detonate the May explosion. The flash point was a relatively obscure dispute between students and university officials at the university in Nanterre, just outside of Paris. There, student complaints about the administration's strict enforcement of rules preventing men and women from staying together in the dorms led to rising anger. A visit from the Minister of Youth and Sports became the occasion for a confrontation with student leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit, which ended with the Minister telling the twenty-three-year-old student, "If you have sexual problems, go soak in cold water." Then, on March 22, several hundred Nanterre students organized a rally in solidarity with campus activists who had been arrested while demonstrating against the Vietnam War, and later, briefly occupied an administration building, where they held a discussion on class inequality and bureaucratization in the university and covered the wall with radical slogans like "No to the bourgeois university."

These tensions finally boiled over at the end of April. On May 2, after further protests, the university administration announced that Nanterre would be closed indefinitely. In response left-wing students organized a mass meeting at the Sorbonne, in Paris's Latin Quarter, which would become a central hub for the student revolt — its Grand Amphitheater the scene of mass meetings, and the streets and alleyways that surround it, a focal point for the conflict between students and authorities. The next night, fears of a possible crackdown on the students meeting inside the Sorbonne led an angry crowd to gather. That evening, police attempted to enter the building, beating and arresting students as they tried to exit, while the crowd began to throw rocks and bottles at them. What followed was a night of violent clashes that left more than 100 injured and 596 arrested. The next

day, the Sorbonne too was closed, leading student groups to call for an indefinite strike.

As the confrontation between students and the government escalated, officials decided to ban demonstrations in central Paris. In response, on May 6, tens of thousands of protesters, led by the national union of students, UNEF, and the radical faculty union, gathered in the Latin Quarter. Finding themselves under attack from the police, who sought to disperse the protests with tear gas and billy clubs, they began to build makeshift barricades, leading to running street battles which saw 422 arrests and almost a thousand injuries. The protests soon spread to other universities and high schools, as students demanded that the government agree to withdraw police from the universities, reopen the shuttered campuses at Nanterre and the Sorbonne, and drop criminal charges against those jailed.

In the face of this growing movement, the government remained intransigent. After several days of fruitless negotiations, on May 9, the Education Ministry reaffirmed its decision to close the universities, setting the stage for the events of May 10–11, when students occupying streets around the Sorbonne attempted to hold off thousands of riot police during the "Night of the Barricades." Protesters erected dozens of barricades, using cobblestones pried from the Latin Quarter's medieval streets and anything else that was handy to construct ad-hoc fortifications. Facing a massed police presence on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, they armed themselves with helmets, sticks, and makeshift projectiles. When the assault began at 2 AM, students attempted to fight back, chanting "de Gaulle, murderer" before being quickly routed.

The government repression that followed was so intense that even sympathetic observers were moved to criticize the police's tactics. By night's end, the Latin Quarter was the scene of destruction, with hundreds of cars burned, almost 900 wounded, and 469 arrested. Yet the government was forced to concede to the students' key demands: Prime Minister Pompidou agreed to reverse the university closures and free those jailed while protesting.

This combination of repression and concessions failed to stem the growth of the movement, however, and when the Sorbonne reopened on May 13, activists quickly occupied it, setting up a committee to direct activities in the newly liberated "people's university." In the days that followed, roughly 400 popular action committees were set up on different campuses and neighborhoods across Paris, while universities throughout the country were seized by protesters.

At the same time, the trade unions, including the Communist-led CGT, under growing pressure to support the students, announced their support for a national day of action in solidarity on May 13 — including a general work stoppage and mass demonstrations in Paris — around demands for an end to state repression, "a democratic reform of the education system" and "the transformation of the economy by and for the people." That day, the French economy was brought to a halt as over a million people joined the demonstration in the capital, demanding an end to Gaullist rule — "Ten years is enough."

The General Strike

The days that followed saw the growth of the strike movement into an indefinite work stoppage. That development began at the Sud-Aviation plant in Bouguenais, near Nantes, where on Tuesday, May 14, more than 2,500 employees at the factory, who had fought for months against a decision to cut working hours, launched May's first major sit-down strike. The next day saw another factory occupation at the Renault plant in Cléon. On Thursday, the work stoppages began to spread rapidly, as workers launched occupations in key manufacturing hubs, among them Renault's Boulogne-Billancourt production facility, just outside Paris, a historical center of French automobile manufacturing.

The strike wave shut down nearly all of France's industrial conglomerates, much of the public hospital and educational systems, air transport, the Paris regional train network, the national rail system, and a number of public utilities. In the state-owned radio and television companies, employees went out, as did workers in the print media, where stoppages temporarily prevented newspapers from being distributed.

The strike movement was surprising not only for its scope, but for its militancy, reflected in the factory occupations that saw workers across France seize control over their workplaces. These strikes were not motivated by any unified set of demands, but workers were often driven into action by shared grievances over stagnant wages, long hours, continuous speedups, and the constant threat of repression at the hands of management.

The strikers were not all men; in some industries, like textiles, women made up a large proportion of participants. Nor was the workplace revolt limited to younger or more marginal workers. In fact, in key industries like auto manufacturing and aerospace, work stoppages were more common in bigger factories, like the large plants that dotted Paris's western and northern suburbs, where unions were stronger and workers tended to have stronger traditions of internal organization. Most often, the strikes were led by more experienced workers who were over thirty years old. For the most part, these were longtime militants with strong roots on the shop floor and a history of union activism.

In the week that followed, the strikes continued to gain steam. On Monday, May 20, over five million workers were out on strike. In the radical wing of the student movement, the spread of the factory occupations led many to conclude that France was on the verge of a revolutionary situation. Thus, on May 21, the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR), whose members played a leading role in the student movement, distributed a leaflet which called for the movement to go beyond merely changing the government and instead fight for the creation of a socialist democracy: "The power we want should create the direct democracy of socialism, based on the authority of local committees in the workplaces and in the neighborhoods." "We are being offered a unique opportunity," the leaflet concluded. "Let us not throw it away."

The PCF, which remained deeply suspicious of the student radicals, was much more measured in its rhetoric and proposals. The Communists advocated negotiations between the unions and the state for resolving the conflict, while also calling for de Gaulle's resignation. His departure, it was hoped, would permit the formation of a united government of the center-left parties, along the lines of Léon Blum's 1936 Popular Front coalition.

On May 18, PCF general secretary Waldeck Rochet issued a statement demanding the "constitution of a popular government and democratic union" to deal with the crisis, promising that the Communist Party was prepared to "take on" the responsibilities of leading this effort. For the traditional parties of the socialist left, getting rid of de Gaulle was also a priority, but what was to replace him was not so clear. While some socialists, notably those grouped around François Mitterrand, shared the PCF's emphasis on a broad coalition of the Left, others believed that strikes were indicative a more fundamental shift in the balance of power. Thus, early on in May, Mendès-France's PSU produced a leaflet which called for de Gaulle to go but concluded, "No other form of bourgeois society must succeed Gaullism, but a socialist society under the democratic control of the workers."

Two weeks later, at the height of the political crisis, another PSU statement called for the extension of the popular action committees that had popped up in many places to every sector of society. The PSU viewed these committees as not just coordination bodies for protests, but as vehicles for socialist self-governance: "It is in such committees as these that the form of a new society should express itself, through discussion and confrontation, but also through action and the setting up of effective powers."

In a striking conclusion for a group that had represented the mainstream of French social democracy, the statement ended with a warning clearly directed at the perceived conservatism of the Communist Party:

> To all those who wish to confine the people's movement or to limit its aims in order to control it better, to those who think they can answer the overall challenge to capitalist society by simply changing the parliamentary balance or a governmental formula, to those who are still hesitating because they did not believe in the student revolt and had doubts about the student-worker alliance during the struggle, we must … respond by opening up new prospects for them.

This statement reflected the growing radicalism of the

Declaring France to be "on the brink of paralysis," de Gaulle raised the specter of civil war if the situation did not improve.

non-Communist left in France, which transformed even the traditional parties of socialist reformism. Similarly, PSU's closest trade union ally, the CFDT, saw the protests as a way of bringing together workers and students around the demand for the democratization of social and economic life, exemplified by the unions' demand for industrial democracy and workers' self-management. On May 16, the CFDT's National Bureau issued a call for workers to organize "democratic structures on the basis of autogestion."

A Deepening Crisis

The government now found itself on the defensive. On May 14, the opposition in the National Assembly, led by Mitterrand and the PCF's Rochet. In a stormy session held on May 22 to discuss the motion, Mitterrand demanded that the government "dissolve the National Assembly and go to the general election!" Adopting a similar line to the Communists, Mitterrand proposed a coalition government, "Starting from the union of the Left, with all the republicans who will join it," and promised that if fresh elections were called, his supporters were ready to "make a majority and a government."

In response, Prime Minister Pompidou expressed sympathy for the protesters' demands and promised to speed-up the introduction of reforms. But behind these conciliatory gestures, the threat of further repression loomed, a prospect Pompidou referenced in a "warning" that "there is a line that cannot be crossed, a point after which the government cannot accept demands that, even if sincere, even if they were legitimate, render it impossible for all the French to live in security and peace."

De Gaulle, meanwhile, was on a state visit to Romania from May 14 to 19, and absent for the beginning of the strike movement. He had given responsibility for handling the conflict to Pompidou, and with the situation deteriorating, the government now shifted from a strategy of appeasement to one of confrontation. On May 19, de Gaulle returned from his trip and pushed officials in his administration to take a harder line. On May 21, the German-born and Jewish Cohn-Bendit was barred from staying in France, a decision that provoked tens of thousands to join a demonstration on his behalf, chanting "We are all German Jews!"

These kinds of tactical blunders by the government only deepened the crisis. On May 24, de Gaulle took to the airwaves for an emergency television address to the nation. Declaring France to be "on the brink of paralysis," de Gaulle raised the specter of "civil war" if the situation did not improve. To that end, he announced a national referendum for June, which would allow the public to give its verdict on his handling of the crisis. He asked voters to show their confidence in him through a "massive" yes vote, promising to resign if the results of the referendum went against him.

De Gaulle's gambit backfired, however. Instead of restoring calm, the speech sparked an immediate reaction from protesters. In Paris alone, 50,000 demonstrated, while revolutionary students seized the stock exchange (trying,

unsuccessfully, to set it on fire). That evening saw the worst violence of the whole May movement, with 456 injured and nearly 800 arrested just in the capital. On the Right, government supporters announced the formation of local Committees for the Defense of the Republic (CDR) opposing what they described as a "violent minority."

The Grenelle Accords

In an effort to bring the strikes to an end, the government now called a conference which brought together the unions and employers. The resulting Grenelle Accords, agreed to on May 27, gave labor a variety of new workplace rights, including the right to organize on the shop floor, to pass out literature, and to collect dues from members inside company gates. The Accords also provided for significant pay increases, including a 35 percent boost in the minimum wage and a 10 percent bump for better-paid workers. Furthermore, employee working-time was to be cut by one to two hours a week.

For the unions and state officials alike, the hope was that the Grenelle Accords would allow for a rapid end to the strike movement. However, before the agreement could be implemented, it had to be ratified by a workforce whose intransigence had only increased through the factory occupations. The problem was that, for the most part, the striking workers were disappointed by the relatively limited concessions provided in the Accords. Many found particularly objectionable a clause which allowed management to recoup work hours lost due to the strike through additional overtime.

French unions, weakened by more than a decade of government hostility and unfavorable labor policies under de Gaulle, now lacked the influence to overcome this resistance. Opposition to the deal was especially strong in the large factories that dominated French manufacturing, where workers in some of France's key industrial conglomerates, including Renault, Citroen, and Sud-Aviation, refused to ratify the Accords. Union officials were forced to pivot to endorse the more confrontational stance. On May 27 a mass meeting of Renault workers, addressed by leaders of the major federations, overwhelmingly rejected the agreement.

The failure of the Grenelle Accords to halt the strikes further eroded the legitimacy of the Gaullist regime. On May 27, tens of thousands of people joined a procession to Charléty stadium in Paris for a rally, addressed by the leaders of the student left, and attended by Mendès-France, who now sought to reinforce his position as the primary alternative to the PCF. In this, he had the backing of not only his own PSU, but the CFDT union federation as well, whose president, Eugène Descamps, described him as the only person "capable of guaranteeing workers' rights conquered in the firm, of carrying out the indispensable structural reforms, of leading a team likely to respond to the great desire for democratization expressed by the workers and students."

Mendès-France said that he was ready to serve as prime minister in a coalition government, so long as it included the "whole left," including the Communists. The PCF had never liked the idea of having the ex-Premier as a coalition partner, and it now tried to sideline him in favor of an alliance with Mitterrand and the more moderate socialist leader, former Prime Minister Guy Mollet. Yet Mendès-France was, by this point, viewed by most of the Left outside of the Communist Party (and even by some Gaullists) as the only figure who could take the reins of government.

On May 28, Mitterrand, who was Mendès-France's rival for leadership of the non-Communist left, gave a press conference at which he declared "there is no state and what now takes the place of one does not even have the appearance of power." Demanding de Gaulle's resignation, he proposed the formation of a new temporary provisional government, led by himself or Mendès-France, which would be dedicated to "founding the socialist democracy and opening to young people this exhilarating prospect, the new alliance of socialism and freedom."

The German Vacation

By the final days of May, the outlook for de Gaulle seemed bleak. The national government had effectively ceased to function. A government official would later recall that Prime

Minister Pompidou "by himself was the whole government." By May 28, de Gaulle was commenting to aides, "I have no government." One minister is said to have wondered if they should expect insurgents in the ministries, and if so, whether any firearms were on hand. The Paris police chief was moved to comment, "It is not clear who defends the government outside the police."

On May 29, in a show of strength, the CGT organized a march that brought out 500,000 protesters yelling "Adieu, de Gaulle" and calling for a "popular government." For de Gaulle, fears that the demo would become an opportunity for the Communists to launch an insurrection (something they had no intention of doing) added to the growing sense of despondency. The president, fearing that his loss of authority was irreversible, now sought to shore up his support with the army, sending emissaries to the key generals to sound them out on the crisis.

Later in the day on May 29, with the president scheduled to address the nation just a few hours later, de Gaulle decided to leave the capital. His mysterious disappearance led to rampant speculation about his whereabouts. The government later claimed that he had departed for a planned visit to his country home, a claim that was too absurd to be believed. In fact, de Gaulle had gone to Germany, where the French army had its headquarters in the town of Baden-Baden. There he met with his old enemy, General Massu, who now headed all French forces in Europe. No one knows just what de Gaulle's intentions were in leaving the country, but Massu would later say that the president was so depressed upon his arrival that only his own pleading convinced him to return to Paris.

After six hours, de Gaulle arrived back at the Presidential Palace, waving away his temporary disappearance as a "momentary lapse." That afternoon, he gave a television address in which he announced that he would not step down or replace Pompidou. Claiming that the demonstrations were driven by "totalitarian" Communists, who he accused of attempting to seize power through a mixture of "intimidation, intoxication, and tyranny," de Gaulle told the public that he had decided to postpone plans for a referendum and would instead dissolve parliament, to allow for new elections.

Promising to use constitutional means to end the crisis, de Gaulle said he would only opt for more extreme measures if threatened with insurrection, a prospect, he said, which raised the specter of a Soviet dictatorship. Against such a danger, the president promised to take drastic action, even including extra-constitutional measures, to protect the country from "subversion." "Should this situation of force be maintained," he concluded, "I will be obliged in order to maintain the Republic to adopt different methods … other than an immediate vote by the country."

Whether de Gaulle really would have gone down that road is impossible to know for sure. But the PCF, in its reply, accused the regime of preparing a military coup, arguing that the "attack against the Communist Party is designed to mask the wish of General de Gaulle to impose his own dictatorship." Meanwhile, the leading trade union confederations issued a joint statement denouncing de Gaulle and demanding an end to employer intransigence. "We reject the call to civil war by the head of state," it concluded. "Only the satisfaction of our claims will stop the strike."

De Gaulle's Counteroffensive

But momentum now began to swing toward the regime. In response to de Gaulle's address, 800,000 government supporters marched down the Champs-Elysées waving French flags and chanting right-wing slogans, including one that promised to send "Cohn-Bendit to Dachau." This opening to the far right was no accident. To bolster the government's standing on this front, the Interior Ministry soon announced that it would allow jailed members of the banned terrorist organization OAS to go free.

With wind now in the sails of the government, workers began to slowly trickle back in during the first two weeks of June. The movement's loss of momentum was compounded by the timing of a religious holiday, which meant there was a long weekend on June 2–4. The extra vacation day, following on the heels of de Gaulle's speech, helped reverse the tide of the strike wave. In the public sector, the government made significant concessions on wages and other contentious issues and wrapped the strikes up over the next two weeks.

View of the demonstrations in Toulouse, June 11–12, 1968.
Municipal Archives of the city of Toulouse

The Communist-led CGT played an important role in these efforts. By and large, union officials tried to lobby workers to accept deals, highlighting the significant concessions employers were offering. On June 5, the CGT issued a statement, in which it proclaimed victory for the striking workers and argued that "wherever essential demands have been met, it is in the interests of the employees to call en masse for the return to work in unity."

This approach provoked a further split between the Communists and their opponents on the radical left, with each side accusing the other of acting dishonestly. On June 6, Étienne Fajon, PCF Political Bureau member and *L'Humanité* editor, wrote an article supporting the CGT's line that the strikes must be ended as soon as possible. Fajon argued that criticism of this position was being pushed by "pseudo-revolutionary groups," who, "having sabotaged the great movement underway on the pretext that its demands are no longer relevant," were "now trying to prevent the resumption of work." Behind these ultra-leftists, he claimed, lay the hand of the Gaullist regime, and he warned that "the defeat of those whom they serve will at the same time be their own defeat."

With the Left divided and the tide now turning against the strikes, the administration felt emboldened to step up the campaign of repression against those who refused to give way. Pompidou now argued that "the motto 'to work' must be France's slogan at this moment," and the government showed it meant to enforce that slogan with force. To test this harder line, the state launched an assault on workers in the auto industry. On June 6, one thousand riot police from the CRS surrounded the occupied Renault plant at Flins after management accused union activists of sabotaging a vote on whether to end the strike. Police then occupied the factory.

The government followed this up with a similar attack. In this case, the victims were striking workers at one of France's largest factories, the giant Peugeot-Sochaux plant, home to over 25,000 employees. On June 10, after three weeks of work stoppages and following the failure of negotiations with workers occupying the factory, management, with government backing, decided to reopen the plant by force. That night, 6,000 officers from the CRS surrounded 1,000 workers and supporters, who erected barricades outside the factory and armed themselves with whatever makeshift weapons they could find. The fighting that followed saw police use guns, tear gas, and batons against the striking workers, two of whom were killed and 150 injured.

In response, the student union, UNEF, called for a protest on June 12. It would prove to be the last public demonstration it organized as part of the May–June movement. The protest was broken up before it could begin, with police flooding the streets around the proposed meeting place to prevent attendees from participating. The next day, the government announced that it was prohibiting all public demonstrations for a period of several weeks and disbanding a number of organizations of the far left. It also decreed that foreigners caught participating in the protests would be deported.

In the week that followed, the effectiveness of this more combative approach became clear. Broke and exhausted after almost a month of striking, and faced with the prospect of isolation, workers who had continued to resist now began to drift back to work. Meanwhile, the government had moved to vacate the most symbolically important occupations and expel protesters from their remaining strongholds: on June 14, the Odéon was retaken; two days later, the Sorbonne was cleared by police; and on the 27th, the occupation of the School of Fine Arts was brought to an end.

The government's ability to end the strike movement put it in an ideal position for the June 23 parliamentary elections. For the middle classes, the instability that the movement produced was indicative of the dangers of the totalitarian left. Despite the Communist Party's denunciations of the excesses of "ultra-left adventurists," and regardless of its efforts to bring the strikes to a rapid and successful close, in the minds of many French voters, the PCF was responsible for the disruption. By raising the specter of a Soviet dictatorship, the Gaullists were able to portray their opponents as Moscow-controlled totalitarians, while painting themselves as the defenders of order and liberty.

The Left, meanwhile, entered the elections divided and rudderless. The Communist Party found itself increasingly at odds with the rest of the Left. As May turned to June, its relations with the student radicals, always tenuous at best, had become more and more contentious. As voters went to the polls, there was also considerable public sniping between the Communists and their socialist counterparts, including not just Mendès-France (whom the PCF had never much valued) but also Mitterrand, with whom it hoped to forge a governing coalition. By the evening of June 30, when the second round of voting had been completed, it was clear that the Left had been routed: while the PCF suffered a loss of nearly 40 seats (dropping from 73 to just 34), Mitterrand's Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left saw its representation fall from 118 to 57 deputies.

Yet if the Gaullists emerged victorious from the election, for de Gaulle, the triumph was short-lived. The events of May had exposed the government's fundamental weakness — it would never recover from this loss of prestige. De Gaulle himself now appeared increasingly as an anachronism whose outlook was no longer compatible with the demands of a modern society. Pompidou's independence during the crisis led to his dismissal on July 10, 1968. Less than a year later, de Gaulle himself was forced from office

May '68 marked the high point of a period of radical protest that would continue into the 1970s.

after his defeat in an April 1969 referendum on two proposed amendments to the 1958 Constitution. His departure opened up space for Pompidou's triumph in the presidential election that summer.

The Left's electoral defeats in 1968 and 1969 had important consequences for its future. Mendès-France, increasingly uncomfortable with the leftward turn of the PSU, quit the party and retired from politics soon afterwards. Others on the non-Communist left, however, became convinced that a new, more powerful vehicle was needed if it hoped to compete with the PCF for influence and challenge the Gaullists' stranglehold on state power. Thus, Mitterrand decided in 1971 to join the newly formed Socialist Party, immediately becoming its standard bearer. Promising a "rupture" with capitalism, he entered negotiations with the PCF, which resulted in joint agreement on the "Common Program" in 1972. While Mitterrand's relationship with the Communists would go through a series of ups and downs in the years that followed, these developments nonetheless set the stage for his 1981 election.

What May Brought

For the far left, May '68 marked the high point of a period of radical protest that would continue into the 1970s. While in France, mobilizations never again approached the peaks of that month, elsewhere in Europe there were movements that achieved a similar scale and breadth, such as the factory movement in Italy during the Hot Autumn of '69. Nowhere else, however, was there such a concentrated explosion of student protests and workplace struggles.

Today, many observers question the belief that May '68 was motivated by radical political aims, and ask whether it actually constituted a danger to the existing order in France. In liberal circles, that understanding has been challenged by observers who stress protesters' desire to transform established cultural norms and counter the traditional conservatism of French society. The late historian Tony Judt wrote that the "May Events in France had a psychological impact out of all proportion to their true significance," arguing that the protests reflected a "fundamentally apolitical mood" and expressed "irritation and frustration, but remarkably little anger." For the most part, Judt concludes, the Gaullist state not only survived, its "institutions were never seriously questioned."

If this was true, however, it was not so clear to de Gaulle and Pompidou. For them, the last days of May were marked by growing fears of a total government collapse. In May 1968, "neither the political class, nor the Communist Party understood the weakness of the state and how vulnerable it was," says Michel Jobert, who ran Pomidou's office. Immediately before departing for Germany on May 29, de Gaulle is reported to have told his son-in-law, General de Boissieu: "I do not want to give them a chance to attack the Elysée [Palace] … I have decided to leave: nobody attacks an empty palace." While in Baden-Baden, the president allegedly told Massu: "Everything is done.

The communists have created a general paralysis in the country. I don't run anything anymore."

The interpretation offered by those, like Judt, who emphasize the lack of a shared political ideology or revolutionary agenda within the movement, overlaps with the assessments of a number of prominent ex-'68ers who have renounced the radical ambitions of their past. Now a Green parliamentarian, Daniel Cohn-Bendit has even written a book, appropriately titled, *Forget 68*. Cohn-Bendit is hardly the only figure from the '68 generation to trade in the radical politics of his student days for a more respectable brand of liberalism. Others who traveled down this road went even further in turning against the very radicalism that once drove their participation in the protests of '68. Already by the mid-1970s, the collection of ex-leftists known as the "New Philosophers" were denouncing the movement for reviving Marxist ideologies, which they saw as containing the seeds of Soviet totalitarianism.

Today, Bernard-Henri Lévy and other liberals can point to aspects of the movement that are still worth celebrating, especially its role in challenging the repressive values and outdated mores that prevailed in France at the end of the 1960s. For much of the French right, on the other hand, these same features are seen as the most destructive elements of May '68. In 2007, former president Nicolas Sarkozy famously denounced the "heirs of 1968" for contributing to the moral and cultural degradation of French society, insisting that the movement's legacy must finally be "liquidated."

So what did May '68 actually accomplish? In the short term, the movement secured a significant increase in pay for French workers — almost 11 percent in just one year. Public spending introduced by the government to appease the strikers also provided an additional 1.2 billion francs to households. After June, however, the collapse of the strike wave allowed French business to enjoy the fruits of a booming economy. Overall, the French economy grew by more than 3 percent in 1968, despite the lost production due to the strikes. Industrial output increased by an impressive 7.4 percent.

Afterwards, it became clear that, while the stinging defeat of the movement in June was a blow to the Left, it did not signal a rightward turn in French politics. In fact, the political climate of the early 1970s proved favorable to an enhanced reform agenda. During these years, feminists, gay-rights activists, and others began to mobilize, and a number of measures were adopted which would have been impossible a decade earlier: in 1974, for instance, legislation was introduced to allow women the right to abortion. Moreover, the fallout from May '68 fed a general uptick in labor militancy which resulted in a 35 percent increase in real wages between 1969 and 1973. In fact, the years after 1968 saw considerable reforms to French capitalism. This period saw the introduction of a host of new or beefed up social-welfare benefits, a new statutory minimum wage, and rule changes to provide added protection for unions and workplace organizing, among other measures.

Yet the gains of the movement clearly fell short of what most militants had hoped for during the heady days of May. For many on the Left, the primary culprit for this disappointing outcome was the PCF, whose sectarian conservatism and insistence on bringing the strikes to an early end was widely thought to have doomed the movement. It is true that the Communist Party was dismissive and hostile toward the student left — often in ways that were highly destructive — and exerted itself to reach a settlement with the government and employers to end the strike movement as soon as possible. In part, it was motivated by fears that the workers would be isolated, and by a desire to avoid giving the Gaullist regime an excuse to step up its repression or even launch a military coup. "If we are not under a dictatorship, it is because we did not let ourselves be swept away by our impatience," one PCF leader argued. In part, however, its concern was to control an increasingly explosive situation for a labor movement it had long dominated. Above all, the Communists pinned their hopes on an electoral alliance with socialist leaders like Mitterrand, with the intention of forming a new coalition government along the lines of the 1930s Popular Front. That strategy proved a failure.

However, that does not mean that revolution was on the agenda in 1968. As the veteran '68ers Alain Krivine and Daniel Bensaïd note, "The strikers in their mass wanted to settle a social problem, shake the yoke of an authoritarian regime. From there to revolution there was still a long way to go." But that does not mean a better outcome was impossible. What that might have looked like is up for debate: certainly, they might have secured more concessions than those offered in the Grenelle Accords; the socialist left could have come out of the movement stronger, with greater momentum and unity, than it did; and de Gaulle's administration might not have held onto power.

If nostalgia for the lost promise of a brief period of radical ascent half a century ago must be avoided, so too must the fatalism that says no other result was possible. ■

READING MATERIEL

DOWN WITH JOURNALISTS AND THOSE WHO CATER TO THEM.

BY MEAGAN DAY

When *Ramparts* Reigned

How *Ramparts* went from Catholic literary magazine to the vanguard of the New Left.

In 1966, William F. Buckley hosted an episode of *Firing Line* titled "Is *Ramparts Magazine* Un-American?" Gesturing to his guest, *Ramparts* editor Bob Scheer, Buckley went on the offensive, saying, "Here is a man … whose magazine defends a lot of positions that are uniquely defended by communists. I don't think he understands the consequences of it." For Scheer, playing to a hostile audience, it was Buckley — a "Stalinist with an $11-million inheritance" who had a "contempt" for freedom.

The *Firing Line* host's charges were hyperbolic, but the target made sense. Though forgotten today, it's hard to imagine a New Left without *Ramparts*. The magazine played a key role in the rise of the Black Panthers, blew the whistle on the CIA more than once, inspired Martin Luther King Jr to speak out against the Vietnam War, and was granted exclusive rights to Che Guevara's diaries by Fidel Castro himself. It gave a platform to Noam Chomsky, Susan Sontag, Bobby Seale, Seymour Hersh, Angela Davis, Cesar Chavez, Murray Bookchin, Christopher Hitchens, and many more. It was, as Peter Richardson writes in *A Bomb in Every Issue*, "the journalistic equivalent of a rock band, a mercurial confluence of raw talent, youthful energy and high audacity."

The magazine notably gave us David Horowitz, one of its final editors, who went from dour Marxist to anti-imperialist firebrand to right-wing reactionary in a few decades. But *Ramparts* alumni ended up all over the map: some landed on the far left (Maoist Bob Avakian is a former *Ramparts* researcher), others on the center left (three editors founded *Mother Jones*), and some drifted from politics to culture (two editors departed to found *Rolling Stone*). Even Fox News's Brit Hume served as Washington correspondent for *Ramparts*.

Vol. 1 No. 1 — May 1962

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Ramparts was founded in 1962 in the San Francisco Bay Area as "a forum for the mature American Catholic," dedicated to advancing "those positive principles of Hellenic-Christian tradition which have shaped and sustained our civilization for the past two thousand years." Its founder Ed Keating was a wealthy young Catholic convert, and he staffed the magazine with other justice-minded Catholics, including Thomas Merton and John Howard Griffin.

But what began as an erudite Catholic debate forum was soon largely devoted to the movement for black equality, a topic it explored from both a Catholic and a secular perspective.

"Keating's keen sense of justice attuned him to racial equality and civil rights issues," writes Richardson, "but his other views could be conservative, even reactionary." Still, he didn't resist the magazine's radical drift. He brought on a flamboyant young Catholic reporter named Warren Hinckle and swiftly promoted him to executive editor. Hinckle was a San Francisco native whose grandmother had been a barroom entertainer on the Barbary Coast. He had a pet monkey and wore a black eye patch due to a childhood auto accident. He was a dandy who donned white linen and velvet suits, and he was also an alcoholic: at the North Beach bars where he was a regular, bartenders were known to greet him by lining up fifteen screwdrivers, which Hinckle would polish off in quick succession.

Hinckle, too, was deeply interested in civil rights, having confronted a chilling racial double standard on the police beat at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. One of the first stories he worked on for *Ramparts* was an investigation into the murders of three civil rights activists in Mississippi. A subsequent issue edited by Hinckle featured a special report on the 1964 riots in Harlem: "An extraordinary account of the Harlem Riots — told by people who were there — in words few white men have ever heard." The white cross that had graced the back of the magazine was replaced by a photo of a black man with a bleeding head, surrounded by police.

By late 1964, Hinckle had transformed *Ramparts* into a monthly progressive news magazine with hard-hitting investigative stories, glossy photos, and flashy headlines. The magazine began publishing anti–Vietnam War content in 1965 and never looked back. *Ramparts*'s watershed investigative piece was published in 1966: Bob Scheer, who had been hired to write about foreign policy, broke a whistle-blower story about the CIA secretly training Saigon police at Michigan State University. The cover featured a drawing of South Vietnam's Madame Nhu dressed as a cheerleader, waving a Michigan State pennant.

The magazine moved its headquarters to San Francisco's North Beach, a neighborhood associated with beat poets and topless bars, and Hinckle began to hire more secular left-wing agitators with roots in the burgeoning Bay Area youth counterculture, draining the magazine of what remained of its religious character. ("There haven't been so many Jews involved in a Catholic operation since the twelve apostles," remarked I. F. Stone.) Keating, whose eccentricities rivaled Hinckle's, decorated his office with a thick black rug and heavy velvet curtains, while outside the colors popped and the magazine courted — and in many respects crafted —the political counterculture.

Ramparts was rigorous without being stuffy. Over the next several years the magazine ran features exposing government secrets alongside counterculture celebrity profiles and satirical columns. "Much like Allen Ginsberg's effect on poetry," writes Richardson, "*Ramparts* loosened the breath of American political journalism."

Vol. 7 No. 12 — December 1968

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Starting in 1966, exposés on the CIA and the American military became the magazine's trademark. And *Ramparts* editors didn't just write about Vietnam; in 1966, three of the magazine's principals ran for office, taking aim at the Cold War liberals leading the war. One of these candidates was Scheer, who condemned his Democratic primary opponent's hawkish anti-communism as "middle of the road extremism." They all lost, but their campaigns helped turn Vietnam into a central campaign issue in California, and eventually the rest of the nation.

Also in 1966, *Ramparts* made a fateful connection: a lawyer passed along the notebooks of a black San Quentin inmate named Eldridge Cleaver. The magazine immediately began publishing Cleaver's writing, helped arrange for him to receive parole, threw him a party on his release, and added him to the masthead as a staff writer. Soon after settling into his role at *Ramparts*, Cleaver became acquainted with members of the newly formed Black Panther Party and joined in short order.

Cleaver's connection to Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and other Panthers gave *Ramparts* a front-row view of black radicalism in the Bay Area. The first showdown between the Panthers and the police occurred in February 1967 outside the *Ramparts* office in San Francisco. The now-famous photo of Huey Newton in a throne-like chair holding a spear and a shotgun appeared in a 1967 issue of *Ramparts*.

During this time, the increasingly radical *Ramparts* was publishing government confidences without hesitation. It followed up the Michigan State story with a story about the CIA funding the National Student Association, a revelation that led to the exposure of dozens of similar CIA front operations. The federal government responded by auditing the magazine aggressively and planting news stories suggesting that it was part of a foreign-led Communist plot. In 1967, the FBI burglarized and ransacked the *Ramparts* office. According to the account in Richardson's book,

"There we were, all staying at the Ambassador Hotel in Chicago, while the movement kids were getting their skulls cracked."

Hinckle believed he had done it himself during a drinking blackout until an FBI agent confessed years later.

Despite the harassment, the publication was making an impact on the broader left. In 1967 it published an ambitious essay about napalmed Vietnamese children, with graphic accompanying photos. The story eventually landed in the lap of Martin Luther King Jr. A friend recalled King's encounter with the article: "When he came to *Ramparts* magazine he stopped. He froze and looked at the pictures from Vietnam," and decided that day to speak out against the war. When he eventually did, he offered *Ramparts* sole rights to publish the text of his speech.

But the magazine's most significant impact was on the student antiwar movement. Jeff Cohen, who later founded Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR), remembered it being passed around his dorm room in Ann Arbor. "It was dog-eared by the time I got it. It really was a radicalizing tool of its own. It ripped your head off. It helped turn my cousin's fraternity into an SDS chapter."

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Ramparts developed close relationships with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) activists, including the organization's former president Todd Gitlin, who was tapped to cover the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Everyone knew the DNC would bring mayhem. The state was losing what little patience it had with demonstrators, and a violent mood was beginning to capture the student movement. *Ramparts* editors struggled with whether to publish certain calls to action, such as Tom Hayden speaking in what Gitlin thought was "chillingly cavalier tones about street actions which would run the risk of getting people killed."

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The fractures in the student movement were widening, Gitlin recalls, with the "action freaks" denouncing the sit-in cohort as "movement creeps" whose revolutionary strategy was "wimpy." Meanwhile *Ramparts* itself, being a glossy national magazine and not an activist organization, was developing an awkward relationship to the student movement — the closer the two grew, the more noticeable the dissonance became. For example, Hinckle used magazine funds to pay for luxurious accommodations for its reporters in Chicago and flew himself and Scheer there first-class. "There we were, all staying at the Ambassador Hotel in Chicago, while the movement kids were getting their skulls cracked," Scheer recalls.

The assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr in 1968 marked a turning point for the New Left. After King's assassination, the Panthers' alienation from America transformed into determination to foment international insurrection. Eldridge Cleaver left the country; his wife, party member Kathleen Cleaver, stayed behind and wrote of America in the pages of *Ramparts*, "Let it burn, let it burn." SDS collapsed, with some "action freaks" opting for bombings and fugitive life over sit-ins and demonstrations.

As George N. Katsiaficas wrote in *The Imagination of the New Left*, "The arguments became polarized into what might have been two illogical extremes: the complete rejection of confrontation, on the one hand, and the glorification of it, on the other." *Ramparts*, for its part, eventually came to represent the latter.

Keating had blown his entire inheritance and exited the stage. Amid financial turmoil two younger *Ramparts* editors, David Horowitz and Peter Collier, ousted Hinckle and Scheer. The magazine stayed afloat for a few more years, but like the American New Left itself, its attentions were divided and its broader message increasingly inarticulate.

After the turn of the decade, some contributors wrote in the pages of *Ramparts* about American imperialism, some about environmentalism, others about rape. While many of

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these articles were ambitious and insightful, the magazine increasingly failed to offer a comprehensive worldview that integrated them all. Instead, each represented a distinct path that some tribe or another of former New Leftists would march down in the 1970s and beyond. It increasingly seemed that the only banner under which *Ramparts* contributors were united was an embrace of extreme positions and actions. Articles frequently lionized those urban guerrillas who took up arms, bombed or burned buildings, and engaged in open combat with police.

Within years, it was clear to everyone that *Ramparts*'s moment was over. The magazine shuttered forever in 1975. The Weather Underground's last bomb exploded that same year, as Black Panther Party chapters were disbanding across the nation. Some left movements were still in full swing — radical feminism, environmentalism — but their luminaries had moved on to other media outlets, increasingly with a singular focus. Whatever shared vision of emancipation existed was lost.

As the *Ramparts* staff was winding down in San Francisco, missing issues and struggling to pay rent, the magazine's former star staff writer Eldridge Cleaver returned from overseas. Upon arrival, he was arrested on outstanding charges from 1968, which already seemed like an eternity ago. Whether earnestly or to avoid jail time or both, he announced his conversion to Christianity. Richardson recounts the following story in his book:

> A former Black Panther asked Cleaver, "Hey Eldridge, what's all this shit, now you're a big conservative and you're all into this religion and everything. What the hell is that all about?" Cleaver lit a joint and said, "Look brother, we've *seen* all the revolution we're gonna see." ■

BY DAVID BRODER

Discovering Shanghai in Paris

Mao's *Little Red Book* united student radicals with Third World guerrillas.

A decade after the events in Paris, Régis Debray passed a withering verdict on the Maoism that had colored much of France's far left in May '68. In his mockingly titled "Modest Contribution to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Tenth Anniversary," Debray derided the '68er radicals who had looked to Chairman Mao for an anti-bureaucratic, emancipatory socialism. "The Great Helmsman" was certainly an unusual guide for these militants' rebellion against French conservatism.

The "pro-Chinese" '68ers had torn down the old France and the old left, only for many to arrive at liberalism. For Debray, this contorted route to capitalist modernity resembled a past voyager whose maps to India had taken him to the Americas: these modern Columbuses thought "they were discovering China in Paris, when in fact they were landing in California. Their sails were filled by the West wind, but they were steering by the *Little Red Book* which said the opposite."

During the movements of 1968 that book of Mao Zedong quotations had indeed enjoyed a curious prominence in the Western far left, and in anti-imperialist and resistance movements more generally. With over a billion copies printed, its 427 quotations and aphorisms were both a political compass for a fresh layer of militants and, in their sheer ubiquity, a symbolic point of reference that seemed to harbor a new world.

Published in 2014 upon the fiftieth anniversary of its first printing, *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History* (edited by Alexander C. Cook) examines this text's extraordinary success in a variety of national contexts. Taking in not just Western leftist radicalism but anticolonial struggles, the Eastern Bloc countries, and its uses in the People's Republic of China, its chapters are a fascinating insight into the '68 period and the imaginary in which Mao Zedong Thought took root.

Contradiction

This is perhaps most starkly illustrated in Julian Bourg's chapter on the French influence of the *Little Red Book*. The prestige that the French Communist Party (PCF) had

built during the World War II Resistance had already by the 1960s begun to ebb, especially for those who supported the Algerian Revolution. Mao's China, which began to part ways with the Soviet Union in the late 1950s, became an alternative reference point for those who accused the PCF of conservatism.

The *Little Red Book*, first appearing in France in 1966, appealed to a hard, orthodox Leninist sensibility, but also the so-called "anti-hierarchical" (later, "spontaneist") Maoism of the Proletarian Left. The students around Louis Althusser were key to the formation of this latter brand of French Maoism, and despite their lack of prominence in the May events themselves, after 1968 they formed one of the dominant trends of the new dissident left.

This sensibility, present across several organizations, was an intellectual phenomenon but also concentrated on organizing groups such as rural laborers, immigrants, and prisoners, relatively marginal to the PCF's own conception of the working class or French people. The *Little Red Book*'s veneration of youth, renewal, and "study" appealed to the young militants at the heart of this tendency, immortalized in Jean-Luc Godard's film *La Chinoise*.

While Godard's description of his subjects as "Robinsons whose Friday is Marxism" suggests an image of wayward travelers, Bourg points to a more theorized use of Mao's work. Key was Althusser's wider use of Mao's dialectics to attack stale Communist orthodoxy. It is, however, difficult to avoid the conclusion that the *Little Red Book* is itself deeply schematic, not least in its pretension to summarize and replace the insights of all previous Marxism.

For all the Maoists' deprecation of Soviet monolithism, the book is strikingly jarring. We might even say that in the West the quotations' evident cultural alienness was part of their luster, the embrace of a new language from a new world. Its elision of nation and class, and its efforts to counterpose "faith in the people" and the "revisionists" and "running dogs," created a simplistic system of binaries to be applied to political struggle around the world.

It vigorously denounced Soviet dogmatism in the name of Mao's own. Elizabeth McGuire describes a 1967 incident in Lenin's mausoleum where Chinese tourists holding up copies of the *Book* began to sing the quotations, to the bemusement of Soviet onlookers, before allegedly sparking a brawl. This was followed by physical clashes at the Soviet embassy in Beijing and the Chinese embassy in East Germany, where the work was similarly suppressed.

During the Cultural Revolution of 1966–76, carrying the book and being able to quote from it was a challenge to Soviet orthodoxy. Yet it was also an object of factional conflict within China itself. With the death of its orchestrator Lin Biao in 1971 and Mao himself in 1976, it fell into discredit.

By the end of the 1970s, the *Little Red Book* had been pulled off the bookshelves in the People's Republic, condemned as a distortion of Mao Zedong Thought. With the retreat of the student movements that had flourished in 1968, and indeed Mao's reconciliation with Richard Nixon, its appeal had also faded in the West. This, and then China's market turn in 1978, was a psychological trauma for those who had invested their hopes in an anti-systemic power.

Anti-Imperialism

Mao's Three Worlds Theory identified the Soviet Union as a "social-imperialist" great power standing alongside the United States as a barrier to the global revolution. The USSR's "state capitalism" after Stalin's death was identified with its conservative acceptance of peaceful coexistence with the West, with Moscow hesitant or outright unwilling to support the anticolonial movements of the 1960s.

While the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties allied to it had made great headway after World War II, following Stalin's death its advance was less notable. Nikita Khrushchev's recognition of his predecessor's crimes, then suppression of the Hungarian revolt in 1956, had undermined the unity and idealism of the Communist movement, and the Cuban Revolution of 1959 further made clear that new centers of revolutionary prestige were on the rise.

In the Maoist imaginary, China stood in the vanguard of the Third World revolt against the postwar global order. This was an element of Maoism's appeal among the European and US far left, and in particular those who looked to Algeria and Vietnam as evidence of the possibility of overthrowing

established Cold War dividing lines. For Lin Biao, the *Little Red Book* was an "atomic bomb" able to blow apart the old world.

Such a description reflected both Chinese pride, as it sought to catch up technologically with the more established powers, and what might kindly be called a slightly unhinged idea of catastrophe producing redemption. Nonetheless, Lin's comment aptly indicated the charge of the Maoist-inspired anticolonial politics of the '68 period, ranging from anti-imperialist guerrillas in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to even the heart of empire.

Indeed, in the United States, the *Little Red Book* was widely read in Black Power and anti-imperialist circles. Huey Newton was well-versed in Mao's previous work and, with Bobby Seale, promoted the sale of the book as a means of financing the Black Panther Party. Its message of "serving the people" was of course reflected in the Panthers' own community activism, and together with the likes of Frantz Fanon it served as a counterpoint to a Eurocentric socialist canon.

Bill Mullen sharply illustrates its role in the Panthers' vision: both a "blueprint" from afar and a work whose simple truths allowed it to be used as a "blank check." A Detroit militant like Grace Lee Boggs was critical of West Coast Black Panthers' superficial transplanting of Mao into the US context. Yet she paired this with a classically Maoist focus on the primacy of study, integrating Mao Zedong Thought, Lenin, and Amílcar Cabral into a new anti-imperialist politics.

For Mullen, the *Little Red Book* was both "a symbol for an oversized and itinerant dream — a successful Chinese-style revolution in America" and "a prism onto that dream's irreconcilability with US capitalist imperialism." Yet with the decline of the '68 left and indeed China's own capitalist turn, Maoism left its mark in a contorted, cultural form, especially through the application of Maoist "self-criticism" and "consciousness-raising" in campus radicalism.

Marketing

Today the Panthers' slogans are lauded by kitsch art exhibitions, but the force of their message has been dulled by the manufacturers of posters and T-shirts. This is of course part of a more general mainstream recuperation of '68: the countercultural revolt that ended up being venerated as nothing but *cool*.

While any characterization of '68 must explore the silencing of the sharper politicization that shaped this period, Quinn Slobodian's chapter can be thanked for pointing out a contradiction that was already present within the late 1960s uses of the *Little Red Book*. He uses the notion of the book-as-"badge" to suggest that for many, the Mao volume was more like a fashion accessory than a text to be understood.

This is best encapsulated in a 1968 anecdote in which Freiburg police attempted to impose a book-sales permit, in response to which German student demonstrators offered the *Little Red Book* for free together with a tomato costing two marks. Just like the tomato, the book was ammunition — to be thrown.

In this sense the *Little Red Book* occupied an unusual position between being a serious article of faith and an ironic "provocation." Its uses were as varied as they were widespread, a single ubiquitous book onto which militants projected all manner of beliefs. As old orthodoxies crumbled, the book with the force of an "atomic bomb" united a transcontinental revolt. Yet, ultimately, Mao's quotations provided no easy map to a new world. ■

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

COLUMBIA

TO: Mr. W. C. Sullivan

DATE: 5/9/68

FROM: C. D. Brennan

SUBJECT: COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
INTERNAL SECURITY
DISRUPTION OF THE NEW LEFT

Our Nation is undergoing an era of disruption and violence caused to a large extent by various individuals generally connected with the New Left. Some of these activists urge revolution in America and call for the defeat of the United States in Vietnam. They continually and falsely allege police brutality and do not hesitate to utilize unlawful acts to further their so-called causes. The New Left has on many occasions viciously and scurrilously attacked the Director and the Bureau in an attempt to hamper our investigation of it and to drive us off the college campuses. With this in mind, it is our recommendation that a new Counterintelligence Program be designed to neutralize the New Left and the Key Activists. The Key Activists are those individuals who are the moving forces behind the New Left and on whom we have intensified our investigations.

The purpose of this program is to expose, disrupt and otherwise neutralize the activities of this group and persons connected with it. It is hoped that with this new program their violent and illegal activities may be reduced if not curtailed.

General instructions are being furnished to all offices relating to the purpose and administration of this new program. Briefly, these instructions require all offices to submit an analysis of possible counterintelligence operations on the New Left and on the Key Activists on or before 6/1/68, including any specific recommendations for action. Thereafter, all offices will submit a 90-day status letter setting forth a summary of their accomplishments and future plans. Each office will maintain a pending case and assign experienced personnel to this program. All proposed counterintelligence action must be approved at the Seat of Government prior to instituting it. This new program will be supervised at the Seat of Government by a Special Agent supervisor in the Internal Security Section.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) That the Domestic Intelligence Division be authorized to immediately initiate a coordinated Counter-intelligence Program directed at exposing, disrupting, and otherwise neutralizing the New Left and Key Activists.

2) That the attached letter setting forth instructions for the administration and immediate enactment of the program be forwarded to all offices.

William C. Sullivan, then the director of the FBI's Intelligence Division, died in 1977, shot through the neck by a hunter who claimed he mistook him for a deer.

Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI DATE: 5/27/68

FROM : SAC, NEWARK (100-50166)

SUBJECT: COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
INTERNAL SECURITY
DISRUPTION OF THE NEW LEFT

Re Bureau letter to Albany, 5/10/68.

It is believed that in attempting to expose, disrupt, and otherwise neutralize the activities of the "new left" by counterintelligence methods, the Bureau is faced with a rather unique task. Because, first, the "new left" is difficult to actually define; and second, of the complete disregard by "new left" members for moral and social laws and social amenities.

It is believed that the nonconformism in dress and speech, neglect of personal cleanliness, use of obscenities (printed and uttered), publicized sexual promiscuity, experimenting with and the use of drugs, filthy clothes, shaggy hair, wearing of sandals, beads, and unusual jewelry tend to negate any attempt to hold these people up to ridicule. The American press has been doing this with no apparent effect or curtailment of "new left" activities. These individuals are apparently getting strength and more brazen in their attempts to destroy American society, as noted in the takeover recently at Columbia University, New York City, and other universities in the U.S.

We concur.

It is believed therefore, that they must be destroyed or neutralized from the inside. Neutralize them in the same manner they are trying to destroy and neutralize the U.S.

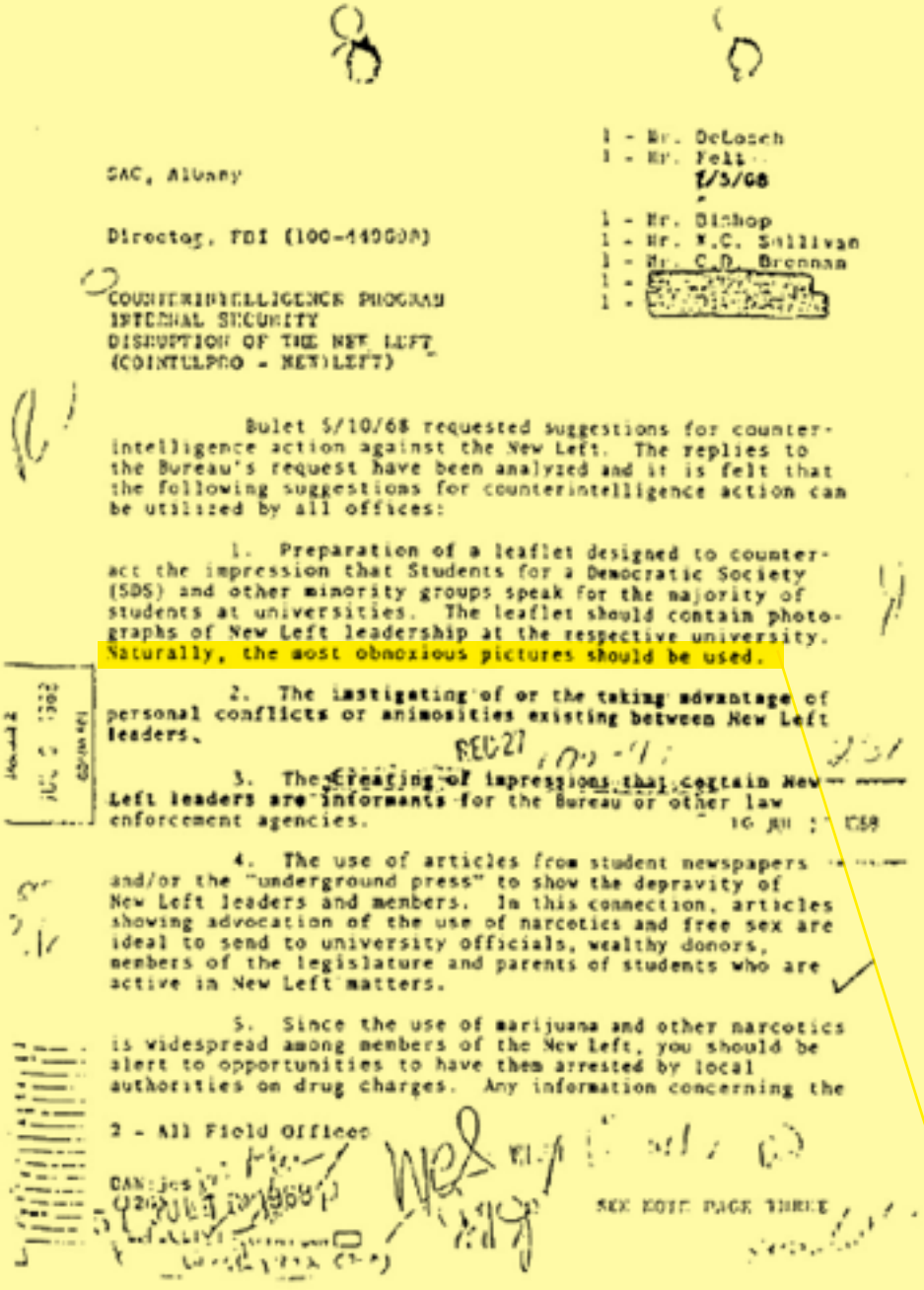
It is Newark's opinion that this can possibly be done in two ways:

MCI 100-449698-31-1

1. The U.S. Government must be convinced, through the proper departments, that it must stop subsidizing its own destruction. Each field office should acquire the names and backgrounds of all students of the "new left", who have been arrested for the very type of activity we are now trying to curtail or halt. Any Government subsidization to these individuals should be stopped.

They must be taken out of the ranks of this predominantly college-age movement; separate them and diminish their power.

2. Certain key leaders must be chosen to become the object of a counterintelligence plot to identify them as government informants. It appears that this is the only thing that could cause these individuals concern; if some of their leaders turned out to be paid informers. Attacking their morals, disrespect for the law, or patriotic disdain will not impress their followers, as it would normally to other groups, so it must be by attacking them through their own principles and beliefs. Accuse them of selling out to "imperialistic monopoly capitalism".



1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Felt
1/3/68
1 - Mr. Bishop
1 - Mr. W.C. Sullivan
1 - Mr. C.D. Brennan
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1 -

SAC, Albany

Director, FBI (100-449698)

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
INTERNAL SECURITY
DISRUPTION OF THE NEW LEFT
(COINTELPRO - NEW LEFT)

Bulet 5/10/68 requested suggestions for counter-intelligence action against the New Left. The replies to the Bureau's request have been analyzed and it is felt that the following suggestions for counterintelligence action can be utilized by all offices:

1. Preparation of a leaflet designed to counteract the impression that Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and other minority groups speak for the majority of students at universities. The leaflet should contain photographs of New Left leadership at the respective university. Naturally, the most obnoxious pictures should be used.

2. The instigating of or the taking advantage of personal conflicts or animosities existing between New Left leaders.

3. The creating of impressions that certain New Left leaders are informants for the Bureau or other law enforcement agencies.

4. The use of articles from student newspapers and/or the "underground press" to show the depravity of New Left leaders and members. In this connection, articles showing advocation of the use of narcotics and free sex are ideal to send to university officials, wealthy donors, members of the legislature and parents of students who are active in New Left matters.

5. Since the use of marijuana and other narcotics is widespread among members of the New Left, you should be alert to opportunities to have them arrested by local authorities on drug charges. Any information concerning the

2 - All Field Offices

DAN:jcs

SEE NOTE PAGE THREE

The FBI field office in Phoenix zeroed in on Arizona State philosophy professor Morris Starsky in 1968, after he allowed his students to miss class to attend an antiwar demonstration. He was fired in 1970 after the FBI submitted a dossier summarizing his activities, including his association with the Socialist Workers Party, to the university's Board of Regents. The dossier was signed "A Concerned ASU Alum."

In July of that year, a slew of high status New Yorkers received an annotated copy of an open letter written by Columbia student leader Mark Rudd, with his expletives highlighted. It asked, "We wonder — after you read this letter — if you will consider Students for a Democratic Society to be a legitimate campus organization in the American University tradition," and was signed "Concerned Alumni."

Naturally...

The mid-century successor to the "mass party."

fact that individuals have marijuana or are engaging in a narcotics party should be immediately furnished to local authorities and they should be encouraged to take action.

6. The drawing up of anonymous letters regarding individuals active in the New Left. These letters should set out their activities and should be sent to their parents, neighbors and the parents' employers. This could have the effect of forcing the parents to take action.

7. Anonymous letters or leaflets describing faculty members and graduate assistants in the various institutions of higher learning who are active in New Left matters. The activities and associations of the individual should be set out. Anonymous mailings should be made to university officials, members of the state legislature, Board of Regents, and to the press. Such letters could be signed "A Concerned Alumni" or "A Concerned Taxpayer."

In fact, the "New England Universities Referendum on Vietnam" was conducted a few months later. 51% of respondents favored a Communist Vietnam over the continuation of the war. 68% thought the war was against the best interests of the Vietnamese people. 73% thought the war was "not worth it."

8. Whenever New Left groups engage in disruptive activities on college campuses, cooperative press contacts should be encouraged to emphasize that the disruptive elements constitute a minority of the students and do not represent the conviction of the majority. The press should demand an immediate student referendum on the issue in question. Inasmuch as the overwhelming majority of students is not active in New Left matters, it is felt that this technique, used in carefully selected cases, could put an end to lengthy demonstrations and could cause embarrassment to New Left elements.

9. There is a definite hostility among SDS and other New Left groups toward the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), and the Progressive Labor Party (PLP). This hostility should be exploited wherever possible.

The FBI was on to something here. These animosities contributed to the organization's dissolution in 1969, and the subsequent splintering of the New Left.

10. The field was previously advised that New Left groups are attempting to open coffeehouses near military bases in order to influence members of the Armed Forces. Wherever these coffeehouses are, friendly news media should be alerted to them and their purpose. In addition, various drugs, such as marijuana, will probably be utilized by individuals running the coffeehouses or frequenting them. Local law enforcement authorities should be promptly advised whenever you receive an indication that this is being done.

Shortly after this memo was written, the FBI field office in Newark moved against the SDS chapter at Princeton University, publishing a leaflet that included student leaders' heads superimposed over apes' bodies, with the caption "Princeton is not Planet of the Apes."

11. Consider the use of cartoons, photographs, and anonymous letters which will have the effect of ridiculing the New Left. Ridicule is one of the most potent weapons which we can use against it.

12. Be alert for opportunities to confuse and disrupt New Left activities by disinformation. For example, when events are planned, notification that the event has been cancelled or postponed could be sent to various individuals.

You are reminded that no counterintelligence action is to be taken without Bureau approval. Insure that this Program is assigned to an Agent with an excellent knowledge of both New Left groups and individuals. It must be approached with imagination and enthusiasm if it is to be successful.

Just like a college education!

The words that launched a thousand FOIA requests...

As an economy measure the caption "COINTELPRO - NEW LEFT" should be used on all communications concerning this Program.

NOTE:

See memo C.D. Brennan to W.C. Sullivan dated 7/3/68, captioned as above, prepared by BAM: jcs.

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SOCIALIST REGISTER 2018

RETHINKING DEMOCRACY

The antagonism between liberalism and democratic processes is increasingly visible amidst the contradictions of capitalist globalization today. This is seen in authoritarian measures being adopted by so many states, as well as in concepts like post-democracy gaining currency in theoretical and political debate. The 2018 volume of the *Socialist Register* on *Rethinking Democracy* was conceived as a companion volume to the 2017 volume on *Rethinking Revolution*. No revival of socialist politics in the twenty-first century can occur apart from founding radical new democratic institutions and practices.

- **The struggle over actually-existing democracy**
- **Women: linking lives with democracy**
- **From Hayek to Trump: the logic of neoliberal democracy**
- **In fear of populism: referendums and neoliberal democracy**
- **Can the Democratic Party really be transformed?**
- **The media: bad news, public broadcasting and digital democracy**
- **New democratic practices? Mondragon, Barcelona, Kerala, South America**
- **The relationship between Marxism, liberalism and radical democracy**

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HALF THE WAY WITH MAO ZEDONG

How Students for a Democratic Society went from building a mass movement to embracing the politics of self-destruction.

BY PAUL HEIDEMAN

THE AMERICAN LEFT has never produced a group more self-critical than Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In the years since the organization's 1969 collapse, its former members have produced an endless stream of mea culpas.

Some of this has come from self-conscious apostates, like *New Republic* contributing editor Paul Berman. A Columbia SDSer in 1968, Berman later condemned the group's "degeneration into violence and irrationality … its final embrace of totalitarian doctrines." The later SDS should have, he quips, been renamed "Students for a Dictatorial Society." Even those less gleeful about skewering their former comrades have aired regrets about late-sixties radicalism. James Miller became "profoundly skeptical of the assumptions about human nature and the good society held by many radicals." Mark Rudd, a member of the Weatherman faction of SDS, muses that "we played into the hands of the FBI.... We might as well have been on their payroll."

Of course, on one level it's difficult to argue with these assessments. Picture a convention of students, split between two sides, one chanting "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh!" and the other "Mao, Mao, Mao Zedong!" SDS really did degenerate into a caricature of leftism.

Yet if former SDSers have grasped what went wrong with their organization, they've been less successful understanding why. This is especially glaring in accounts like Berman and Miller's, where stress is placed on the ideas that SDSers held at various moments. Former SDSers still tend to see the story of their organization as one in which the choices made by students determined the movement's path.

But understanding SDS requires more than understanding students. It requires understanding the dilemmas the American left more broadly faced in the 1960s. In these years, a new radicalization, driven above all by opposition to the slaughter in Vietnam, found itself wholly isolated from a labor movement itself defanged of radicalism by anticommunist purges. The result was a radicalization unmoored from the social forces capable of realizing its ideas. As a result, those ideas themselves were thrown into flux, as SDSers substituted one social force after another for the working class, moving from students to black revolutionaries to Third World guerillas.

SDS serves as a warning about the fragility of political ideas in the abstract, and how quickly they can be remade when history comes knocking.

THE LABOR YOUTH

Students for a Democratic Society was born, with little fanfare, in January 1960, when members of the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID) decided to change their name to something more modern. The youth group of the venerable League for Industrial Democracy (LID), SLID had gone through the 1950s as a small part of the larger current of American social democracy. Within it, a certain set of politics were axiomatic: first, opposition to

communism in all its forms, both foreign and domestic; second, a commitment to the union movement, whether with enthusiasm, as for Walter Reuther's beacon of left-liberalism, the United Auto Workers (UAW), or begrudgingly, as for the unvarnished business unionism of AFL-CIO head George Meany; third, seeing the Democratic Party as the political vehicle for reform.

The advance of the Civil Rights Movement in the second half of the 1950s introduced the first cracks into the foundations of SLID's milieu. Though the social democrats were fervent supporters of the movement from its earliest days, and champions of racial equality within the still-Dixified Democratic Party, the Southern movement, with its dramatic mass civil disobedience, implicitly called into question the faith held in progress through elections and collective bargaining. SLID's new name, Students *for* a Democratic Society, was informed by the sensibility so forcibly impressed by the black movement — that the United States was, for all its proclamations, not yet a democracy.

SDS's first order of business was organizing a spring 1960 conference, held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in support of the Civil Rights Movement. Titled "Human Rights in the North," it had the good fortune to come a few weeks after student sit-ins took off in the South. The conference brought in some of the leading lights of the movement — Bayard Rustin from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, James Farmer from the Congress of Racial Equality — to talk with young student activists. Though no concrete initiatives came of it, the conference helped solidify the Civil Rights Movement as SDS's primary cause.

Coming out of the conference, SDS made a fateful move: it hired as its full-time staffer a young University of Michigan graduate student, Al Haber. Unlike later SDS notables, Haber was neither a charismatic leader nor a creative thinker. But he was an organizer, with a drive and energy that would prove crucial in establishing SDS as a new activist force. Haber embraced the organization's focus on civil rights, and threw himself into putting its meager resources in service of the struggle. He started a SDS newsletter on civil rights, which within a year had over ten thousand subscribers. He also led the organization in a boycott of Sears, Roebuck & Co. over hiring discrimination. In November, SDS and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) co-edited a special issue of SNCC's paper, *Student Voice*, on the election. At student conferences across the country, Haber made contacts with other movement supporters, building up SDS's name and profile.

In 1961, SDS hired Tom Hayden as its field officer. Hayden had recently graduated from Michigan, and went to work in Atlanta, acting as SDS's reporter on the ground. His fall arrival in Atlanta coincided with the beginning of a new stage in the movement, as SNCC was beginning its campaign of voter registration in the Deep South. Over the previous summer, SNCC activists had set up shop in McComb County, Mississippi, to attempt to register black voters in the face of white supremacist intimidation.

As violence against the campaign escalated, Hayden flew to Jackson to bring attention to the struggle. Very quickly, he himself became a target of violence and was forced to leave the state. He would soon write up his experiences in an SDS pamphlet titled "Revolution in Mississippi." Hayden's account of the student activists in McComb County would come to serve as a fitting descriptor for his generation's ambitions for SDS:

> They have decided not only to protest but to seek social transformation as well, and that is revolution. They have decided it is time right now — not in a minute, not after this one more committee meets, not after we have the legal defense and the court costs promised — to give blood and body if necessary for social justice, for freedom, for the common life, and for the creation of dignity for the enslaved, and thereby for us all.

Throughout this early period, SDS was attached at the hip to the labor movement. LID, SDS's parent organization, was largely funded by the labor unions, making them indirect funders of SDS. The organization also received no small amount of direct funding from unions. Al Haber's hiring was made possible by a $10,000 grant from the UAW. The AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department promoted SDS's fund-raising efforts and lent the young organization their printing press. Walter Reuther himself praised the group as "the vanguard student organization dedicated to the forces of progress in America."

In turn, early SDS activists held a positive view of the labor movement. Haber's father was a labor arbitrator in Michigan. When Haber pushed SDS to become active in the Sears boycott, he wrote that he hoped the case would "bring to the fore the natural alliance of labor and the civil rights movement." Sharon Jeffrey, another early leader in the group, was the daughter of Mildred Jeffrey, a top UAW

Labor-union Conference held at Port Huron, Michigan, 1946.

official. The small SDS chapter in New York supported the 1962 newspaper strike, arguing that such support "ought to be an automatic reflex" for the group.

Even Tom Hayden, who would come to be the symbol of New Left alienation from the old left, was favorably inclined towards labor, writing in a letter to Reuther that "the labor movement remains the critical agency in the future advancement of democratic and egalitarian solutions to our economic troubles." This relationship, however, wasn't without strain. In particular, the LID looked with trepidation on SDS's involvement in civil rights activism. LID was, after all, an educational organization, as well as a nonprofit whose tax exemption could be threatened by political action.

SDS's involvement in boycotts and solidarity pickets went beyond the LID leadership's imagined brief for the organization. When it found out about Haber's efforts to turn the group into a kind of Northern SNCC, it tried to push him out of leadership. Haber stood steadfast, however, and, drawing on his father's contacts in the labor movement, was able to persuade LID's board that he should stay on.

SDS was thus a child of labor. Its early years were made possible by the movement's largesse, and its ideology was firmly within the bounds of American social democracy. The question of what drove SDS's later derangement is thus not why the organization didn't look to the working class, but rather, why its once-strong partnership with labor couldn't survive the sixties.

BEYOND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Any answer to this question has to run through Port Huron, Michigan. There, in June 1962, SDS published the "Port Huron Statement," the defining document of its early years. As the organization had grown over the past two years, acquiring a handful of organized chapters and about eight hundred dues-paying members scattered across the country, there was a need to clarify its aims. The June convention was called to accomplish this task, and Tom Hayden was charged with drafting a document to serve as the basis for discussion at the convention. In keeping with SDS's labor roots, the convention was held at a Port Huron campground owned by the UAW.

The statement is an extraordinary distillation of the politics at play in the emerging student radicalism. It's unapologetically middle-class, reflecting on how its authors

and readership have been "bred in at least modest comfort" and are "housed now in the universities." Later, it somewhat presumptuously declares that "a new left cannot rely on only aching stomachs to be the engine force of social reform." Instead to confront the problems confronting the country in the early 1960s — racism, corporate domination, and the threat of nuclear annihilation — a revolution of values was necessary. Unsurprisingly, the Port Huron Statement authors identified students and universities as key players in the making of such a revolution.

Today, these sentiments can appear hopelessly out of touch with the realities of most Americans at the time (the vast majority of whom would never step foot on a university campus). But we should understand why this kind of analysis was compelling to so many. First, there was the demographic fact of a massive youth bulge, beginning with the baby boom. This combined with postwar economic growth to create a generation of college students far larger than any of its predecessors. The 1960s were the first time that college students outnumbered farmers in the United States. In this context, the facts of student life and the social setting of the university felt like a new source of strength for the Left, rather than a prescription for isolation.

The early 1960s were also a period when American society displayed few of the signs of obvious pathology that mark our politics today. These were years when most people's standard of living was rising, buoyed by both a rapidly growing economy and a labor movement with 30 percent union density. Unlike our own era of catastrophic inequality and the foundering of official politics, these were years in which, if anything, the system appeared to be working too efficiently — the problem was that its operation was totally outside of the control of most Americans. Alienated from the machine-like operation of US institutions, most of the population was, in Hayden's view, growing ever more remote from the kind of civic life necessary for confronting the real problems that remained in society. It was to this problem that SDS proposed the solution of a revolution in values.

These undeniably middle-class impulses coexisted, however, with a continued appreciation for the centrality of the labor movement for progressive politics. The statement's section on labor opens by noting the frequent equation of "big labor" with "big business," arguing that "nothing could be more distorted." Instead, it declares that "what progress there has been in meeting human needs in this century rests

The Port Huron Statement identified students and universities as key players in the making of a revolution of values.

greatly with the labor movement." The primary problems with labor are a result of big business's success in containing the movement's further expansion. In this context, the statement argues, with no small justification, that labor has come to see itself as pressure group, rather than a "mass-oriented … 18 million member body making political demands for all America." Labor, it concludes, will be an essential part of creating a more progressive country, but it needs a revolution of values as well.

The Port Huron Statement provoked intense criticism from SDS's allies who identified their politics with the house of labor. Their criticism, however, didn't center on the rather gentle critique of labor in the document, but rather on the question of communism. The issue arose at a June convention even before Port Huron's drafting. The convention committee had voted to recognize as an observer the eighteen-year-old Jim Hawley, a member of a Communist Party youth group. The response of LID leaders like Michael Harrington was nothing short of apoplectic. This was compounded by the statement's running attacks on anticommunism throughout the document, which it blamed for encouraging support of dictators abroad and enforcing a stifling political conformity at home. To Harrington and others, all this appeared as a dreadful forgetting of what they viewed as the most hard-won lesson of the 1930s — the need to completely isolate Stalinists from the progressive movement.

Haber and Hayden were summoned before a LID committee to discuss the issues. To the SDSers, there must have been a special irony in being hauled before a committee to answer questions about their views on communism. This irony, however, went unappreciated by their questioners, who attacked Haber and Hayden with blunt queries like "Would you give seats to the Nazis too?"

The SDSers' answers failed to move their inquisitors, and LID tried to restrain its wayward child. It suspended Hayden and Haber's salaries, declared all further SDS publications would be preapproved by LID, and changed the locks on the New York office's doors. While in the next few weeks the crisis would be deescalated, largely through the efforts of Sarah Lawrence president Harold Taylor and Socialist Party spokesperson Norman Thomas, irreparable damage had been done to the image of social democracy in the eyes of the student left. To a left that had come of age chafing against the rituals of McCarthyism, the demand for a quarantine against Communist-linked activists, and for unyielding hostility to the Soviet Union, seemed less principles for the Left than symptoms of the very things they hoped to change about society. As Hayden put it years later, the experience of that summer "taught me that social democrats aren't radicals and can't be trusted in a radical movement."

DARE TO STRUGGLE

Though the Port Huron Statement and battles with the LID contributed mightily to SDS's developing politics, the group still lacked a clear sense of what it was actually trying to do. Hayden and company were inspired by SNCC's example, but it had become abundantly clear to them that Northern students heading South wasn't of much help to the movement. Instead, the question became how SDS could replicate what SNCC was doing elsewhere.

The group's answer was the Economic Research and Action Programs — the ERAPs. Inspired by recent work from social-democratic economists arguing that automation was threatening skyrocketing unemployment and recession in the 1960s, SDSers became convinced that organizing the Northern poor could be their contribution to the struggle. Just as SNCC fanned out from Southern cities into the rural South with the goal of mobilizing disenfranchised blacks, Northern students would leave the universities and live among the poor of their cities, organizing them into "community unions" to fight in their own interests. Beginning in the summer of 1963, SDS began devoting itself to this project. It was still helped along in this endeavor by the UAW, who provided the bulk of ERAP's early funding.

Over the next two years, hundreds of students moved into poor neighborhoods in cities like Baltimore, Chicago, and Newark. There, they lived in poverty themselves, forgoing the privileges of middle-class student life to help build an "interracial movement of the poor." ERAP organizers tried to hold community meetings and work with local organizers on everything from city garbage collection to rent strikes against slumlords.

In retrospect, it's easy enough to see that ERAP never stood a chance of success. Far from a new era of joblessness, the economy embarked on one of the strongest climbs of the century, and employment and wages both grew. Moreover, SDSers, in their idealism, had massively underestimated the obstacles to organizing the urban poor. The sheer levels of atomization and dispossession in Northern cities shocked the young activists. While over a dozen cities had ERAPs at some point, by spring of 1965 only a few remained.

Yet the experience was not entirely negative. Activists, both black and white, learned a great deal from the experience. Many black organizers who worked with SDS went on to play important roles in their city's politics. White students, for their part, became convinced that something more than idealism was required to address poverty — the American system needed to be rebuilt from the bottom up.

This radicalization was steadily reproduced across the country. The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 served notice that the mirage of consensus politics that had reigned throughout the Eisenhower years was dissipating. The assumption of steady social progress could no longer be taken for granted. This new mood was felt on campuses, as SDS slowly expanded its base of active chapters from the handful it had since its founding to the several dozen in 1965. This growth was all the more remarkable given that the organization's attention had been focused on the ERAPs off-campus.

In fall 1964, student radicalism took a qualitative step forward with the Free Speech Movement (FSM). The FSM grew out of civil rights activism at Berkeley, where students were active in solidarity work with groups like SNCC and CORE. On September 15, a local group announced plans to picket the *Oakland Tribune*, a right-wing newspaper viciously critical of the Civil Rights Movement. The next day, the Dean of Students sent a letter to all student groups banning tabling on a popular bit of sidewalk and forbidding the distribution of literature advocating action on off-campus issues. In response, students mounted pickets against the administration, and set up tables collecting money for SNCC and CORE in explicit defiance of the policy.

On October 1, Jack Weinberg was arrested for tabling for CORE. In response, hundreds of students surrounded the police car, refusing to let it take him to be processed. A continuous speak-out was held, using the car as a podium, and after thirty-two hours, Weinberg was finally released. Over the next few months, student activism continued, leading to a dramatic sit-in at which eight hundred students were arrested. By January, however, the students had won, as the chancellor of the university was forced to resign and his replacement issued new rules acceding to the bulk of the movement's demands.

Berkeley had an immediate impact on student politics across the country. While SDS had been devoting most of its attention to the ERAPs, the FSM called its attention back to campuses with authority.

Though the Port Huron Statement had identified a special role for students and universities in the process of social change, the FSM gave those arguments a force they had previously lacked. Students could, it seemed, play a similar role to SNCC in the South. They even drew on the same retinue of tactics — pickets, civil disobedience, and sit-ins. If demographics and a booming economy created a new potential for student politics, the FSM showed what they could look like.

THE WAR AT HOME

In spring 1965, SDS finally moved against the Vietnam War. Though opposition to the war inside the group had long existed, it had not yet taken any antiwar action. US involvement in the war had grown slowly over the past few years; before the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in August 1964, Vietnam had remained far behind the Civil Rights Movement in its importance in American politics. What's more, many in SDS felt that a focus on foreign policy was too remote from the project of a revolution of values to which the group was devoted.

However, when Vietnam became the subject of discussion at the National Council meeting in December 1964, it was an unexpectedly contentious topic, with different plans of action proposed to take on the war. Todd Gitlin, then SDS president, proposed a national pledge to refuse draft orders. Another member proposed sending medical supplies to the Vietcong. Some of the group's more conservative members, fearful of open support for communist forces, proposed a

march on Washington as a tamer alternative. This proposal passed, committing SDS to a spring march against the war.

The plan put SDS in the right place at the right time for tremendous growth. Just weeks after that meeting, the Johnson administration announced a significant escalation, launching bombing raids on the North and massively increasing the US troop presence. In response, campus activism surged. The first teach-ins against the war began, and new SDS chapters formed at an unprecedented rate. The march, planned for April, brought 20,000 people out — far larger than the 3,000 organizers had hoped for — making it the largest American antiwar protest ever. As an SDS-organized event, it also brought increased media and attention to the group, facilitating even more recruitment and chapter formation.

The influx of new members soon began to change SDS’s character. This became clear at the summer convention, held in Kewadin, Michigan. Here, at a convention ten times larger than the one which produced the Port Huron Statement, SDS began its move to the far left.

The new recruits who asserted themselves at Kewadin were far different than the generation who had founded SDS. Many of the early members had grown up around left-liberal politics, like Al Haber and Sharon Jeffreys, or had found their way into that milieu through their intellectual pursuits, like Tom Hayden. The new cadre, however, came from homes and campuses with no tradition of liberalism that could serve as a launching pad for radicalization. As Jeff Shero, one of the new breed, put it, “If you were from Texas, in SDS, you were a bad motherfucker, you couldn’t go home for Christmas.”

For these students, the break with the mainstream of American politics was necessarily much harsher than it was for the earlier generation. At this point, however, this alienation expressed itself more organizationally than ideologically. Rather than fighting for more militant positions in SDS, the new members, who easily won most of the votes at Kewadin, fought for decentralization and an eschewal of national positions altogether.

This hostility to strategy would have profound consequences for the group over the next few years. First, it left the group organizationally and politically unable to sustain the leading role it had played in mobilizing antiwar sentiment. Second, the decision to place all bets on the spontaneity and dynamism of local chapters instead of any kind of political vision, only guaranteed that later, when

that dynamism inevitably faltered, there would be a frantic, ad-hoc search for a politics capable of explaining why.

Kewadin was also where the last threads connecting SDS to the LID were finally severed. The social democrats had been furious over SDS's sponsorship of the antiwar march. Allowing a Communist to observe the Port Huron convention was bad enough; now the group was calling marches where Communists openly organized against Johnson administration policy. At Kewadin, SDS took things a step further than that — in a decision supported by both old members and new, the group got rid of the clause in its constitution banning supporters of "totalitarian" governments from joining the group.

To the veterans, who had slowly been disillusioned with American social democracy, the change merely institutionalized a political break that had been long in coming. To the new members, already called communists in their communities, it was simply common sense. As a result, in October, the organizational connection between LID and SDS was finally dissolved completely. Born of American social democracy, SDS had finally committed itself to a different path, though few at the time could say where they hoped it would lead.

ACTION THAT DEMONSTRATES

The immediate result of Kewadin was paralysis. As antiwar sentiment continued to grow, SDS was unable to give it shape or direction. The sentiment at Kewadin had been strongly against prioritizing antiwar work, both on principle because it would decrease the autonomy of local chapters, and because most members felt the war was so deeply rooted in American life that only the vague "revolution of values" could end it. On top of this, the decisions at Kewadin had thrown the group's organizational infrastructure into chaos, as questions of bureaucratic efficiency were treated with scorn.

At a time when American involvement in the war was escalating monthly, and antiwar sentiment growing to match it, the group was desperately searching for anything else to do.

Yet despite the group's spurning of the antiwar movement, it continued to be identified with it in the public mind. Congressmen fulminated against SDS's opposition to the war, and students across the country continued to view it as the main antiwar organization. When marches were called for mid-October by a different group, SDS's endorsement was less than enthusiastic: "We are for action that educates, rather than action that demonstrates." Despite the hostility from the national organizers, local chapters participated enthusiastically in the march, which drew over a hundred thousand, dwarfing April's demonstration. SDS continued to grow, in spite of itself.

In the spring, the foolishness of the attempt to evade the war became clear to all. The immediate impetus was once more the Johnson administration, who, in the effort to supply manpower for the expanded American war effort, ended the student draft deferment. Universities were instructed to rank students, with lower ranks being vulnerable to local draft boards, and a national test was proposed to aid in the ranking. The response on campuses was immediate. Though SDS nationally floundered in preparing a concerted response, local chapters flew into action. Across the country, students disrupted draft exams, and rallied on campuses against university complicity with the war. Here, finally, the vision of the Port Huron Statement, of a struggle to remake the university in order to remake society, found fruition on a national level.

That spring also saw the entrance of the Progressive Labor Party (PL) into SDS. PL was born of a 1961 split from the Communist Party, when a small number of New York-based members were expelled for their criticism of the party's continued support for Nikita Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization" campaign. Led by former Buffalo steelworker Milt Rosen, these communists looked instead to Mao's China. Rosen and his comrades founded a magazine, *Progressive Labor*, and launched themselves as a left-wing labor organization. In 1964, moving sharply to the left, the group declared itself a party, and announced its campaign of struggle against other left currents for their "revisionism."

The party grew at a respectable rate over the next few years, taking initiatives like organizing trips for college students to revolutionary Cuba and forming an antiwar group of its own, the May 2nd Movement. By early 1966, however, it was clear that SDS was where the action was. Entering into the organization, PL members, trained by old CP cadres with decades of experience, quickly won influence. Their developed politics stood out in the context of SDS's general avoidance of ideology, allowing them to become a pole of attraction for SDSers looking for something deeper than immediate action. Their influence began to be felt in small ways, like letters in SDS publications full of strident praise for China.

In 1966, however, PL remained a tiny current in the group. Far more popular were the evolving politics of university protest, which received increasing theoretical elaboration over the course of the year. Two papers in particular laid the groundwork for an elevation of student struggle. First was Carl Davidson's "Toward a Student Syndicalist Movement." Delivered at the 1966 SDS Convention, Davidson's paper argued that universities were central to sustaining modern American society. Their function was, essentially, "to produce the kind of men that can create, sustain, tolerate, or ignore situations like Watts, Mississippi and Vietnam." The centrality of campuses thus raised an obvious question — "what would happen to a manipulative society if its means of creating manipulable people were done away with? The answer is that we might then have a fighting chance to change that system."

Davidson's concrete suggestions for disrupting this system were peculiar, focusing in particular on the supposedly revolutionary effect abolishing grades would have. But the tactics he advised were less important than the general theoretical picture, in which universities acted as one of the key cogs of modern society.

The second paper, originating with students at the New School, was called, in conscious parody of its ancestor, "The Port Authority Statement." It offered a more social-scientific version of Davidson's argument, contending that the traditional working class was in decline, and being replaced with "the new working class," consisting primarily of clerical, technical, and professional workers. Since these workers were educated, of course, at universities, schools could be a key site of struggle to win them over.

Over the course of late 1966 and 1967, this analysis connected powerfully with what was happening on campuses. The college population continued to explode. While under four million had been enrolled in higher education at the start of the decade, by 1967, the number was just shy of seven million. Campuses continued to be sites of student struggle, with university involvement in Vietnam the most important target.

Students organized referenda on university facilitation of draft testing; they launched sit-ins at administration offices; and they declared student strikes, shutting down whole universities. At the University of Wisconsin, after some student protestors were arrested, over a thousand occupied a building until the university president was forced to bail the arrested students out with his own money. All of this created a ready campus audience for SDS's ideas about student syndicalism and the potential of the new working class.

CHANGES OF HEART

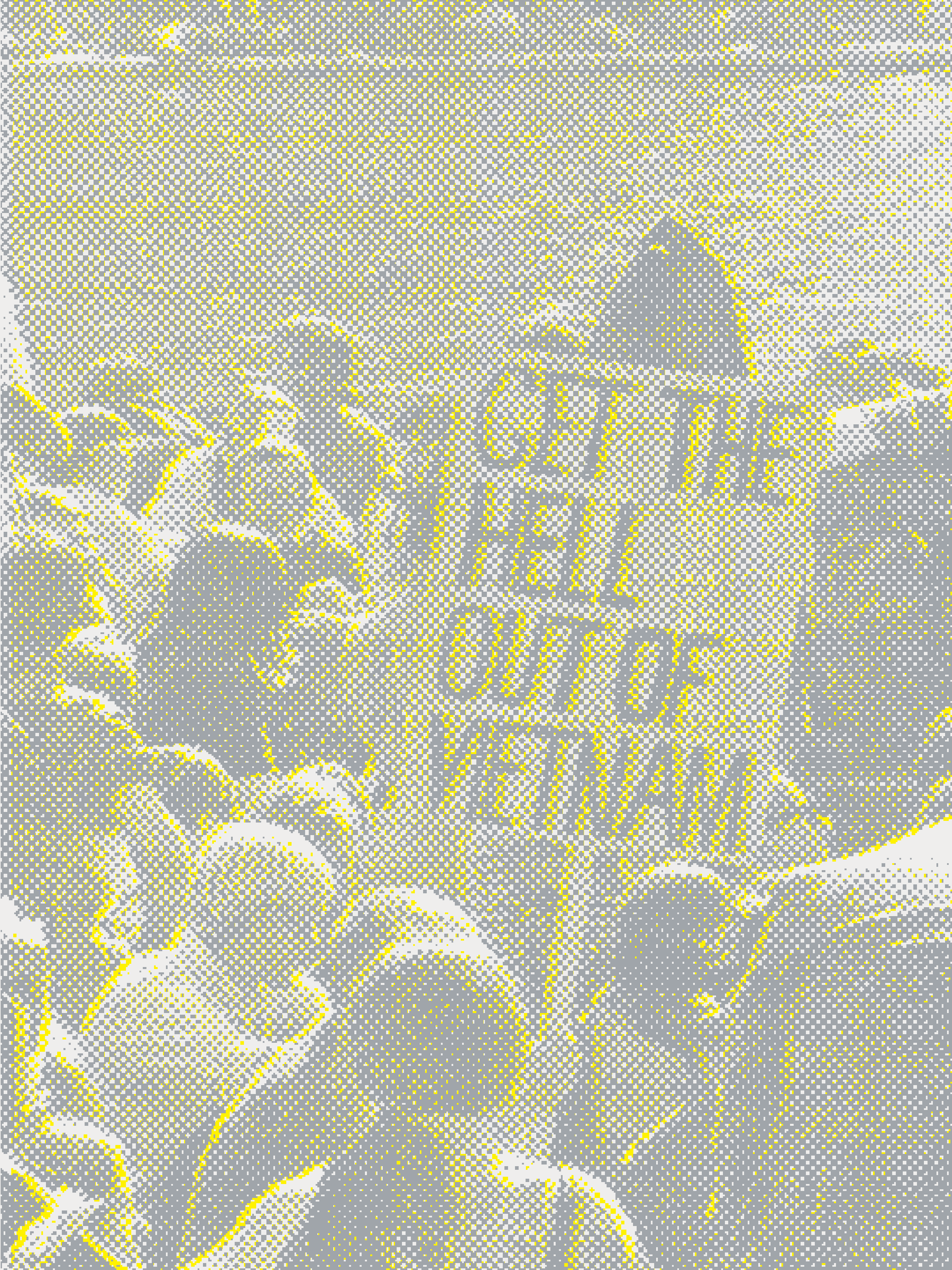
Though SDS now had a perspective with wide resonance, it again failed to act on it in a decisive way. The summer 1967 conference repeated the failures at Kewadin two years prior. No plan for acting on the student-power perspective was developed, and once more, the organization's infrastructure was neglected. SDS's leadership was determined, it seemed, to avoid grasping the opportunities presented for them.

At this point, however, events moved so rapidly that the formal decisions of the SDS conventions played a smaller role in the group than ever before. Most centrally, the antiwar movement grew in both numbers and militancy. One hundred thousand attended an October 1967 demonstration in Washington, DC Where previous rallies had directed themselves towards Congress or the President, petitioning for policy changes, this time, they marched on the Pentagon.

Once there, some ten thousand demonstrators proceeded to occupy the building's lawns all night long. Some seven hundred were arrested, with many more suffering injuries from various police and military attacks.

The Pentagon demonstration induced yet another change of heart in SDS's leadership. The direct action taken that day proved, in the words of one SDSer, that "the move from protest to resistance has been made." Now, many of the same people who had for the last year been pushing "student power" turned their backs on the campuses. Carl Davidson himself led the about-face, proclaiming "We organize students against the draft when the Army is made up of young men who are poor, black, Spanish-American, hillbillies, or working class. Everyone except students … Students are oppressed. Bullshit. We are being trained to be the oppressors and the underlings of oppressors."

With this turn, figures like Davidson and other leaders turned more forthrightly towards a Marxist analysis of capitalism and imperialism. Yet rather than embracing Marx's arguments for the revolutionary potential of the working class, they embraced black urban rebellions and Third World guerrillas as the key agents for overthrowing the system. This turn towards "resistance," however, also


GET THE
HELL
OUT OF
VIETNAM

created more distance between the group's leadership and its tens of thousands of mostly campus-based members. As one SDSer told Davidson, "In case you don't know, sitting behind an SDS table involves taking a very large step, if you happen to be a Nebraskan fresh off the farm and don't even know who Marx is."

Other fractures were appearing in the group as well. Most prominently, women in SDS began to assert themselves against its culture of sexism and elitism. Women had raised this issue in back in 1965, but it had never gotten much attention. Now, they pushed more forcefully. Women managed to pass a resolution calling on men in the group to address their "male chauvinism." At the end of the year, *New Left Notes* published an article by a Chicago women's group making the case that women would have to organize for their liberation outside of the existing left, due to its pervasive sexism. Many of the women who pushed this analysis inside the group would go on to be leaders in the women's liberation movement over the next few years.

Tensions were also developing with PL, which was playing an ever-larger role in SDS politics. PL's own worldview had developed rapidly since 1966. The group was more forthrightly pushing a doctrinaire Maoism that took a hard line against the Soviet Union. The USSR and those countries aligned with it were criticized as revisionists trying to undermine the global anti-imperialist resistance led by Mao's China. Most importantly, this meant PL began criticizing the North Vietnamese government for its acceptance of Soviet aid.

As one of the group's leaders put it after the North agreed to participate in the Paris peace talks, "We struggle, struggle, struggle, and they always sell us out." This wasn't a perspective that endeared PL to antiwar activists.

Additionally, inside SDS, PL began pushing a strategy of worker-student alliance. This perspective argued, along traditional Marxist lines, that students needed to link up with the working class for their struggles to succeed. It was carried out, however, with a caricatured workerism that limited the argument's appeal. PL members eschewed the countercultural trappings dominant in SDS, cutting their hair short and wearing conservative clothing, in a stereotyped image of what they imagined American workers looked like. They also argued against direct action, in favor of building large demonstrations that, they argued, would be more successful in drawing workers into the movement.

Though these positions alienated PL from many SDS members, their influence was still growing. Cadre discipline meant that PL members were often willing to undertake the hard work of local organizing, and they took full advantage of the credibility that came with doing that work. PL had also identified a real hole in the ideology of the group's leadership. Plenty of students in SDS saw the logic of trying to link up with worker struggles.

Heading into 1968, SDS was thus in a precarious position. On the one hand, it had undeniable cache, recognized across the country as the leading New Left organization. As a result of this, it had tens of thousands of members in hundreds of chapters across the country, many of which were undertaking militant actions against the war and their administrations. Yet the signs of trouble were becoming impossible to miss. The organization's leadership was challenged by PL's growth, and moving further away from its membership while engaging less and less with them.

1968

Students had just arrived back on campuses in early 1968 when liberation forces launched the Tet Offensive, shattering one of the administration's most important arguments for continuing the war — that they were winning, and the war would be wrapped up soon. Antiwar sentiment surged in response, and Johnson found himself facing Democratic primary challenges. Two months later, Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated, sparking black rebellions in over a hundred cities. It was not hard to imagine that the revolution had arrived.

For SDS, the decisive development was the struggle at Columbia University. Coming out of struggles around university complicity with the military and a plan to expand further into Harlem, students occupied several university buildings, holding them for a week. Some seven hundred people were arrested in the process, and the campus was shut down for the next month by a student strike with wide support. Taking place on an Ivy League college in New York City, the struggle was covered intensely by the national press, and seemed a dramatic confirmation of the student left's strength.

Columbia also offered a reconciliation between student power and resistance politics. The struggle had been led by students, but its target had been university complicity with the military and the racism of Columbia's approach to its neighborhood. For many in the SDS leadership, it seemed

A survey of college students estimated that some 350,000 considered themselves revolutionaries.

that student and youth politics could be a vanguard in a struggle that was not primarily about their own conditions, but about remaking the country as a whole.

Heading into the 1968 convention, the SDS leadership was thus confident that this analysis would find wide support in the group. They were sorely disappointed. PL, which commanded around a quarter of the delegates, launched an all-out attack on their perspective. The leadership had argued that SDS's project should be to use campuses as a base for building revolutionary organization in the cities, drawing on the "new working class" theories that had come before. PL skewered this proposal for its vagueness, its reliance on still-hazy notions of class, and pointed instead to May '68 France, which they argued demonstrated the political potential of a worker-student alliance. Drawing support well beyond their own numbers, PL decisively defeated the revolutionary-cities proposal.

Unable to contend with PL politically, the leadership group resorted to arguing against their organizational practices. PL's conduct as a disciplined cadre group, they argued, was contrary to the spirit of SDS. PL was simply in SDS to recruit members, not actually build the organization. Though PL often behaved in unprincipled and destructive ways, the leadership's critique of the group would have been more convincing if they themselves weren't guilty of ignoring the membership when convenient, and if they had raised these concerns before they began losing votes to PL.

PL members responded by accusing the leadership of red-baiting, prompting one outraged SDSer to sputter "Red-baiting! Red-baiting? I'm the communist here, not you guys from PL!" The leadership did manage to retain control over the organizational infrastructure. For the first time in SDS history, they put forward a slate for the national offices, headed by Mike Klonsky, a West Coast former student activist, and Bernardine Dohrn, a legal support worker who had only recently become involved in SDS. The politics of resistance had won a victory, if only a narrow one.

In the wake of the revolutionary-cities debate, Klonsky and company were forced to develop their ideas more systematically. The result was the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) document, which provided the basis for the leadership's politics for much of the rest of SDS's life. Opening with a quote from Mao, it argued that youth were a key revolutionary force, but that SDS had so far failed to tap into this potential because of the organization's embrace of the privileges of university life. Instead of fighting there,

SDSers should make it a priority to go to community colleges, technical schools, and high schools to meet the radicalizing youth and bring them into the movement.

To carry out this perspective, the SDS leadership called for a national student strike around the election. The initiative was a massive failure, unable to shut down a single school. The intensity of the ideological fracases among the factions contending for SDS's leadership concealed an ever-growing distance from the group's actual membership and audience.

Yet still, SDS continued to grow. In 1968, its membership reached a hundred thousand. At Princeton that fall, a tenth of the incoming freshman class joined the group. One survey of college students estimated that some 350,000 considered themselves revolutionaries. As the radicalization continued to grow, so did SDS, even as its leadership proved themselves more incapable than ever of taking advantage of it.

CHARLES MANSON VS. MAO

SDS began its final year of existence blissfully unaware that its end was near. Developing the RYM perspective further, backers of Klonsky and Dohrn argued that the youth movement could only succeed in alliance with the two great revolutionary forces of the era: black radicals and anti-imperialist guerrillas. The elevation of these struggles was partially driven by a recognition that a youth movement alone could hardly lead a revolution; but it was also pushed by the leadership because these alliances seemed valuable weapons against PL. That year, PL published a series of documents arguing that black nationalism needed to be vigorously fought as a barrier to black liberation. This, combined with PL's sectarianism around Vietnam, made boosting these groups a natural move for RYM supporters.

They also tried to implement the RYM perspective by going to high schools to recruit. The result was a disaster. SDSers came in and speechified about revolution to high schoolers just discovering radical politics. They brought the increasingly arcane debates between PL and RYM directly into their work with young students, factionalizing instead of organizing. SDSers found themselves unwelcome among young activists.

The failure of the RYM perspective to yield any success was compounded by the increased repression that came with the Nixon administration. The White House had SDS in its crosshairs; the deputy attorney general wrote of SDS that "If people demonstrated in a manner to interfere with others, they should be rounded up and put in a detention camp." State legislators introduced more than four hundred bills targeting campus activists.

University administrators got in on the action as well. School psychiatrists were even encouraged to identify and "treat" student activists. The mounting repression only compounded SDS's internal problems, as already overheated political debates now took place in the shadow of infiltration.

This was the environment in which the 1969 summer convention opened. Unlike the previous year's, when the conflict with PL was unanticipated, this was clearly a battle to the finish between RYM and PL. RYM's opening shot was a document entitled "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows." The title, taken from a Bob Dylan song, was a shot at PL, whose facility with Marxist theory RYM hoped to turn into a mark of elitism. The document itself is almost unreadable — one older SDS leader quipped that, if read closely, it would cause the reader to go blind. Thousands of words of jumbled Maoist jargon, the work argues that the principle contradiction in the world is between US imperialism and the forces opposing it. As such, struggles in the United States that weren't primarily oriented around fighting imperialism were dangerous distractions. Most American workers were simply brainwashed, and would have to be woken up.

PL, naturally enough, attacked this perspective head-on. RYM had come to the convention with backup, however. Representatives of the Black Panther Party spoke against PL, arguing that their criticisms of the Panthers disqualified them from the movement, and that if SDS hoped to be taken seriously, it needed to expel them. However, the Panther intervention went off script when the speaker began discoursing on women's liberation, arguing that "pussy power" — women refusing to sleep with nonrevolutionary men — was crucial. When PL (and many non-PL SDSers) began chanting "Fight male chauvinism" in response, the Panthers responded with an infamous Stokeley Carmichael joke — "The position of women in the movement is prone."

Things only devolved from there. PL-RYM arguments degenerated into PL chanting "Mao! Mao! Mao Zedong!" with RYM trying to drown them out with "Ho! Ho! Ho Chi Minh!" (some New York wags responded to the cacophony with their own chants of "Go Mets!"). By this time, it was clear that each group had alienated all but its most die-hard

supporters. Each side withdrew to caucus. When RYM returned to the stage, they announced, without the pretense of a convention-wide vote, that PL was expelled from SDS. The next day, there were two SDSes.

After June 1969, SDS ceased to exist as a national entity. PL tried to build its own SDS, though the point of a separate organization with identical politics to PL was lost on most students. RYM fractured quickly into two groups — the Weathermen, who embraced armed guerrilla struggle against the system, and RYM II, with more orthodox Maoist politics. The Weathermen group soon established itself as a menace to radical politics, but only a nuisance to the system. Its bombings against establishment targets accomplished nothing, and its occasional bizarre public pronouncements, like Bernardine Dohrn's declaration that "The Weathermen dig Charles Manson" only underscored how far these former SDSers had come from their old goal of a mass movement to transform America.

Meanwhile, the student radicalization continued. By 1970, polling was indicating that one million college students in the United States considered themselves revolutionaries. The student strike in spring 1970 against the invasion of Cambodia shut down hundreds of campuses for months. Yet without SDS there was no organization to give coherence to this upsurge.

THE LOST REVOLUTION

SDS was caught in the vicious trap American politics created for the Left in the 1960s. On one side, the country witnessed a massive expansion of higher education, turning students into a social group with real social and political weight. This was then combined with the war in Vietnam, a constantly escalating commitment to overseas slaughter, to create a formidable youth radicalization. Yet, on the other side, the most important ally for radical movements throughout the twentieth century, unions, remained viciously opposed to antiwar organizing, out of both deep anticommunist commitment and a steadfast allegiance to the Johnson administration. Politically defanged by McCarthyite repression and led by a caste of bureaucrats who genuinely believed in the American mission in Vietnam, the house of labor and its left-liberal allies saw SDS and the broader antiwar movement as enemies, rather than potential allies.

The consequences of this division can scarcely be overstated. At the most basic level, it was a terrible tragedy that one of the American left's greatest accomplishments of the twentieth century — the movement to end the war in Vietnam — had to be built largely against the opposition of the labor movement. This fact profoundly distorted the politics of the antiwar movement, yielding SDS's at-times frantic search for a social base — moving from the Civil Rights Movement to students to the poor back to students and finally to anticolonial guerrillas.

As escalation in the war fed an escalating radicalism, SDS was caught up in the shallowest sorts of ultra-radicalism, eventually splitting as its different groups envisioned profoundly different agencies for the transformation of American politics.

A broader look at left politics in these years only confirms that the centrifugal forces at work on SDS came from forces much larger than the student group itself. After all, American social democracy, represented by the Socialist Party, also split in these years, as figures like Michael Harrington tried to maintain a cautious opposition to the war, while others pursued the logic of labor anticommunism to its most deranged conclusions, moving steadily to the right over the next few decades and ending up orbiting the Reagan administration. The institutional separation between labor and radicalism in the 1960s had tragic consequences for the moderates as well as the radicals.

Yet if SDS's destruction was, in a key sense, not of its own making, it does not follow that it was inconsequential. The group's self-marginalization and demise deprived the antiwar movement of any agency capable of channeling its tremendous energy. While spontaneity would continue to drive the movement forward, it meant that the movement's life was a wrenching series of ups and downs, with little effort to build the infrastructures of dissent that can sustain radical politics.

SDS thus bequeaths a complicated heritage to radicals today. We should be inspired by the moral courage the group so often demonstrated, their unwillingness to allow their criticisms of American society to remain confined to the limits of acceptable politics. At the same time, their spasmodic ideological shifts, and ultimate embrace of self-marginalization, underline the importance of developing a sober analysis of political reality well in advance of any upsurge.

But if we can question the path they took to bring one about, there can be no doubt of SDS's goal — America still desperately needs a revolution in values. ■

BY LUCIANA CASTELLINA

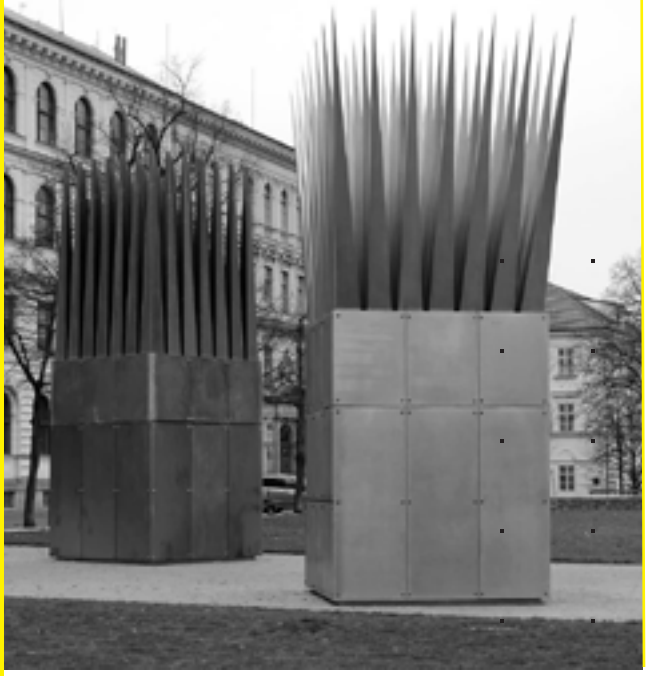
Why We Fought

Luciana Castellina on the real ’68.

OVER THE DECADES WE’VE SEEN the slow burial of 1968. And with the fiftieth anniversary we have arrived at something like a triumphal state funeral. Some of the gravediggers are even people who played a leading role in the movement.

With its importance and meaning diminished, it’s now hard to explain why the rebellion came to involve a whole generation across all continents within such a short time. Today, the mainstream remembers a few advances from ’68, but only the weakest and most painless — an individualistic libertarianism — and cancels out everything in the movement that was really challenging and dangerous to the system. In Italy, ’68 is just remembered as drugs, sex, and rock and roll — a revolt against our parents and teachers.

We can understand, then, why the fiftieth anniversary is not all that interesting to today’s youth. After all, in terms of freedom of personal mores, they have already got what they wanted.



The House of the Suicide and the House of the Mother of the Suicide, also known as the Jan Palak Memorial based on the designs of John Hejduk.

But this is not the real history. The novelty of ’68 was precisely the attempt to liberate freedom from bourgeois libertarianism; the struggle to root it in social relations, which is to say, in a collective context. What was everywhere challenged was not just the teachers and parents but the system itself — the capitalist system.

MAO, MARCUSE, MARX

In 1968, orthodox Marxism was able to cross paths with American sociology, the Frankfurt School, and the British New Left, as well as the thought that came from the Third World.

Today one could mock the joint appearance of Mao, Marcuse, and Marx on our placards. But we should recognize that this did have some sense: Mao, because notwithstanding the turmoil produced by the Cultural Revolution (which we knew little about) we really did need to bombard the headquarters, which were deaf to what we were saying. Marcuse, because in bringing to politics the new and indispensable dimension of happiness and the personal — beyond power and money — he greatly enriched the idea of freedom. And Marx, because what we desired seemed materially possible, but was politically impossible within the ambit of capitalism.

One of the documents most useful for understanding how the problem of the relation between one’s own freedom and the freedom of all cut absolutely right across the movement is a June 13, 1968 BBC TV program. Presented by the

channel's foreign-politics correspondent Robert McKenzie, it featured newly prominent leaders from across the world.

One was Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who had been active in Paris: "We criticize any society in which individuals are passive and lack the power to change what they are forced to do." For Lewis Cole, from New York's Columbia University, "The students no longer believe that present-day society can guarantee them a real right to make the social choices that will guarantee their freedom." For Yasuo Ishii in Tokyo, "We are above all fighting for a society in which democracy is not a formality, in which the abstract individual is considered equal to other individuals, as against the reality of socioeconomic differences." For Karl Dietrich Wolff in Berlin: "You are mistaken if you think this is just a student movement, which is not at all true. The fact that Western societies continually squander wealth and keep afloat with repressive methods in the factories and the schools, concerns everyone." For Jan Kavan in Prague: "We do not think this is the socialist society it claims to be. This is not a question of intellectual freedom, we call for the fundamental freedoms of not only intellectuals but also workers." For Dragana Stavijel in Belgrade: "We demand not only our rights, but the rights of all those, students and workers, who set as their goal socialism, the democracy that we need." For Ekkehart Krippendorff, from Berlin: "The socialist societies have resolved some of the basic contradictions inherent in capitalist societies, they have expropriated private property and the means of production, now we have to fight for their socialization." For Luca Meldolesi in Rome: "All the university students are in revolt, but you are mistaken to speak of a student class. So long as the universities were founded on the privileges of the class in command there were no problems, but now many more students are accepted, divided, differentiated, selected. This created a new potential for revolt." For Tariq Ali, a Pakistani in London, "What unites us … is our feeling that capitalism is inhumane and unjust."

Another participant was the Spaniard, Luca Martin de Hijas, who limited himself to noting that in his country the movement was clandestine and that the essential priority was thus freedom itself.

ITALY'S TWO '68s

The perception that the greater well-being produced by capitalism's successes had not rendered the challenge to the system obsolete, but rather enriched it with new contents, was the true point of friction with the traditional parties of the Left, notably the Italian (PCI) and French (PCF) Communist Parties. They were convinced of the need to stay within the limits of the postwar social compromise but to stimulate the development of production, and most importantly they were still intent on seeking broad alliances.

The parties didn't see that new and different social subjects had entered the stage, becoming active in relation to new needs and contradictions: first and foremost, the students — who Communists for a long time continued to dismiss as "rich kids," irresponsible revolutionaries with a tenuous relationship to the working class. This attitude came at some cost, because they lost the opportunity to capture the new spirit that had now emerged.

Despite this common kernel, '68 did not play out in the same way everywhere. In Italy, for example, there was a divisive debate within the PCI already before 1968, precisely on the question of what historical phase we were going through. Was Italy still a backward country that thus needed to complete its bourgeois revolution, or were the contradictions of advanced capitalism already dominant, if interwoven with older ones? This gave rise to the conflict between the right of the PCI and the left led by Pietro Ingrao. The group which took this debate beyond the bounds of "legitimacy" was pushed out of the PCI. This group then gave rise to *Il Manifesto*, which was first a magazine and then a daily newspaper, and ultimately also led to the creation of the Proletarian Unity Party (PdUP). I joined it together with a large chunk of the '68 movement.

In Italy the first demonstrations began already in 1967, when a series of universities were occupied by the students protesting a bill — the infamous Law 2314, pushed by the Christian-Democratic minister Luigi Gui, which made an underhand bid to subordinate study to business. First to move was the Catholic University in Milan. This was significant because it was driven by young people who had grown up in religious organizations marked by the influence of Vatican II. Not just the schools but also the cathedrals were occupied.

While the agitation was at its height, a delegation from the PCF came to Rome for one of its ritual meetings with the (not much-loved) PCI. Stunned by what was happening, the French delegation criticized their PCI "brothers," saying "Nothing like this could happen in our back yard, for we are fully in control of the movements."

Just a few months later came the famous French May. The PCF was caught unaware and reacted in the worst possible fashion. First of all, it acted under the pretense of being the only representative of the working class, to the point that the Communist-controlled CGT union refused to meet with the student organization UNEF, which had asked for such a meeting in order to coordinate joint actions against the government. Even to the point that it gave its own backing to the expulsion from France of the "German anarchist" Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the most famous leader of the Parisian '68.

In Italy as in France, there were clashes between students and an infuriated trade union just outside the gates of the big factories. But things played out differently in Italy, for there was a different Communist Party and trade unions, ones more open to the new currents. It was precisely this stance that allowed the new forms of struggle and the new demands indicated by the students to be carried forth by a wider movement.

In 1969, when we saw the extraordinary mobilization around the renewal of the engineering workers' national contract — what was called the "Hot Autumn" — the two forces had clearly been welded together. This was the phase that gave rise to new forms of representation — political representation, and no longer just through the unions. In '69 there were factory committees, zone committees, a whole series of formations that lasted over time, helping to get technicians and intellectuals involved. This sparked major cultural and organizational shifts: there was democratic psychiatry, democratic medicine, democratic judiciary, and even a democratic police. At first it also had an important reflection in parliament, leading to the passing of historic reforms: the Workers' Statute,

During the 1968 Soviet invasion, Czechoslovaks carry their national flag past a burning Soviet tank in Prague.

the introduction of a national public health system, and the revision of the pension system. A few years later, driven by a feminist movement triggered by '68, would come the legalization of first divorce and then abortion.

While the Italian '68 made rather less of a splash than the French one, it lasted much longer, including in the organizations of the New Left. These latter had established themselves already by the early 1970s, and in 1976 they would also send a small group into parliament as a unitary list, Proletarian Democracy.

Yet this was also the beginning of the decline, for the PCI — which had ended up riding the left-wing turn which '68 had imposed on Italian society generally — now chose the grievous route of the "historic compromise." This was an attempt at a deal with Christian Democracy, from a position of weakness, and by the end of the 1970s it ended badly. The disappointment — and, for many, the anger at what was considered the betrayal of the Left — was one of the causes, though certainly not the only one, that encouraged the tragic turn to terrorism.

Some have considered 1977 as a sort of second '68 in Italy. It did, indeed, lead to a new wave of demonstrations in the universities. But the contents of the protest and the forms of struggle had changed, and this was the beginning of decline and then defeat. On the one hand was the so-called "workers' autonomy" current, whose slogan was "not for work, but against work." This led to violent clashes and the cutting-off of any real relationship with the factories. On the other hand were the so-called "Metropolitan Indians," a response to the further


il manifesto
Dai duecentomila della Fiat riparte oggi la lotta operaia. E' una lotta che può far saltare la controffensiva padronale e i piani del riformismo. Corrispondenza dalla prima base rossa di Mao

Front page of a 1971 Issue of *Il Manifesto*.

proletarianization of the students, who took refuge in an existential protest that was increasingly less political.

PRAGUE, EUROPE, *IL MANIFESTO*

Of course, given the context, '68 in Eastern Europe was quite different. The outlier was Yugoslavia, where there was similarity between the occupation of Belgrade University — re-christened "Red Karl Marx University" — and the movements in countries like Italy, France, Germany, and Japan. Elsewhere in the Communist world there was a generalized youth insurgency, reviving the spirit and the force of a democratic, anti-bureaucratic popular protest which had been silenced since 1956. It all began in January 1968 when Alexander Dubček took over the reins of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and government, embarking on a new course which stirred enthusiasm not only in that country but across the Warsaw Pact.

Czechoslovakia saw the opening of unprecedented spaces of freedom which allowed the music, clothes, and literature of the '68ers on the other side of the Iron Curtain to have a "contagion" effect also in this country. This blossoming of hope was brutally destroyed by the Soviet tanks which invaded Prague on August 21. As Umberto Eco recalled in a memorable correspondence from the Czech capital, the tanks were held up by the long-haired kids of Prague, who surrounded the Soviet soldiers and invited them to dance with them. They sarcastically shouted "Wake up Lenin, Brezhnev's gone mad!"

The target of Moscow's invasion was not just — as a fair few Communist organizations, including the Cuban CP asserted — counterrevolutionary forces, but Dubček's Communist Party itself. On August 22, the party was forced to hold a special congress underground.

The theses that came out of that extraordinary meeting, held in a factory on the periphery of the occupied capital, made it to us over the subsequent months,

and they were published in the first issue of *Il Manifesto*. This magazine directly resulted from what happened in Prague. It was the outcome of the rupture that took place in the PCI: there were other reasons for the divide, of course, but it was these events that aggravated it.

Unlike its "brother" parties, the PCI did sharply condemn the invasion, but it accused the Soviet Communist Party of having made a "mistake," while *Il Manifesto* reached the conclusion that this system could no longer be reformed. The group at the heart of the magazine was pushed out of the PCI, and from 1969 onward it was fully part of the movement emerging from '68, which was now taking the form of a variety of political groups.

Yet I still remember how in the days following the invasion of Prague we were amazed by the lack of reaction among a large share of the young '68ers. The communists were shocked, but for most the clamorous Soviet action seemed something distant, almost as if it did not concern them. At most they took an equidistant position between Dubček and Brezhnev, suspicious of the new course in Czechoslovakia which looked to them like a dangerous turn to the right.

Rudi Dutschke was the only '68er leader who took an interest in the reform initiative, and in April he even went to Prague, soon before being gravely injured by the attempt on his life during a demonstration in Berlin. But he also observed that there was the "risk of a temporary exaltation of bourgeois-democratic forces" and an "infiltration of anti-socialist ideas."

None of the New Left in Italy, from the more distinguished publications like *Quaderni Piacentini*, *Classe e Stato*, and *Nuovo Impegno* to the Trotskyist ones, or indeed the Lotta Continua and Potere Operaio groups, grasped the enormity of what had happened. A document by the Pisa Potere Operaio group immediately after Jan Palak's suicide held that the analyses of Prague's new technocrats' (the economists behind Dubček's new course) "unscrupulously plundered Western neo-capitalist models." This above all alluded to the Czechoslovak reformers' move away from strictly egalitarian models, the very thing that the movement in the factories in Italy was working to achieve.

In France there was the same distrust and, largely, indifference, as indeed in the powerful '68 movement at Columbia University, which was harshly repressed (with more than 800 students arrested). In the middle of the Tet Offensive, they were above all interested in what was happening in Vietnam and attacking the Department of Defense in their own country, which was using Columbia researchers for the imperialist war.

Their distance from the Czechoslovak drama didn't mean sympathy for the USSR. But the challenge to the Moscow regime took place on another terrain, in the name of other peoples: the peoples of the Third World. Sixty-eight saw another fresh explosion of consciousness: after the Cuban Missile Crisis the world seemed to have shifted toward a relatively peaceful coexistence under the aegis of the two superpowers, a balance within a neo-capitalist framework. But this was not the case: the newly decolonized Third World did not fit into this picture, and the Vietnamese resistance was but the spearhead of a more general upsurge.

To the '68ers the USSR looked like one of the two gendarmes that sought to save "peace" by fighting any upheaval that risked disturbing this picture. To think of containing this tumult within the meager framework of the traditional

left's reformism had become impossible. In this sense it is true that '68, which almost everywhere challenged the status quo imposed by the two great powers' conception of coexistence, was "Chinese." It was a critique different from the one that the previous generations trained in Communist thinking had made, as they now themselves lived the dramatic, irreversible crisis of the Soviet social model.

I should mention that in this summary of '68 I have not talked about feminism. Contrary to what the hagiographical official celebrations tell us, '68 was not feminist. Rather, it was still very sexist. Few women spoke in the assemblies, and they were often set to lowlier tasks, even to the point of being called the "angels of the copy machines." That is not to deny that the movement had an impact on feminism, but that was something that had emerged earlier, if in the form of small groups, and it made its own silent, parallel advance only to explode four or five years later.

This was an effect of '68, in the sense that this movement — which rose on the wave of an outbreak of collective subjectivity — did give women the courage to take hold of the microphone. Yet when they spoke out this was directed against the organizations that had emerged from '68. This happened in Italy when women made their clamorous exit from Lotta Continua, the organization that had been most deaf to their message. But it also had some effect on a group like *Il Manifesto*-PdUP, which had early on given space in the magazine to the first steps of this feminist wave. In the mid-1970s, many women's collectives chose the path of separate political activity.

THE JOY OF STRUGGLE

A few weeks ago, the lecture hall in the Faculty of Letters at Rome University saw the beginning of the '68 anniversary celebrations in the Italian capital. Paolo Mieli — in that era a militant in Lotta Continua and later president of the most powerful Italian publishing group, which publishes the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* — made a sharp observation. Remembering that period, he spoke above all of how important it was for the young people of the time that the movement allowed them to break out of solitude, of the individual dimension. It offered the happiness that comes with discovering the other, of making up part of a collective, of becoming protagonists.

This meant the discovery of both politics and the subjectivity necessary to practice politics. I would say that the heaviest loss we have suffered since the gains of '68 is that politics is no longer considered a source of happiness. Its meaning has changed, for it has been impoverished by a grave crisis of democracy.

Rita di Leo, an Italian sociologist, has just written a book for the centenary of the October Revolution entitled *From Lenin to Zuckerberg*. She concludes that after thousands of years in which we tried to build political, social man, thanks to the "Khomeiniites of the algorithm" we have returned to a primitive, asocial man. All that remains is to prepare ourselves for barbarism. I am less apocalyptic than her — but I am worried. ■

CULTURAL CAPITAL

GODARD: THE SUPREME SWISS MAOIST JERK.

BY EILEEN JONES

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CHRISTOPH KLEINSTÜCK

Year of the Zombie

George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* showed a new society devouring the old.

The most radical film of 1968 wasn't French — it was a low-budget horror feature made in Pittsburgh, PA. First-time feature director George A. Romero later said, regarding the way *Night of the Living Dead* seemed to reflect so many aspects of the violence and despair of that year, that this film like all his zombie films were "snapshots of the time they were made."

A political lefty living and working in what he called the "dead towns" of Rust Belt Pennsylvania, Romero knew that aspects of the film would be recognized as highly topical. For example, during production, he and his filmmaking partners referred to the harrowing last sequence of the film as the "Search and Destroy" sequence, borrowing language and imagery from the Vietnam War familiar to everyone from TV news coverage. Later when they delivered the final cut of the film to the lab for processing, they heard announced on the car radio the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Recalling that *Night* ends with its protagonist, a black man, gunned down by a white man, they wondered in the guilty manner of obsessed filmmakers if this latest horrific real-life event would hurt the film, or help it.

Romero was an ambitious filmmaker, and had hoped to make art films, but could never raise enough money. He and his partners in Latent Image, a Pittsburgh company specializing in TV advertisements, finally agreed that making a "monster movie" seemed like a practical way to finance a low-budget film and get it seen. They little suspected that they'd eventually be given credit for the radical recreation of the zombie film genre that, pre-Romero, focused on the figure of the Haitian "voodoo zombie."

This earlier iteration of the zombie was a legacy of the US military occupation of Haiti from 1915–1934, which was intended to quell any political turmoil that might endanger Washington's control of the sugar industry there. During that time, Americans became enthralled by amateur anthropologists' lurid reports of empty-eyed, somnambulistic "undead"

indigenous workers seen in the fields and towns that had supposedly been revived from death and enslaved by powerful local voodoo priests. This racially charged zombie fascination led to a spate of popular books, plays, and B-movies featuring the shambling creatures in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, with titles like *White Zombie*, *I Walked with a Zombie*, *King of the Zombies*, and *Plague of the Zombies*.

It was inevitable that audiences would interpret the undead cannibal creatures of *Night of the Living Dead* as zombies, though the word is never used in the film, and though Romero seemed to take no interest in the Haitian voodoo zombie film antecedent.

"Ghouls" rather than "zombies" were the monsters Romero's team initially thought they were dealing with, and *Night of the Flesh-eaters* was the film's original title. The other "monster" influence came from the pitiful infected masses of starving vampires in Richard Matheson's 1954 novel *I Am Legend*. The 1964 film adaptation, *The Last Man on Earth*, features hordes of vampires clawing weakly at the house of the Last Man in a foretelling of Romero's main setting, a besieged rural farmhouse. This picture also features a Romero-like upending of typical horror film logic, when in the end the *Last Man*, a relentless vampire-killer by day, is revealed to be the true monster in the eyes of the revolutionary new vampire society that's emerging.

For Romero, the zombie figure that he identified with was "always the blue-collar kind of monster," representing the working underclass that needs to overcome the hopelessly cruel, corrupt, and self-destructive hegemony controlling the nation. "To me," he said, "they were dead neighbors." In his famous sequels to *Night of the Living Dead*, this stance becomes progressively clearer. By 2005, with *Land of the Dead*, zombies are literally represented as the oppressed working class living in slums ringing the "Fiddler's Green" high-rise in downtown Pittsburgh where elite humans wallow in walled-off luxury.

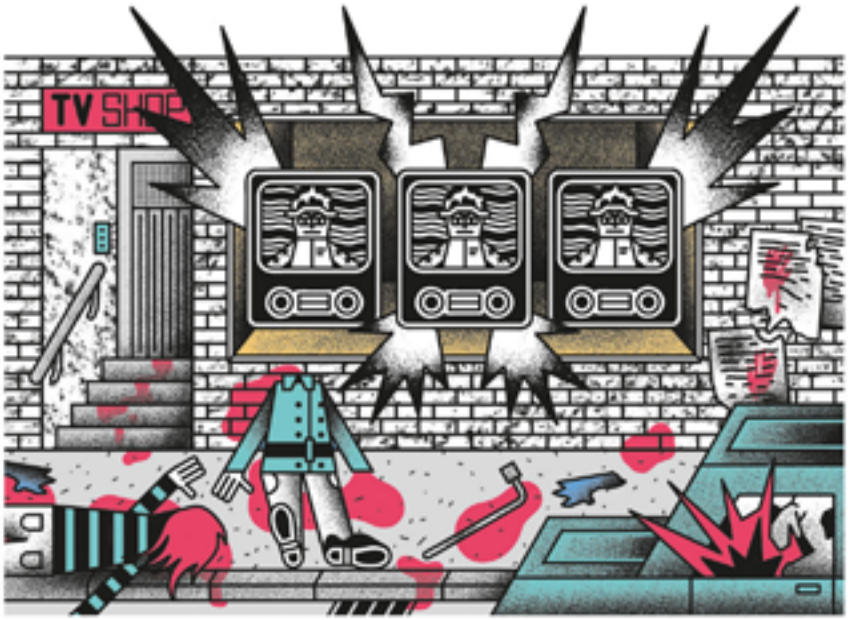
For Romero, the zombie figure that he identified with was "always the blue-collar kind of monster."

But such ideas were still embryonic in *Night of the Living Dead*. It's a stark film, black-and-white at a time when color filmmaking was ubiquitous. Romero liked the fact that the TV news was still in black-and-white, which lent a disquieting realism to the movie's events. Romero's "ghouls" dragging down humans and tearing them open to feast on entrails versus humans beating zombies to death with crowbars, shooting them down in methodical "Search and Destroy" marches across open country, and torching their writhing bodies played out on a continuum with the real-life televised gore of public assassinations, mass rioting, and the slaughter in Vietnam.

Night's plot is simple: dead people are inexplicably rising out of their graves to devour the living. A disparate group of survivors hole up in an isolated farmhouse, fighting off slow-moving hordes of undead "flesh-eaters." This life-or-death crisis fails to unify the group in the farmhouse. Seven fractious individuals undermine their own survival through constant arguing, factionalism, and power struggles. In the end, only Ben, a truck driver who happens to be black, is left alive. Exhausted and traumatized, he staggers outside in the morning only to be accidentally shot down by an all-white local posse formed to kill "ghouls."

Romero always swore that it was color-blind casting, and that Duane Jones got the part of Ben because he was the best actor who showed up to audition. Supposedly there was never any intention of making a film about racial injustice in America. But this seems incredible while watching the last moments of the film, as Ben's body is lifted with hooks and tossed into the fire by callous, grinning posse members, and the images transform into grainy newsprint evoking America's racist violence.

Romero and company were far more conscious of showing the breakdown of US society in other terms, signaled in part by the pointed shot in the opening scene of an American flag waving over the cemetery where the first zombie attack occurs. People's disastrous inability to communicate or unify, even if their lives depend on it, was an



obsession of Romero's that would manifest in all his *Dead* films.

Representing the rancorous dissolution of the nuclear family, the supposed backbone of the nation, is the bitter, bickering couple Harry and Helen Cooper (Karl Hardman and Marilyn Eastman) and their ghoul-infected daughter Karen (Kyra Schon). And indicating that American institutional authority is in shambles are the TV reports watched anxiously by the farmhouse inhabitants, who still mistakenly trust the media to guide them. Scientists and government officials — those once heroic figures of old 1950s Cold War sci-fi films who would unite to save the world from alien invaders — are seen ducking reporters, unable to get their story straight on the cause or the means of dealing with the crisis.

Nevertheless, Duane Jones, an NYU graduate student who reconceived the role of Ben in order to base it more on his own cerebral personality, was highly aware of the difference his race would make to the part and to the film. As he noted, "It never occurred to me that I was hired because I was black. But it did occur to me that because I was black, it would give a different historical element to the film."

As the lone black man involved in the film, he was having different experiences than his friends on the shoot. In a rare interview, he told of being driven the long distance through rural Pennsylvania to his home one night after the day's filming. An obliging actress in the cast was at the wheel. Midway through the journey, they were chased by white men in a pickup truck, one of whom was brandishing a tire iron, and they only just made it to town in time to discourage their pursuers.

"I'd just been brandishing a tire iron myself," Jones recalled ironically, having been filmed fighting off ghouls in the scenes shot earlier that day. A black man acting violently and not just on the receiving end of violence would, he knew, be electrifying to viewers. Only the year before, the film *In the Heat of the Night* had become notorious for an unprecedented scene when Sidney Poitier, as a black police detective working a case in the South, is slapped in the face by the white officer (Rod Steiger) he's partnered with, and actually slaps him back even harder, a response Poitier claimed he insisted on.

When the *Night of the Living Dead* opened, advertising posters prominently featured shots of Duane Jones as Ben punching out Karl Hardman as Harry, the middle-aged white man who vies with Ben for leadership over the survivors.

The completed film was dumped into low-rent theaters and drive-ins by Continental, the only distribution company that would handle its release without demanding changes that Romero refused to make. *Night* shocked audiences who weren't expecting its gory mayhem. It fell in the gap between the waning of the strict Hollywood Production Code of censorship, and the enforcement of the ratings system that got instituted a few months later. This lack of advance warning about the film's gruesome content caused a certain amount of exhibitor and audience confusion, as described by young critic Roger Ebert when he attended an afternoon screening of *Night* and found himself sitting among terrified, weeping children. They'd been dropped off at the theater by their parents, who figured — in an era not yet marked by the fear of roving pedophiles and "stranger danger" — that there was never any harm in a typical "monster movie" kiddie matinee.

Critics who bothered to review *Night* tended to wail louder than the children. Lee Beaupre writing for *Variety* railed, "Until the Supreme Court establishes clear-cut guidelines for the pornography of violence, *Night of the Living Dead* will serve quite nicely as an outer limit definition by example."

But this was before the film was discovered by the louche Andy Warhol crowd dominating New York City's art scene. They wrote extravagant and perceptive paeans to it in Warhol's *inter/VIEW* magazine, and named Kyra Schon, who played Karen, the zombie-bitten child that "turns," kills her own parents, and is discovered gnawing on the flesh of her father's arm, the great new star of 1968. *Night* promptly became a must-see on the urban hipster film circuit, playing certain theaters for months or even years at a time.

Shell-shocked by the sudden success of the film, Romero had to figure out how to talk about the social messages attributed to the film. He felt his way toward expressing the vaguely revolutionary vision that had shaped its production: "There's a new society coming in … devouring the old, and the old society being unable to process it, not knowing how to deal with it."

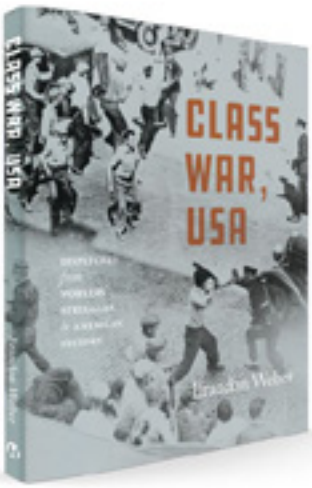
In the harrowing "Dead" trilogy upon which Romero's reputation rests, *Night, Dawn of the Dead* (1978), and *Day of the Dead* (1985), he would continue to push forward this vision, showing the zombie population steadily overwhelming human survivors. But meanwhile the new society that was fighting to break through never did "devour" the old. As Ben Hervey put it, "By 1971, *Night*'s ending must have felt agonizingly prophetic. A few stragglers held out, feeble as those last ghouls, but normality had won." ■

BOOKS FOR CHANGING THE WORLD

Super Bowl Champion and three-time Pro Bowler Michael Bennett is an outspoken proponent for social justice and a man without a censor.

THINGS THAT MAKE WHITE PEOPLE UNCOMFORTABLE

Michael Bennett and Dave Zirin
Foreword by Martellus Bennett



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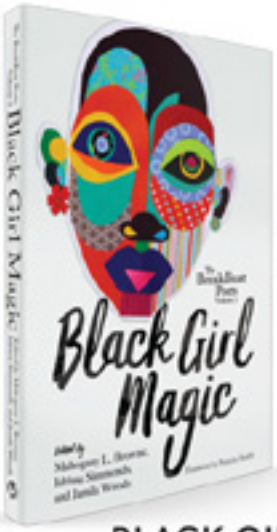


A BreakBeat Poets anthology to celebrate and canonize the words of Black women across the diaspora.

BLACK GIRL MAGIC

The BreakBeat Poets Vol. 2

Edited by Mahogany L. Browne, Idrissa Simmonds, and Jamila Woods
Foreword by Patricia Smith

HaymarketBooks.org

BY JONAH WALTERS

Before the World Arrived

Archivo Histórico de la UNAM.

Just ten days before the 1968 Olympics, hundreds of protesters lay dead in a Mexico City square.

By the 1960s, bankers around the world were whispering of a "Mexican miracle." Only a generation removed from a bloody civil conflict, Mexico was booming.

After the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) consolidated national power in the 1930s and '40s, Mexico enjoyed decades of rapid economic growth, confounding economists who had predicted nothing but doom. Mexico City soon glittered with monuments and nightclubs, winning comparisons to European capitals. The Mexican hinterlands stood open for travel and investment, freshly crisscrossed by thousands of new roads. Universities churned out bankers and engineers while factories generated cars, textiles, and washing machines.

At last, in 1968, national elites felt ready to project a new image of prosperity and peace. An energetic lobbying campaign delivered the 1968 Olympic Games to Mexico City — the first successful bid for a Latin American city in history. With the Olympics, the PRI and their colleagues in the private sector intended to announce Mexico's maturation.

With the country's international reputation at stake, unrest could not be tolerated. Mexico's ruling elite had already made clear that they were more than happy to sacrifice democracy at home in pursuit of prestige abroad.

Just months before the impending games, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz issued a stern warning to the nation: "Mexico displays its enthusiasm for sport in a discreet, but resolute manner," he wrote. Any displays of uncontrolled emotion — hard to avoid at sporting events — risked reminding visitors of Mexico's earlier reputation as an agrarian backwater peopled by unruly townsfolk and marauding bandits. Even worse, any demonstrations against the PRI would threaten the party's image as the benevolent steward of Mexico's prosperity — an intolerable embarrassment for a party that projected itself as the natural and inevitable leader of modern Mexico.

Nothing, neither unruly fans nor loudmouthed dissidents, could disrupt the Games.

Elites soon seized on the opportunity to browbeat into submission those intransigent elements of Mexican society that lagged behind — or dared to question — the country's newly minted modernity. "The Olympiad will confirm to us that we are now young adults; that it is now time to abandon our short-trousers mentality," read an editorial in the PRI newspaper *El Nacional*. "It is good to make ourselves aware of this and the responsibilities that it brings."

But there were some who would not be browbeaten. As the PRI poured $150 million (about $1 billion today) into Olympic preparations, a militant student movement emerged to challenge the terms of national development. Spurred by the military's invasion of several preparatory schools in July 1968 to search for alleged gang members, the movement soon swelled in size and influence.

A National Strike Council (CNH) formed, uniting student radicals from seventy universities and preparatory schools across Mexico. Their demands were straightforward: an end to police and military impunity; the dispersal of the hated *granaderos* (tactical police); and the repeal of laws that criminalized protest, assembly, and political agitation. Then, just two months before the influx of international visitors was set to arrive, 50,000 students staged a march from the National Autonomous University (UNAM) in Mexico City. The military responded by occupying the campus, arresting dozens of student leaders.

Students across the country mobilized to prevent the seizure of more universities. Beginning on the afternoon of September 23, contingents of armed students at the Zacatenco and Santo Tomás campuses of the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) successfully repulsed soldiers for twelve full hours. When their fortifications were finally overrun the next morning, the injured tended to one another in a converted chemistry lab while military vehicles rolled menacingly between academic buildings. A group of journalists on the scene relayed news of fifteen students dead, with dozens more injured.

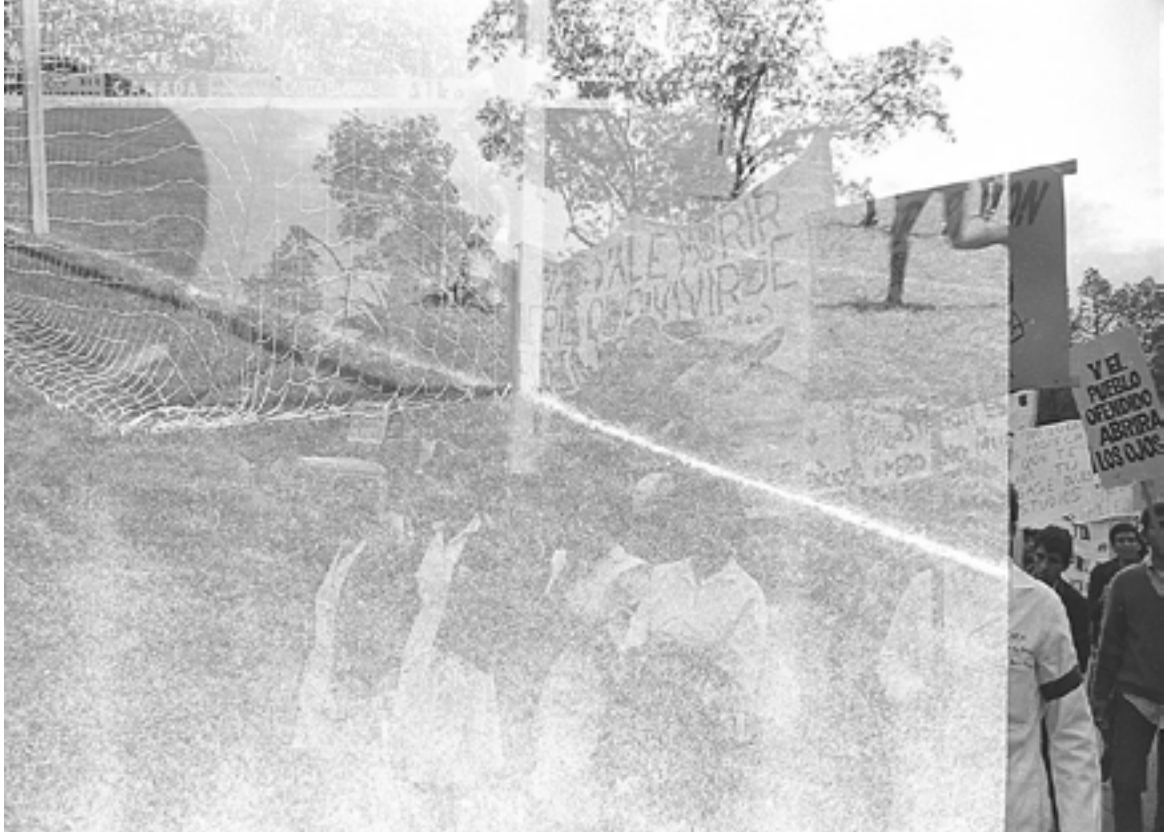
The shooting continued for several minutes. When it was over, 300 students were dead.

The Olympics — scheduled for mid-October — were less than a month away. Elites wrung their hands with worry as the student movement regrouped.

On October 2, 10,000 students gathered in Mexico City's Plaza de las Tres Culturas — a square meant to commemorate the convergence of indigenous, Spanish, and mestizo societies in Mexico — to protest the military occupations of the IPN campuses. Several detachments of soldiers assembled alongside the protestors, positioning themselves around the plaza's perimeter.

The Plaza de las Tres Culturas is situated alongside and partially atop an Aztec ruin called Tlatelolco, whose black stone structures are sunk slightly into the earth but nonetheless stand open to the sun. A long apartment complex encloses one side of the plaza, and a Spanish colonial church effectively blocks off another. Despite being a public square, the place nonetheless feels confined.

Once the crowd had assembled, a group of student leaders began to address the demonstration from an apartment balcony. Despite the military presence, the demonstration seemed to be proceeding as planned. But then things changed. Grainy newsreel footage shows a green flare falling from somewhere high, glowing eerily as it lands at



Colección Incorporada Manuel Gutiérrez Paredes / Archivo Histórico de la UNAM.

the edge of the crowd. There is a moment of chilling stillness, then it becomes clear: the flare was a signal.

Gunshots begin in a volley. The soldiers move quickly to hem in the protesters, herding them toward one narrow exit. There are machine guns on the roof of the apartment building, trained down at the crowd. Bodies fall and are trampled in the chaos.

The shooting continued for several minutes. When it was over, as many as three hundred students lay dead in the square. Inside the apartment building, a group of heavily armed men — each of whom, memorably, wore a white glove on his left hand — detained the student leaders who had addressed the crowd. The students were beaten, stripped to their underwear, and arrested.

The Olympics began ten days later. A flood of international visitors — including the broadcasters who would succeed that year in transmitting the first color broadcasts of an Olympic event — arrived in Mexico. They saw a city adorned in banners and raining confetti, emptied of protesting crowds. Still, the Olympiad did not proceed undisrupted — athletes themselves, including American runners John Carlos and Tommie Smith, seized the international limelight to make highly public political statements. But the Mexican student movement, still reeling from the massacre, stayed quiet.

Mexico '68 wouldn't be the last time the Olympic Games elicited popular unrest that couldn't be contained from above. In the lead-up to the 2016 summer Olympics, *favela* residents in Rio de Janeiro mobilized mass demonstrations against austerity and security policies that prioritized international perception over local well-being. In the seven years between the city's successful bid and the arrival of international athletes in Rio, more than 2,500 *favela* residents were murdered by security forces.

The Tlatelolco massacre loomed large over the ensuing decades of Mexican political development. The PRI — whose leaders, together with their allies in the United States, were key architects of the atrocity — would remain in power until 2000, rounding out almost a century of uninterrupted rule. But the student movement of 1968 remained a lodestone for generations of dissidents.

Years later, reflecting on the importance of that radical upsurge, essayist Carlos Monsiváis credited the massacred students with opening their country's eyes to "something fundamental"; the massacre showed Mexico that democracy, in all its unruly glory, was "infinitely superior to a modernity selected by particular individuals or a particular class." ■

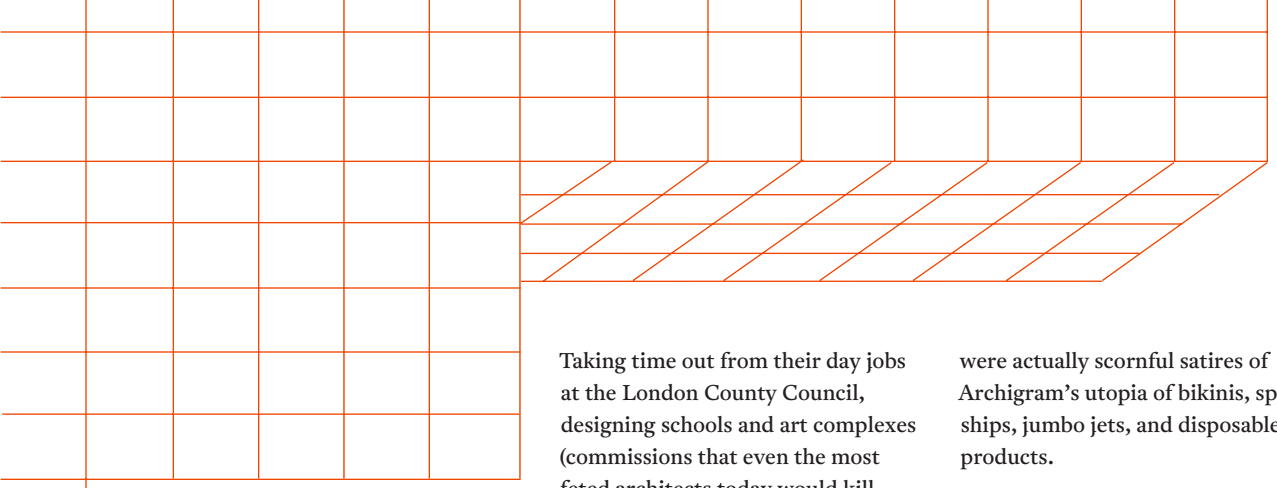
BY OWEN HATHERLEY

Life Without Buildings

In the late sixties, radical architects expressed their scorn in satirical utopias, where the world's landmarks and landscapes are eaten up by the power of capital.

A few years ago in Hamburg, I walked past an occupation of derelict buildings, about to give way to yet another complex of office blocks and luxury flats. Around were tents, little geodesic domes, and some words, chalked up on a blackboard. They read: "If architecture can only commit to the bourgeois model of private property and society, we must reject architecture. Until all design activities focus on primary human needs, design must disappear. We can live without architecture."

The quote was uncredited, but was from Adolfo Natalani, of the Italian architects' Superstudio, and it encapsulates 1968 in architecture. Because capital made a humane architecture impossible, architecture would remain on paper.



Looking from the perspective of 2018, the dystopian perspectives can seem puzzling. Many architects in Europe now look back on the 1960s both as a time when they had a degree of power in society and one they would never repeat. In Britain, for instance, every town and city had a group of architects in its direct employ, who would then shape the city through the mass construction of public housing, schools, parks, and hospitals. Now, when new, architect-designed public housing is either residual, in France, Spain or Germany, or inconceivable, as in Britain, Ireland or Eastern Europe, the statist sixties appear as a period of remarkable equality and fairness. This is seldom how they were seen at the time. Radical architects strained at the era's limits.

The earliest example of this is Constant Niewenhuys' New Babylon, an all-encompassing communal playground elevated above the earth, constantly in construction, never to be finished, taking technological ideas from endlessly self-adapting spaces like the factory and the airport and making them into the model for a post-capitalist future. But perhaps the most influential of the sixties paper architects was the British collective Archigram – certainly, they're the most easily enjoyed today as charming *Yellow Submarine* kitsch.

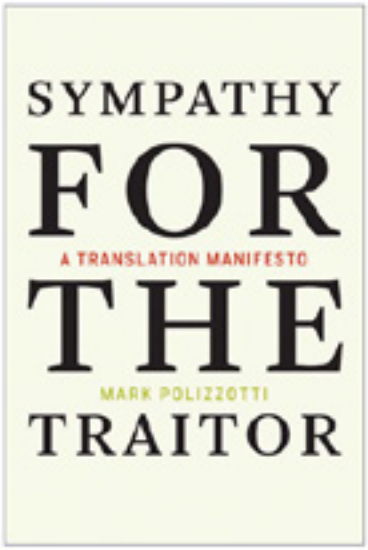
Taking time out from their day jobs at the London County Council, designing schools and art complexes (commissions that even the most feted architects today would kill for), they published a zine showing designs for walking cities, "Sin Centres," instant cities, and suchlike, which their lurid draughtsmanship rendered as mechanically plausible and aesthetically outrageous. For Archigram, mass production was being wasted on heavy, permanent structures, rooted to the ground — an absurdity when jet aircraft made cinema-restaurants flying thousands of feet into the air an eminently normal proposition. They didn't stop at the idea that housing should be as well-designed and allegedly pleasant as airplanes — a modernist commonplace since Le Corbusier in the 1920s — but that housing should be as disposable as an in-flight meal. "The packet of frozen peas and the house," they declared,"are exactly the same."

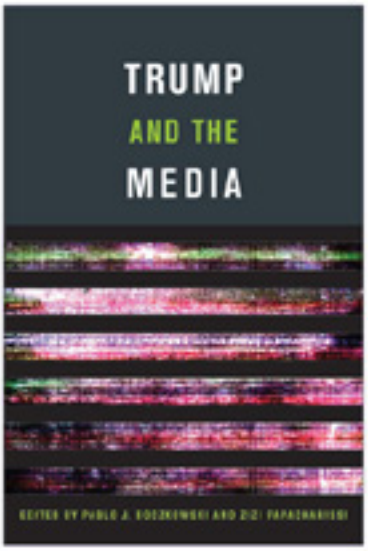
Superstudio and Archizoom are often treated as kindred spirits to Archigram, purveyors of what they called "Superarchitecture." Superstudio are best known for the "Continuous Monument," a mirror-glass grid intended to be a model of settlement that could be reproduced anywhere in the world, Archizoom for the "No-Stop City," an all-encompassing air-conditioned artificial environment; goofy and technocratic projects ostensibly much like those of the British group. But as Douglas Murphy points out in *Last Futures: Nature, Technology and the End of Architecture*, these were actually scornful satires of Archigram's utopia of bikinis, spaceships, jumbo jets, and disposable products.

In now famous photomontages, Superstudio took the mirrored-glass grids that were then becoming the basis for thousands of fundamentally identical office complexes around the world, and changed them from "buildings" into "landscape." The grid runs through the desert, into the mountains, across waterfalls, and charges into Manhattan. It is a fantastical image, in a sense, evoking seventies dystopian films like *Zardoz* and *Logan's Run*, but it was intended as a challenge. This is what capitalism will create, if it isn't stopped.

If Archigram resembled New Babylon with the politics taken out, Superstudio and Archizoom forced it back in, making these images of high-tech fun chilling. What happened next was slightly younger designers, like Rem Koolhaas's Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), falling in love with their aesthetics. OMA developed the ideas of the "Radical Architects" into real projects that would be both satirical and actual.

When designing for banks, state broadcasters, and property developers, these aging '68ers bring to bear an eye for the sinister and cruel that was once intended as a means to reveal the inherent logic of capital. Peculiarly, capital — which now considers the reformism of the "official" sixties to be beyond its means — doesn't seem to mind. ■





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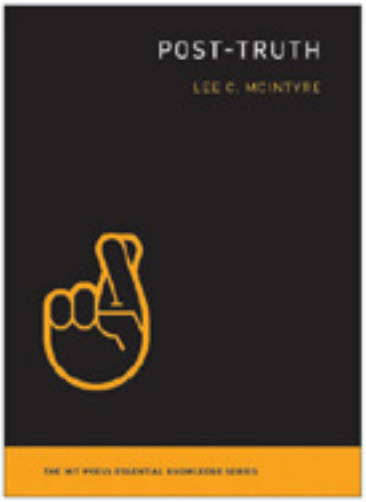

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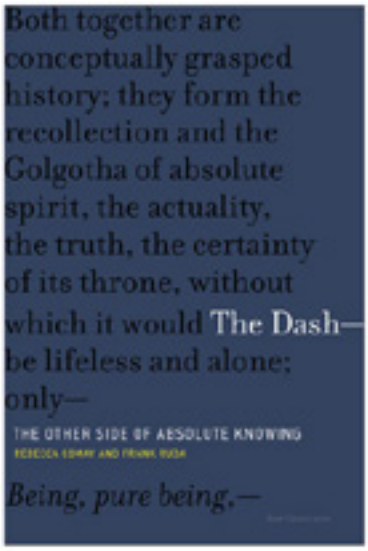

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BY HELENA SHEEHAN

WHEN THE OLD WORLD UNRAVELED

Before 1968, we felt confident in everything. Afterwards, we knew everything had to change.

IN 1968, I WAS TWENTY-FOUR, a postgraduate, a university teacher, and an activist in the US New Left. My background was catholic and working class. I had entered the convent when I graduated from high school in 1962. The world as I saw it in my 1950s childhood was the best of all possible worlds. The United States was the greatest country in the history of the world. The Catholic Church was a bastion of the ultimate truths of the universe. I was a true believer. It was so strong, so stable, so sure of itself. Until it wasn't.

In the 1960s, it all unraveled.

Vatican II was the beginning. What was absolute suddenly became relative. An atmosphere of fresh air and a process of questioning began and it took many beyond the bounds of anything even the most liberal elements in the church envisaged. It took me out of the church altogether. My crisis of faith shook me profoundly. My whole worldview collapsed. At first, I felt as if I had fallen into an abyss.

In time, I built up a new worldview, which was an excruciating yet exhilarating process. At first, I felt very alone in it, but I began to feel less isolated in my searching. Perhaps there was no better time for someone to go through a crisis of worldview, because such crises came to be the agenda of the times. I had a sense of call and answer, a longing toward the world that seemed to echo all around me.

It wasn't only the church, but the state, and beyond that the whole system, that came into question.

The Port Huron Statement, the founding document of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), expressed what so many of us felt:

"We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit."

It was the Civil Rights Movement that opened the cracks in the political edifice. When I first heard civil rights marchers singing "We shall overcome," and my whole being was with them, I saw it as a resolve to prevail over cosmic evil generally and Southern racism specifically. At first, we saw the Kennedy and Johnson administrations as basically on the same side as ourselves and our political system as sound, if in need of serious reform. As time went by, it became the administration, the nation, and even the system itself that we hoped to overcome.

Then there was the Vietnam War. It was so obviously an unjust war. Why did so many Vietnamese peasants have to die? Why was it the US underclass who were sent to kill them? We started with simple opposition to US policy on Vietnam and eventually many came to support the other side. Chants were no longer just "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" but "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, the NLF is going to win." Flags of the National Liberation Front, the Vietcong, began to appear at antiwar demonstrations. I was shocked at first, because I was just against the war, but that didn't mean that I supported the other side. Before long, I embraced them.

Protests against the war became an integral part of our lives. The march on the Pentagon in October 1967 was like nothing I had ever experienced. There were more people than I had ever seen all together, as far as you could see in every direction. I thought that the power represented by the Pentagon had to crumble in the face of the power of the people who were converging on it that day. No matter how naive that came to seem later, that was how it felt that day. It did not come as a surprise that the Yippies failed to levitate the building, but it was a source of disillusionment over time that our voices had so much less impact than we felt they deserved. I still thought then that truth and justice would somehow prevail. I did not understand power.

1968 was a year of spectacular, often shocking, events. We beheld the ferment we were experiencing at home taking fascinating forms abroad. We cheered on the events of spring 1968 in Prague and Paris, though we sadly saw their efforts overtaken, as ours were, as the year wore on. The imaginative slogans of Paris, such as "All power to the imagination," lived on in our minds, even if the immediate promise of what we imagined then did not come to pass. In Prague, we watched an experiment in "socialism with a human face" unfold, which broke down our prejudices and raised our hopes, only to see it crushed as well.

Nevertheless, the global momentum continued to build.

The election of 1968 was the first presidential election in which I was old enough to vote. I had longed to vote in 1960 and 1964 and supported Kennedy and then Johnson wholeheartedly. By 1968, my enthusiasm for electoral politics was already well past. The voices articulating my sense of the world were all outside the electoral arena. Those inside it sounded so myopic, so compromised, so bland by comparison. However, I supported Eugene McCarthy in the primary. I didn't think that the entry of Robert Kennedy into the campaign was a good idea, as it split the antiwar vote, but I was stunned and saddened when he was assassinated. I watched the protests on the streets of Chicago during the Democratic Party convention and was sorry that I could not be there. I found it amazing and appalling in that wondrous year of 1968 that our political system gave us Richard Nixon.

The consensus that characterized our youth was destabilizing rapidly. The discordant notes became more frequent and furious. A momentum had been building and gathering mass and velocity. Questioning that began in response to particular injustices swelled into a critique of capitalism, which saw racism, sexism, poverty, and war no longer as isolated phenomena that occurred in spite of the system, but as manifestations that emerged because of it.

Movements mobilized for specific reforms converged and adopted the rhetoric of revolution. Peaceful protests

erupted into bitter and violent confrontations. The opposition to the war in Vietnam turned into active resistance to the military-industrial complex and all its works. We engaged in many forms of civil disobedience, whether minor offenses, such as marching without a permit or breaking through police lines, or major ones, such as refusing the draft or breaking into draft boards to destroy files.

For those of us who became part of this emergent New Left, life changed suddenly and dramatically. There had been a profound shift of mood and it reached into virtually every corner of American life. No one could have been untouched by it. The American dream had suddenly become a nightmare, ironically, at the peak of its material fulfilment. The polarization intensified and all the mass movements spawned increasingly radical successors.

It was nearly an atmosphere of civil war. Families were split down the middle. We could no longer sit down cosily to Thanksgiving dinner together. One year, in my family, it erupted furiously. It was not only the tension between my brother and I on opposite sides of the barricades. He was in the army in a chemical and biological unit based in Thailand. It was a total clash of worldviews with one fault line after another opening up, with most of my family on one side and me on the other. I called them conformist and cowardly. I stormed out and didn't speak to anyone in my family for months after that.

The legendary sixties generation, don't forget, also included George W. Bush, Donald Trump, and many of our neighbors, cousins, and classmates, who seemed oblivious to the tides of history that pulsed so powerfully through us. There were the fraternity brothers and sorority sisters, the jocks and the bikers, the hard hats cat-calling at passing feminists, the John Birch Society, and the Young Americans for Freedom, who organized counter-demonstrations.

However, it was the New Left who defined the decade, even if there were still flag-waving citizens who wanted the Fourth of July to be the same as it always was. Though we lived much of our lives in our own enclaves, our own counterculture, we could not ignore the dominant culture, which was still all around us. We sometimes felt like aliens in our own land, as we were shaken with an overwhelming revulsion for the culture that had nurtured us. We didn't want to live as our parents had. We rejected their gender roles, cultural conformity, and political passivity.

All the big questions were in the air and sometimes the answers too were there, blowing in the wind.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EMILY HAASCH

The whole texture of everyday life changed. The movement became an entire way of life.

The folk music of the time resonated with such force. The songs of Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Simon and Garfunkel, Joan Baez, Tom Paxton, Pete Seeger, and others converged to provide a fitting soundtrack to the times. The words seemed so much more substantial than those of songs we heard when we were young, such as "By the Light of the Silvery Moon," or even those to which our own generation rallied in adolescence, such as "Hound Dog," "Heartbreak Hotel," or "Blueberry Hill." The new songs weren't just about romantic relationships, but they seemed to reach down into the psyche and out into the social order. It was music that undermined the existing order and incited to rebellion, rather than mooning and spooning and finding one true love and living happily ever after.

Television, of course, was the terrain of the enemy. We struggled to have our voices heard. Nevertheless, television did in its way convey something of the insistent questioning and sweeping social unrest that was changing the character of the social order, at least in news and current affairs, where it was impossible to ignore the death toll in Vietnam, the massive demonstrations at home, the draft resistance, the constant disruptions of virtually every type of institutional function in the country, even if these were often reported in a hostile and distorted manner. "The whole world is watching" we chanted as police charged at us.

In contrast, television drama continued much as before. The police we encountered bloodying the heads of peaceful demonstrators bore little resemblance to those in *Car 54 Where Are You?* The military, who now pointed their guns at us, hardly endeared themselves to us in the way that those in *No Time for Sergeants*, *West Point*, or *Men of Annapolis* once had. The judicial system, as we saw it in the farcical trial of the Chicago 8, was far from the inevitable triumph of truth and justice in the world of *Perry Mason*. In the face of priests and nuns leaving in droves, draft cards burning, black-power militancy, and feminist fury, *Bonanza*, *Bewitched*, and *Beverly Hillbillies* seemed like something from another planet. In contrast to the dizzying kaleidoscope of images unfolding in the streets and on the news, it seemed absurd that *Search for Tomorrow* and *I Dream of Jeanie* should go on and on as usual. Television drama completely ignored the war in Vietnam, but it did come forth with a rash of war drama, much of it a vain attempt to recapture the World War II consensus for the war in Vietnam.

However, there were some changes coming even there. In the face of devastating criticisms of the moral and intellectual emptiness of American popular culture and the insistent demands for relevance, the networks began to cancel long-running series and to make some concessions to at least the superficialities of social change in new series like *The Mod Squad* and *Storefront Lawyers*. Programs such as *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* with its irreverent humor went as far as network television dared to go at this point.

The mood on campuses was becoming more and more radical. Even those who didn't join left groups came out to support numerous ad-hoc activities: speak-outs, teach-ins, sit-ins, bitch-ins, draft counseling, brown-bag boycotts, building occupations. The university felt the full pressure of the wider world on it, not just in distant North Vietnam, but in its immediate surrounding community in North Philadelphia, where I was. The university became increasingly conscious of itself as a white island in a black ghetto. There were increasingly militant demands from black students within the university and the black community outside it, such as the creation of a black-studies program, academic credit for community work, and an end to university expansion into working-class neighborhoods.

I was teaching on the day after the Martin Luther King Jr assassination in 1968. The atmosphere was fraught. Students, especially black students, wanted to talk about it and not go about business as usual. It was impossible to do otherwise. Indeed, it was hard to talk about anything else anywhere on that day. We articulated our common grief in a cathartic class. I made other arrangements to make up the planned material. I pondered *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire and *The Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon. I wanted my teaching to be liberating and transformative.

The whole texture of everyday life changed. Though I was supposed to be writing my PhD thesis, the movement became an entire way of life for me. I was involved in meetings, marches, protests, strategic brainstorms, and tactical tête-à-têtes, morning, noon, and night. I was giving talks

to small community and student groups as well as rabble-rousing speeches at mass demonstrations. I did a lot of writing, but it was more memos for meetings, searching letters about the nature of our movement, articles for left publications, and notes for a book I never wrote, than for a doctoral thesis.

Many of our activities in Philadelphia took place in Powelton Village, a city area bordering the campuses of University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. We made the most of campus facilities, but we sided with local activists in fighting the encroachments of Drexel and Penn into the neighborhood, entailing evictions of local residents. It was a racially integrated area. It was the site of communes, coffeehouses, and co-ops. It was the locus of many meetings and activities, many parties, including street parties. It was a center of alternative culture. The whole country was full of such enclaves and experiments. There was a vibrant counterculture of communes, co-ops, collectives, speak-outs, sit-ins, teach-ins, be-ins, die-ins, vigils, consciousness raising, street theater, happenings, underground press, and independent cinema.

There was a strong utopian dimension to our activities. There was a genuine groping to a new way of life, with much talk of a "new man" and the relationship between psychic and political liberation. The new man would not emerge *ex nihilo* the day after the revolution. We had to create a new society in the struggle for a new society. A liberation movement should itself be liberating. We were creating liberated zones.

There was a whole vast network of alternative institutions, which we saw as the embryo of a new society germinating within the shell of the old. This was the prefigurative politics of the time. We thought that we should live as far as possible according to the norms of the sort of society we wanted to create. We saw politics as not just about seizing the commanding heights of economic and state power, but about everything, about a revolution in consciousness, about a transformation in the texture of everyday life. We believed in continuity of means and ends. We lived by different norms, making us put flowers in the barrels of guns, practice free love, renounce or suspend careers. We talked long into the night in an atmosphere in which everything was up for grabs, all philosophical assumptions had to be rethought and all social arrangements had to be renegotiated.

There was some tension between politicos and hippies, though the boundaries became increasingly fluid. Photos of left activities through much of the sixties show a clean-cut look with men even wearing suits and ties and women wearing dresses and high heels. As time went on, clothing became less formal, looser, wilder. A new vocabulary too came into use. We said: Let's rap. Dig it. Right on. Far out. What a rip-off. What a bummer. The dude needs a crash pad.

We had a different way of occupying space. We sat on floors or on the ground rather than on chairs or benches. We slept on floors and on grass quite often too. When we danced, we did it all together, rather than in couples, to celebrate a wider love and larger vision. We papered our walls with political posters. Though elements of a hippie lifestyle began to permeate the culture of politicos, even drug taking, there was still a notion among politicos that it was important not to sink into self-indulgence to the point of losing perspective and social commitment. Timothy Leary incited our generation to "turn on, tune in, drop out," but Tom Hayden warned of the danger of "creating islands of post-scarcity hedonism far from the blood and fire of the third world." I was on Tom's side there.

The Yippies aimed at a particular fusion of politics and counterculture. They had done their time in serious left politics and moved to a more theatrical, zany style of politics. They were into anarchism, rock 'n roll, psychedelic drugs, guerrilla theater, crazy costumes. They specialized in pranks, such as throwing dollar bills from a gallery onto the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and nominating a pig to run for president in 1968. They invaded Disneyland and occupied Tom Sawyer's island. They applied for a permit to blow up General Motors and, when denied, argued that it just showed that you couldn't work within the system to change the system. The most famous were Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, especially from their role as defendants in the Chicago 8 trial. Stew Albert ran for sheriff in California and challenged the incumbent to a high-noon duel. Some Yippie women founded WITCH (women's international terrorist conspiracy from hell), bringing guerrilla theater into the feminist movement.

There was in the movement a strong sense of guilt about our privilege that played out in all sorts of ways, sometimes destructively. Weathermen played a crucial role in breaking up SDS: they raged through the streets and then went underground and bombed buildings to redeem themselves of their white-skin privilege and bring on revolution. The guilt was also a source of accusation and counter-accusation at many meetings with conflicting factions that was ugly at times. It intensified with the rise of the Black Power

movement with black activists sometimes denouncing all whites and then the women's liberation movement with radical feminists denouncing all men, even those who stood shoulder to shoulder with them. However, it was most often well-educated white men denouncing each other for their privilege. There was a lot of more-militant-than-thou macho posturing. There was a lot of scurrying about in the blind alleys of identity politics.

We talked a lot about the relation of psychological and cultural liberation to political and economic liberation. We believed that the personal was political. We were seeking personal liberation that would avoid the pitfalls of both apolitical personalism and impersonal politics. There was a strong sense on the New Left that we were legitimate agents of the historical process in our own right and not just allies of the wretched of the Earth. We needed to liberate ourselves to be any use to the liberation struggles of others. We knew, however, that we were children of privilege, especially when we looked at the lives of the oppressed, whether in our own cities or in the Third World. In articulating the nature of our movement, there was constant tension between the liberation of others and ourselves.

We confronted those in power in an imaginative way that matched their moves to our countermoves. The Nixon inauguration provoked a counter-inauguration. Federal grand juries incited people's grand juries. We issued wanted posters for the president, the attorney general, the special prosecutor, the police commissioner. If the police could not be trusted to protect and serve, we would set up structures for community accountability of police. If the government would not make peace with Vietnam, we organized a People's peace treaty. We formed our own foreign relations as we built our network of connections with liberation movements abroad. Some governments, such as those of Cuba and North Vietnam, dealt directly with our movement. If their newspapers and magazines presented a distorted view of the world, we would produce our own. We had *Distant Drummer*, *Free Press, Ramparts, Liberation*, and many more. As the mainstream wire services wouldn't convey our truth, there was Liberation News Service. If the whole range of their media failed to represent the world as we saw it, we would make our own films and find openings to make our voices heard on radio and TV. If they persisted in parading women in beauty pageants, we crowned a sheep Miss America in Atlantic City.

We saw ourselves as making a long march through all the institutions of society: homes, schools, workplaces,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EMILY HAASCH

neighborhoods. It was not just seizing control of factories or government buildings. It was a long, hard, intricate process.

Sexual identity was a constant theme in all of our movement organizations at this time. We believed that sexism had to be addressed seriously, both in how it played out in the wider society, as well as in the movement itself. Some pushed for a separatist women's movement, but I saw the women's movement as a movement within a movement. I saw patriarchy as a powerful force, but not the primary form of oppression. I was focused on the relationship of gender and race and class within capitalism. I rebelled against received conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity. To be fully human was to be both rational and emotional, both logical and experiential, both political and domestic.

Many of us were moving between the academic world and the movement. The tensions and contradictions came into particularly sharp focus during academic conferences, where we formed radical caucuses. The conventions of the American Philosophical Association (APA) each year were sites of sharp confrontation between the academic establishment and radical academics. Initially the radical caucus was focused on passing resolutions protesting against war, prohibiting defense research, and supporting Angela Davis. Davis was a philosopher who had been fired for her radical views and then was arrested for alleged involvement in the kidnapping and murder of a judge. She was a major icon of the day, a face on many posters and t-shirts.

Such resolutions, we now argued, weren't enough. It wouldn't do just to get philosophers to oppose the war and then keep on doing philosophy as before. We had to engage in a radical analysis of philosophy itself and a critique of the sort of philosophy prevailing in our departments. The profession was dominated by analytic philosophy, which we found increasingly sterile, irrelevant, even repressive. At a plenary session of the APA, I exploded at Arthur Danto and Sidney Hook, both renowned philosophers of the day, for their stance of insisting on the political neutrality of philosophy. I argued that there was no neutral ground, that the whole capitalist economy, the whole bourgeois social structure, was grounded in certain thought patterns. Danto replied that it was necessary to separate a philosopher's work in his profession from his moral concerns as a man and as a citizen. I argued back.

At the American Historical Association (AHA), there were more dramatic confrontations, one involving a melee in which the AHA president fought to wrest the microphone from Howard Zinn. At the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the scientists were having the same arguments as the philosophers and historians. Some thought that politics should have no part in such proceedings, arguing that they might take positions as citizens, but couldn't let it interfere with the "objectivity" of science.

Science for the People brought a more radical critique to bear. It was formed in Boston by Harvard scientists Richard Levins, Richard Lewontin, and Stephen Jay Gould and spread from there. They had been refused permission to sponsor a seminar on the official program or even to set up a literature table. Nevertheless, they distributed copies of their manifesto, rented a suite in the hotel where they held unofficial seminars and strategy meetings. At official sessions, they spoke from the floor, particularly targeting sessions on weapons research, and continued speaking, even when ruled out of order. Their efforts were supplemented by demonstrations organized by the antiwar movement against scientific support for the war.

So it went in other disciplines. The sociologists, economists, psychologists, litterateurs, and the rest were all arguing for and against value-free discourse in their disciplines. There was a Sociology Liberation Movement that opposed "fat-cat sociology," value neutrality, emphasis on consensus and de-emphasis on class. They published several radical-sociology readers. They produced a counter-convention newspaper at the American Sociological Association (ASA), which turned into a journal called *The Insurgent Sociologist*. Its editor, Al Szymanski, a big, energetic, intellectual powerhouse of a guy, held up a sign saying "bullshit" at any particularly objectionable statement made by a speaker at ASA conventions. It was, he explained, "an experiment in ethnomethodology." We wanted our teaching to be truly transformative: to bring students to the point of liminal experience, to question received dogmas, to work out their own worldviews.

The "culture wars" resulted in real intellectual liberation, as well as a lot of nonsense. I was uneasy with some ideas that took hold in the New Left, particularly with the tendency to newage mysticism. I understood the need for a cosmic perspective, but I was critical of the gravitation towards Eastern religions as a panacea for all that was wrong with Western culture. I was regularly asked what my star sign was, as astrology got a grip. Some feminists got into a cult of goddesses. When some who had a track record as serious organizers, such as Julius Lester and Rennie Davis, began to drift in this direction, I worried.

I pondered and polemicized on these matters, from gender to geopolitics, and scurried around from city to city, campus to campus, group to group, trying to build our movement. I pursued this with an almost unbearable intensity at times. I surged from revolutionary exhilaration and then plunged into apocalyptic despair and back again. I felt the tide of history cascading through me. I was often emotionally overwrought and physically distressed. The constant movement from place to place, sleeping on floors and in cars, sometimes talking all night and not sleeping at all, eating whatever I could grab, maintaining a number of intense relationships, took its toll, but I kept going.

So here we are in 2018, fifty years later looking back on 1968. I can't help remembering, not only 1968, but 1988, when there was much ado marking the twentieth anniversary of that watershed year. There were some solid books giving sound and stimulating assessments of its meaning and impact. In the mass media, in contrast, there was a flurry of superficial and spurious assessments of the New Left. Jerry Rubin's exhibitionist trip from yippie to yuppie received more media attention than the serious work of all of the others in the years since, who were still addressing the nature of the system and exploring ways to transform it.

The media consensus was expressed in a tone of affectionate derision, indicating that those who rose up at that time were now either trading on the stock exchanges or growing organic vegetables, either turncoats or dropouts.

Looking back on this 1968–1988 syndrome, Daniel Bensaïd wrote of the battle of memory between rebels and repentants: "The 68ers had reached their greying and bourgeoisifying forties.... Masses and classes were erased ... reducing the largest general strike in history to a juvenile prank or narcissistic wound."

The fact that there was and still is still so much fallout from 1968 it is itself a kind of victory. The year itself symbolizes the New Left indicating the extent to which we set the agenda of the times.

So what did we accomplish? Not what we intended obviously, but not nothing either. We defined the era. We transformed the terrain in many respects. We played a part in ending the war. We were responsible for many reforms that have endured. We did not, however, make the revolution that was so necessary. So many years later, knowing all that transpired in subsequent decades, it may seem crazy that we ever thought otherwise, but many things seemed possible then, even if they were not.

Nevertheless, most of those who were really committed then continued to be committed and found ways to advance the ideas and ideals formed in the sixties into subsequent decades. Sadder but wiser, we carried on.

We seized the intellectual and moral initiative. We shook up a smug and stable social order. We challenged the hegemony of the dominant ideology and shattered forever the consensus of the fifties.

It is true that no government fell, but it is also true that no government has ever ruled in such an uncontested way as before. It is true that capitalism has prevailed and has shown itself to be a far more resilient system than we ever imagined, capable of restructuring itself and regaining lost ground. However, our critique of capitalism has not been refuted and massive disaffection still simmers, which could flare up again. Briefly, during the Occupy movement, we saw that on a global scale, but also in many forms of protest and resistance and alternative networks during these years of crisis.

It is true that we then lost that initiative and witnessed the aggressive reassertion of all that we sought to undermine: the primacy of the free market, imperialist domination, traditionalist definitions of male and female roles, fundamentalist religion. However, the pendulum has not swung back to where it was and these areas remain contested.

On this terrain grew crops we did not intend to plant. For example, I did not intend postmodernism to sprout from the seeds of doubt and disaffection that we sowed. Nor the callout culture of narcissistic identity politics, privilege-checking, trigger warnings, and safe spaces.

The legacy of the New Left is contested and complex. It is a story of both victory and defeat. Our defeats were due not only to the resilience of capitalism, but also to our own blind spots.

As for myself, I took issue with the strain of anti-intellectualism, the cult of violence, the shambles of structurelessness, the romanticization of the Third World, the indulgence of drug culture, the ethos of consumption versus production, even at the time. I did, however, share the general New Left rejection of the Old Left, naiveté about power politics, ignorance of economics, suspicion of science and technology. I would reevaluate on these fronts as the next decades unfolded.

I kept thinking for years that the pendulum had swung as far to the right as possible and would soon swing back to the left again, but that didn't happen, not on that scale, not yet anyway. Those of us who rose up in the sixties and persisted through the half century since have navigated mighty historical waves, but we haven't yet come into port. We are still seeking, still sailing, still struggling for a better world. ■

THE TUMBREL

BARRICADES SHUT DOWN THE STREET BUT OPEN THE WAY.

BY LOREN BALHORN

Joschka Fischer's Long March

How the Green Party wunderkind transformed German capitalism, and with it, himself.

Out of the 1968 generation, few political transformations are better known than that of Joschka Fischer — a street fighter turned foreign minister turned business consultant.

Born the son of a butcher in conservative southwestern Germany, Fischer moved to Frankfurt in the mid-1960s, drawn to the emerging radical student movement there. He would quickly establish himself in the "Sponti" scene, a left-libertarian counterpart to the movement's more traditional Communist wing. Yet despite the "spontaneist" label, Fischer's group, *Revolutionärer Kampf* ("Revolutionary Struggle"), began not as a group of squatters and street fighters, but one dedicated to organizing in Frankfurt's big factories.

Inspired by Italian *operaismo*, they took blue-collar jobs and agitated among workers, leaving campuses to capitalize on increasing labor unrest. Fischer industrialized at the local Opel factory, but was fired after only six months. He would spend the better part of the decade working as a taxi driver and selling used books.

The other Spontis' factory experiences were brief, rarely lasting over a year, and the erstwhile radical proletarians found themselves culturally and politically cut off from their coworkers. It was only following this frustrated attempt to intervene in politics directly at the point of production that they began branching out into urban politics.

Around the time that the group's factory work was fizzling out, Frankfurt's Westend neighborhood was being transformed as developers bought up housing stock to demolish and build office buildings. Rising rents and the rapid replacement of residential with commercial space triggered Frankfurt's infamous *Häuserkampf*, a brutal, years-long struggle which witnessed bloody street battles, successful occupations and, ultimately, a partial victory for the movement.

It was in this phase of militancy that the iconic images of Fischer as a street fighter would arise, lending his early political career a rebellious mystique and later providing fodder for conservative attacks. It also marked the Sponti movement's decisive shift towards radical

politics in the sphere of reproduction, which seemed to offer more immediate gains than organizing largely uninterested factory workers.

Through the Institutions

While the West German student movement was still on the ascent in 1967, its de facto leader Rudi Dutschke gave a famous speech depicting the "long march through the institutions," in obvious reference to Mao. Today, this is often interpreted as foreshadowing the '68ers decision, beginning in the late 1970s, to reintegrate themselves into parliamentary democracy in order to change the system from within.

Dutschke in fact had something quite different in mind, using the metaphor to describe how revolutionary activists should consistently try to shake things up and disturb the established order in whatever social institutions they found themselves in. And though he would arguably moderate his politics later on and become a fervent supporter of the emerging Greens (his early death in 1979 prevented him from seeing the project to its completion), he probably never could have imagined how far into the institutions his former comrades would march.

Fischer had never been very sympathetic to the dogmatic Maoist and neo-Stalinist "K-Gruppen" that sprung up after the student movement's collapse, but he remained somewhat ambivalent for a time on the question of political violence. Yet around 1976–77, he completely rejected the terrorism of the Red Army Faction and similar groups which isolated, rather than grew, broader struggles. From here, Fischer would become increasingly involved in the local social movements out of which the Greens emerged.

Following the *Häuserkampf*, the next major struggles in Frankfurt were against the expansion of the city's international airport and, later, nuclear power. These movements extended deep into society, bringing the Spontis into contact with much wider milieus and with them, the taste of victory. Often, these movements succeeded in at least slowing unpopular development projects, and saw a new, broadly "progressive" majority emerge in some West German cities. As the world revolution receded further into the distance, local political and social reform seemed increasingly within reach.

Sensing the way the wind was blowing, by the end of the decade Fischer was a major spokesperson of the Greens' "Realo" wing which opposed radical action and sought to make the party a powerful parliamentary force by actively seeking government participation. By 1985 Fischer was serving as environmental minister in the first SPD-Green state government and never looked back.

Fischer's career is in many ways paradigmatic of what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello describe as the "new spirit of capitalism." The two sociologists describe how capitalists co-opted the libertarian impulses of 1968 in order to make the workplace, and with it the culture of capitalism generally, more flexible. All the better to extract profits in a more dynamic and complicated capitalist system, where the Fordist model appeared increasingly stagnant.

Yet there is no doubt that the Green Party Fischer led and the wider social milieus around it brought a limited and without a doubt "bourgeois" degree of environmentalism and feminism to German politics and opened up cultural spaces that made society significantly more bearable for minorities and anyone who failed to fit in to the suffocating social norms of 1950s West Germany. The country became more tolerant and more diverse, which, not incidentally, also made it better suited to return to its role as a leading capitalist power in Europe and the world. The government pursued renewable energy development and, at least rhetorically, supported women's rights, sustainable development, and peace. As a result, Germany no longer exercised soft power as a militaristic empire, but could do so as a seemingly progressive, liberal democratic state which presented itself as a champion of equal rights, environmental protection, and international cooperation.

Fischer and his comrades' early writings on their understanding of "Realpolitik" exhibit a strong emphasis on and interest in results.

As the world revolution receded further into the distance, local political and social reform seemed increasingly within reach.

In stark contrast to their early days as marginalized radicals lobbing Molotov cocktails at police, the Greens now ran city and state governments and became a real political factor in the country. Yet in order to become reliable governing parties for the Social Democrats (and later even the conservatives), they had to accept the rules of the game and make their peace with German capitalism.

Fischer's ascendency to the role of foreign minister in 1998 symbolized not only his personal zenith as a respected German statesman, but also the integration of the 1968 generation into the German political establishment and with it, the country's cultural renovation and modernization. The German decision to participate in NATO air raids on Yugoslavia in the 1990s — the first time German forces participated in a war since 1945 — could only have been made by someone like Joschka Fischer. Free of any ties to the Nazi past or military establishment, Fischer possessed the necessary political and cultural capital to make an impassioned case for intervention by citing the legacy of "Never Again," drawing comparisons to his own country's dark past and wrapping the decision in anti-fascist sentiment.

It is hard to say where exactly Joschka Fischer the Sponti radical ends and Joschka Fischer the neoliberal opportunist begins, as there was no identifiable break so much as a long, tortured transformation, which makes him all the more difficult to pin down. The conservative right detests him for thumbing the conventions of West German political decorum and representing everything they see as "wrong" with post-'68 German society. The Left in turn views him as the quintessential sellout — a confident, young militant who once eagerly organized clashes with police, only to become a pliant neoliberal shill.

And fair enough. There reaches a point after the second $200,000 lectureship, or the third exorbitantly

paid consulting gig for some rapacious European energy corporation, where you have to ask if political principles and ideals were ever there to begin with. At face value, the truism that politics is the art of the possible and of compromise has some validity. But for anyone who seeks to do it for the greater good and not for the sake of politics as such, the compromises ought to at least be in our favor.

Nevertheless, in their own limited way and on their own limited terms, Joschka Fischer and the Spontis accomplished what they set out to achieve. Unlike most of the Maoists and left-wing terrorists of his generation, Fischer never fundamentally renounced his ideals or turned his back on the cause. Rather, he and others increasingly reached the conclusion that in order to change society, protest alone would not suffice, and the realm of the political had to be occupied. Even today, Fischer continues to defend his career in passionate and robust terms, always managing to frame his actions in the language of human rights, freedom, and justice, even as the horizon of what he believed to be politically possible receded dramatically. Reaching their zenith during a time when the labor movement and the Left were in chaotic retreat, it was almost inevitable that these gains would be limited to reforms acceptable to capitalism.

It is thus little surprise, though perhaps tragic, that during Fischer's "long march through the institutions," the institutions ended up swallowing him whole. ■

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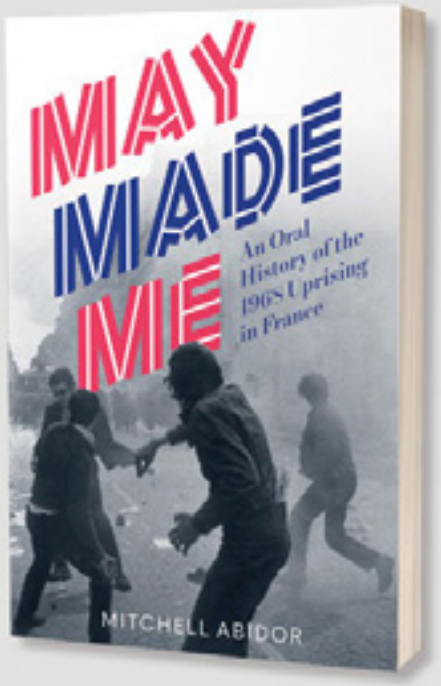

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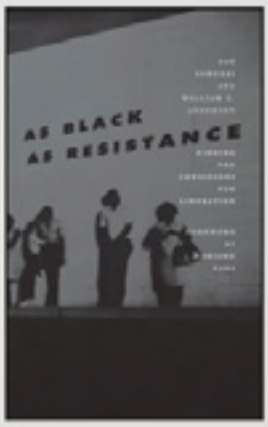

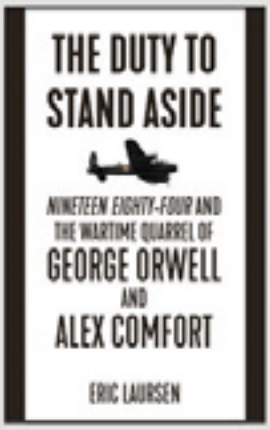

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BY LEO P. RIBUFFO

George Wallace's '68

For every American won over to radicalism in 1968, there was another captured by George Wallace's right-wing populism.

Despite our nostalgia, the "Sixties" was a polarized time rather than a radical one. Nowhere was this clearer than in the 1968 presidential election. Richard Nixon won narrowly by portraying himself as a moderate between welfare-state Democrat Hubert Humphrey on his left and segregationist former Alabama governor George Wallace on his right. Wallace got 9.9 million votes and came close to influencing the outcome.

Since the 1940s, Wallace had demonstrated considerable flexibility on economic policies and to some extent on issues relating to race. Alabama had a tradition of electing segregationists who nonetheless favored the New Deal-Fair Deal welfare state; in 1968 Senators John Sparkman and Lister Hill fit into this category. As a young legislator after World War II, Wallace allied with Governor "Big Jim" Folsom who tried to evade racial politics while improving public services and attacking Alabama's economic elite colloquially known as the "Big Mules."

Folsom's acquiescence in court-ordered integration prompted Wallace to break ranks. Even so, Wallace lost the 1958 Democratic gubernatorial primary because he seemed insufficiently racist. He vowed never to be "out-segged" or "out-niggered" again. Wallace won the governorship four years later as a staunch segregationist.

Whether or not Wallace became more fervent in his heart remains disputed. Undeniably, his public defense of white supremacy legitimated murder and mayhem. These actions also made him the foremost national symbol of the "white backlash." Running against President Lyndon Johnson's surrogates in 1964 Democratic primaries, Wallace averaged more than a third of the vote in Indiana, Maryland, and Wisconsin. To the initial obtuse amazement of liberal commentators, he drew support from white workers — including union members.

In 1968 Wallace got on the ballot in all fifty states usually running under the label of the American Independent Party (AIP). His donors and local organizers included anti-black bigots worse than himself, John Birchers, Ku Klux Klan members,

and devotees of antisemitic conspiracy theories. Even Wallace and his Alabaman inner circle privately referred to their affiliation with "nuts" and "kooks." Though Wallace generally avoided open appeals to white supremacy, especially in the North, his supporters overwhelmingly opposed integrated schools, civil rights demonstrations, and African Americans moving into their neighborhoods.

Wallace's broader message had greater consequences for American politics. He incessantly assailed those who "look down their noses" at the "average" hard-working American. Identifying himself as a former (part-time) truck driver, he pointedly defended steel workers, cab drivers, and beauticians against a range of snooty critics: prominent editors and publishers, the Council on Foreign Relations, foundation presidents, "pseudo-intellectuals," bearded government bureaucrats, "sissy-britches," "pointy-headed professors," and "intellectual morons" who could not park a bicycle straight.

Although Wallace moved friendly audiences with unusual eloquence, he certainly did not invent these themes. But because his most recent eloquent precursor on the Right, Senator Joseph McCarthy, had died a whole eleven years earlier, mystified journalists and pollsters belatedly set out to discover where this "backlash" had come from. Some of them could not get beyond Wallace's slicked-back hair and shiny suits; the best discerned a genuine if inchoate grassroots and pavement movement. According to fairly reliable contemporary polls, one-third of Roman Catholics and a majority of manual workers approved of Wallace. More than half of Americans surveyed thought "liberals, intellectuals, and long hairs" exerted too much power and hailed Wallace for "saying it the way it really is."

Organized labor, at a peak of its political power, campaigned to undermine Wallace's claim to be a "friend of the working man." No Jim Folsom, he had compiled a mixed record on taxation and public services as governor. Yet as a presidential candidate, he separated himself from "ultraconservatives" who were "conservative about just one thing — money." The AIP platform endorsed the minimum wage, speedier decisions by the National Labor Relations Board, and public works programs during an economic downturn.

Wallace incessantly assailed those who "look down their noses" at the "average" hard-working American.

Wallace's support in the polls rose steadily during the first nine months of 1968. By late September, he stood at 21 percent. Nixon and Humphrey, among many interested observers, thought he might carry enough states to deny both an electoral college majority and thus relegate the choice to the House of Representatives.

Yet a split between the inchoate movement's prejudiced mainstream and its out-and-out "kooks" affected Wallace's worst tactical mistake, his choice of a vice-presidential candidate. Wallace initially picked A. B. "Happy" Chandler. Chandler refused to repudiate his decision as commissioner of baseball to allow Jackie Robinson into the major leagues or his acceptance of integration while governor of Kentucky. On the contrary, Chandler thought these actions would bring an aura of moderation to the ticket. Pressed by AIP "nuts" and "kooks," Wallace switched to retired Air Force General Curtis LeMay in early October. The new vice-presidential candidate immediately began to criticize the national "phobia" about nuclear war. Humphrey described Wallace and LeMay as the "Bombsy twins."

Ultimately, Wallace carried five Southern states and one North Carolina Republican defector for 46 electoral votes. Nixon beat Humphrey by 110 electoral and 510,000 popular votes. At least 15 percent of union members voted for Wallace. His fall to roughly 13.5 percent of the popular total

reflected the disastrous choice of LeMay, organized labor's efforts for Humphrey, and the electorate's perennial hesitation to "throw away" votes on third-party candidates.

Even so, the outcome was closer than it seemed. With Happy Chandler — or just about anybody other than LeMay — as his running mate, Wallace might have drawn enough votes from Nixon to deny him an electoral college majority. The results in Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, South Carolina, and New Jersey ranged from very close to relatively close.

Anyone interested in the "Sixties" as a period longer than the ten-year mathematical minimum must pay attention to Wallace after 1968. According to polls, at least three times as many Americans admired Wallace as voted for him. President Nixon's desire to attract this group influenced his appeals to the "silent majority." An attempted assassination during the 1972 Democratic presidential primaries left Wallace paralyzed but he ran again in 1976 to the benefit of Jimmy Carter, an erstwhile ambivalent ally.

Carter won the Democratic nomination by presenting himself as the non-Wallace, the good white Southerner who had converted from segregationist — pro forma in Carter's case — to proponent of affirmative action. Wallace was reelected governor of Alabama in 1970, 1974, and 1982. Starting in the early 1970s, he began to recant his racist past without admitting he had been racist. He owed his election in 1982 to Alabama's African Americans.

In historiography, punditry, and partisan polemics, Wallace is typically left out of the standard story of the (predominantly Republican) Right since the 1960s that proceeds from (a usually soft view of) Senator Barry Goldwater through (a usually softer view of) Ronald Reagan and beyond. Conservatives themselves prefer to

remember William F. Buckley Jr's critique of Wallace rather than Goldwater's praise. Furthermore, Wallace ended his political career as a conventional conservative Southern Democrat (though he supported none of his party's presidential nominees after Carter).

Perhaps most important, despite their differences in social class and region, Wallace qualifies as a precursor to Donald Trump. He, too, received much free mainstream media coverage, courted law enforcement and veterans' organizations, and brought crowds of supporters to the brink of violence — and sometimes beyond the brink. In 2016, mystified liberals began to ponder where this latest white backlash, now in favor of Trump, was coming from. After all, it had been two whole decades since Congress fell to Newt Gingrich and the Contract with America.

We need to consider long-standing working-class and lower middle-class suspicion of the *other* one percent — the cultural and intellectual elite that occasionally overlaps with but is generally distinguishable from the proudly capitalist billionaires in the original one percent. Professors and bureaucrats — pointy-headed, bearded, or not — may feel quite distant from Hollywood stars and *New Yorker* editors. But, as is the case with the explicitly capitalist one percent, prevailing attitudes filter down at least through the next quintile. Moreover, on a day-to-day basis, working-class Americans of all sorts are less likely to meet condescending billionaires than to deal with teachers and bureaucrats who look down their noses at the 2018 equivalent of slicked-back hair and shiny suits.

Explanations by way of catchphrases like "paranoid style," "status anxiety," and "anti-intellectualism" are worse than useless. If a single hyphenated word is required, anti-cosmopolitanism is the best bet. Nonetheless, latent working-class suspicion of the other one percent often mixes with curiosity and respect. The level of animosity is not constant. Neither is it unprovoked. ■

BY BRANKO MARCETIC

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
AYUMI TAKAHASHI

Traitors to Their Class

Rich people today mostly post Instagram photos of themselves. They used to sometimes do left-wing politics too.

Thanks to a banner 2016 and some great book sales, Bernie Sanders finally joined the ranks of the one percent, which, along with his fancy winter coat, has fueled accusations of hypocrisy. But Sanders isn't the first child of the New Left to turn against his fellow social betters. The 1960s and '70s was an era stacked with such class traitors.

Jane Fonda

Many actors flirted with the counterculture during the 1960s, but "Hanoi Jane," for better or worse, remains the poster girl for that era's blurring of show business and activism. Fonda, daughter of Hollywood royalty and radicalized during her six years in Paris, marched for Native American rights, befriended the Black Panthers, campaigned for working mothers, and, most prominently, agitated against the Vietnam War, earning her decades of conservative enmity.

Abby Rockefeller

The odds were that John D. Rockefeller's ever-multiplying progeny would eventually produce a Marxist. Abby, the daughter of Chase Manhattan CEO David, first refused her $25 million inheritance, then started giving it away to radical causes. In 1968, she helped found the militant, Marxist women's liberation group Cell 16, which held that women were the proletariat of the family and advocated for gender separatism and the teaching of martial arts. In the early 1970s, she started a business producing the more ecologically sound composting toilet.

Leonard Bernstein and Felicia Montealegre

Musical genius Leonard Bernstein was the subject of a Bible-sized FBI file because of his support for civil rights and antiwar causes. His wife, Chilean actress Felicia Montealegre, had founded an antiwar organization and raised money for the ACLU and other causes. But this was quickly forgotten when the pair were lampooned as clueless dilettantes for drawing on their wealthy friends to fundraise for the Black Panthers' legal bills and their families' living expenses. The *Times* chided them for "elegant slumming" that "mocked the memory of Martin Luther King," while conservative reporter Tom Wolfe coined the term "radical chic" to mock their activism.

George Pillsbury

He was the Pillsbury Doughboy, but socialist. Instead of selling hot pastries, George Pillsbury gave away the enormous amount of dough he inherited to left-wing causes, setting up the Haymarket People's Fund and the Funding Exchange to funnel money to activist groups, and convincing his lefty scion friends to do the same. "This money should rightfully have been going to employees of the Pillsbury Corporation over the years but was skimmed off and ended up in trust funds for people such as myself," he explained.

The Weather Underground

During the heyday of the Weathermen, there was a joke that you couldn't get in unless your parents were millionaires. Bill Ayers was the son of the CEO of Commonwealth Edison; Kathy Boudin, the daughter of a prominent left-wing lawyer; Silas Bissell, the heir to a carpet-cleaning fortune; Diana Oughton, whose great-grandfather founded the Boy Scouts and whose father was one of the wealthiest men in Illinois; and Cathy Wilkerson, whose millionaire father owned a chain of Midwest radio stations. All felt a profound unease toward the material comfort they grew up in. It was in Wilkerson's father's townhouse that the bomb the Weathermen were building accidentally went off, killing Oughton and two others.

Jean Seberg

Most moviegoers probably knew Jean Seberg best as the female lead in Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless*. J. Edgar Hoover just knew her as that actress who supported the Black Panthers. Seberg backed a variety of political causes, but it was her donations to the Panthers — "the biggest threat to national security," according to Hoover — that made her the target of an FBI misinformation campaign that ultimately led to the stillbirth of her child and her suicide ten years later in 1979.

David Dellinger

The son of a well-off lawyer and local GOP chairman who once had Calvin Coolidge over for dinner, David Dellinger spurned the destiny his elite pedigree guaranteed — cutting short stints at Yale and Oxford, declining offers to work for the State Department — for antiwar organizing. What his father saw as "throwing his life away," Dellinger, one of the "Chicago 8," saw as preparation. He went on to organize the 1967 march on the Pentagon and use his North Vietnamese connections to negotiate the release of American POWs.

Elinor Gimbel

Elinor Gimbel didn't let her directorship of her parents' brewing companies — nor her marriage into the Gimbel family, of department store fame — stop her from being a vocal supporter of leftist causes. In the 1940s, she funded the left-wing newspaper *PM*, happily associated with communists, and chaired Women for Wallace. Warren Hinckle tried to get her to pony up for his radical monthly *Ramparts* in the 1960s, but accidentally stepped on one of her purebred toy dogs, killing it.

Victor Rabinowitz

Victor Rabinowitz's career spanned many decades, but he did some of his most important work during the 1960s and '70s, representing hundreds of draft resisters, Jimmy Hoffa and the Black Panthers, civil rights activist Julian Bond (who was refused the seat he'd been elected to), and the governments of Fidel Castro and Salvador Allende. Among his rules: never to represent a landlord suing a tenant, an employer suing a union, or a right-wing institution. His father, a socialist immigrant who struck gold by inventing bra-strap hooks, must have been proud.

Obie Benz

The genetic lottery was kind to Obie Benz, who stood to inherit both the Sunbeam bread and Daimler-Benz auto fortunes. Benz spent the sixties organizing against the Vietnam War, setting up childcare for workers at his college, and helping local farmers with their harvests. He saw the Vanguard Public Foundation that he founded with his inheritance in 1972 as an extension of these efforts, backing groups "too small, too radical, or experimental" to get funding. It set up, among other things, one of the country's first shelters for domestic-abuse victims, and was the model for George Pillsbury's later efforts.

Bert Schneider

Hollywood producer Bert Schneider, former Wall Street trader and the son of a studio head, didn't just bring the New Left to the screen through films like *Easy Rider*; he helped keep it alive through his wealth. Schneider gave to antiwar organizations, partly financed the 1967 Pentagon march, donated office space for a peace rally, bankrolled Abbie Hoffman, Huey Newton, and other radicals, and much more. When the anti–Vietnam War documentary he had financed, *Hearts and Minds*, won an Oscar, he read a telegram from a Vietcong official in his acceptance speech.

LEFTOVERS

**FORESTS CAME BEFORE MAN,
THE DESERT COMES AFTERWARDS.**

BY AARON J. LEONARD
AND CONOR A. GALLAGHER

Dear Comrade, Follow the Feds

How the FBI broke into the revolution business.

Sometime in the late fall of 1962, a document began circulating among members of the Communist Party USA based in the Chicago area, titled "Whither the Party of Lenin." The document was a broadside against Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, denouncing his "shameful retreat" in the Caribbean during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The two-page statement closed with a call to action: "Comrades: The time has come to throw off the shackles of revisionism and return to the Revolutionary Principles of Lenin, Stalin and Mao." The paper was signed "The Ad Hoc Committee for a Scientific Socialist Line." Anyone receiving the broadside was thus on notice that there was a pole within the pro-Soviet party proclaiming itself "anti-revisionist" and tilting toward China and Maoism.

While polemics passing back and forth within old left formations was nothing novel, there was in this something of note. It was not the work of factionally inclined CP comrades, but rather the counter-intelligence imagination of the FBI.

From this initial effort sprang an initiative that would continue well into the 1970s. "The Ad Hoc Committee for a Scientific Socialist Line" would ultimately become "The Ad Hoc Committee for a Marxist-Leninist Party," a mysterious entity that exerted its influence over the US left through a blend of misinformation, provocation, and the deployment of well-placed informants.

At its peak in 1944, the Communist Party of the United States had just shy of 80,000 members. Throughout the 1950s there would be a precipitous drop: 25,000 in 1952, 11,000 in 1957, and 5,000 in 1962. While cadre were hemorrhaging from the group, FBI informant penetration remained more or less constant. In 1958 they had 408 active CP members serving as informants; in 1962 they reported 431.

Yet even with all this the Bureau was not content. While informants were critical in supplying a steady stream of information, the Bureau saw its mission against the CP as being proactive. Specifically, they sought at every turn to undermine, destabilize, and ideally destroy.

Image courtesy of Repeater Books.

The FBI, keenly aware that the Sino-Soviet schism in 1962 was at a critical juncture, outlined their objective as being "to take advantage of recent international events to frustrate the Communist Party (CP)." They noted that in the Chicago area there were a group of "hard-core 'Stalinists'" who had been "at odds with the CPUSA leadership since the Twentieth Congress of the CP-Soviet Union at which Khrushchev denounced Stalin." Those in this group "are extremely militant and they hold the view that peaceful co-existence with capitalism is a sell-out of Marxism-Leninism." This was the target demographic for their new disruptive program.

Given the success of "Whither the Party of Lenin," the Chicago office followed up with five more newsletters, all in relatively short order. The second Bulletin picked up on the theme of the first, charging the American party with being revisionist and slavishly "parroting Moscow's soft line approach to imperialism." Read on its face, the document comes across as a radical, even revolutionary statement.

The CP's leaders leapt to the conclusion that outside left political forces were responsible. It is revealing as to the internal life of the CPUSA — and this is no doubt true for other Marxist-Leninist forces — that they did not at first assume there were forces more hostile to them than Trotskyists.

The Bureau, in taking stock of their accomplishments, reported that three CPUSA members were expelled because of the dissension caused by the bulletins. In the Chicago area, the Party "was bogged down because of the resulting controversy" and national Party leaders were concerned about the bulletin.

Copies of the AHC Bulletin contained a Chicago Post Office box address at the bottom of the newsletter. Unfortunately for anyone writing to the AHC, their correspondence was not going to the proto-Maoist group. Government files show that anyone writing to the "Ad Hoc Committee for a Marxist-Leninist Party" was actually writing to the FBI, who in turn assumed the writer was grist for a new security investigation.

Every piece of evidence obtained on the Ad Hoc Committee for a Marxist-Leninist Party suggests that the entity had a significant impact on the myriad individuals and organizations it was leveled against in its twenty-year run. Still, the organization — which was a conduit for the Bureau's informant work and much else — to this day is an unknown quantity despite having operated for over twenty years.

In researching the topic, some people familiar with the intricacies of the New Communist Movement, on hearing of the true nature of the AHC, responded with incredulity, to the effect that the FBI simply could not be sophisticated enough to write the Ad Hoc Bulletins — particularly the later ones. While it is possible that the later AHC Bulletins had the input of former communists, everything discovered in this work shows that the FBI was able to swim comfortably in the waters of Marxist nuance — whether they used surrogates or their own personnel to do this would seem to be beside the point.

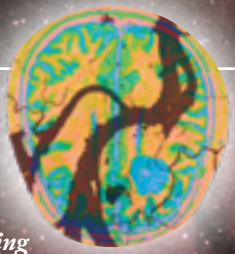
As the Communist veteran and Bureau informant Morris Childs remarked, "The Bureau as a whole is the most dedicated organization I've ever known, maybe with the exception of the early Bolsheviks." ■

Adapted from *A Threat of the First Magnitude: FBI Counterintelligence & Infiltration from the Communist Party to the Revolutionary Union, 1962–1974* by Aaron J. Leonard and Conor A. Gallagher.

YOUR QUARTERLY

HOROSCOPE

BY ABASSI DUBIAKU



Aries

This is a big Aries year. You're leading with your moon this year, so whatever your moon is go read that one too to supplement this. Or if your moon is in Aries then this goes super deep for you like usual. This is a year of self actualization for you, dreams coming true. As you receive your blessings take care to pay it forward, spread the love, this will keep the river of soul charity flowing and keep that universal unconscious in harmony. Your energy is doing a lot of vibe carving this year so be kind, dip down deep as you can into them deep, deep wells of Aries wisdom.

Libra

Build a green house on your roof, grow your own food, grow some weed too, now you got your rent money, you stoned, you fed, you vegan. What next? I don't know man, read a book, you're a Libra. Donate some old clothes, sell off some stuff, minimize, further detach yourself from material possessions, pare it down to what truly matters to you. Objects have their own energy and too much object energy can be draining. Get some sun, be around water, go swimming when you get the chance.

Gemini

Tupac was a Gemini, ain't that funky? This a time of Big Love for u, get down on the floor and make some sweat. Big Labor baby, the labor of love. Live in the moment, jump into the night sky and eat the most sensual star u can find. Feel the star juice swirl in ur soul tummy, Ur the star now, hanging in the sky like a crazy leaf on this crazy tree called life. Life, man, what a trip, huh? Zonk out to the joy fantastic. Enswirl urself in the vines of wonder. Lick the big lollipop of life like some crazy baby. Stay Healthy. Viva La Revolucion.

Taurus

Do yoga. Box. Kickbox. Do Karate. Go swimming. Go surfing. Go vegan. Listen to Miles Davis, Betty Davis, John Coltrane and Alice Coltrane. Finish that shit you started. Lay low, party less, work more, but not some wack shit for somebody else I mean work on yourself. Write a novel. Read some nonfiction.

Leo

Art is useless and therefore the only labor worth performing. We should be free to move our limbs in any way, shape, form, or fashion as behooves us at any given moment of the day. Automation and Universal Basic Income is but one timid step down a long and winding road to the utter perfection of human consciousness.

Cancer

Hit the blackjack table. Take a bike ride. Eat some tofu. Do a kickflip. Take up pottery, make all of ur own earthenware. Sew ur own clothes. Meditation is the realest drug. Lift weights, hit the sauna. Sell cocaine. Go to architecture school. Become a chef. Be a lawyer. Learn Ju Jitsu. Go surfing. Play marbles. Eat a sandwich. The stars contain crazy mysteries, ruminate on those.

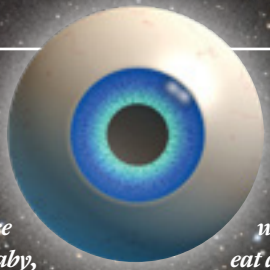
Aquarius

Don't let your emotions rule you in these times. Identify your emotions and learn what they're telling you, act accordingly. But don't dwell in your emotions, keep it moving. Stop eating meat and dairy. Drink about half as much alcohol. Cut out like 75% of ur sugar intake. Eat weed instead of smoking it. Sit-ups, pushups, crunches, running, walking, swimming. Get a dog. Walk the dog a lot. Ride a bike. Go fishing.

Sagittarius

Dog, Palma the '30s, seeing that Pacino one Scarface is a wild movie. (The Brian De one with Al Pacino, not the one from like which was also pretty good, I remember one hella years back.) Naw but yeah, the is wild. Pacino, I always felt was trash in Scarface, but in such a way that he occasionally was very spot on. I feel like his only real "process" was sniffing a lot of cocaine, but in the case of this film, I think it worked. Funny thing is u watch other Pacino movies and you realize, the dude's just a coked out maniac who can't act very well in every movie, then you realize, hey, that's the appeal. Like Keanu Reeves or Arnold Schwarzenegger, you're just in awe that they're even in the room, the Brechtian disruption of it. Giorgio Moroder bodied that score, Jesus Christ. That Mobb Deep joint that samples it over those Bonita Applebum type drums, G.O.D. Part III off Hell on Earth, that whole album is crazy. Anyway, what was I saying? Who cares. Art defies reality, and in doing so, shapes and changes reality, cements, gels, envelopes itself within reality, its own, and the conditions that create it.

Scorpio



Do whatever, have fun, turn up, smoke weed, get drunk, go snorkleing, have sex, live ur best life, Scorps rule, u the best, fuck the dum stuff, get paid baby, make love not war, serve hot looks for the passing eyeballs of the world, serve fierce walks for the uninitiated, sing into the ocean, vibe out in the groovy son u big beautiful baby, eat an apple, think about ur life doggy, what did u do wrong? what did u do rite? did u have a sick enuf time on earth? no? well it's not over yet, there's still time to turn that ship around, eliminate fear sadness and anger with a stern look, let the twinkle in ur eye become the twinkle in ur entire body and then the twinkle in the world.

Virgo

Your early summer is a Coexist bumper sticker. Your later summer is a Subvert the Dominant Paradigm bumper sticker. As fall approaches you will be in full ABOLISH PRISONS spray paint stencil mode. Some real ass shit bout to go down this year.

Capricorn

Get a bullet proof whip with tinted windows. Buy some land in the country put a trailer on it, don't tell nobody about it. Bank black. Close your eyes and wake up from your butterfly dream. Now you're a butterfly. Fly around, eat the honey out of flowers or whatever it is butterflies do.

Pisces

Joy is always present in your body, waiting to be released. Take advantage of that. Next time you're feeling deprezzed, go volunteer at your local soup kitchen. Next birthday, ask for donations to a local bail fund. Bored? Write a letter to a prisoner. Smoke weed, ride a bike.

BY BHASKAR SUNKARA

Socialism In Our Time

We reach hundreds of thousands — we need socialist media that reaches hundreds of millions.

The legacy of 1968 has been used to sell just about everything — from Ikea furniture to credit cards. So excuse us if we don't feel bad about using the last page of our 1968 issue to help fund a socialist magazine.

We're been really busy at *Jacobin* in the past few months. Beyond this print edition, we've continued publishing online articles, expanded our "Jacobin Radio" network of podcasts, and built our scholarly journal *Catalyst* into a force of its own. We also just relaunched *Africa Is a Country*, the best online magazine around covering African politics and culture. Plus, in the coming months, we're helping support editions of *Jacobin* in other languages, and even backing a feature-length documentary about socialism.

How have we been able to do so much? Quite simply, we've gained subscribers to *Jacobin* and our subscribers have been loyal enough to consistently donate to the project. Your subscription helps us stay afloat, your donations fund expansions.

With over a dozen staff, *Jacobin* has come a long way since I was running it by myself as a college student seven years ago. But I suspect we're still falling well short of our potential. Millions around the world are looking for alternatives to the discredited politics of the neoliberal center and the backward appeals of the reactionary right. Socialists have the potential to reach them with writing, video, and audio meant not just for passive consumption, but for active engagement.

We've tried to foster that spirit through our reading groups, but all told, *Jacobin* reaches hundreds of thousands of people, not the hundreds of millions to whom the socialist appeal should connect.

Perhaps we never will, but for the rest of the decade, at least, we're poised to take on more ambitious projects. And maybe we'll help advance our ideas enough to pave the way for the kind of left-wing media that doesn't exist today but desperately needs to.

For now though, you're stuck with us. Whether you love *Jacobin* or merely tolerate it, please consider making a tax-deductible donation today. You can do so online at

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“In May ’68 we redesigned
the world. In May ’86 we’ll redesign
the kitchen.”

— 1986 IKEA advertisement