

The Global 1968 and International Communism

ROBERT GILDEA

In June 1962 a meeting of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at Port Huron, Michigan, of whom Tom Hayden was the leading light, published a statement expressing anxiety about the current situation in the United States. While they had been raised on the American dream of “freedom and equality for each individual, government of, by, and for the people,” they were now confronted by what they called “the Southern struggle against racial bigotry” and “the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb,” the “military-industrial complex” and the “Warfare State.” The current political system, they held, was “an organized political stalemate” based on the “paranoia” of anti-communism, which shut down social and political criticism, even in the universities. Their demands for a “participatory democracy” that involved ordinary citizens in decision-making at the grassroots became the founding manifesto of the New Left.¹

Two years later, in November 1964, two Polish students, Karol Modzelewski and Jacek Kuroń, drafted an open letter to the Polish Workers’ Party, the ruling party of communist Poland. The letter accused their communist rulers of having forgotten their anti-fascist and Marxist ideals and of erecting a “central political bureaucracy” that regarded youth, the working class and peasants as their enemy. They called for freedom of speech, meeting, research and artistic creation, a plurality of political parties, trade unions that were independent of the state and had the right to strike, and workers’ councils to be set up in factories. Modzelewski and Kuroń were arrested, put on trial in July 1965 and sentenced to three years in prison.²

1 Richard Flacks and Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Port Huron Statement: Sources and Legacies of the New Left’s Founding Manifesto* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 239–43, 249–59.

2 Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski, *An Open Letter to the Party Written in a Polish Prison* (London: Socialist Review, 1969), 8, 51–63.

The original draft was confiscated but a redraft was circulated in secret from hand to hand and internationally.

Political Revolt

Although written more than 4,000 miles apart, these texts came out of a certain global context. World War II had been over for twenty years, but there was a feeling among many young people that many of the legacies of Nazism and fascism were still present. On either side of the Cold War divide, liberal democracies or people's democracies flourished, but both the American and Soviet regimes might be criticized as military-industrial-security regimes geared to developing nuclear weapons, motivated by anti-communist or communist ideologies and setting firm limits on individual freedom. Opposition to this stalemate came less from political radicals in Europe than from the American South where the civil rights movement took off, and from the Third World of underdeveloped Latin America, Africa and Asia where peasant and urban revolutions against corrupt local regimes supported by American imperialism spread like wildfire in the 1960s. Opposition also came from global cultural movements of young people challenging their parents' generation and the postwar world in general and providing a broad context of discontent and creativity in which more political avant-garde protest could flourish.

These texts also reflected other protest movements in the 1960s in that they occupied a broad and diverse political field between anti-Stalinism on the one hand and anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism and anti-racism on the other. Stalinism, seen to be embodied by official communist parties, stood for militarism and bureaucracy, purges and the Gulag system. Protest was revolutionary, and revolutionary often meant Marxist, but Stalinism was deemed the opposite of revolution. A Marxist revolutionary might be a Trotskyist, inspired by the Bolshevik avant-garde of 1917, a Maoist, inspired by the Long March and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, or a Castroist or Guevarist, inspired by the leaders of Third World revolutions against American imperialism. Not all revolutionaries, however, were Marxists. They might be anarchists, hating the dictatorship of the proletariat and loving the councils movement that swept across Europe from Kronstadt to Spain at the end of World War I. They might be architects of the New Left, which broke with communism after the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary and developed libertarian Marxist ideas. They might be militants of the civil rights movement in the United States, which in turn inspired many protest

movements in Europe. Or they might belong to much wider cultural rebellions and countercultural revolts that swept up young people in the long 1960s.

Protest movements emerged in a similar global context, but they were inflected according to local political circumstances. The so-called free world headed by the United States and including Japan was fiercely anti-communist, communist parties being banned in South Africa in 1950, the United States in 1954 and West Germany in 1956. In the Eastern bloc of Europe, communist regimes banned all other political parties and clamped down on all noncommunist views. Northern Europe was run by democratic regimes while Mediterranean countries – such as Spain under Francisco Franco and Greece, where the communist party was banned in 1947 and the colonels seized power in 1967 – were dictatorships supported by the USA as bastions against communism. In the global South, meanwhile, from the American South to Africa and Asia, a fightback was taking place in the 1960s against racial segregation, the oppression of the European colonial powers and American imperialism, which in turn had a huge impact on protest movements in Europe and North America.

There were significant encounters, connections and transfers between these protest movements, at the level of individuals, organizations and images. For example, the Students for a Democratic Society in the United States was the twin of a movement of the same name in West Germany, which in 1965 was shaken up by the arrival of Dieter Kunzelmann. Contacts between these movements, however, also threw up misunderstandings and conflicts. When Rudi Dutschke traveled to Leningrad in 1965 to meet Komsomol activists, he was horrified to discover how far they followed the communist party line and took the side of Lenin, who had crushed the Kronstadt sailors' revolt of 1921, which Dutschke admired.³ By contrast, when he visited Prague during the Prague Spring of 1968, Dutschke was frustrated by the fact that the Czechoslovak students were only too keen to abandon Marxist socialism, which they experienced as Stalinist, for democracy and free speech.⁴ Likewise, Seweryn Blumsztajn, an activist in Poland's 1968, was bemused by Western radicals' commitment

3 Rudi Dutschke, *Jeder hat sein Leben ganz zu leben. Die Tagebücher, 1963–1979* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003), 31–32.

4 James Mark and Anna von der Goltz, "Encounters," in Robert Gildea, James Mark and Anette Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 150–51.

to Marxism: “[W]e were fighting for what they were rejecting,” he later said; “For us democracy was a dream – but for them it was a prison.”⁵

Protesters had a wide variety of means of protest at their disposal, and often divided between those who favored only nonviolent protest and those who were prepared to resort to violence. In societies that were basically democratic, protest tended to be peaceful, symbolic, even subversive, unless and until it came up against state violence. In other societies, marked by the legacies of fascist and Nazi Europe, imperial and colonial power, and white supremacy, violent action was much more likely to be an option. Disagreement on this question broke out between protesters in the same country and between those in or from different countries. Greek students who fled the brutal colonels’ regime to study in France, for example, commented that the May events were little more than a fiesta.⁶

The term “1968” is a shorthand for a range of political activities that took the world by storm from the early 1960s to the early 1970s. They began with the peace movement against the Bomb and the civil rights movement against segregation in the United States and other powers in which white domination was entrenched, such as South Africa. By the mid 1960s they were shaped by the repercussions of Third World revolutions against European colonialism and American imperialism, culminating in agitation over the Vietnam War. After the crushing of the events of 1968, some protesters went down the route of violence, inspired by the Palestinian uprising, while others turned away from violence and engaged in more cultural forms of protest.

The peace movement generally applied peaceful methods, but there were differences between Western Europe and Japan. In Britain, the Committee for National Disarmament (CND) organized marches from London to the nuclear weapons research establishment at Aldermaston from 1958, reaching peak numbers in 1962. In West Germany, where the United States had a powerful military presence, and where Hiroshima was compared to Auschwitz, the *Kampf dem Atomtod* organized Easter Marches from 1960, mobilizing 100,000 people in 1964.⁷ Under the umbrella of labor and

5 Ibid., 144.

6 Kostis Kormetis, *Children of the Dictatorship: Student Resistance, Cultural Politics and the “Long 1960s” in Greece* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), 62.

7 Holger Nehring, “Searching for Security: The British and West German Protests Against Nuclear Weapons and ‘Respectability,’ 1958–1963,” in Benjamin Ziemann (ed.), *Peace Movements in Western Europe, Japan and the USA During the Cold War* (Essen: Klartext, 2001), 167–87.

Christian organizations, they were decidedly nonviolent. More independent and more confrontational, however, was Zengakuren, the National Federation of Student Self-Government Associations, which had grown up under the auspices of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP). In June 1960 the Japanese government set out to extend the 1951 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, which gave the USA the right to keep military bases in Japan. When 15,000 people protested outside the Japanese parliament and were driven back by police with truncheons and tear gas, one student died and hundreds of others were injured. Subsequently, the federation broke up, with revolutionary Marxist groups breaking away from the JCP and taking up helmets and staves for street fighting.⁸

The civil rights movement in the United States began as entirely peaceful. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who emerged as its leader, had read Marx but could not abide what he saw as communist rejection of religion and individual freedom. Instead he was inspired by the nonviolent *satyagraha* or truth-force tactics of Gandhi, and visited India in 1959 in order to find out about them at first hand.⁹ Peaceful activism was taken up by white and black young people who founded the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which in 1961 organized Freedom Rides to test the official desegregation of interstate buses in the South. However, entrenched social and racial inequalities in the USA were dramatized by riots in the black ghettos of northern cities during three hot summers of 1965–67. The SNCC became divided between activists who opposed violence and those who were prepared to embrace it, and on 17 June 1966 Stokely Carmichael announced, “We want black power!”¹⁰ Later that year the Black Panthers were organized to provide self-defense against racist violence. Carmichael linked the riots in what he called the “internal colonies” of the black American to Third World struggles against imperialism. This he owed to the discovery of Frantz Fanon, the doctor and writer of French Caribbean origin who was bloodied by the Algerian War and whose 1961 *Wretched of the Earth* argued that the violence of the colonialists had to be confronted by violence of the colonized, which

8 Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*, vol. II, *Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954–1970* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 42, 91, 244; Volker Fuhr, “Peace Movements as Emancipator Experience: Anpo tōsō and Beheiren,” in Ziemann (ed.), *Peace Movements*, 79–80.

9 Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (London: Souvenir Press, 2011 [1958]), 71–85.

10 Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 56.

would cleanse them of their sense of powerlessness and bind them in their struggle for liberation.¹¹

There was a direct link between the civil rights and the student movement. On campus, students were increasing in number and in politicization, but were frustrated by narrow academic subjects, hierarchical university structures and generalized bans on political activism. In the autumn of 1964, students who had taken part in the Freedom Rides returned to their home universities. At Berkeley they set up tables on Telegraph Avenue to publicize SNCC's work and collect donations. When this was banned by the university authorities, the administrative building was occupied on 2 December 1964, triggering a strike by 10,000 students. The university was forced to concede the principle of free speech, and a model was provided for other campus struggles both in the United States and elsewhere.¹² At its Frankfurt Congress in September 1967, the West German SDS declared its solidarity with Black Power, hoping to see American imperialism dismantled from within.¹³

In communist bloc countries, the grip of Stalinism had been undermined by Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 Secret Speech, but the limits on reform were dramatized by the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising of that same year. Restrictions on free speech in the universities were demonstrated in Poland by the arrest and trial in July 1965 of Modzelewski and Kuroń. Leadership passed to a younger generation of students around Adam Michnik, who set up a group called the Commandos. Their aim was to infiltrate or disrupt meetings of the official Communist Youth organizations and turn them toward sharper criticism of the regime. In Czechoslovakia, the communist party was much bigger than in Hungary and Poland, its 1.5 million accounting for 10–12 percent of the population, and its Stalinist control was rigid after having seized power in 1948. Nevertheless, the system was increasingly questioned by economists such as Ota Šik, who argued the benefit of market forces against five-year plans, jurists such as Zdeněk Mlynář who promoted the rights of civil society against the party-state, and

11 Stokely Carmichael, speech to congress of Dialectics of Liberation, 18 Jul. 1967, in *Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2007), 86–94.

12 Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 60–65.

13 Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 112.

a cultural renaissance of writers, artists and New Wave filmmakers.¹⁴ All this had an influence on students who chafed against party domination of the Czechoslovak Youth Union. On 31 October 1967 they processed from their dim dormitory blocks to Prague Castle carrying candles, playing musical instruments and chanting “We want light!,” only to be attacked and beaten by police.¹⁵

In Italy, the student movement drew on a long tradition of factory occupations going back to the *biennio rosso* of 1919–20, when metalworkers occupied car factories in Milan and Turin and set up factory councils, modeled on Russian soviets, and to an anti-fascist tradition that had climaxed in the wartime partisan movement. In fact, student occupations began at the new University of Trento, on the Austrian border, in January and October–November 1966. Students produced a “manifesto for a Negative University,” embodying ideas of participatory democracy.¹⁶ The occupation movement spread to the larger universities in Italy – Turin, Genoa, Milan, Pisa and Venice – in November 1967, and into the high schools during the winter.¹⁷ The movement spread to France too, beginning at the University of Nanterre. Students led by anarchist Jean-Pierre Duteuil and Daniel Cohn-Bendit occupied the segregated women’s dormitories in March 1967, organized a strike in November 1967 and occupied the university’s administrative block on 22 March 1968, an event that is generally seen as the beginning of France’s 1968.¹⁸

The events of 1968, in France or anywhere else, cannot be understood outside the context of the Third World revolutions, aimed at Western imperialist and colonial powers, that rocked the globe in the 1960s. The Soviet Union exploited the opportunity of offering support to these movements – even if they were not communist but rather “national-democratic” – to win Cold War advantage. Young activists across the world drew inspiration from the Third World in their protests, and in the Eastern

14 Vladimir V. Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 35, 59–88, 106–16; Jan Pauer, “Czechoslovakia,” in Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (eds.), *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 165–66.

15 Z. A. B. Zeman, *Prague Spring: A Report on Czechoslovakia 1968* (London: Penguin, 1969), 80–82.

16 Horn, *The Spirit of '68*, 75–80.

17 Sidney G. Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder: Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965–1975* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 151–52; Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency: Cultures of Revolt in Italy from 1968 to 1978* (London and New York: Verso, 1990), 79–96.

18 Jean-Pierre Duteuil, *Mai 68. Un mouvement politique* (La Bussière: Acratie, 2008), 93–102, 203–05.

bloc found room to criticize the USSR for not going far enough in its support. The powerful slogan was that young activists should bring the revolution back home to Europe and the United States. The question was: Would that revolution be real or symbolic?

The first breakthrough was the Cuban Revolution against the American-backed regime of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Its leader, Fidel Castro, immediately became a figure on the world stage, as did his young comrade-in-arms, the Argentinean Ernesto “Che” Guevara. “The liberation of Cuba, in this moment of revolutionary thought, is found in the hands of the people,” reported Jean-Paul Sartre, who visited Cuba in 1960. The war was “a people’s war, a guerrilla war,” emancipating a “semi-colony.”¹⁹ Régis Debray, a brilliant student of the *École normale supérieure* in Paris and member of the Union of Communist Students (Union des étudiants communistes, UEC), who had written an article on the Cuban Revolution for Sartre’s *Les Temps modernes*, was invited by Castro to attend the Conference of the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America, known as the Tricontinental, in January 1966. He took the opportunity to write a study of guerrilla warfare, and his best-selling 1967 book *Revolution in the Revolution?* highlighted the tactic of *foquismo*, actions by a vanguard (*foco*) of revolutionaries who could provide impetus for wider peasant uprisings.²⁰ But revolution was not child’s play. That year, following Che on his campaign against the Bolivian government, Debray was captured, tried and sentenced to thirty years in prison, although he was released after four years following a worldwide campaign led by Sartre.²¹

If Latin America provided romance, Africa proved tragedy. The “winds of change” that swept the continent in 1960 brought independence to many countries, but also the fightback of neocolonial forces. The Sharpeville massacre of black demonstrators protesting against the pass laws in South Africa on 21 March 1960 brought into being a worldwide anti-apartheid movement.²² Patrice Lumumba came to power in the Congo when the Belgians suddenly granted independence; he was welcomed as a “black Robespierre” by Sartre.²³ When he was overthrown and murdered

19 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sartre on Cuba* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1961), III, 157.

20 Régis Debray, *Révolution dans la Révolution? Lutte armée et lutte politique en Amérique Latine* (Paris: Maspero, 1967).

21 *Le Procès Régis Debray* (Paris: Maspero, 1968).

22 Hakan Thorn, *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

23 Jean-Paul Sartre, “Préface,” in Jean Van Lierde (ed.), *La pensée politique de Patrice Lumumba* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1963), xx.

in January 1961 by African rivals supported by a coalition of Belgian forces, other Western governments and the CIA, demonstrations broke out in cities from Montreal to Lahore. On 8 December 1964, the new Congolese premier, Moïse Tshombe, who had helped to eliminate Lumumba with Western assistance, came to West Berlin in search of further support. He was met at the city hall by a powerful demonstration organized by SDS and African students. "Our friends from the Third World jumped immediately into the breach" in the police lines, remembered Dutschke; "it was up to the Germans to follow."²⁴ Three days later, Che Guevara addressed the UN and berated it for betraying Lumumba. "The free men of the world must be prepared to avenge the crime committed in the Congo," he declared, and in 1965 he formed a band of freedom-fighters in the Congo.²⁵

In 1962, Algeria finally gained its independence from France after an eight-year war. This initially owed little to the French Communist Party which in 1956 had voted the government full powers to crush the rebellion. But after 1960 the communist party was involved in a campaign to end the war against the right-wing extremists of the Organisation armée secrète (OAS), which tried to hold on to French Algeria by terror attacks both in Algeria and in metropolitan France. After its liberation, Algeria became a center of transnational revolution. Che Guevara visited Algiers in July 1963 and was interviewed by Frantz Fanon's widow, Josie.²⁶ As the European settler *pièdes noirs* fled to France, Tiennot Grumbach, a French law student, went as a so-called *pièd rouge* with medical supplies to liberated Algeria and organized an international youth camp at Sidi Ferruch. This was a sort of North African '68 *avant la lettre*, and Grumbach later recalled that "all the young people who made 'May '68' passed through there – Italians you will find in Lotta Continua, together with German students."²⁷

China became a focus of attention in 1960, when it broke diplomatically with its former mentor, the Soviet Union, and in 1966, when Mao launched the Cultural Revolution. It offered a Maoist alternative of revolution

24 Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 73.

25 John Gerassi (ed.), *Venceremos! The Speeches and Writings of Ernesto Che Guevara* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), 368.

26 Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 125.

27 James Mark, Nigel Townson and Polymeris, "Inspirations," in Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, 97.

based on commune organization that challenged Soviet bureaucracy and détente with the USA, scorning the “paper tiger” of Western imperialism. The mobilization of young people in the Red Guards as the vanguard of the revolution against the party bureaucracy in 1966–69 may be seen as a Chinese 1968, and it certainly had a galvanizing effect on young activists in Europe. In West Germany, Kunzelmann and his comrades set up Kommune I that month to promote free love and political education, calling themselves Red Guards.²⁸ In France, enthusiasm for the Cultural Revolution provoked a breakaway in December 1966 from the Union of Communist Students by a Maoist group that called itself the Union of Communist Youth (Marxist-Leninist) or UJC(ml).²⁹ In July 1967 their leaders went on a pilgrimage to China. One of them, Jean-Pierre Le Dantec, recalled that, “We got an anti-Soviet and anti-Stalinist version of the story of the conquest of power in China . . . there was a spiritual time bomb in Mao Zedong’s saying that ‘a revolution is not a dinner party’ . . . we liked Mao’s idea that there had to be trouble.”³⁰ In the Eastern bloc there was also enthusiasm for Maoism among young people who wanted a stick with which to beat the stultifying communist system. György Pór, a member of the Communist Youth (Magyar Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség, KISZ), formed a small Hungarian Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party, for which he was expelled from Budapest University in 1966, put on trial and convicted for “Maoist anti-state conspiracy” in June 1968.³¹

It was, however, the Vietnam War and massive American bombing raids on the north after February 1965 that catalyzed and universalized the student and youth movements. Vietnam was seen as the battlefield on which the struggle between imperialism and anti-imperialism would be decided. Street demonstrations became bigger and sometimes violent. Surviving ties between young people and communist organizations were ruptured, even in Eastern Europe, where the regimes were nominally on the side of North Vietnam, but were felt not to be fully committed to the people’s struggle.

28 Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 175–77.

29 Christophe Bourseiller, *Les maoistes* (Paris: Plon, 2007), 110–14; Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 109–41.

30 Interview with Jean-Pierre Le Dantec, recorded by Robert Gildea, Paris, 24 Apr. 2007.

31 Robert Gildea, James Mark and Niek Pas, “European Radicals and the ‘Third World’: Imagined Solidarities and Radical Networks, 1958–1973,” *Cultural and Social History* 8, 4 (Dec. 2011), 452–53; Rebecca Clifford, Robert Gildea and James Mark, “Awakenings,” in Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe’s 1968*, 25–27.

The first global anti-war demonstration took place on 24 April 1965 in Tokyo, where Zengakuren descended on the US embassy. "As part of Asia to which Vietnam belongs," they declared, "we will march." At Berkeley, California, a Vietnam Day Committee formed around Jerry Rubin and organized a "twenty-four-hour carnival of anti-war protest" on Vietnam Day, 21 May 1965, which mobilized a crowd of 10,000 people.³² The anti-war movement soon spread to Europe. In France, it was promoted and exploited by the Trotskyists around Alain Krivine, who broke with the Union of Communist Students in April 1966 and founded the Revolutionary Communist Youth (*Jeunesse communiste révolutionnaire*, JCR). They organized a "Six Hours of the World" event in Paris on 28 November 1966, attended by 5,000 people, in order to spread National Revolution Committees throughout universities and high schools.³³ In Britain, a Vietnam Solidarity Committee was set up in 1966 by the Trotskyist International Group, later the International Marxist Group (IMG), notably by Tariq Ali, whose family had fled military dictatorship in Pakistan, and it organized demonstrations against the US embassy in Grosvenor Square in October 1967 and March 1968. West German students organized anti-Vietnam demonstrations on 2 June and 21 October 1967. Rudi Dutschke announced that, "A victory of the Vietnamese revolution would be the green light to social revolution movements across the whole world," toppling "international counterrevolution personified by the American elite."³⁴

Agitation came to a climax after Che Guevara's letter to the Tricontinental Conference, read out on 16 April 1967. He urged creating "a Second or Third Vietnam, or the Second and Third Vietnam of the world!," which became the slogan of all young revolutionaries.³⁵ Che himself then went off to fight in Bolivia, where he was killed on 9 October 1967, a death which dramatized the global revolution even more than his life had done. The International Berlin Vietnam Congress, held in Berlin on 17–18 February 1968, was also inspired by the Vietnamese Tet Offensive of 29 January 1968. Marchers brandished banners of Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara alongside those of German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg.

32 Gerard J. DeGroot, "Left, Left, Left: The Vietnam Day Committee," in Gerard J. DeGroot (ed.), *Student Protest: The Sixties and After* (London: Longman, 1998), 85.

33 Niek Pas, "'Six heures pour le Vietnam.' Histoire des Comités Vietnam français, 1965–1968," *Revue historique* 302 (2000), 157–85.

34 Rudi Dutschke, *Écrits politiques, 1967–1968* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1968), 77.

35 Gerassi, *Venceremos!*, 420–22.

Cultural Revolt

Political activism in the leadup to 1968 took place within a much wider framework of the social and cultural changes of the 1960s. These provided a broader youth constituency into which this activism could tap but which might also offer a challenge to movements – not least communism – that were seen to be too narrowly political and not in step with social and cultural movements.³⁶

These movements practiced a lifestyle revolt or cultural rebellion that may be seen as forming three concentric if overlapping circles. The first and widest circle was the emergence of a youth culture that was situated between mass culture and counterculture, and largely defined by enthusiasm for rock music, jeans and mini-skirts, and later the hippie long skirt and long hair. This in itself was a rebellion against conventional family values and social respectability. Youth enthusiasm was kindled by the arrival of the Beatles at the Star Club in Hamburg in 1963 and in the United States in February 1964. In Mexico, Spanish-language cover versions of Elvis gave way in late 1964 to bands like Los Dug Dugs, doing English-language cover versions of the Beatles, and with this came a fashion for long hair and mini-skirts known as *La Onda*, the wave.³⁷ Political conflict was often not far away. The Rolling Stones concert at Berlin's Waldbühne in September 1965 led to clashes with police, while attempts by the East German authorities to suppress performances they thought ferried American cultural imperialism in October 1965 triggered youth riots in Leipzig.³⁸

The second circle was the world of hippies and dropouts. The hippie subculture, which began on the west coast of the United States, aimed to build an alternative society in which war, violence, racism and poverty were replaced by peace and love. It reached a high point with the Summer of Love 1967 in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, with free music, art, medical care and transport offered by the Diggers, and with the Monterey Pop Festival in California in June 1967, which featured Jimi Hendrix,

36 Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958–c. 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

37 Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 64–65, 93–114.

38 Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962–1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 158–60; Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 177.

The Who, Janis Joplin and Jefferson Airplane.³⁹ This counterculture was political in that it battled with police over illegal drugs and resisted the draft for the Vietnam War, but also created separate spaces away from possible repression.⁴⁰ Hippies followed the hippie trail to Mexico, Morocco, Afghanistan, Kathmandu in Nepal and ultimately Goa in India, for midnight bathing and more on its Anjuna beach.⁴¹

The third and most intense circle was linked to the anarchist or libertarian Marxist critiques of advanced industrial society and linked cultural and political analysis. It drew on analyses of advanced industrial society by the likes of Herbert Marcuse, the German-American thinker whose *One-Dimensional Man* was published in 1964. Marcuse argued that advanced industrial society was highly productive and increased affluence but at the same time was scientifically and bureaucratically managed, promoted commodity fetishism and commodified culture through the mass media. Ordinary people were pacified, persuaded to conform and rendered insensitive to exploitation and mass slaughter. Individuality, creativity and critical thought were stifled. In opposition to this state of affairs, he argued, free play should be given to the imagination to bring about social transformation.⁴²

In the mid 1960s a number of groups emerged to challenge the existing order by provocation through art, spectacle or “happening.” The idea was to shock society through theatrical, symbolic gestures that were transgressive, collective and short-lived. In Amsterdam, the so-called Provos made their mark on 10 March 1966 when they threw stink bombs to disrupt the wedding of Princess Beatrix to a German diplomat who had fought in the Wehrmacht.⁴³ In West Germany the Subversive Aktion group, founded by Kunzelmann, planned to throw puddings at US vice-president Hubert

39 Detlef Siegfried, “Music and Protest in 1960s Europe,” in Klimke and Scharloth (eds.), *1968 in Europe*, 57–70.

40 Joseph H. Berke, “The Creation of an Alternative Society,” in Joseph H. Berke, *Counterculture* (London: Owen, 1969), 16, 40; Godfrey Hodgson, *America in Our Time: From World War II to Nixon. What Happened and Why* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 319–29.

41 Luther Elliott, “Goa Is a State of Mind: On the Ephemerality of Psychedelic Social Emplacements,” in Graham St. John (ed.), *The Local Scenes and Global Culture of Psytrance* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 26.

42 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991 [1964]).

43 Niek Pas, “Mediatization of the Provos: From Local Movement to a European Phenomenon,” in Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder and Joachim Scharloth (eds.), *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), 157–76.

Humphrey when he visited in April 1967. Happenings also occurred on the other side of the Iron Curtain, where because of censorship political opposition often took artistic form. Vera Jirousová, who graduated from Prague's Philosophy Faculty, belonged to the Holy Cross School of Pure Humour Without Wit. "We did things in a spontaneous, creative manner," she recalled, "immediately, not to order: 'Walk down the street and crow.' 'Take off your jacket and throw it off the Charles Bridge.' 'I don't need to free myself because I am free.' That was the difference."⁴⁴ In the United States, former Marcuse pupil, civil rights activist and Digger Abbie Hoffman and anti-war activist Jerry Rubin founded the Youth International Party or Yippies on 31 December 1967. "The hippies see us as politicians and the politicians see us as hippies," complained Rubin.⁴⁵ Perhaps their most famous subversive stunt was to run a pig called Pigasus for the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 1968.

The Revolts of 1968

In these political and cultural contexts, the revolts of 1968 triggered each other in what David Caute called "a chain of insurrections" across the globe.⁴⁶ From San Francisco and Mexico City to Paris, Berlin, Cape Town and Tokyo, students occupied campuses and young people took to the streets. Communist parties and communist-dominated trade unions were wrongfooted by these events. They denounced them as student adventurism and either failed to gain purchase on them or applauded their defeat. In the long run, however, communist parties both in the Soviet bloc and beyond were among the great losers from 1968.

Although the high point of 1968 is often seen to be France's "May '68," the story might better begin in January 1968 in Prague, where Alexander Dubček took over as First Secretary of the Communist Party after a revolt in the Central Committee against the Stalinist Antonín Novotný. Jurist Zdeněk Mlynář was appointed to the Central Committee and was behind the party's Action Program of April 1968. Censorship was abolished, and people – disillusioned with the fact that Marxism-Leninism had promised so much but

44 Maria Černá, Joan Davis, Robert Gildea and Piotr Oseka, "Revolutions," in Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, 116.

45 Jerry Rubin, *Do It! Scenarios of the Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970), 85; Jonah Raskin, *For the Hell of It: The Life and Times of Abbie Hoffman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

46 David Caute, *Sixty-Eight: The Year of the Barricades* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988), vii.

delivered so little – debated intensely how far communism could be reconciled with market forces, autonomous trade unions and associations, religious freedoms and the rights of national minorities.

This relaxation of the Stalinist system found echoes across the communist bloc in Central and Eastern Europe, although not always with the same room for maneuver. Student protest in Poland was triggered by the government's banning on 30 January of the play, *Forefather's Eve*, by Polish nationalist poet Adam Mickiewicz, on the grounds that it was anti-Russian. This provoked marches to the Mickiewicz monument in defense of free speech. When student leaders from the Commando movement, including Adam Michnik, were arrested, a strike movement spread across the universities in March 1968. There was, however, no response from the workers. Since many of the student leaders were of Jewish origin, the government of Władysław Gomułka took the opportunity not only to crush the strike but also to purge Jews from prominent positions in the communist movement.⁴⁷

In Yugoslavia, which had broken with Stalinism in 1948, students in Belgrade trying to get to a concert clashed with police during the night of 2–3 June 1968. Together with their teachers, they occupied the university, which they renamed the Red University of Karl Marx, and went on strike, demanding free press and right of assembly. Communist leader Josip Broz Tito argued that the workers' self-management supposed to exist in Yugoslavia already gave them what they wanted and asked students and teachers to return to work.⁴⁸

In Italy, where the student occupation movement was already well underway, the defining moment of 1968 was the Battle of Valle Giulia in Rome on 1 March 1968, between students, defying a ban on demonstrations, and the police. The Italian Communist Party was entirely unsympathetic: Communist filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini criticized what he called upper-class students and praised baton-wielding police who were recruited from the poverty-stricken south.⁴⁹ Students' relations with workers were nevertheless good, and workers came out on strike at the Pirelli works in Milan, Fiat in Turin and the Porto Marghera oil refinery outside Venice.⁵⁰

47 Jerzy Eisler, "March 1968 in Poland," in Carol Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (eds.), *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 244–50; Černá et al., "Revolutions," 109, 113–14.

48 Boris Kanzleiter, "1968 in Yugoslavia: Student Revolt Between East and West," in Klimke, Pekelder and Scharloth (eds.), *Between Prague Spring and French May*, 84–92.

49 Horn, *The Spirit of '68*, 142.

50 Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 181–213; Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder*, 168.

In France, the events in Paris from 3 May 1968 were triggered by the disciplining of student leaders including Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Jean-Pierre Duteuil, who had occupied the administrative building of the University of Nanterre on 22 March 1968. The Sorbonne was occupied by police, and students mobilized to liberate it. Television images of the brutalization of students by police brought youths and workers onto the streets in support. At first, communist leaders were hostile, with Georges Marchais calling Cohn-Bendit a “German anarchist,” but, when the workers began to mobilize, the communist-dominated CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail) union joined the call for a general strike on 13 May.⁵¹ Factory occupations began on 14 May, and after the government reopened the Sorbonne it became the epicenter of a countercultural revolution, as well as a platform for Trotskyist and Maoist groups. Having briefly lost authority, Charles de Gaulle’s government reached a deal with the trade unions to end the strike movement, banned the Trotskyist and Maoist groups and called elections, which were won by the Gaullist party’s landslide on 23 and 30 June 1968.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the end came much more brutally, with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on 12 August 1968. Four other countries of the Warsaw Pact – East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria – supported the invasion. Dubček and the reformist leadership were whisked away to Moscow, signed “confessions” and were sent home to dismantle their reforms. There was considerable resistance to the Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia. Petr Uhl and his comrades set up a Revolutionary Youth Movement, which organized a university strike in November 1968. For this he was arrested, tried and sentenced to four years in prison.⁵² In March 1969 the Czechoslovaks beat the Soviets in an ice hockey tournament, provoking demonstrations by half a million people. This led to the final dismissal of Dubček as First Secretary, the expulsion of half a million party members and indubitable proof that in the Soviet bloc communism and reform were incompatible.

The reverberations of 1968 were felt far outside Europe. At the University of Cape Town, 300 students of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) occupied the administrative building on 14 August 1968, after the university withdrew a job offer to

51 Maud Ann Bracke, “The Parti communiste français in May 1968: The Impossible Revolution?,” in Klimke, Pekelder and Scharloth (eds.), *Between Prague Spring and French May*, 64–83.

52 Černá et al., “Revolutions,” 121–22.

a Cambridge-educated black South African anthropologist. A sit-in lasted ten days, with seminars led by philosophy lecturer Rick Turner, who had written a thesis on Sartre at the Sorbonne.⁵³ But NUSAS represented white, mostly English-speaking students, so black students – confined under the apartheid regime to so-called tribal or bush universities such as Fort Hare and Turfloop – set up a South African Students' Organisation (SASO), led by medical student Steve Biko.⁵⁴

In Chicago, the SDS, the Yippies and the SNCC spearheaded a challenge to the Democratic Party Convention, which was set to nominate Hubert Humphrey as its candidate for the presidential election. Abbie Hoffman borrowed the French slogan from May '68, "Be realistic. Demand the impossible."⁵⁵ A crowd of 10,000 young people gathered in Grant Park on 28 August, but when the US flag was lowered by the students, the police charged and used tear gas. The leaders, including Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Tom Hayden of SDS and Bobby Seale of the Black Panthers, were arrested and – dubbed the Chicago eight – put on trial for "conspiracy" in 1969. The November 1968 presidential elections were won by the Republican candidate, Richard Nixon, who became the mouthpiece of the "silent majority" opposed to 1968 and all it stood for.

Nearly 2,000 miles south, in Mexico, the situation became much more serious. After the *granaderos* or riot police attacked a student demonstration on 23 July commemorating the beginning of the Cuban Revolution in 1953, strikes and occupations spread through the universities and high schools, mobilizing 250,000 students. The Zócalo (main square) in Mexico City, used for military parades, was taken over as a festive meeting place.⁵⁶ A strike committee tried to negotiate with the government and organized a silent procession on 13 September 1968. The aim, read one student flyer, was "to transform society . . . in this task we are not alone. For the first time youth around the world are identifying with each other in this common task."⁵⁷ An appeal was sent to the people of the United States "because Americans can speak their mind." They received a reply from black SNCC leader James Forman saying that all student movements were

53 John Daniel and Peter Vale, "South Africa: Where Were We Looking in 1968?" in Philipp Gassert and Martin Klimke (eds.), *1968: Memories and Legacies of Global Revolt* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2009), 142.

54 Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948–1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 129, 160–70.

55 Raskin, *For the Hell of It*, 155. 56 Zolov, *Refried Elvis*, 127.

57 Eric Zolov, "Protest and Counter-Culture in the 1968 Student Movement in Mexico," in DeGroot (ed.), *Student Protest*, 80.

confronted by capitalism, colonialism and racism and offering solidarity.⁵⁸ The government was keen to restore order before the opening of the Mexico Olympics, and on 2 October 1968 the police and army were sent to break up a demonstration in Tlatelolco Square, the square of the Three Cultures, killing more than 200 students.⁵⁹ The repercussions were legion. On 16 October two black American athletes, who had won gold and bronze in the Olympic men's 200 meters, raised black-gloved fists on the podium, while on 5 November a student-led meeting in Paris declared, "Paris–Mexico, same fight."⁶⁰

After 1968: The Question of Revolution

The defeat of the movements of 1968 either at the ballot box or by force was not the end of the story. A Trotskyist book published in France in September 1968 entitled *May 68: A Dress Rehearsal*, had a picture of helmeted Japanese Zengakuren in battle.⁶¹ Revolutionary networks were formed, from the Trotskyist International Socialists in Britain and the Weathermen in the United States, to Lotta Continua in Italy and the Gauche prolétarienne (GP) in France, which seriously debated a move to violent action. In areas where there had been considerable industrial strike activity in 1968, such as Italy and France, these activists tried to remobilize workers for the fight. Lotta Continua used the spectre of Third World revolution to intimidate the bosses: "Agnelli, Indochina is in your factory."⁶² Elsewhere, links between students and workers failed to materialize. In Poland, the workers had not backed the students in 1968, and in December 1970, when the port workers of Gdańsk, Gdynia and Szczecin went on strike, the students were nowhere to be seen, and the state opened fire on the workers.⁶³

The Vietnam War was still a model for American radicals, although the issue now was not only to stop American bombing but also to support the Vietnamese. At a mass rally of 500,000 people on Washington's Mall

58 Sarah Stokes, "Paris and Mexico City: 1968 Student Activism," D.Phil. thesis (Oxford University, 2012), 291.

59 Annick Lempérière, "Le 'mouvement étudiant' à Mexico (26 juillet–2 octobre 1968)," in Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), 68. *Une histoire collective (1962–1981)* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), 291–98.

60 Stokes, "Paris and Mexico City," 321.

61 Daniel Bensaïd and Henry Weber, *Mai 68: une répétition générale* (Paris: Maspero, 1968); Alain Brossat, "La Zengakuren japonaise: modèle pour les étudiants occidentaux?," in Artières and Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), 68. *Une histoire collective*, 68, 102.

62 *Tout! Ce que nous voulons: Tout!* 1 (23 Sep. 1970). 63 Černá et al., "Revolutions," 128.

in November 1969, helmeted protesters stormed the Justice Department, clashed with police and hoisted the Vietcong flag in place of the Stars and Stripes. After the demonstration, the Weathermen declared, "It's not so much that we're against the war, we're for the Vietnamese and their victory."⁶⁴

Western revolutionaries, however, were now inspired by a new wave of revolutions in the Third World. After the defeat of Gamal Abdel Nasser in the Six-Day War in 1967, leadership of the Arab struggle passed to the Palestinians. Stokely Carmichael told a meeting of Arab students in Chicago in August 1968 that "we feel very close to the commandos in Palestine . . . We will help the struggle of the Arabs in any way we can."⁶⁵ Alain Geismar of the Gauche prolétarienne went to meet the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Jordanian refugee camps in the summer of 1969.⁶⁶ When the Jordanian army attacked those PLO camps in September 1970, Palestine Revolution Support Committees were formed in France. These acted as bridges between the GP and Arab students and workers from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.

Inspired by working with the PLO, a small minority of revolutionaries continued down the road of what they called revolutionary anti-imperialism by armed struggle or urban guerrilla tactics, which included bombings, kidnappings and ultimately killings. Among them were the Red Brigades in Italy, the Red Army Faction in West Germany, the American Weathermen and the Japanese Red Army, Nihon Sekigun, which perpetrated the Lod Airport massacre near Tel Aviv on 30 May 1972.⁶⁷ They also included the New Popular Resistance in France, the armed wing of the GP, the Iberian Liberation Movement, one of whose members, Salvador Puig Antich, was garrotted in March 1974, and the People's Revolutionary Resistance directed against the Greek colonels.⁶⁸ Whereas for most 1968ers, slogans such as "bring the war

64 Jeremy Varon, "Crazy for the Red, White, Blue and Yellow: The Use of the NLF Flag in the American Movement Against the Vietnam War," in Ziemann (ed.), *Peace Movements*, 235–36.

65 *Stokely Speaks*, 139–40. 66 Bourseiller, *Les maoistes*, 163.

67 Jeremy P. Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); William R. Farrell, *Blood and Rage: The Story of the Japanese Red Army* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990).

68 Robert Gildea, Gudni Jóhannesson, Chris Reynolds and Polymeris Voglis, "Violence," in Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, 274–76.

home,” “two, three, many Vietnams” and “revolution within the revolution” were understood symbolically and rhetorically, these violent groups took them literally. They saw themselves fighting the Vietnam War and Palestinian struggle on European and American soil, and also refighting the battles of anti-Nazi and anti-fascist resistance against regimes they saw as only nominally democratic and still run by politicians, soldiers and corporate bosses marked by that era. Although they prided themselves on acting for “the people,” in the Third World as much as in Europe, they enjoyed very little popular support and were treated by the media simply as “terrorists.”

The descent into terrorism not only alienated the wider public from those who were sometimes called “the monstrous children of 1968,” but also divided the revolutionary movements themselves. When the PLO took Israeli athletes hostage at the Munich Olympics in September 1972 and eleven of them died in the ensuing battle, the GP, whose leadership was predominantly Jewish, denounced the attacks and increasingly distanced itself from violence. It became inspired by strike action that revived among skilled workers faced by layoffs as economic recession bit. The most famous was the Lip watch-making factory strike of 1973 in Besançon, when the workers took over the factory in an early version of *autogestion*. In conversation with Jean-Paul Sartre, the GP leaders concluded that the way forward was “a partial, local and in part symbolic taking of power” and subsequently dissolved themselves.⁶⁹ In Poland, shipyard workers went on strike at Radom in 1976 but this time, unlike in 1970, had the support of intellectuals such as Modzelewski, Kuroń and Michnik, who formed the Workers’ Defense Committee (Komitet Obrony Robotników, KOR), which was a forerunner of Solidarity. In Greece, students occupied the Athens Polytechnic in November 1973, with the support of workers, and though the uprising was brutally repressed by the colonels’ tanks, the regime did not have much longer to last.⁷⁰ In South Africa, black students organized by Steve Biko’s SASO formed a Black People’s Convention to undertake youth and community work in black communities. This led the way to strikes by 100,000 South African workers in 1973, to the trial of nine SASO activists in 1975–76 under the Terrorism Act and ultimately to the Soweto uprising of June 1976.⁷¹

69 Philippe Gavi, Jean-Paul Sartre and Pierre Victor, *On a raison de se révolter* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 254–55.

70 Kornetis, *Children of the Dictatorship*, 256–92. 71 Dubow, *Apartheid*, 166–89.

After 1968: Lifestyle Activism

This reaction against the ideology of revolution was part of a much wider movement that retreated from confrontation and violence and explored changing the world through lifestyle activism or cultural subversion that emerged from the deeper cultural and social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. This was symbolized by the Woodstock Festival of 15–18 August 1969, which gathered an audience of nearly half a million hippies and other fans. In Mexico, as if to forget the massacre of 2 October 1968, *La Onda* gained new momentum. Rock music proper arrived inside the Olympic stadium with the Byrds performing in March 1969. The hippie movement also took off, this time by Mexican *jipis* themselves, who turned the Zona Rosa of Mexico City into a countercultural center and went off to discover the Mexican countryside.⁷² In Czechoslovakia, while Uhl indulged in revolutionary posturing, four teenagers from Prague formed an underground rock band called the Plastic People of the Universe. It triumphed at the Third Czech Music Festival, held in a half-frozen marshy meadow in February 1975, until the authorities clamped down on them and put the band on trial in 1976.⁷³

Many former activists left street battles to experiment with communal living, either in squats in the city or in the countryside. Rather than confront the state and capitalism, they skirted round them, taking part in a sort of inner immigration to find free spaces in which they could build communities of equals pooling resources without authority, private property or nuclear families. In France, it was estimated that in the summer of 1972 there were between 300 and 500 communes in the Pyrenees, Cévennes and the Alps with about 30,000–40,000 communards.⁷⁴ In Denmark, the number of communes multiplied from 10 in 1968 to 700 in 1971 and 15,000 in 1974, with 100,000 inhabitants.⁷⁵ Communal experiments spread as far as Leningrad, where the Yellow Submarine commune was founded in 1977 by a group of young people hostile to the rigidities of the Soviet system.⁷⁶ In time, however, most of the communes either fell foul of the authorities, or broke up over

72 Zolov, *Refried Elvis*, 133–56.

73 Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture Under Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 99–122.

74 Bernard Lacroix, *L'utopie communautaire* (Paris: PUF, 1981), 8.

75 John Davis and Anette Warring, "Living Utopia: Commune Living in Denmark and Britain," *Cultural and Social History* 8, 4 (2011), 515.

76 John Davis and Juliane Fürst, "Drop-outs," in Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, 193–210.

issues of authority, gender hierarchies, sharing resources or the raising of children.

One of the main legacies of 1968 was the feminist movement. Women were heavily involved in the movements that made 1968, but often came to realize that these were very male-dominated. Aggressive, theoretical debates left women voiceless, military-style tactics alienated them and the sexual exploitation of women by male leaders was standard. In 1964 two activists in the SNCC, Casey Hayden – the partner of Tom Hayden – and Mary King wrote a position paper arguing that “assumptions of male superiority are as widespread and deep-rooted and every much as crippling to the women as the assumptions of white superiority are to the Negro.” The emergence of an autonomous black power movement was a powerful influence on feminism, but also a provocation, since Stokely Carmichael had quipped that “the only position for women in the SNCC is prone.”⁷⁷ American women were ahead of the game, although many had been influenced by Simone de Beauvoir’s *Second Sex*. When feminist organizations multiplied after 1968, there was a global dimension that was strongest across the Atlantic. The Redstockings, set up in 1969 to challenge American laws against abortion, was copied by a Danish group of the same name in 1970. Their campaign to change abortion laws was taken up in France, where 343 women in the public eye signed a manifesto in 1973, putting on record that they had had illegal abortions. These transnational encounters did not always result in a common view. When French feminist Annette Lévy-Willard went to meet American feminists in 1971, she said that there was “a real cultural gap” between them. “We were extremely chic, made up, hair done, while the American girls were wearing any old shirt, enormous glasses, had frizzy hair and didn’t shave under their arms. They seemed rather lesbian to us, while we were very heterosexual.”⁷⁸

Afterlives of 1968 and International Communism

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 had a fatal effect, in the long run, on the communist movement. In the first place, it drove a wedge between communists in the Warsaw Pact who backed the Soviet Union’s action and those, mainly in the West, who condemned it. In the mid 1970s they devised the option of Eurocommunism, which distanced itself from

⁷⁷ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 84–87, 233–34.

⁷⁸ Interview with Annette Lévy-Willard, conducted by Robert Gildea, Paris, 6 Jun. 2007.

Moscow by accepting NATO and the plurality of political parties. The Italian Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano, PCI) negotiated an “historic compromise” with the Christian Democratic Party and gave parliamentary support to its government. In the hope of one day being offered ministries it took a hard line against the Red Brigades. This was not to last. The Red Brigades’ terrorist campaign climaxed with the kidnapping and murder of Christian Democratic president and former prime minister Aldo Moro in April–May 1978, which weakened the PCI and destroyed its chance of entering government.⁷⁹

In 1975, in its eagerness to defend its borders through détente, the USSR signed the Helsinki Accords on Security and Cooperation, and committed itself to upholding human rights. This offered an opportunity to former ’68ers to use this as a stick with which to beat the Soviet Union. Reinvented as “dissidents,” they tried again to introduce democracy into the communist bloc. Former revolutionary Petr Uhl, jurist Zdeněk Mlynář and playwright Václav Havel were among the signatories in January 1977 of Charter 77 which asserted the right of “all the citizens of Czechoslovakia to work and live as free human beings.” This included “the freedom to play rock music” denied to the Plastic People of the Universe.⁸⁰ The regime was not ready to give ground, and in October 1977 Uhl and Havel were sent to trial, while Mlynář fled to Vienna. However, the fuse of the human rights bomb had been lit. Mikhail Gorbachev had studied law with Mlynář in Moscow in the 1950s and talked with him about the possibility of reforms in Czechoslovakia in 1967. In 1987, as he pushed through *glasnost*’ and *perestroika*, he was interviewed by Mlynář, who said, “In the Soviet Union they are doing what we did in Prague in the spring of 1968, perhaps acting more radically. But Gorbachev is General Secretary and I am still in exile.”⁸¹

Change finally came to Eastern Europe with the Velvet Revolutions of 1989. The new leaders of postcommunist countries in Central and Eastern Europe often traced a link back to 1968. Václav Havel, of course, became the first president of postcommunist Czechoslovakia, then of the Czech Republic. Karol Modzelewski and Jacek Kuroń were leaders of the

79 Donald Sassoon, *The Strategy of the Italian Communist Party from the Resistance to the Historic Compromise* (London: Francis Pinter, 1981), 223–30.

80 Václav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), 46–47, 221.

81 Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (London: Bantam Books, 1997), 623; Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdeněk Mlynář, *Conversations with Gorbachev on Perestroika, the Prague Spring and the Crossroads of Socialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 44–46, 65.

Solidarity movement that came to power in Poland. Gábor Demszky, who became liberal mayor of Budapest after 1990, argued that “’68 brought a real change, after that the world turned to a more cultured and fortunately more westernized direction, and it was already neither necessary nor possible to live or think in these older ways, it was the end of the eastern Soviet system . . . Our young heroes of ’68 were Daniel Cohn-Bendit in Paris, Rudi Dutschke in Berlin, Tom Hayden and Abbie Hoffmann in the US.”⁸²

The year 1989 might have been the apotheosis of all 1968 activists, but it was not so simple. Many found themselves discredited by their association with communism, even if their brand had always been an anti-Stalinist Marxism. Attacks were mounted on 1968ers from France and Denmark to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as apologists for communist dictatorship and violence from whom repentance was now due.⁸³ Meanwhile, many of the 1968ers who had formerly embraced the promise of Third World revolution saw their dreams turn into nightmares when the entry of the Vietcong into Saigon in 1975 drove out the Vietnamese boat people. Former Young Communist Bernard Kouchner, one of the founders of Médecins sans frontières, chartered the *Île de lumière* to rescue them in the China Sea.⁸⁴ The triumph of Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and Mengistu Haile Mariam’s Marxist regime in Ethiopia suggested that wars of liberation could lead to dictatorships more cruel than the democracies against which they were fighting. In 1978 former Maoist Jean-Pierre Le Dantec published an attack on Third Worldism in *Le Nouvel Observateur*: “We invented the Third World” as a myth to help change the world, he confessed, but now realized that “one barbarism can hide another.”⁸⁵

Many former 1968 activists nevertheless kept the faith and reinvented their protests in different ways that were not tainted by communism. Some joined the struggle against global capitalism that took off after the end of the Cold War. Tom Hayden, for example, spoke at the Seattle anti-World Trade Organization protest in 1999 and urged support for Barack Obama as

82 Kristin Ross, *May 1968 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); James Mark, Anna von der Goltz and Anette Warring, “Reflections,” in Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe’s 1968*, 287, 336.

83 Mark, von der Goltz and Warring, “Reflections,” 315–31.

84 Eleanor Davey, *Idealism Beyond Borders: The French Revolutionary Left and the Rise of Humanitarianism, 1954–1988* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 193–200.

85 Jean-Pierre Le Dantec, “Une barbarie peut en cacher une autre,” *Le Nouvel Observateur* 717 (22 Jul. 1978); Ross, *May 68 and Its Afterlives*, 158–69.

US president in 2008 because the former continued the tradition of opposition to what he called “grave threats to our democracy when shaped only by the narrow interests of private corporations in an unregulated global marketplace. We should instead be globalizing the values of equality, a living wage and environmental sustainability.” The wheel had come full circle. “What he needs, and what we need,” concluded Hayden, forty-six years on from the Port Huron statement, “is a New Left.”⁸⁶

Bibliographical Essay

A good overview of the subject is David Caute, *Sixty-Eight: The Year of the Barricades* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988). Overviews which have a transnational but not necessarily global perspective include Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *Die 68er Bewegung. Deutschland, Westeuropa USA* (Munich: Beck, 2001), Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), and Paul Berman, *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968* (New York and London: Norton, 1996).

There are some very useful edited collections on this subject. The ones with the most global reach are Carol Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (eds.), *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Philipp Gassert and Martin Klimke (eds.), *1968: Memories and Legacies of Global Revolt* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2009). Klimke has coedited two other important collections with a European focus: Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (eds.), *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), and Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder and Joachim Scharloth (eds.), *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011). Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), *68. Une histoire collective (1962–1981)* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), focuses on France but links into wider themes.

Studies using the oral history of 1968 activists began with Ronald Fraser et al., *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988). A new generation of research, with a mainly European focus, although taking in global influences, is highlighted by Anna von der

⁸⁶ Tom Hayden, *The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama* (Boulder and London: Paradigm Publishers, 2009), 171, 185.

Goltz (ed.), *“Talkin’ ’Bout My Generation”: Conflicts of Generation Building and Europe’s “1968”* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011), and Robert Gildea, James Mark and Anette Warring (eds.), *Europe’s 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). A related series of articles, “Voices of Europe’s 1968,” was published in a special issue of *Cultural and Social History* 8, 4 (Dec. 2011).

Global connections operating at a national or local level have been explored by Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), and Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). An interesting comparative study is Sarah Stokes, “Paris and Mexico City: 1968 Student Activism,” D.Phil. thesis (Oxford University, 2012).

Studies that prioritize transnational cultural and countercultural movements include Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958–c. 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2006), and Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Among works that deal with questions of violent and peaceful protest are Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), Benjamin Ziemann (ed.), *Peace Movements in Western Europe, Japan and the USA During the Cold War* (Essen: Klartext, 2001), Håkan Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), and Eleanor Davey, *Idealism Beyond Borders: The French Revolutionary Left and the Rise of Humanitarianism, 1954–1988* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Specialized studies on particular areas with a wide resonance include Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture Under Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press, 2012), and Kornetis Kostis, *Children of the Dictatorship: Student Resistance, Cultural Politics and the “Long 1960s” in Greece* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013).

Speeches, letters and memoirs by activists themselves may be used to trace global connections. Among these may be highlighted John Gerassi (ed.), *Venceremos! The Speeches and Writings of Ernesto Che Guevara* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), Dany [Daniel] Cohn-Bendit, *Nous l'avons tant aimée, la révolution* (Paris: Barrault, 1986), Rudi Dutschke, *Écrits politiques, 1967–1968* (Paris: Christian Bourgeois, 1968), Rudi Dutschke, *Jeder hat sein Leben ganz zu leben. Die Tagebücher, 1963–1979* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003), Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy 1968* (Hannover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), Tariq Ali, *Street-Fighting Years: An Autobiography of the Sixties* (London: Collins, 1987), Petr Uhl, *Le socialisme emprisonné* (Paris: Stock, 1980), Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), and Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdeněk Mlynář, *Conversations with Gorbachev on Perestroika, the Prague Spring, and the Crossroads of Socialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).