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1968 as event, milieu and ideology[1]

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ABSTRACT *This article analyses the peculiar nature of the political thought of the leading activists of the German '68. It first discusses—and then partially dismisses—a number of common interpretations of the 'events', not least because previous accounts have paid insufficient attention to the actual political thought of the protagonists of '68. Three strands of '68 theorizing (and their limits) are then analysed: the legal road to socialism proposed by the 'Marburg school' of Wolfgang Abendroth, the anti-parliamentarianism of Johannes Agnoli and the anti-authoritarian* guerilla *strategy against 'integral étatism' put forward by Rudi Dutschke and Hans-Jürgen Krahl. Political thought in turn has to be understood as necessarily interacting with the 'events' of '68. When the main theories were unable to locate a new revolutionary subject and to solve the much-debated question of how to organize the movement, '68 intellectuals put their faith in events, occasions and direct action to reshape theory. In the end, this strategy yielded further (terrorist) 'events', a large left-wing counter-milieu largely free from theory and a persistent group ideology of personal convictions, also largely divorced from theorizing.*

> Theorie?—Nein, danke!
>
> Slogan of the alternative movement

> Philosophy's sole aim is to become worthy of the event …
>
> Gilles Deleuze

> And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries, and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.
>
> Karl Marx

For more than three decades, 1968 has been an event in search of an interpretation.[2] In Germany (and elsewhere), *les événements* remain shrouded in mystery—historians, with their fear of touching the 'third rail of the present',

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have only recently begun to undertake research into *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. In these still rather tentative forays, they have trod on seemingly sacred ground and often become polemically opposed to the numerous protagonists whose accounts have tended to mythologize, demonize or sometimes just neutralize '68. While there have been a number of more or less illuminating controversies between 'witnesses' and 'historians' of '68, both about the events as such and their wider historical meaning, one rather obvious aspect of '68 has remained curiously neglected.[3] This aspect is the actual political thought of the protagonists—or, to put it differently, an answer to the quasi-anthropological question: what did they think they were doing when they were doing politics?[4]

It has become a cliché that 1968 was a revolution without politics—and, in particular, without a political theory. The by now most common interpretation—that '68 constituted a major cultural rebellion or at least the first battle in an ongoing 'culture war'—holds that '68 began with culture and ended with culture.[5] '68 is simply said to have been a cultural revolution, or a revolution in 'life-styles', with history essentially acting behind the backs of the protagonists. The *enragés*, or so the most extreme version of this theory goes, were really the precursors of the 'flexible' liberal bourgeoisie of the 1990s, with '68 a 'laboratory for post-industrial society'.[6] In short, once the abstruse—and, in any case, irrelevant—theorizing had been subtracted, 68'ers were essentially (or at least practically) libertarians, with their 'experiments in living' serving as a perfect preparation for a more fluid and informal kind of capitalism.[7]

And yet, almost every decade since the 'sixties has somehow seen the 'sixties as its precursor—all epochs seem to remain equally close to '68. Even those, however, who reject such historicism and the cunning of liberal (or neo-liberal) reason and who remain incensed by the revolution on account of its supposed anti-liberalism and utopianism, frequently argue that 1968 was in some sense 'apolitical'. It was, in a famous phrase, a 'romantic regression', a reincarnation of the German Youth Movement, a reborn vitalism and voluntarism.[8] It could then even be cast as a form of 'left-wing fascism'—here understood mainly as a belief in direct action and the action-inducing power of myths, whether of the Third World *guerillero* or the metropolitan general strike.

Moreover, there can be no denying that the events were mostly driven by the media—and themselves driving the media. After all, one important origin of '68 lies in political-cum-artistic movements such as the Situationists, bent on exposing the 'society of the spectacle' through the curious mixture of neo-Marxism, Dada and surrealism.[9] To a politics that was no more than a spectacle one had to respond with provocations—whose success in turn was measured by the very media which one held responsible for parts of the spectacle.[10] Just as Vietnam was the first media war, so '68 turned out to be the first 'media revolution'—and a global one to boot.

'68, then, was driven by images and collective memories (and in turn largely survived as images and as a collective memory).[11] Consequently, the 'text' or even 'texture' of '68 is made up of much more than the then canonical, but now almost forgotten, political tracts of Johannes Agnoli, Oscar Negt and

Hans-Jürgen Krahl—the dramatic gestures of direct action, the unrecorded speeches, the lost flyers and torn-down *affiches* are as important for the text and context of 1968.[12] Yet, '68 was hardly the first (and not the last) political rebellion which was sustained by symbolism and which became absorbed into the 'spectacle'. If anything, it only strengthened trends which were already there.

Moreover, just as the students remained fixated on the past, so did their opponents. Collective myths and memories—referring to 1848, 1871, 1917 or 1936 in the French case, for instance—charged '68 and '68 in turn became a collective myth. However, it was the opponents of the student movement who have proven most eager to reduce '68 to a historical farce, or at least, an instance of an eternal recurrence of protest by the *jeunesse dorée*. Analysis, then and now, remains driven by analogy.

Alternatively, a focus on political theory—or a lack thereof—has been displaced by sociological approaches. In recent scholarship the student movement has been re-conceptualized as a 'new social movement' or even as a 'single-issue movement', with its distinctive 'cognitive orientation', 'cognitive structure of ideas', 'frame' or simply 'ideology'—which then becomes merely one minor variable in a larger sociological theory.[13] Again, the suspicion is not unjustified that the experiences of the 1970s and 1980s, with their rise of citizens' initiatives, are projected back onto the 1960s. When generational conflict and demographic growth have been added as variables to such sociological explanations, it is striking how frequently and fervently the protagonists of '68 have dismissed these factors.[14] In itself, this is of course no reason to discard them—but the refusal of such sociological reductionism is valid insofar as the students did not initially see themselves as a social movement *and* failed precisely in their attempt to become a sustained movement. In their own perception, they were strong on ideas—and weak on organization.

In the same vein, there have been many attempts to explain 1968 psychologically. There can be little doubt that the affective side of '68 was indispensable in mobilizing intellectual energies for theory, even if theory and vitality (or vitalism) then also came to be seen by the students as incompatible.[15] According to Dutschke, for instance, '68 was not about 'abstract theory', but 'existential disgust'.[16] Arguably everywhere in the Western world, the student movement had its origins in such feelings of disgust in the face of obvious repression—whether of minorities (African-Americans in the US), colonials (Algerians in France) or, more indirectly, the crimes of the past (the Nazi legacy in West Germany). In every single instance, these clearly visible injustices led the students to theory—and theory eventually came to be seen as equally obvious as the concrete injustices.

Again, already at the time, Alexander Mitscherlich and other psychiatrists diagnosed the students as 'fatherless' and many observers have followed Raymond Aron in dismissing '68 as a 'psychodrama'.[17] In retrospect as well, the generational conflict between war and post-war generations appears as an ideological *folie à deux*.[18] Yet, the focus on psychological and *de facto* biological factors presumes what it seeks to prove: that political theory was not an

important part of '68, and that its real significance, at the level both of causes and of effects, is a matter of 'the social', not 'the political'.[19]

Finally, there is a theoretical (and normative) argument that makes the '68ers 'apolitical'. Since at least one strand of theory led them to be opposed to all hierarchies and bureaucracies, they thereby automatically became opposed to all institutions. Being anti-institutional, or so this line of reasoning goes, is then equivalent to being apolitical or even 'anti-political'. Any political thought that denies that modern societies are characterized by deep disagreements, and therefore downplays the importance of mediating political conflict though commonly agreed procedures is not political at all, according to liberal reasoning. A utopian anarchism, then, not only left the students without a real political programme—it also made them vulnerable to the temptations of substituting permanent direct action for the painstaking work of organizing a coalition of the dissatisfied within the universities, the schools and the factories.

Of course, '68 itself called into question traditional (and particularly institutional) concepts of the political, tearing down the ideological barricades between the public and the private, and making culture and everyday experiences explicitly political. 'Culture', and 'cultural inequality' in particular, were indispensable for the 'oppressive structures', as theorized by the leaders of '68.[20] In that sense, the retrospective dichotomy between politics and culture is one that cannot do justice to the students' thought.

Even from within the movement, however, has come the cry that the students had to face the Grand Coalition and other political challenges without a political theory. The students simply lacked an idea of how the domination of the bourgeoisie over the workers was politically mediated—and therefore also proved unable to understand actual political institutions.[21] In short, then, friends and enemies (and academic observers) of 1968 have all taken it for granted that the political thought of the 68'ers could be safely neglected, dismissing the 'Great Marxisant Fallacy' of the students and their supporters with nonchalance as being irrelevant to the actual unfolding of events.[22]

In this essay, I would like to question the assumption that '68 was a political event without political thought—although that political thought might well have become embarrassing for the protagonists. I concede at the outset that the relationship of the student leaders to theory was indeed altogether ambivalent. They sought theoretical superiority and cohesion vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie, but also wanted to conduct a revolution, not a seminar. '68 was to a large degree constituted by spontaneous action, a self-declared permanent revolution which left little time for strategic thinking, and sustained by effervescent media such as the poster and the flyer. As Daniel Cohn-Bendit put it, the students and their leaders were 'learning through action', while Rudi Dutschke preached the 'unity of action and reflection'.[23] The strategy of 'enlightenment through provocation' necessarily entailed an element of unpredictability, as events outran whatever theoretical premeditation there had been.[24]

To acknowledge the essential 'eventness' of '68, as well as its psychological

dynamics, however, does not mean that the '68ers cannot be understood in terms of how they thought about politics, or, even more narrowly, political institutions. Political thought took place in a shifting cultural context—but then again, it always does. Political ideology was also a 'group phenomenon', full of inner contradictions, just as much as a matter of individual master thinkers—but then again, it always is. '68 was centred on a political *Gedankenmasse*, a chaotic 'mass of thought'—but so is any comparable political event.[25]

What made '68 different, is precisely the fact that the students themselves were constantly struggling with the question of how 'theory' and 'event' were to inform each other. The students, driven by what in retrospect has even been called *Theoriewut* (a fury of theory) were eager to revise Marxist theory, and to invent a tradition of 'Western Marxism' to come to terms with the changes under way in 'late capitalism'.[26] Yet, they were also looking to 'events' to reconstruct theory, and at the same time were afraid that events would somehow subvert theory for good. For some, theory was needed to give legitimacy to the programmes of 'direct action' and spontaneity—for, others it was merely another chapter in the history of Marxist frustrations about how to reconcile theory and praxis. Almost all of them, however, ultimately put their trust in events themselves somehow to 'practically problematize'—as one of the most telling phrases went—the elements of theory which seemed doubtful.

What has to be explained, then, is not so much why political thought became inspired by many different, often incompatible sources, not so much why it was enmeshed with different cultural contexts and subject to logical and cultural constraints, and not so much why it was disseminated in new and often ingenious ways—but why particular ideological fragments came to form the potent mix they did in 1968, why the students managed to loosen cultural constraints on political thought, and why certain '68 values eventually came to pervade culture as a whole. After all, it is unlikely that 1968 would have become '68 if it had simply been about taboo-breaking. Taboo-breaking might have been more effective than theorizing—but, at least to some extent, the former still depended on the latter.

This essay seeks to do justice both to the aesthetic aspects of 1968, which have been the focus of influential recent analyses, and the essential 'eventness' of '68—but it concentrates mainly on the theoretical elements which have almost completely fallen into oblivion, especially after 1989. In particular, I seek to uncover how theory and event were supposed to be related in the minds of the student leaders—and how core concepts of the movement evolved under the pressure of events. In the context of this essay, I shall only very briefly relate event and ideology to some of the large-scale historical interpretations—or myths—which have become prevalent in the decades since 1968. For now, I shall also postpone a discussion of how '68 values became influential in German culture more generally. Before disentangling the various strands of political thought in the student movement, however, I want briefly to review the argument for seeing '68 as, above all, an aesthetic 'happening'.

1968 as event: surrealist epiphanies

It has become commonplace to distinguish between a 'leftist-socialist' and an 'anti-authoritarian' wing of the German 'New Left', and the SDS (*Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*, the Socialist Student Association of Germany) in particular.[27] The latter, however, was in itself only one part of a much larger 'extra-parliamentarian' coalition of the *Ostermarschbewegung* (the peace movement directed primarily against rearmament in the 1950s and early 1960s), the opposition to the proposed Emergency Laws, and the student movement itself.[28] However, there was arguably a 'third way' of student protest, namely the radical 'communards' who partly emerged from the German section of the Situationist International and who took the 'carnivalesque' elements of 1968 to their extremes.[29] They were eager to expose the workings of the 'society of the spectacle' and create situations according to the principle of *détournement*. As self-declared 'pariah-élites' they sought to stage 'events' which might or might not find an appropriate interpreter and which were free from all bourgeois concerns about 'legitimacy'.[30] Situationist action had to be direct and immediate, and ideally would inspire new passions and desires, redrawing the entire map of the 'psycho-geography' of the modern city.[31]

As the German literary theorist and critic Karl Heinz Bohrer in particular has argued, they celebrated a kind of 'political surrealism', resolutely resistant to critical theory and the claims of intellectualized utopias.[32] They relied on the surrealist 'shock' as a seemingly non-instrumental political means, and, in a deeper sense, fit the description as 'romantics' most easily on various accounts.[33] They thoroughly aestheticized everyday experience, and, in a sense, treated political situations as mere 'occasions' to exercise their creative imaginations. But they also affirmed the 'suddenness' of aesthetic experience, and in particular the chaos as well as contingency of the experience of the modern city.[34] Unlike the orthodox Marxist theorists of the movement—and unlike Guy Debord even—they were not truly interested in theories of alienation. What they cared about was the free play of the imagination and the creation of new structures of feeling. If there is any real connection between 1968 and romanticism, it can be found here.

Conversely, those who dismissed 1968 as a 'psychodrama' or a 'carnival' were right—but this was not at all contrary to the intentions of the situationist-cum-surrealist actors.[35] Creating physical and psychological unrest, staging drama for its own sake were all part of a general strategy to subvert bourgeois patterns of everyday life. There was a vague sense that, ultimately, such 'subversive actions' were supposed to awaken the masses in the repressive society from their slumber. The end might have been conforming to some of critical theory's tenets and been in line with the general aim of 'consciousness-raising' which Rudi Dutschke advocated—but the means were a mixture of Benjaminian *Bilddenken* (thinking-in-pictures) and a playful revelling in exercises of *épater les bourgois*.[36] Some theorists—and, once again, Bohrer in particular—have argued that the 'situations' created by the German Situationists

did indeed provoke 'epiphanies' which ultimately added up to a cultural revolution.[37]

Quite early on—and not surprisingly—there emerged a split between Situationist figures like Frank Böckelmann and Dieter Kunzelmann on the one hand, and, on the other, the anti-authoritarian Rudi Dutschke as well as the more orthodox socialist theorists.[38] The latter were all seriously devoted to the purity of Marxist theory—strongly flavoured with a Protestant, even puritan devotion to the revolutionary cause.[39] Where the anti-authoritarians were struggling to reconcile the demands of provocative spontaneity in response to revolutionary occasions with the need to organize the movement, the members of *Subversive Aktion* boldly declared that the meaning of organization was its failure.[40]

Of course, the libertarian 'experiments in living' were not nearly as liberating as the protagonists claimed—in fact, they often resulted in the worst kind of sectarianism and intense psychological terror for some of the participants. But ultimately, they did provide a model which partially spawned Germany's large 'alternative milieu' that in various diluted forms has persisted to this day.[41] They also contributed to what Jürgen Habermas—20 years after the events—called a 'fundamental liberalization', which included a revolution in 'life-styles', but also the formation of increasingly post-materialist political attitudes.[42] In Bohrer's seminal interpretation, this romanticism was not a regression, but the true advance accomplished in 1968—a step towards a more modern liberal, ironic and aestheticized society.[43] What made 1968 a 'German ideology' was precisely the fact that it was so theory-laden—and impregnated with philosophies of history and almost apocalyptic expectations among the theory-crazed leaders.

At the time, and from within the movement, however, things looked rather differently. Ironically, the students were faced with the reproach that their theories were insufficient, or at least insufficiently sophisticated, for instance by Habermas. But in retrospect, the social movements as well as the intellectual Left of the 1970s and 1980s seemed to complain of a 'loss of theory' after 1968. 'Theory-envy' became a defining feature of the post-1968 Left—whereas the loss of theory became celebrated by those who emphasized the aesthetic and astheticizing elements of '68.[44]

1968 as legal theory: living up to the Basic Law

But what then was the political theory the '68ers actually subscribed to? Of course, there was considerable internal pluralism, a variety of approaches held together not necessarily by any real ideological core, but by the feeling of being part of a common movement, of being driven by similar sorts of dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, there were a number of core concepts and ideas which remained by and large undisputed at least among the anti-authoritarians and the more traditional socialist wing of the movement. The 'left-socialists', however, were in turn split between orthodox 'hardliners', mostly based in Marburg and

Cologne, on the one hand, and a majority of 'democratic socialists' who subscribed to the Basic Law. The 'hardliners' followed an orthodox 'dialectical materialism', and, as has become clear in recent years, orders from East Berlin.[45]

The 'democratic socialists' also did believe that a genuine class struggle was being fought in the Federal Republic, but they explicitly sought to remain within the framework of the Basic Law. They diagnosed that the Constitution was increasingly hollowed out, and, in any case, had never been fully realized in its social and democratic aspirations. They largely followed Wolfgang Abendroth in his teachings from the 1950s that the Basic Law did not specify a particular economic system and that it left the option of a socialist economy open.[46] In a famous controversy with conservative jurist Ernst Forsthoff, the socialist *Partisanenprofessor* (partisan professor) Abendroth had argued that the Federal Republic was primarily a *Sozialstaat*, i.e., a welfare state, rather than a pure *Rechtsstaat* that only guaranteed the rule of law for a free market society.[47] The 'legal road to socialism' implied a defence of legal norms already achieved and a continuous struggle for their realization.[48] In line with Abendroth's reasoning, the 'democratic socialists' sought wide-ranging redistribution and a democratization of the economy.[49] The core concept of this strand of '68 theory remained a 'socialist democracy' which could be realized *inside* the Basic Law.

Like Jürgen Habermas, they argued that liberal democratic institutions had been increasingly hollowed out.[50] Parliament in particular no longer reflected genuine conflict in society and no longer provided a forum for real deliberation, but had instead become a stage for corporatist compromise—an impression strongly reinforced by the formation of the Grand Coalition and the seeming disappearance of any effective parliamentary opposition after 1966.

In addition, the theory of the *formierte Gesellschaft* (aligned society), first expounded by the conservative political theorist Rüdiger Altmann in 1965 and more or less officially adopted by then Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, seemed to hail the end of liberal democracy.[51] It was seen as the first step from pluralism to a legally sanctioned corporatism in which parties, unions and employers' associations would form a harmonious whole. Such pluralism restrained from above could potentially be the first step on the road to a full-fledged authoritarianism. The 'aligned society' seemed designed to eliminate whatever genuine socio-economic (and potentially political) pluralism there was due to the power of the proletariat. Since the power of the unions had increased during the 1950s and early 1960s, or so the students thought, the state now found it necessary to reduce their room for manoeuvre. The prospect of the Emergency Laws then appeared to complete the picture of a society on the legal road to dictatorship, as they seemed designed for the case of a sudden increase in class conflict.[52]

Yet, the antidote to this threatening situation remained not the abolition of the actually existing state as such, but a strategy firmly contained within the parameters of 'bourgeois legality', which supposedly included an 'extra-parliamentary opposition' charged with the task of defending democracy. Yet, whether a defence of democracy was possible at all still depended above all on the level and development of class consciousness among the workers.[53] In

retrospect, Abendroth had to concede that, by and large, the workers had not been truly mobilized by the spectre of dictatorship. It was only with the help of the students and the workers who defied the official decisions of the trade union leadership that West German parliamentary democracy had survived the Grand Coalition and the promulgation of the Emergency Laws. Therefore, the student movement had not shifted the Federal Republic closer to the 'socialist democracy' Abendroth and his followers envisaged—but it had at least served as a bulwark against dictatorship and a return to 'post-liberal' fascism. Moreover, the hope went, it had set into motion learning processes at the end of which both students and workers should find novel ways for bringing about socialist democracy *within* the parameters of legality during the next capitalist crisis.[54] For Abendroth and his students, the firm belief remained that only socialism could ultimately make society safe for democracy.

1968 as political theory: Johannes Agnoli and the ambivalence of parliamentarianism

Johannes Agnoli was arguably *the* political theorist of the German 1968, and his thoughts merit a longer exposition, not least because they have frequently been caricatured as a crude anti-parliamentarianism similar to the one the radical Left and Right espoused during the Weimar Republic. In many ways, Agnoli's theory merely mirrored that of Rüdiger Altmann. Altmann had praised the potential of pluralism for the purpose of social integration in the absence of a major external enemy, while warning at the same time that pluralism should always be tightly contained.[55] Agnoli identified precisely this strategy as the latest 'transformation' of bourgeois democracy, whose aim was to make actual democracy impossible.

Agnoli, who had begun his intellectual career as a Trotskyist in Italy, and his followers started from the premise that the 'bourgeois state' and capitalism were inextricably linked.[56] Under the conditions of capitalism—whether early or late—no genuine, or 'open' and 'radical', democracy could ever be realized. The 'bourgeois state' systematically contained 'the political', i.e., the room for political manoeuvre, by limiting popular sovereignty and the autonomous articulation of the desires of the population. However, rather than reverting to fascism—after all, a failed strategy for controlling and diverting the mass desire for political self-determination—the bourgeois state under the conditions of 'organized capitalism' transformed the existing institutions of parliamentary democracy in such a way as to make revolutionary change impossible without resorting to open oppression. This 'transformation of democracy' meant a 'modernization of the state in the sense of an adjustment to the new forms of collective life (the so-called "mass society") as well as an improvement in the sense of a modernization of the means of domination'.[57]

The need for modernization was caused by 'technical-economic progress', but also driven by the 'unified interests of the dominating groups'.[58] These 'dominating groups' had a collective interest in defusing democracy as a potential means of what Harold Laski had called 'revolution by consent' and what Jakob Burckhardt had referred to as a potential 'permanent revolution'.[59]

Parliamentary democracy was, after all, not the most secure guarantee for capitalism. It was by its nature ambivalent. Since parliament could in theory accurately reflect the basic social antagonism in society, and since it might be capable of overcoming it through majority decisions, it might become the springboard to socialism. Alternatively, it could be a highly effective means of preventing open terror and fascism by keeping up the façade of a pseudo-democracy to repress the popular will.[60]

Agnoli claimed that parliament and a plurality of parties were essential in transforming democracy into a more effective means of domination. The kind of 'unification' or political uniformity which the fascist state could only impose by one-party rule was now achieved through what was called 'aligned pluralism'. Society had not overcome the basic dualism (and antagonism) between capitalists and workers, but the pluralism on display in parliament veiled this fact most effectively. Through the negotiations between different parties and 'social partners' such as employers' associations and unions, social peace and the illusion of democratic participation for the masses could be maintained. Individuals would only see the 'republic of the market'—not the 'despotism of the factory'.[61] The 'parliamentarization' as well as the personalization of conflicts, making them a matter of individual moral and legal conduct of politicians, ensured the 'blindness of the masses'.

The twist in Agnoli's theory, then, was that in fact parliamentarianism constituted the most effective way of keeping the masses away from actual power. It presented a pseudo-pluralism in the 'sphere of circulation', while hiding the basic antagonism in the sphere of production. Only one pole of the basic socio-economic opposition was represented in parliament, since the socialist parties had become integrated into the 'oligarchy', and all parties had effectively evolved into 'cartel parties', which had fused with the state. In short, representation in parliament was the best means of repression.

In addition, however, the institution of parliament had itself become thoroughly corrupted. What Hans Kelsen had called 'the fiction of representation' ensured that it was not the people, but the state, that was represented in parliament.[62] Legislative and executive power became fused, and parliament *de facto* served as a transmission belt between the oligarchy and the people. Borrowing heavily from Michels and Ostrogorsky, Agnoli argued that not only had parties become oligarchic, but parliament itself had developed an oligarchic structure. Publicity and public reasoning, the characteristics of nineteenth-century liberalism, had been replaced by a 'representation' which did not in fact reproduce, but repressed the fundamental social antagonism. Rational deliberation could never address actual social conflict, because conflict remained hidden from view—even though of course rational deliberation had become impossible in an oligarchic parliament in any case.

Throughout this transformation into a democracy which kept the demos out the doors of parliament, the official ideology of democracy was left intact—the only semantic change was that languages of humanism and technocratic necessities were supposed to supplant the language of class struggle among the

workers' representatives. Parties no longer knew workers and capitalists—only human beings as such. They no longer implemented platforms, they only observed economic and technological constraints. What a conservative politician had called 'the abolition of the proletariat' only meant that class consciousness could be eroded through increasing mass consumption and other 'grand attempts at collective corruption'.[63] Class and other social cleavages were erased imperceptibly, and the language of humanism effaced socio-economic difference. Thus, citizens were turned into consumers, and class consciousness was replaced by a mystified *Staatsbürgerbewußtsein* (civic consciousness).[64]

As soon as the workers came to believe that 'the state is us', or to embrace the liberal illusion that the state stood above society as a neutral arbiter, the bourgeoisie had succeeded in defusing the ambivalent potential of parliamentarianism. Ideologically tying the people to political institutions (and restricting their institutional imagination or 'social imaginary') was much more effective—and less dangerous—than open terror.[65] Legality (through the 'constitutionalizing function' of parliament) thereby produced legitimacy. Yet, while the means were humane and peaceful, the end of social integration was not. The priority of the means over the end was simply another bourgeois ruse and prevented the masses form perceiving the priority of real emancipation over pseudo-democratic procedures.[66] Bread and circuses, after all, *were* more inhumane than violent revolution. And in any case, Agnoli argued, perpetual social peace inside the state was preserved not for humane reasons, but because it proved necessary for continuous capitalist expansion, both economic and political.

Under a democratic veneer the state would then extend its rule over any part of society and declare a state of emergency wherever it saw fit.[67] The 'emergency state' was the necessary continuation and even 'crowning' of the welfare state, and could be justified by the claim that emergency measures were necessary to preserve the 'general welfare'.[68] The state had a vital interest in repressing social conflict, and therefore had to extend its reign continuously—in fact, the line separating state and society, administration and economy, became increasingly blurred.[69] Such a situation, however, already meant a *de facto* 'permanent state of exception'. Consequently, there was no reason to stay within the limits of 'bourgeois legality', as Abendroth and his followers advocated, since bourgeois legality had *de facto* already been abolished. The recurrent breach of the constitution, it seemed, had itself become part of the real constitution of the 'emergency state'.

In short, then, the state had been transformed into an authoritarian one without any outward change—and parliament remained essential in legitimating this situation. Just as Pareto, the 'Marx of the bourgeoisie', had advised Mussolini to keep parliament as an 'ornament' while transforming the Italian state into a fascist one, so the West German élite was engaged in a particularly perfidious game of anti-democratic deception.[70]

Thus arose what in retrospect appears like a fully-fledged ant-iliberal anti-parliamentarianism, reminiscent indeed of the contempt Sorel had for the socialists in parliament who only furthered their own interests.[71] Like Sorel,

Agnoli and his followers believed that left-wing parties had effectively abandoned the workers and become, in Léon Blum's famous phrase, the 'loyal stewards' of the bourgeoisie. They had become more invested in social control and the satisfaction of economic wants than any genuine transformation of society.

Like Carl Schmitt and Habermas, Agnoli and his followers believed that in the nineteenth century, the notables in parliament had been devoted to open and rational discussion, and that there had indeed once been free political competition (which, of course, had been restricted to a narrow franchise).[72] Like Schmitt and Habermas, they told a story of decline in which parliament had become a site of backroom dealings, in which powerful social interests brokered secret, undemocratic agreements. In other words, like Schmitt and Habermas, Agnoli and his followers diagnosed a 're-feudalization' of representation: representation had become representation before, rather than for the people.[73] Elections did not present a choice, and parliament did not represent the actual complexity of society. And Habermas, Schmitt and Agnoli all shared a roughly Rousseauean definition of democracy—even if none of them felt that an ideal of complete direct democracy was realizable in complex commercial societies.[74] They also, to varying degrees, clung to what Bernard Manin has called the 'ideal of resemblance', in which the representatives should resemble the represented as much as possible—even though Agnoli did not hold that such a homogeneity would necessarily produce a proper defence of the workers' interests.[75]

Agnoli, however, went further than either Schmitt or Habermas in claiming that representation had actually become repression. Whereas Schmitt prophesied the necessary disintegration of parliamentarianism and the return of a sovereign decision-maker, Agnoli saw a steady state of manipulation and repression through parliamentarianism, against which one had to intervene politically. It would not even be sufficient, if the representatives came to resemble the represented—above all, they had to represent the repressed pole of the social antagonism, and, crucially, the *real* interests of the workers. In the back of Agnoli's theory operated a rather traditional Marxist theory of ideology, in which the reproduction of bourgeois society required the persistence of false beliefs.[76] A diagnosis of a crisis of representation, then, could lead in many different theoretical (and practical) directions—and neither dictatorship nor direct action necessarily followed as remedies.

Yet, according to Agnoli, what *was* the remedy for this situation? The answers to this question remained not only vague, but often contradictory. On the one hand, Agnoli hinted that societies which had not completely disintegrated, were essentially beyond reform. On the other hand, he argued in line with Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' that international peace slightly increased the chances of 'liberation'.[77] Bernd Rabehl agreed that with the erection of the Berlin Wall, the GDR had come to be seen as less of a threat, and that the weakening of anti-communist ideology had been a vital precondition of the rise of the student movement.[78] But then again, the presence of Communist parties in some Western European countries also might alleviate a few of the problems posed by the

'transformation of democracy'. Ultimately, however, the process seemed essentially unstoppable within the current parameters of legality.[79] Clearly, then, the bourgeois state had to be abolished, including the institutions of parliamentarianism which were controlled by the oligarchy. Yet, Agnoli insisted that this had to be brought about through a 'peaceful revolutionary process'—without much further specification.[80]

Democracy, then, was only possible under the conditions of socialism. Agnoli and his fellow theorists never wavered in making two assumptions, namely that liberalism had brought about fascism and could do so again anytime, and that advanced capitalist societies had reached an age of abundance in which the abolition of 'irrational domination' had in practice become possible.[81] Yet a further background belief held that 'post-fascist' liberalism had learnt its lesson in manipulating the masses to such an extent that the 'transformation of democracy' actually appeared to be in their interest.

For the proponents of this view, then, '68 had to be about a genuine 'change of political form'—any integration into existing institutions was condemned to failure, and only a complete political break could be counted as an adequate answer to the covert transformation of democracy.[82] Yet, the potential agents of such a change remained unaware of its necessity. After all, a revolutionary subject that does not recognize that it is a revolutionary subject, is no revolutionary subject at all.[83] Fascism had caused a practical and theoretical caesura for the workers' movement, and attempts at reconstructing a proper class consciousness seemed to take the students into waters largely uncharted by theory.[84]

At the same time, theory seemed to prohibit the students from seeing themselves as simply students. Rather arbitrarily, they began to search for other potential revolutionary subjects. At one point, it was prisoners, racial minorities, then school children, and, of course, for some, the students themselves.[85] The more sober leaders of the movement, however, recognized that the students would not do as a revolutionary subject and sought to '*practically* problematize' the 'traditional theories of the workers' movement'—without much success, though.[86] After all, Agnoli's theory, while highly influential among radicals, did provide few specific guidelines on how to halt the 'involution' of democracy. If anything, it made the students dismiss the promises of 'more democracy' made by the Social Democratic government elected in 1969.[87] Taking Agnoli's ideas a step further, the more radicalized students would revert to old Communist arguments about the Social Democrats as 'social fascists' who were already integrated into the system. In that sense, while of little direct impact, Agnoli's ideas helped to set in motion an ultimately self-sustaining radicalization among the activists who became increasingly immune to the *real* transformations of West German democracy.

Not surprisingly, Agnoli and others in retrospect came to see the passivity of the proletariat as the 'most tragic aspect' of the 'German '68'.[88] A mobilized proletariat would have been the obvious agent for changing the 'political form'. Yet at the time, one of the fateful ideas of some student leaders was that the workers would only understand the language of violence.[89] While there had

indeed been a few defectors of the proletariat to the rebelling bourgeoisie (to reverse an old Marxist dictum), such figures remained few and far between, and, in some cases, ultimately resorted to terrorism. The real tragedy, then, was not one of the proletariat, but of a theory that could not find a real foothold in society and seemed to remain immune to events.

The ambivalence of anti-authoritarianism: the Great Refusal revisited

Both 'hardliners' and 'democratic socialists' stood to varying degrees in opposition to the 'anti-authoritarian' part of the movement. In Berlin, the anti-authoritarians were centred around Rudi Dutschke and Bernd Rabehl, while in Frankfurt Hans-Jürgen Krahl emerged as the theoretical leader of a movement which saw itself in theory as leaderless. What united them—and provided a link with the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School as well as Herbert Marcuse—was the firm belief that the working class could no longer be regarded even as a potentially revolutionary subject. As for Agnoli and his followers, the working class had become conservative, even counter-revolutionary.

Instead, for a while even the anti-authoritarian theorists did put their trust in the students as a possible 'vanguard'—even though hardly anybody dared to put it that way—and supported various 'Third World' liberation movements. They used a concept of 'totality' to draw metropolitan struggles and Third World movements together. The concepts of partisanship and totality were supposed to support each other and both were supposed to be grounded in a conception of 'world history'.[90] Moreover, Third World struggles also taught them the morality of an uncompromising kind of politics.[91] Where in the metropolis they could only witness oppression, the Third World suffered from actual, direct exploitation (although it was never explained how this Sartrean distinction was to be compatible with actual Marxism).[92] Ultimately, or so a common assumption went, it was in the Third World that 'new men' were to be born.[93]

Dutschke and his allies adopted Adorno's theory of the 'authoritarian personality' and other elements of the older Critical Theory—with a decidedly Marcusian twist. Marcuse also added to the movement's libertarian, self-consciously hedonist and anti-authoritarian flavour. It was the mixture of Marxism and psychoanalysis which constituted the ideological core for '68 anti-authoritarianism—and at the same time a symbolic surplus, as the two theories which the National Socialists had persecuted and which found it difficult to re-establish themselves in West Germany after 1945 were also a potent weapon vis-à-vis parents. The adoration of the Third World in turn provided a safe outlet for anti-Americanism and resentment vis-à-vis the victors of the Second World War.

Like their French counterparts, the German anti-authoritarians diagnosed the bureaucratization of both state and economy—in West as well as East.[94] Autonomy became the core concept of the movement and was to be realized in all areas of social life. Direct democracy, direct administration or self-management, and anti-authoritarian education (or 'education to disobey') went together. The

theoretically sanctioned alternative to a sham parliamentarianism was a vision of direct democracy in politics and self-management in the economy. Yet, unlike French theorists such as Claude Lefort and other members of the *Socialisme et Barbarie* group, German thinkers never had a fully-fledged theory of *autogestion*.[95] Neither did they have a real theory of anti-totalitarianism, in the way that the French had in the works of Lefort and Cornelius Castoriadis.[96] Part of the problem was clearly that, if there was any use of the concept at all, capitalism became the main instance of totalitarianism—especially in Marcuse's theorizing about 'repressive tolerance'.[97]

German student leaders were also likely to assign greater autonomy to the state than, for instance, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and most French thinkers did. And, on the whole, they were less prone to put their hope in the general strike as the moment of the transformation of capitalism (or the transformation of democracy). It was no accident that the Germans were likely to give more credence to the autonomy of the state and the need for direct action—in fact, an inverted *étatisme* and *Aktionismus* (a belief in direct action) came to depend on each other.

For the metropolis, the student theorists re-applied a diagnosis which Max Horkheimer had first made in the darkest decades of the 1930s and 1940s.[98] According to Dutschke and Krahl, the West German system could best be described by the label of 'integral étatism'—a concept applied to a state in which manipulation from above was so pervasive that open state violence was no longer necessary.[99] Not surprisingly, the remedy for such a situation proved difficult to find. At their more peaceful moments, Dutschke and Krahl seemed to put their faith in a kind of council democracy slowly built up from below. Berlin, as a strategic revolutionary flash-point between East and West, was supposed to be the site of such a council republic opposed to both Western imperialism and Eastern Stalinism. The 'Free State of West Berlin' as an 'association of free individuals' was to become a 'Hong Kong' in Central Europe, or even a giant 'civic university' for teaching the world a lesson in direct democracy.[100] Such a city would combine central planning and 'automation', that is production planned by computers, with individual civic autonomy. But, if nothing else, West Berlin, as an 'international centre of subversion', could house an ever expanding, self-organizing 'counter-milieu' which one day might serve as the basis of a more stringent organization of the movement.[101]

Increasingly, however, such Central European utopias were displaced by more violent solutions to the problem of 'integral étatism'. According to Dutschke's ultimate assessment, only an urban *guerilla*, modelled on South American terrorists, might disrupt such an all-pervasive social control.[102] Such a *guerilla* would operate from within the 'safe havens' of the universities and form part of a European front against the US and the Eastern bloc.[103] These ideas became more and more attractive, not least because attempts at organizing the movement as a whole into a party or even just a small vanguard party were failing.

Eventually, the aversion to parliamentary procedures and the perceived need to reconstruct theory through praxis would tie in with a call to direct

action, which in turn seemed guided by the maxim *l'idée vient en parlant*.[104] 'Enlightenment through action' seemed to promise a short cut out of the theory-praxis dilemma under the conditions of late capitalism.[105] As Cohn-Bendit put it, 'we could not guess what turn the events were going to take, but that did not bother us—all that mattered was that, at long last, we were all united in action'.[106] In the same vein, for the German anti-authoritarian leaders the classical theorists came to seem like 'rusty armour' which gave nothing more than illusionary strength. Given the need for immediate action, the uses of theory became increasingly tactical and claims about 'practical theory' appeared as mere euphemisms to legitimate the latest turn of events—as critics from within the movement had already recognized.[107]

Dutschke, Krahl and Marcuse eventually all advocated open violence *gegen Sachen* (against objects).[108] Violence could be justified as long as it was supposed to end all violence. Such direct action then led many liberals, Social Democrats and even democratic socialists to disown the anti-authoritarian radicals, most prominently Habermas who charged the students with 'left fascism' in 1967.[109] What he meant by that was largely a Sorelian 'fascism of direct action', a belief in an action-inducing myth of the bourgeois or fascist enemy. A voluntarist identification with Third World movements seemed to short-circuit theory—and to leave behind the melancholy about having lost the 'bourgeois subject' and not been able to replace it with a liberated proletariat.[110]

In such circumstances, expressive and symbolic action became a proof of radicalness—and, in addition, politics and violence became thoroughly aestheticized.[111] This made politics also more concrete and led to what one might call a left-wing personalization of politics. On the one hand, this applied to the movement itself: as it became increasingly difficult to solve the question of 'organization', charismatic leadership, even what Krahl called 'irrational authorities', had to make up for organizational deficits.[112] On the other hand, personalization also applied to the enemy outside. Because they did not believe in institutions, violence against persons seemed justified, since it would bring about the collapse of institutions that rested on personalities more than on principles. Institutions, in any case, had lost their legitimacy, even if they retained their legality.[113]

Since 'situations' always seemed to require some spontaneous, expressive action, there was ultimately a path from the seemingly harmless Situationism of the early 1960s to the direct political action and decisionism which came to characterize the terrorism of the 1970s.[114] A situation, after all, requires a decision—and conceptually, the situation understood as a 'break' of normality (and legality) came to be associated with the 'groundless' decision which immediately leads to direct, expressive action. Consequently, the movement increasingly came to depend on what Frank Böckelmann called a 'succession of occasions'—in short, occasionalism and decisionism went hand in hand.[115] It was also no accident, then, that Dutschke increasingly resorted to the thought of the early Lukács in which he found the very decisionism he himself came to favour.[116] Occasionalism, existentialism, decisionism—such approaches did not

in any direct sense 'cause' the ultimate resort to terrorism with its radical 'suspension of the ethical'—but they made for a constellation in which the move towards terrorism had a coherent inner logic.[117]

In the end, the students gave in to the temptation of collapsing violence, domination, power and authority into each other.[118] There was simply nothing between the authoritarian state and the anti-authoritarian movement—and the movement needed momentum, even at the price of irrational direct action.[119] In such a polarized situation, the state had to be pushed to the extreme, all mediation of conflict had to be resisted, social relations had to be stripped naked—until the state came to be seen for what it was, power founded on violence. Conflict should never be mediated, but always escalated. Thus, the students came to subscribe to a decisionism which always asked the ultimate question, *quis iudicabit*? The state should reveal its true face, declare the state of emergency and admit that authority was nothing but violence. Political symbolism and political immediacy allowed the activists to circumvent the questions of representation and the revolutionary subject altogether—but at the price of ultimate political ineffectiveness and a very real loss in human lives.

Conclusion: political thought between irony and praxis

It seems a significant simplification to understand 1968 as a social movement or 'single-purpose movement' *avant la lettre*. The sheer diversity of theoretical (and practical) concerns and its sheer 'event-ness' rebel against such an interpretation. Rather, '1968' was, above all, itself a situation, which led to a new configuration of logical and cultural constraints on political thought. '68, one might say, was not about a movement, but political thought on the move.[120] And many times, moving and mobilization came to make up for the deficits in legitimation.

The student movement rose and fell with the dilemmas of representation and organization. While the diagnosis of a genuine crisis of representation seemed rather plausible with the formation of the Grand Coalition, the idea that representation actually equalled repression came to be more and more questionable as West German democracy proved capable of a change of government in 1969 and, in subsequent decades, of integrating citizens' initiatives and, eventually, the Greens. Yet, of course, from the perspective of the proponents of the transformation thesis, such integration only seemed further proof of the perfidious nature of the system.

On the other hand, the inability of the students to find ways of forming a coalition with the 'representative of a liberated humanity', i.e., the proletariat, could be seen as evidence that theory had not kept up with the demands of the present stage of capitalism. According to Krahl, the intelligentsia had to serve as the 'collective theorist of the proletariat'. In other words, 'theory was compelled to constitute itself anew as practical consciousness without a given organizational base'.[121]

One might say that the '68ers dealt with this 'lack of theory' under new conditions creatively. Yet, or so a common melancholic glance back often suggested, rather than undertaking the painstaking labour of theory for the sake of finding new ways of organization, action came to substitute for organization. And quoting the Marxist classics and other authorities (or anti-authorities) came to substitute for actual empirical work, while the ever more pressing *Organisationsfrage* was never solved.[122]

The various experiments of organization and representation undertaken by the numerous groupuscules into which the movement split after 1969 seemed to indicate that no mediation between theory and praxis was to be found—no matter which items were picked up in what has been called the 'Great Bazaar' of ideologies.[123] The K-Gruppen, for instance, were an attempt at direct worker representation, yet none of the groups realized the ideals of free communication, solidarity and 'freedom from domination' which Krahl had once outlined as the goals of the organizations.[124] These goals were supposed to be implemented in the organizations, before they could be practised in society at large—yet, they failed even at the local level. What persisted was the hope that the real presence of the people (even if the people were no more than a few radicals)—for instance in the frequent clashes with the police in the alternative milieu of Berlin—would acquire a political quality. As representation proved impossible, real presence came to be seen as a substitute. Yet, quantity never turned into quality, as the quantity in question remained relatively negligible.

The lack of an actual praxis of class struggle proved fatal in every case, no matter how much direct action there was. And so the initial concentration on liberating subjectivity became a matter of private subcultures, in which the goal of transforming democracy was replaced by the goal of transforming the self, or 'revolutionizing the revolutionaries', as a famous Dutschkean slogan went. Theory, driven by an insatiable 'hunger for concepts' and left-wing classics, turned more academic again, while politics became a matter of essentially private confessions.[125] At the same time, the useless 'existential engagement' or mystical overcoming of the fixation on authority became the norm, rather than the exception.[126] In such contexts, the slogan 'theory—no thanks!' turned into an intellectual badge of honour.

Against the bourgeois weapons of 'irony' and 'utility', left-wing theorists eventually set the power of irony (or counter-irony)—and patience.[127] Bourgeois democracy became 'ironized' through ultimately harmless gestures of non-conformism and apolitical provocation. Alternatively, the radicals marched through the institutions, as Dutschke had told them (although he had meant a much less harmless 'marching' than it turned out to be), they established a 'counter-milieu' of left-wing experiments in living and they built up a 'counter public sphere'.[128] One might even say that for a while, they managed to establish a 'dual power', to use a concept of Ostrogorsky's.[129] What Jürgen Habermas was later to theorize as the forces of civil society laying a 'siege' to parliament and other political institutions, in fact described the *modus operandi* (and the actual effects) of the citizens' movements and other organizations which

came out of '68.[130] This 'siege mentality' was hardly a solution to the crisis of representation as conceptualized by Agnoli—yet this development did signify an important change in the nature of representation, even if it fell short of the claims for radical democracy. Above all, however, it meant a turn to 'indirect action' and therefore a liberalization. Liberalism, after all, is the supreme expression of a trust in indirect action.[131] Indirect action, in turn, comes to change the mentality—if not the official ideology—in a given milieu.

Ultimately, however, the 'the dialectic of events' came to impose its own programme on the students.[132] As radical supporters of individual autonomy and the self-instituting society, they left a legacy of libertarianism which came to be appropriated by a Right eager to dismantle bureaucracies and the welfare state. As opponents of the United States and the Western powers, they took a large step in the direction of a 'Westernization'—or even Americanization—of the Federal Republic.[133] And as the principal actors laying siege to parliament, they eventually succumbed to 'parliamentarization', when the Greens became part of the established party democracy. Yet, with or against such events—some of which seemed to disprove theory conclusively—'68 has lived on as milieu and ideology.

Notes and references

1. I take this felicitous formulation from Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 9.
2. Sunil Khilnani, *Arguing Revolution: The Intellectual Left in Postwar France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1993), p. 122.
3. 'Konrad H. Jarausch, '1968 and 1989: caesuras, comparisons, and connections', in Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (Eds), *1968: The World Transformed* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 461–477. For a fully-fledged controversy over the conflict between 'witnesses' and 'historians' of '68, see the illuminating exchange between Wolfgang Kraushaar and Axel Schildt: Wolfgang Kraushaar, 'Der Zeitzeuge als Feind des Historikers? Ein Literaturüberblick zur 68er-Bewegung', in Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000), pp. 253–347. Curiously, however, the *topos* that the history of '68 cannot be written at all is as old as '68 itself: see Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 12.
4. For a stimulating, but also very misleading interpretation of the French case, see Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *La Pensée 68: Essai sur l'anti-humanisme contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988). There is as yet no comparable German account.
5. See Gerd Koenen, *Das Rote Jahrzehnt: Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution, 1967–1977* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001), and D. Roberts, 'Narratives of modernization: the student movement and social and cultural change in West Germany', *Thesis Eleven*, 63/1 (2000), pp. 38–52.
6. See, e.g., Claus Leggewie, 'A laboratory of postindustrial society: reassessing the 1960s in Germany', in Fink, Gassert and Junker, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3, pp. 277–294, and Cora Stephan, *Der Betroffenheitskult: Eine politische Sittengeschichte* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1994), pp. 96–102.
7. For the most sustained and sophisticated argument in this direction, see Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *Le Nouvel Esprit du Capitalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).
8. Richard Löwenthal, *Romantischer Rückfall* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970)
9. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by David Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995) and Guy Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Malcolm Imrie (London: Verso, 1990).
10. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 15.
11. Etienne François, 'Annäherungsversuche an ein außergewöhnliches Jahr', in Etienne François, Matthias Middell, Emmanuel Terray and Dorothee Wierling (Eds), *1968—ein europäisches Jahr?* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1997), pp. 11–17, here pp. 12–13.

12. For one of the largest collection of these, see the ‘Archiv für alternatives schrifttum’, at www.ub.uni-duisburg.de/afas.
13. In particular, Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *Die Phantasie an die Macht: Mai 68 in Frankreich* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995) and Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (Ed.), *1968: Vom Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998).
14. E.g., Bernd Rabehl, ‘Von der antiautoritären Bewegung zur sozialistischen Opposition’, in Uwe Bergmann, Rudi Dutschke, Wolfgang Lefèvre and Bernd Rabehl (Eds), *Rebellion der Studenten oder Die neue Opposition* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1968), pp. 151–178, here p. 151; and, in retrospect, Johannes Agnoli, ‘Das deutsche ‘68: theoretische Grundlagen und historische Entwicklung einer revolte’, in *1968 und die Folgen*, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 5 (Freiburg: Ça ira, 1998).
15. Jörg Bopp, ‘Geliebt und doch gehaßt: über den Umgang der Studentenbewegung mit Theorie’, *Kursbuch*, 78 (1984), pp. 121–142, here p. 123.
16. Dutschke, quoted by Gérard Sandoz, ‘Etre révolutionnaire’, in Rudi Dutschke, *Ecrits Politiques (1967–1968)* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1968), pp. 7–35, here p. 31.
17. ’Vaterlose Gesellen: Alexander Mitscherlich über den Frankfurter SDS-Kongreß und die studentenrebellion’, *Der Spiegel*, 8 April 1968.
18. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 29.
19. Rabehl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 151. For the *locus classicus* of the distinction between the social and the political, see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).
20. Cohn-Bendit, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3, p. 14.
21. Ulrich K. Preuß, in Siegward Lönnendonker (Ed.), *Linksintellektueller Aufbruch zwischen ‘Kulturrevolution’ und ‘Kultureller Zerstörung’: Der SDS in der Nachkriegsgeschichte (1946–1969): Ein Symposium* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998), p. 257.
22. Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
23. Cohn-Bendit, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3, p. 60.
24. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 36.
25. Wolfgang Kraushaar, in Lönnendonker *op. cit.*, Ref. 21, p. 286.
26. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 20.
27. On the SDS, see Tilman Fichter and Siegward Lönnendonker, *Kleine Geschichte des SDS: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund von 1946 bis zur Selbstauflösung* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1977), and Tilman Fichter, *SDS und SPD: Parteilichkeit Jenseits der Partei* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988).
28. Pavel A. Richter, ‘Die außerparlamentarische Opposition in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1966 bis 1968’, in Gilcher-Holtey (Ed.), *1968*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, pp. 35–55. On the Emergency Laws, see Helmut Shauer (Ed.), *Notstand und Demokratie: Referate, Diskussionsbeiträge und Materialien vom Kongreß am 30 Oktober 1966 in Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1967).
29. On the Situationist International, see Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (London: Routledge, 1992), Peter Wollen, ‘The Situationist International’, *New Left Review*, 174 (1989), pp. 67–95, and Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998). It would be tempting to think ‘68 together with Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of the carnival.
30. Frank Böckelmann, ‘Anfänge: situationisten, subversive und ihre vorgänger’, in *Die Emanzipation ins Leere: Beiträge zur Gesinnungsgeschichte, 1960–2000* (Berlin: Philo, 2000), pp. 21–43, here pp. 26–27.
31. Böckelmann, *ibid.*, p. 41.
32. Bohrer made these observations already during the ‘events’ and has consistently defended this approach ever since, as his ‘phenomenological’ reading of the student movement has yielded surrealism as the primary interpretation time and again. See, e.g., Karl Heinz Bohrer, ‘Die mißverstandene Rebellion’, *Merkur*, 22 (1968), pp. 33–44, and ‘1968: die Phantasie an die Macht? Studentenbewegung—Walter Benjamin—Surrealismus’, in Gilcher-Holtey (Ed.), *1968*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, pp. 288–300.
33. One might say that the German Situationists sought to realize Walter Benjamin’s programme of a ‘pure means’—which, precisely because of their non-instrumental character, would bring about the end of a utopia of a violence-free future. See Walter Benjamin, ‘Critique of violence’, in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 236–252.
34. Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Suddenness: On the Moment of Aesthetic Appearance*, translated by Ruth Crowley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
35. 1968 was most famously denigrated as a ‘carnival’ and ‘psychodrama’ by Raymond Aron: see Raymond Aron, *Mémoires* (Paris: Julliard, 1993), pp. 471–497.
36. On Benjamin’s *Bilddenken*, see Michael Jennings, *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin’s Theory of Literary Criticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).
37. Bohrer, ‘1968’, *op. cit.*, Ref. 32, p. 291.

38. Ulrich Chaussy, *Die Drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke: Eine Biographie* (Zürich: Pendo, 1999), pp. 44–53.
39. Johannes Agnoli later observed that the Catholic parts of West Germany had remained immune to radical theory and radical action: *op. cit.*, Ref. 14.
40. Frank Böckelmann and Herbert Nagel (Eds), *Subversive Aktion: Der Sinn der Organisation ist ihr Scheitern* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1976)
41. On this milieu, see also Sabine von Dirke, *'All Power to the Imagination!': The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).
42. Jürgen Habermas, 'Political culture in Germany since 1968: an interview with Dr. Rainer Erd for the *Frankfurter Rundschau*', in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, translated and edited by Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 183–195.
43. Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Die Kritik der Romantik: Der Verdacht der Philosophie gegen die literarische Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989)
44. Bopp, *op. cit.*, Ref. 15.
45. Wolfgang Kraushaar, 'Von der Totalitarismus- zur Faschismustheorie: zu einem Paradigmenwechsel in der Theoriepolitik der bundesdeutschen Studentenbewegung', in Claudia Keller (Ed.), *Die Nacht hat Zwölf Stunden, dann kommt schon der Tag: Antifaschismus: Geschichte und Neubewertung* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1996), pp. 234–251, and Hubertus Knabe, *Die unterwanderte Republik: Stasi im Westen* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1999), pp. 182–233.
46. Part of Abendroth's 'Marburg School', under the leadership of Frank Deppe, also turned into 'hardliners' and effectively became a 'party institute' for the DKP in the 1970s.
47. See in particular Herbert Sultan and Wolfgang Abendroth, *Bürokratischer Verwaltungsstaat und Soziale Demokratie: Beiträge zu Staatslehre und Staatsrecht der Bundesrepublik* (Hanover: O. Goedel, 1955), and Wolfgang Abendroth, *Antagonistische Gesellschaft und politische Demokratie: Aufsätze zur politschen Soziologie* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1967).
48. Agnoli, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, pp. 256–257.
49. On Abendroth's 'Marburg School', see Christoph Hüttig and Lutz Raphael, 'Die "Marburger Schule(n)" im Umfeld der westdeutschen Politikwissenschaft, 1951–1975', in Wilhelm Bleek and Hans J. Lietzmann (Eds), *Schulen in der deutschen Politikwissenschaft* (Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 1999), pp. 293–318.
50. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). See also Jürgen Habermas et al., *Student und Politik: Eine soziologische Untersuchung zum politischen Bewußtsein Frankfurter Studenten* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1961).
51. Rüdiger Altmann, 'Die formierte Gesellschaft', reprinted in *Abschied vom Staat: Politische Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1998), pp. 61–70. Ironically, Altmann had been Abendroth's assistant when Abendroth was Professor at Wilhelmshaven: see Barbara Dietrich and Joachim Perels (Eds), *Wolfgang Abendroth: Ein Leben in der Arbeiterbewegung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), p. 208.
52. Dietrich and Perels, *ibid.*, p. 269.
53. Dietrich and Perels, *ibid.*, p. 271.
54. Dietrich and Perels, *ibid.*, p. 278.
55. Altmann, *op. cit.*, Ref. 51, p. 46.
56. Wilhlem Bleek, *Geschichte der Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2001), p. 355 and Agnoli, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, pp. 258–259.
57. Johannes Agnoli and Peter Brückner, *Die Transformation der Demokratie* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1968), p. 10.
58. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 17.
59. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 26.
60. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 25.
61. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 24.
62. Hans Kelsen, *Vom Wesen und Wert der Demokratie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1981 edition, originally published 1929), pp. 30–31.
63. Kelsen, *ibid.*, pp. 18 and 21.
64. Kelsen, *ibid.*, p. 48.
65. See also Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, translated by Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).
66. Agnoli and Brückner, *op. cit.*, Ref. 57, p. 29.
67. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 53.
68. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*
69. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 20.

70. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 11.
71. Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, translated by T. E. Hulme (New York: Peter Smith, 1941 edition)
72. Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, translated by Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985) and Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 50. In retrospect, Habermas as well as German political scientists and school teachers were blamed for having corrupted the youth through such an idealized image of democracy: see for instance Kurt L. Schell, 'Repressive Toleranz, strukturelle Gewalt: Vordenker von '68', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 February 2001.
73. See also Hannah Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972).
74. Agnoli and Brückner, *op. cit.*, Ref. 57, pp. 48–49.
75. Bernard Manin, *The Principles of Representative Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 208.
76. On the problems of this position, see Michael Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude: False Consciousness and the Theory of Ideology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).
77. Rosen, *ibid.*, p. 21.
78. Rabehl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 156.
79. Agnoli and Brückner, *op. cit.*, Ref. 57, p. 16.
80. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 13.
81. Agnoli and Brückner, *ibid.*, p. 154. This thesis was, above all, advanced by Herbert Marcuse.
82. Agnoli, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 261.
83. Agnoli, *ibid.*, p. 263.
84. Detlev Claussen, Bernd Leineweber, Ronny Loewy, Oskar Negt and Udo Riechmann, 'Einleitung', in Hans-Jürgen Krahl, *Konstitution und Klassenkampf: Zur Historischen Dialektik von Bürgerlicher Emanzipation und Proletarischer Revolution: Schriften, Reden und Entwürfe aus den Jahren 1966–1970* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1971), here p. 7.
85. Preuß, in Lönnendonker *op. cit.*, Ref. 21, p. 255.
86. 'Einleitung', *op. cit.*, Ref. 84.
87. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, pp. 185–186.
88. Agnoli, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 263.
89. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 128.
90. Rabehl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 159.
91. Krahl, 'Angaben zur Person', in Krahl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 86, pp. 19–30, here p. 23.
92. Krahl, *ibid.*, p. 22.
93. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 48.
94. Flechtheim had diagnosed the bureaucratization of the workers' movement in the early 1960s.
95. See 'Presentation of *Socialisme ou Barbarie: An Organ of Critique and Revolutionary Orientation* (1949)', in David Ames Curtis (Ed.), *The Castoriadis Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 35–39.
96. Khilnani, *op. cit.*, Ref. 2, pp. 128–136. For a forgotten strand of anti-totalitarianism, see William David Jones, *The Lost Debate: German Socialist Intellectuals and Totalitarianism* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999). See also Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Linke Geisterfahrer: Denkanstöße für eine antitotalitäre Linke* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik, 2001).
97. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 51.
98. See for instance Max Horkheimer, *Dämmerung: Notizen in Deutschland* (Zürich: Oprecht & Helbing, 1934).
99. On 'integral étatism', see also Friedrich Pollock, *Stadien des Kapitalismus*, edited by Helmut Dubiel (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1975).
100. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 41.
101. Koenen, *ibid.*, pp. 52–54.
102. Wolfgang Kraushaar, 'Autoritärer Staat und antiautoritäre Bewegung: zum Organisationsreferat von Rudi Dutschke und Hans-Jürgen Krahl auf der 22. Delegiertenkonferenz des SDS in Frankfurt (4–8 Sept. 1967)', in Wolfgang Kraushaar (Ed.), *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail, 1946–1995*, Vol. 3 (Hamburg: Rogner und Bernhard, 1998), pp. 15–33.
103. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 50.
104. Kraushaar, *op. cit.*, Ref. 102.
105. Rabehl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 164.
106. Cohn-Bendit, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3, p. 63.
107. Frank Böckelmann, 'Thesen zum Selbstverständnis der antiautoritären Opposition', *op. cit.*, Ref. 30, pp. 45–84. The text was written in 1967.
108. Oskar Negt, 'Rechtsordnung, Öffentlichkeit und Gewalt', in Heinz Grossmann and Oskar Negt, *Die*

Auferstehung der Gewalt: Springerblockade und politische Reaktion in der Bundesrepublik (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1968).

109. Jürgen Habermas, *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), p. 148. See also Frank Wolff and Eberhard Windaus (Eds), *Studentenbewegung 1967–1969: Protokolle und Materialien* (Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1977), p. 120. The Left's response can be found in *Die Linke antwortet Jürgen Habermas* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969). For a discussion of the twists and turns in Habermas's position, see Martin Beck Matuštik, *Jürgen Habermas: A Philosophical-Political Profile* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), pp. 45–63.
110. Krahl, 'Angaben zur person', in Krahl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 86, p. 25.
111. Preuß, in Lönnendonker, *op. cit.*, Ref. 21, p. 260.
112. Krahl, quoted in Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 123.
113. Krahl, 'Angaben zur person', in Krahl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 86, p. 26.
114. Kraushaar, in Lönnendonker *op. cit.*, Ref. 21, p. 286, and Böckelmann, 'Anfänge', *op. cit.*, Ref. 30, p. 39.
115. Böckelmann, quoted in Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 56.
116. Koenen, *ibid.*, p. 50.
117. Koenen, *ibid.*, pp. 174–182. The point is that a certain kind of decisionism and *Aktionismus* were among the 'origins' and 'elements', to coin a phrase, of terrorism—not, in any way, its direct 'causes'. For the relation of terrorism to modern thought in general, see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 450–455.
118. See also Paul Ricoeur, *Critique and Conviction: Conversations with François Azouwi and Marc de Launay*, translated by Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), pp. 36–40.
119. Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968: Das Jahr, das alles verändert hat* (Munich: Piper, 1998), p. 317.
120. See also Frank Böckelmann, 'Bewegung', *op. cit.*, Ref. 30, pp. 91–136.
121. 'Einleitung', *op. cit.*, Ref. 84, p. 11.
122. Siegward Lönnendonker (Ed.), *Linksintellektueller Aufbruch zwischen 'Kulturrevolution' und 'Kultureller Zerstörung': Der SDS in der Nachkriegsgeschichte (1946–1969): Ein Symposium* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998).
123. Rabehl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 164.
124. Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 70. The best account of the many twists and turns of the post-68 Left is Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).
125. Krahl, 'Angaben zur person', *op. cit.*, Ref. 56, p. 28.
126. Urs Widmer, quoted in Koenen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, p. 117.
127. Rabehl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 157.
128. For irony and utility as features of liberal modernity, see Benjamin Constant, 'The spirit of conquest', in *Political Writings*, edited and translated by Biancamara Fontana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 51–83, here p. 55. For patience and irony as left-wing responses, see Joachim Bruhn, Manfred Dahlmann and Clemens Nachtmann (Eds), *Geduld und Ironie: Johannes Agnoli zum 70. Geburtstag* (Freiburg: Ça ira, 1995).
129. Rabehl, *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, pp. 167 and 173.
130. See also Gaetano Quagliariello, *Politics without Parties: Moisei Ostrogorski and the Debate on Political Parties on the Eve of the Twentieth Century*, translated by Hugo Bowles (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996).
131. Jürgen Habermas, 'Popular sovereignty as procedure (1989)', in *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse of Law and Democracy*, translated by William Rehg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 463–490.
132. For a provocative formulation of this argument, see José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1957), pp. 74–77.
133. Cohn-Bendit, *op. cit.*, Ref. 3, p. 62.
134. Axel Schildt, *Ankunft im Westen: Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1999), p. 178.