

Chapter 1

Youth Culture and the Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties

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By the 1950s West European countries were beginning to enjoy some of the fruits of the affluence that had previously characterised only the United States, as recognized by the French historian Jean Fourastié with respect to the thirty glorious years between 1946 and 1975 or again by Eric Hobsbawm who describes “the golden age” between 1945 and 1973.¹ It took time for affluence to translate into the cultural transformations described in this book, and then only because affluence *converged* with other crucial demographic, technological, ideological and institutional factors. The most important of the demographic factors was the working through of the 1940s “baby boom,” which resulted in unprecedentedly high proportions of young people in all countries by the early sixties. Thanks to continuing economic growth these young people had equally unprecedented security and self-confidence. As other factors, which I shall discuss in detail in the course of the chapter, took effect, a universal youth culture began to take shape.

In the 1950s, prior to this convergence, Western societies, afflicted by the miasma of Cold War and threat of nuclear annihilation, were profoundly convention-bound and conformist. The triumph of the Allies over the forces of Nazi brutality and obscurantism by the end of the Second World War, a triumph in which workers, peasants, women, resistance movements and partisans, colonial peoples and ordinary citizens participated, had held out the promise of a greatly changed postwar world; some reforms were implemented, which, particularly in the sphere of education, would eventually have significant results, but in the severe

conditions of reconstruction, austerity and international tension, many of the hopes for change were frustrated. West European societies were preoccupied with their own problems; while American personnel and American customs might have been familiar (particularly in West Germany), as, of course, were American films and American popular music, American society itself might as well have been a million miles away, both its rampant consumerism and its family and school rituals, affecting adolescents in particular.² However, all Western societies did, in one way or another, share certain highly conservative characteristics, such as: rigid social codes and class distinctions; the subordination of women to men and children to parents; racism—standing out all the more starkly in America as a result of the few brave and isolated challenges to segregation taking place in the fifties, just perceptible on mainland Britain (where the non-white population was still tiny) in what was known as “the colour bar” imposed in employment, housing and leisure facilities, blatant in Northern Ireland where the indigenous Irish Catholics were treated as second-class citizens, and very apparent in the behaviour of the French towards the North Africans in their midst; repression, guilt and furtiveness in sexual attitudes and behavior, constantly overshadowed by the fear of pregnancy; unquestioning respect for authority in the family, education, government, the law, and religion, and for the nation-state, the national flag, the national anthem, all of this approaching hysterical dimensions in the United States during the McCarthyite era; a pronounced paternalism in the running of such “top-down” facilities for young people as youth clubs and youth hostels (one has only to reflect on the connotations of the German word, *Herbergsvater*), young people themselves being generally conformist and apolitical; a strict formalism in language, etiquette, and dress codes, strongly marked among young people and the prescribed and separate roles of young males and young females; dull and cliché-ridden popular culture, most notably in American popular music with its boring big bands and banal ballads, epitomised in the song, “Love and Marriage, Go together like a Horse and Carriage” (continental European countries were more successful than Britain in preserving indigenous traditions in popular music); a very haphazard distribution of the amenities of modern society, with only a few families in Western Europe with refrigerators or television sets, many without electricity, inside bathrooms, or even running water.³

By the mid 1970s transformations had taken place in all of these areas. Most tangibly, modern domestic conveniences and consumer goods were being enjoyed in the remoter rural areas of Western Europe, as well as in the big cities. The 1960s had been a decade of rising living standards and enhanced lifestyles, involving a much-remarked-upon

growth in “consumerism”—a word widely and loosely used, less often defined; I use it to signify a condition in which relatively high levels of income throughout society make possible a high level of consumption of goods of all types, which go beyond basic necessities and include “modern conveniences,” “consumer goods” and “domestic luxuries,” and where, indeed, preoccupation with such consumption becomes a characteristic feature of society.” But the decade had also been one of political protest and violent confrontation, in which the main proponents were young people, particularly students; the events of 1968 had seemed to carry the threat of the overthrow of established society and could be read as testimony to the politicization of a whole student generation. One of the most significant phenomena was the way in which students and other young people who were generally uninterested in politics and certainly resistant to radical and Marxist ideas became swept up in protest movements as they perceived the authorities, and particularly the police, as acting with illegitimate force (often trying to provoke the police into “demonstrating the illegitimacy of the capitalist system” as a deliberate tactic of certain student radicals).⁴ It must always be borne in mind that many students who demonstrated were concerned mainly with grievances against the university authorities, against the police, etc., rather than with overt political causes.

Before going any further, my notion of the cultural revolution of the long 1960s, the “long 1960s” running from roughly 1958 to roughly 1974, deserves elucidation and examination, as does the concept of a single, transnational youth culture: how far it was independent of the rest of society; how influential in determining the basic character of the “Cultural Revolution”; how far, if at all, subject to a basic tension between, say, consumerism and politicization. The final section of the chapter, prior to a brief conclusion, will look in more detail at relationships between young people and their elders, broadly arguing that, while there were instances of bitter confrontation, it is wrong to think in terms of a “conflict of generations.”

Too little attention is still given to the legislative enactments that were in fact among the culminating achievements of the cultural revolution. First in importance are the measures giving young people the vote at the age of eighteen, coming in 1974 in France and Italy, 1972 in West Germany and the United States, and 1968 in the United Kingdom; these scarcely betoken bitter hostility between the older generation and the younger, or a total disjunction between “youth culture” and the rest of society. It was during these same years in the early 1970s that crucial decisions were made with respect to the rights of women. In October and November 1972 the celebrated abortion trials took place at

Bobigny on the outskirts of Paris, resulting in the de facto acquittal of the women concerned, in the cessation of all such prosecutions, and in the Abortion Law Reform of early 1975.⁵ The American Supreme Court ruling that made it clear that it was possible for abortions to be carried out legally was announced on 22 January 1973. In Italy, on 12 May 1974 a different referendum was passed when, to the surprise even of Socialist leader Pietro Nenni,⁶ 59.1 percent of Italian voters defied the Catholic Church to endorse the Divorce Law enacted in November 1969. Permissive attitudes and behavior throughout society, though not necessarily permissive legislation by governments, continued and expanded throughout the later 1970s, the 1980s and 1990s, and on into the twenty-first century. It seems to me apposite to perceive the cultural revolution itself as coming to an end around 1974, as it does to perceive it as having its beginnings in the late 1950s, when the phenomenon of the “affluent teenager” began to be noted, when the world view of “the beats” began to spread, when young people began to form music groups of their own to play skiffle and rock, when Mary Quant first began designing clothes specifically for the student-age group, when Herbert Marcuse and others integrated Marxist revolt with Freudian rejection of sexual repression, when postwar educational reforms were beginning to produce greater numbers of young people open to intellectual and cultural influences, when liberals recovered their faith in tolerance, democratic rights, and due process, and when a reaction began to develop against the stifling and authoritarian conventions and taboos of the earlier 1950s.⁷ Technological developments relating to travel and communications, the creation and diffusion of popular music, and the production of consumer goods were approaching critical mass. After the privations of the war and postwar periods, and as the postwar welfare reforms took effect, the process whereby young people were becoming sexually mature at an ever earlier age was again accelerating. As recovery gave way to affluence and some aspects of the Cold War faded, there was a revival of wartime aspirations; in some circles, among young and old, the spirit of protest was ignited over the threatened deployment of nuclear weapons and over neo colonialism in Latin America, Africa and South East Asia. Great historical transformations are not confined neatly to years or decades. It is a minor weakness in the excellent *Dynamische Zeiten: Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften*⁸ that it sticks so rigidly to the decade of the 1960s, ignoring, in particular, the important developments of the early 1970s. And it should be noted that while, for reasons given, it is appropriate to perceive the transformations as actually beginning in the late 1950s, the year 1980 does not form a distinctive terminal point, the revolutionary changes that culminated in the

early 1970s simply continuing steadily throughout the later 1970s and on towards the twenty-first century.

So what precisely were these “revolutionary developments”? First, it is essential to be clear on the fact that the cultural revolution was in no sense a revolution on the Marxist model, and indeed that there was never any possibility of such a revolution taking place. This consideration influences my conclusions about the long term significance of “politicization.” One can admire those young people who were determined to involve themselves in the major issues of the day and who demonstrated on behalf of what they believed to be right, but one has to recognize that they were completely mistaken in their faith that their actions would bring about the overthrow of “bourgeois” society—the great events of 1967/69 really had remarkably little in the way of long term consequences, and it is well worth noting that the senior Bonn diplomat, Ulrich Sahm, commented that while the student demonstrations did worry him, he considered the student movement “marginal” and of no danger to the existing political order.⁹ What actually did take place in the “long sixties” was something far more important, a revolution that transformed the lives of ordinary people, one that can most clearly be explicated by identifying seven distinct, but constantly interacting phenomena. The unprecedented influence exercised by young people, partly through a tiny minority of them becoming icons of the age, mainly through the spending power of the overwhelming majority in a new market entirely devised with them in mind, and through their being, in part at least, arbiters of taste in that market, was important, but we do have to understand that other phenomena developed largely independently of young people and that indeed these phenomena themselves operated as contextual influences on youth culture.

First in importance was the great profusion of new movements, new ideas, new social concerns and new forms of social participation, the passion for experimentation, for pushing matters to extremes, and for, of course, challenging established ways of doing things, exemplified by experimental drama, art, poetry and music groups, New Left, civil rights, anti war and environmental-protection movements, the philosophical pronouncements of the structuralists and post structuralists, the situationists and of Marshall McLuhan and Timothy Leary, in which excess was succeeded by still further excess. Closely associated with all of this were outbursts of entrepreneurialism, individualism, hedonism, doing you own thing, as seen in the founding of clubs, boutiques, pornographic magazines, etc., the development of uninhibited fashions (short skirts, long hair, for example) which defied convention and gloried in the natural attributes of the (youthful) human body. Second, and

related to all of these, was an upheaval in personal and family relationships and in public and private morals, subverting the authority of men over women and parents over children, and entailing a general sexual liberation, involving “permissive” attitudes and behavior, and a refreshing frankness, openness, and indeed honesty in sexual matters.

And so, thirdly, we come back to the rise of the unprecedented influence of young people, most clearly expressed in the formation of a potent youth culture. Inextricably bound in with the forces of commercialism, this youth culture had a steadily increasing impact on the rest of society, dictating taste in fashion, music, and popular culture generally. The central component was pop/rock music, which became a kind of universal language, its performers being young in comparison with the crooners and band leaders of the 1950s, and the audiences mainly (though far from exclusively) being very young. “Youth,” in any case, was not monolithic: in respect to some developments one is talking of teenagers, with respect to others it may be a question of everyone under the age of thirty or so. Such was the growing prestige of youth and appeal of the youthful lifestyle that it became possible to remain “youthful” at more advanced ages than would ever have been thought proper in previous generations. While the origins of youth culture lay in America, the distinctive character it took on owed much to developments in the United Kingdom. Late in 1960 Mary Quant and her aristocratic partner, Alexander Plunkett-Green took their new youthful fashions to America. Responses ranged from astonishment that the staid English could produce anything like this, to a glimmering recognition that this new English fashion was poised for universal conquest. *Life* (5 December 1960), in a feature entitled “British Couple’s Kooky Styles,” remarked on the shortness of the skirts (in fact they went up to just below the knee. Quant did not introduce miniskirts to the world until 1964). *Women’s Wear Daily* was more percipient: “These Britishers have a massive onslaught of talent, charm and mint-new ideas.” Anticipating the way in which Mary Quant fashions would soon be a vital part of American youth culture, the American teenage magazine *Seventeen* prepared a special Mary Quant spring promotion.¹⁰ For nearly forty years now *everybody* has known everything there is to know about the Liverpool group, The Beatles (consisting of three working-class lads, and lower-middle-class John Lennon). However, a special insight into the appeal of the group, and of their kind of music—in this case to a young *adult*—is contained in a letter, written (on 3 January 1964) by a Cambridge academic recently returned from a spell at the University of California at Berkeley, to his senior colleague there:

for health and sanity these last months, I've been going to twist and shake clubs which have sprung up all over London. We have a new group who may be visiting America soon, and here are worshipped as I think no other entertainer ever has been ... Called the Beatles 4 kids from Liverpool, rough, cheeky, swingy, very much war-time kids, and full of gutsy energy. I must say I fell for their stuff when I got back. I never thought to twist and shake—but I have and I do ... it is a relief to lose oneself in the unconscious hypnotic euphoria of the music.¹¹

The British influence on youth culture in other countries can be clearly seen in such magazines as *Salut les copains* in France, and *Ciao amici* and *Big* in Italy.¹²

As youth culture expanded from being relatively inward-looking and basically confined to *teenagers* into being increasingly integrated with, and, at the same time, reactive against, the rest of society, with university students more and more the dominating constituent, the cultural revolution presented varied, seemingly contrasting, aspects: from violent would-be revolution to passive hippiedom, pervaded by psychedelic drugs and oriental religion; from organized paramilitary formations on city streets to newly founded paperback bookshops, galleries, experimental theaters, nightclubs and underground magazines. French historians focus on what they call “the years of *contestation*,” a word that sounds odd in English, but which draws attention to the dramatic events on the streets of Paris and elsewhere.¹³ Equally, one may legitimately, as already mentioned, stress the marked politicization of sections of the student populations. But whether there really was a deep tension, or paradox, at the heart of youth culture seems to me rather doubtful. It is true that most young people, like their elders, enjoyed the benefits of affluence and of consumer society, while it was fashionable among young revolutionaries and radicals to denounce “consumerism” as the evil capitalist trap that lured the workers away from their historical destiny of overthrowing “the bourgeoisie.”¹⁴ The burning down of the department store, L’Innovation, in Brussels on 22 May 1967, resulting in the deaths of nearly three hundred people, was only the most lethal of several direct attacks on “consumerism” in various countries; but only very small minorities of extremists were involved, and as political action faded in 1969 (when, for example, the German Extra Parliamentary Opposition disintegrated) and 1970 (when the German SDS was wound up), the hard core of irreconcilables coalesced into the dangerous, but numerically tiny terrorist groups of the 1970s. To understand the essential unity of youth culture, despite the different levels of intensity with which different young people held, and acted out their principles, we have to grasp the two slogans, infinitely flexible, but immensely potent,

which, as a mass of contemporary documentation and subsequent reminiscence testifies, lay at the heart of what most young people believed, or wanted to believe: “Changing the World” and “Having a Good Time.” Rather than a tension between hedonists and activists, or between consumerism and politicization, youth culture presented a shifting accommodation between these two imperatives. Most young people were able to persuade themselves that for most of the time they could do both, but some actually believed that they were changing the world simply by having a good time; and can one say they were totally wrong when one considers the austere, gloomy, authoritarian world of the 1940s and 1950s? For some, “changing the world” simply meant changing personal lifestyles and relationships. Even the irreconcilables believed in enjoying themselves—with sex, drugs and the consumer products, records, record-players, amplifiers, etc.—(indispensable to youth culture itself), believed in sharing in the irreverent humor that was such a characteristic of the youth movements, and seen strikingly in the pranks of situationists, provos, yippies, Kabouters and Onda Verde (it was for their lack of appropriate Politburo seriousness that the student left were excoriated by the official Communist Parties).¹⁵

In introducing the exhibition, “I Want to Take You Higher: The Psychedelic Era 1965–1969,” to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the San Francisco summer of love at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, James Henke, one of the central figures in American youth culture struck a familiar note:

... this period, unlike the Nineties, was a time of hope, a time of optimism. It was a period when people valued personal freedom and social equality. It was a time when anything seemed possible. People thought they could change the world—and they did.¹⁶

Jim Haynes, the American who launched Europe’s first new-style paperback bookshop in Edinburgh in 1960, then played leading roles in setting up Edinburgh’s experimental theater, *The Traverse*, and subsequently London’s Arts Lab, expressed some of the same ideas, though overlaid by later disillusionment. He referred to:

the innocence and naivety of the decade when everybody thought that they were changing the world, that we could change the world. Then maybe a few people began to realise that maybe through the music, through long hair and colourful costumes, through our attitudes, hopes and fears, we weren’t going to change the world. We could only maybe change ourselves a bit.¹⁷

Innocence, naivety and optimism are frequently mentioned, and these certainly existed by the bucket-load; but optimism is not necessarily a bad quality, and young people, particularly students, could plausibly argue that they were, as an entire generation, facing up to issues that previous generations had largely avoided: the involvement in higher education of young men from all social classes and of unprecedented numbers of women, for instance; the rise of the civil rights movements and the challenges to traditional racial attitudes; neo colonialism, nuclear weapons, new domestic technologies. Unquestionably, the faith in, and the desire for change was palpable. Here is the recollection of a woman who was a teenager in Liverpool during the 1960s:

... did all that upheaval in the living standards, in attitudes and fashion have a lasting effect on the lives of the adults who were teenagers in Liverpool in the sixties? I believe it did. It gave us tolerance for new ideas, and brought us a step nearer to equality of rights, removing many prejudices of sexual, racial and moral origin. It gave us the freedom to accept or reject things on their own merits and according to our own individual preferences. I believe that the sixties were a mini-renaissance in which the right of individual expression was encouraged, applauded, and nurtured by a generation whose naïve belief was that all we needed was love.¹⁸

Apart from having a good time, another basic foundation of youth culture was, despite the primacy of “doing your own thing” and “individual expression,” the sense of “being there” and of “belonging.” And, of course, of “being outside established adult society” (however unavoidable links to that society were in reality). Barry Miles, founder of Indica paperback bookshop in London, and friend and biographer of Alan Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and Paul McCartney, has defined the ethos of San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury hippy district in these words:

... it was like a coalescence of the free sexual revolution, the marijuana revolution, the drug revolution, political revolution, liberation movements of all kinds. We were getting together to have a be-in. The purpose was just to be there. That was the whole point. This was after the sit-ins, and the idea was more Buddhist influenced: to be there, to simply be there, not having to do anything particular except to enjoy the phenomenon of being together outside of the realm of the state.¹⁹

One of London’s more famous psychedelic clubs was UFO, about which cofounder John “Hoppy” Hopkins wrote:

UFO was done from the heart with a purpose, which was to have a good time. We decided to run UFO all night, and it was a piece of all-night cul-

ture suddenly flashing into being that really made it popular. People would stay till it was light outside. You could stay out of your head all night.²⁰

And to put with that, here is the recollection of the guitarist in Tomorrow, one of the UFO rock groups:

Going into the UFO club when you were on the bill made you feel great...It was a mass happening, day after day, week after week. You were part of something; you felt like you belonged somewhere.²¹

The 1960s youth culture is, of course, indelibly associated with sex and drugs, which can very nearly be explained by the key notion of "Having a Good Time," mixed in with the prevailing notions of experimentation and challenging authority. The spread of drug-taking was greatly accelerated by the absurd belief in the mind-expanding qualities of psychedelic drugs.

One development that was contributing greatly to the knowledge and understanding of the world possessed by young people was the increased availability and, therefore, popularity, of travel. It was highly noticeable that the great political demonstrations faded out with the onset of summer, as the traveling season began. Changing the world did not necessarily mean taking part in political demonstrations: many young people joined with their elders in such humanitarian bodies as Amnesty International, in the various civil rights' movements, the environmental movement, the campaigns for the homeless, even the consumer movement ("consumers," as I shall shortly show, far from being wicked representatives of the bourgeoisie, were simply ordinary people living life as best they could, who themselves needed protection from capitalist exploitation). In Amsterdam the provos, rather than political activists, were "radical pacifists" with a highly developed sense of fun, and plans for "white bicycles" (free of charge, to combat environmental pollution) and "white chimneys" (smokeless). They were succeeded in 1970 by the kabouters, who distinguished themselves by their peaceful work in combating air pollution, in forcing the city to make empty houses available for occupation by the homeless, and helping the elderly cope with bureaucracy.²² Overwhelmingly the evidence is that in all countries the Beatles were regarded as *the* group that represented the interests and concerns of the young, but the appeal was entirely visceral, directly through the music, not through any political programs or activities associated with the "fab four" (a well-loved song, of course, was "All You Need is Love").²³ The point in respect to rock music in general was made crudely but graphically by American female pop star, Janis Joplin: "My music isn't supposed to make you riot. It's supposed to make you fuck."²⁴ The variegated mix

that made up youth culture was most fully displayed at the major rock festivals, most impressively perhaps at the Essen International Song Days of September 1968, almost, you could say, a festival of consumerism enlivened (not contradicted) by protest songs.²⁵

After that long disquisition on the rise of youth and youth culture, I come to my fourth phenomenon, again closely tied in with the others: the enormous growth in the international exchange of cultural products and practices. America continued to be the mass producer of what film critics refer to as “classical” films,²⁶ but these were now being rivaled, in prestige if not popularity by “modern” films from Europe, many of these coproductions from several European countries. Curiously some of the most internationally famous experimental theater came from America, but also from European countries, notably Norway, West Germany, France and Italy. Basically the American monopoly of cultural exports was broken, and, of course, Britain acquired a special position in regard to pop music, fashion, film and television. Among developments that had their origins in the 1950s or earlier, but which now permeated to all parts of Western Europe, were motor scooters (significant agents in the liberation of young women) and espresso machines (essential adjuncts to the coffee-bars central to early youth culture) from Italy, discos from France, and juke boxes from America. Again it must be stressed that the fifth, and absolutely fundamental phenomenon of the cultural revolution was the spread to all sections of society of decent living conditions (which is linked to, but not the same thing as, consumerism). In an important survey of a rural commune in Brittany, the French sociologist, Edgar Morin, after noting that the commune had been without running water in 1950, remarked on a “wave of change” in the 1960s which “brought wash-hand basins, showers, sometimes bathtubs, inside WCs, refrigerators, and washing machines.” He added that:

Diet became richer and more varied. Gruel was abandoned, the pancake had returned as a delicacy, potatoes remained as a basic element, but people were starting to eat steaks, vegetables, desserts ... Italian raviolis and tinned paellas began to appear at the grocer's.²⁷

Turning to the country of origin of one of these interesting components of international cultural exchange (ravioli!), we can refer to the three-part survey of a village seventy kilometers south of Rome conducted by the American sociologist Feliks Gross, with the assistance of Professor G.N. del Monte of the sociology department at Rome University. The first survey took place in 1957/58, the second in 1969 and the third in 1971. The first survey made clear both the lack of amenities in the village itself and the contrast between the existence of at least basic facili-

ties within the village and their total absence in the habitations dotted about the surrounding countryside. In his interview with Gross, the mayor of the village put matters succinctly. The village, he said

... is about 60 to 80 km from Rome, but it seems that it is about 80,000 km. We are living in very primitive conditions and I don't know if we really belong to a civilized country, or whether we should be considered a part of the African region ... We have not enough direct communication with Rome and with other great cities such as Naples.²⁸

In his 1969 survey, Gross reported a stunning transformation. The people now had roads, electricity and water; the elderly had old-age pensions; men, by dint of getting up early, were using the new travel facilities to take up employment in Rome. National statistics show a sharply increasing proportion of personal expenditure going on transport.²⁹ Professor del Monte provided this colourful piece of information:

... a friend, who is also a peasant, showed me his toilet; leading the way, he said with pride: "We have a toilet, the Roman type." It was all plastered with tiles. I asked him: "You remember not so long ago—we used to go in the middle of the field—not to a toilet. How do you feel today when you go to the toilet?" Said he: "I feel like a human being, like the others, not like an animal as I felt before."³⁰

When does the acquisition of the basic amenities of civilized living become consumerism? Some authorities declare that consumerism began as far back as the seventeenth or eighteenth century.³¹ However the hard statistics both of sales of the new consumer goods based on advanced technology, and of the definitive swing away from expenditure being taken up with basic foodstuffs, demonstrate conclusively that a new intense phase of consumerism began in the 1960s.³² The famous novel of that decade which both celebrates and criticizes the advent of consumerism was *Les Choses: une histoire des années soixante* (1965) by a former sociology student who had worked for a time as a market researcher, Georges Perec. A similar function is often attributed to the simultaneous and related arts movements, Pop Art and Nouveau Réalisme.³³ For the hard everyday realities of consumerism we can hardly do better than consult the series of interviews with ordinary French families published in *L'Express* of 21–28 September 1968. As we see it in the five extracts I am about to quote, consumerism scarcely connotes luxurious self-indulgence and shows only faint elements of servitude to "the capitalist system" in the extent to which goods are bought on credit, and in the constant rather discontented striving after yet more purchases (a

central theme of *Les Choses*). Since, at the end of the 1960s, the overwhelming evidence is that most French people thought they were better off and happier than they had been ten years previously,³⁴ we do not necessarily have to believe all the grumbles of the married couples.

Robert B., is an agricultural worker, aged 42, with a wife, Simone, aged 38 and six children. He is paid 950 francs a month for twelve months, with double pay in one month and certain bonuses. To supplement the family income his wife does a little outside housework. In total, including family allowances, the household has an income of about 1,900 francs per month. Electricity, being paid for by the farmer who owns the house, is free and there is no rent.

In the kitchen there is a veritable arsenal of modern machines: an electric waffle iron, an electric mixer, coffee mill, and mincer, 250-liter refrigerator, a butane gas cooker and a washing machine. All bought on credit. In the rest of the house, emptiness with the exception of a transistor radio. Their pride is their car, a 4L, also on credit. "It's prosperity, and us, we want to catch a little of it. By working hard, we have now got there."

Pierre M., aged 45, is an employee in a food-processing factory in a Paris suburb. He has three sons, and earns 499.40 francs a fortnight. Monique, his wife, does two hours a day of house-cleaning to augment their income. There total, per month, is 1,365.49 francs.

They find it tough. They live in a three-room unfurnished flat, without a bathroom, in a very old building, paying 100 francs a month (the three boys all have to sleep in one room). They have a refrigerator, electric cooker, and television. "We have bought everything on credit. We have a basic principle: when the instalments on one gadget are paid off, we immediately buy another one." She makes some clothes herself; clothes are passed from boy to boy (they are aged 15, 13 and 9). She says: "On Sundays, from time to time, the boys go to the pictures. Us, we go for a walk, play cards with neighbours. Or else my husband stays at home doing odd jobs about the house." Holidays are with a cousin in a little village in the Sarthe. "It's not the seaside, but the three boys enjoy themselves." M. reckons he's better off than he was ten years ago, though conscious of rising prices.

Pierre G., son of an agricultural laborer, has risen to the position of salaried executive in a commercial firm, and earns 2,800 francs a month, with 1,000 francs for the thirteenth month, which, with family allowances for his two children aged 7 and 2, rises to about 3,150 francs a month.

He has a four-room, fourth-floor flat, without a lift, in the outer suburbs of Paris. He has a week's holiday at Easter, which he spends at home, and four weeks in the summer, when he books a holiday away from home. They have a refrigerator, a cooker (with four burners, the latest model), a washing machine, a rotisserie, a camera, a television, a three-band tran-

sistor radio, a record-player, 30-odd records, 100-odd books. Madame G. gave up work as a secretary on the birth of her second child, but would like to take up part-time work "in order not to just go on dreaming about the luxury world presented in the women's magazines." They are "profoundly dissatisfied."

Patrice D. is an industrial designer; his wife, 28, is a secretary in a record company. They live at Bois-Colombes, near Paris, and have one 4-year-old child. D. gets thirteen monthly payments of 1,900 francs the calendar year, and a summer holiday bonus of 1,100 francs. She gets 1,155 francs a month over thirteen months, and a holiday bonus of 900 francs. This gives them a total of 3,818 francs per month.

They run a Simca 500. "It is beyond our means, but it is our only luxury." Their television has been bought on credit. They have a battery of modern conveniences, plus a record player, and ordinary camera and a film-camera, a hair-drier, and a radio in the car. But she dreams of a bigger apartment, holidays away from relatives, better clothes, fine books. She believes that, because of rising prices, their standard of living is going down.

S., aged 32, is an employee in a big Paris shop, earning 1,050 francs per month. He and his wife, Genevieve, have three children.

She is 28 and, apart from looking after her own children, she takes other people's children into her own flat after dinner twice a week. With family allowances, they make 1,530 francs a month. Half of this goes on food; they have a small refrigerator, a second-hand television, and no car. Madame S. dreams of having a washing machine.³⁵

Sixth is a phenomenon to which I attach great importance, but which is completely neglected in traditional Marxist-leaning accounts of the 1960s: the expansion and strengthening of a liberal, progressive presence, privileging tolerance and due process, within institutions of authority. This I label "measured judgment," believing that it should completely replace the misconceived notion of "repressive tolerance" invented by Herbert Marcuse.³⁶ Unwittingly, Tom Hayden, leader of the American socialist student party, SDS, while wittingly intending to attack the federal government, revealed "measured judgment" at work in the American judiciary (and a contrast with the 1950s):

It was remarkable that in these several years of political trials on conspiracy charges, the federal government failed to win against *any* of the sixty-five conspiracy defendants. Such defendants as the Harrisburg Seven, the Camden Seventeen, and the Gainesville Eight always managed to win, either before juries or appeals courts, a dramatic difference from the McCarthy era, only fifteen years before.³⁷

Much of what was most innovatory in British popular culture was in fact fostered by two key establishment figures, John Trevelyan at the British Board of Film Censors and Sir Hugh Carleton Greene at the BBC.³⁸ In France, the abolition of rules intended to prevent male/female cohabitation at the main University of Paris student residences at Antony was carried through by Jacques Balland, the director of the residences, appointed by the Gaullist Government in January 1966.³⁹ In West Germany the judiciary ruled that SDS files seized by the police in January 1967 must be returned; on Easter Sunday, 1968, *Justizminister* Heineman made his famous call for “*zukunftsgerichtete Toleranz*.”⁴⁰

Against “measured judgment” we must immediately place, seventhly, and lastly, the existence of circumstances leading readily to dogmatism, rigid intolerance and extreme violence. Bigoted, reactionary attitudes in some institutions of authority, including most police forces and some university administrations, were nothing new, but the sight of change taking place all around them incited certain upholders of the status quo into resistance on a vicious scale. At the same time many of the radical protesters themselves believed in the violent overthrow of existing society, while some, as previously mentioned, deliberately provoked police violence on the assumption that this forced into the open the repressive nature of “capitalist” society. The view of the 1960s as an era of violent confrontations that did determine some of the characteristics of the decade is not, therefore, erroneous; only, as I have stressed, violent confrontation was, in the end, much less important than the positive transformations that took place throughout society.

It was a common statement among young people that it was not possible to trust anyone over the age of thirty. Germany’s Nazi past, France’s collaborationist past, Britain’s continuing imperial adventures, nuclear weapons, Vietnam, the authoritarianism rampant in the 1950s, all inspired a great deal of hostility among the younger generation towards the older. Hysterical attacks by old reactionaries against all aspects of youth culture are to be found throughout the long 1960s. But what the detailed evidence brings out is the great extent to which young people had the support of their own parents, and of other adults, including lawyers and academics. Popular culture would not itself have had the impact it did had it not been for the presence of certain adult mediators who catered to the youthful market and sponsored young performers. France’s first great open air pop concert was organized at La Nation in Paris, to coincide with the start of the Tour de France on the night of 22/23 June 1963, by Daniel Filipacchi, founder, first, of the radio programme aimed exclusively at young people, *Salut les copains*, and, then, the teenage magazine of the same name. Expected to attract 20–30,000

participants, it actually attracted five times that number; also 2,000 police, and a vast amount of viciously hostile comment, including an astonishing reference to Adolf Hitler. "There are laws," said *Paris Presse*, "police and courts. It's time to make use of them before the savages of the place de la Nation turn the nation's future upside down." "What difference," asked *Figaro*, "is there between the twist ... and Hitler's speeches in the Reichstag, apart from the leaning towards music?"⁴¹ For the actual state of relationships between students and adults there is rich evidence in the collections of letters preserved at the University of Berkeley at California, scene of the Free Speech Movement from 1964 onwards, and Cornell University, subject to particularly violent disturbances in the Spring 1969. The events at Cornell, and particularly the occupation of the students' union by black students in April, together with the restrained handling of the situation by President Perkins and the almost uniquely liberal administration, provoked many bitter denunciations by Cornell alumni and their withdrawal of financial support from the university. In response, one Cornell student wrote to the Cornell *Alumni News* one of most carefully reasoned denunciations of the older generation to be found anywhere, one which points out that students are now coping with the sorts of social changes their elders had been completely oblivious of:

I note with interest in the letters column of your July issue that there seems to be a direct relationship between the amount of time an alumni has been away from Cornell, and the degree of outrage expressed by him over the April crisis ... These men and women who attended college in the "Golden Days" of Cornell when they buried their little heads in the sands of academia, sneaked booze into the football games, and joined fraternities and sororities that were openly discriminating and proud of it ...

While I disagree to a great extent with the issues the blacks were raising, and, to a degree, with the way in which the confrontation was handled by the administration, I have nothing but contempt for the men and women who tried to second-guess the actions of Perkins and the rest of the administration ...

... none of these writers had to face the social issues we are now facing. For instance, how many blacks attended Cornell when Mr. Dryden ... was there? Times, and society change with the passage of years. Cornell and the rest of the world are not the simple straight-forward things they were decades ago. But, at least we are trying to cope with our world ... today's Cornellians are ten times as concerned with the outside world, and trying to influence it, than was his generation. We may not be right all the time, and we may be misguided much of it, but we're in there giving the old college a try ...

... When people detract from the things today's college students are saying and doing, I can only turn and point the finger at our parents' generation. After all they were the ones who made us what they wanted us to be. If we are all wrong, then so were they ... Our parents made us, and the world, what we are today. I wish they, and the generation preceding them would go light on the criticism they level at us when we try to deal with the world they willed us and occasionally stumble in the process.⁴²

This student clearly belongs to the moderate majority at Cornell, a supporter of the liberal values that he believes "the old college" should stand for, but far from a total supporter of black liberation. What the wealth of correspondance between students, their parents, and other adults brings out is the great amount of support there was for student protesters. When several hundred Free Speech Movement students were arrested at Berkeley on 2 December 1964, parents, lawyers and academics immediately formed the Parents' Committee for Defense of Berkeley Students, which declared its support for those arrested:

because we recognize their high moral purpose in peacefully asking to maintain and defend constitutionally-guaranteed rights and principles ... We believe the students acted in the best tradition of American democracy ...⁴³

It is often argued that the persistent insistence by young people on sexual freedom unknown to their parents was a major cause of conflict between the generations, and there can be no doubt that some older people were shocked by what they saw as the immorality of their juniors, and that some of the more politically active young people deliberately flaunted sexual promiscuity in order to provoke their elders into even more reactionary positions. Yet there is much evidence of conciliation on sexual matters also—again the actions of Jacques Balland in France are relevant. The street violence of 1968 was perhaps a more serious test of tolerance on the part of the older generation towards the younger, although in many cases (this happened in all countries) the vicious actions of the police swung sympathy round to the side of the student demonstrators.⁴⁴ One striking discovery made by Professor Michael Seidman in the Paris police archives, which supports my long-held position that there was cooperation as well as "contestation," even between students and police, is that student marshals did inform the police about demonstrators who were armed and dangerous.⁴⁵ In some cases the drama and the "trauma" of the events of May/June 1968 brought parents and children closer together. A particularly valuable document in this connection is the special, skeletal edition that the French women's mag-

azine, *Elle*, managed to bring out on 17 June, while Paris was still almost totally paralyzed. The editor, Helen Gordon-Lazereff, spoke directly to her readers, recognizing how “traumatic” their experiences had been, the difficulty they had often had in understanding the children who participated in protests, but noting also how some had become involved through their children and came to understand the rightness of their actions.⁴⁶ In a later lycée demonstration, pupils, parents, teachers and workers stood shoulder-to-shoulder against a police cordon.⁴⁷ Some adults gave their support to young people throughout the long 1960s; others never withdrew their hostility. Some took offence at greater extremism, greater violence, greater obscenity. Some, as *Elle* suggested, came through to a new understanding. A particularly interesting case is that of the widowed Italian school teacher, Anna Avallone, whose son, Sergio, from 1968, was a student activist at Turin University. In her diary she records some general sympathy towards the ideas of her son and his friends, but she is personally estranged from him, offended by the polemic students are aiming at teachers like herself, hurt by his casual attitude towards her, and shocked that he is sleeping with his girlfriend, Giulia. Eventually, influenced in particular by Giulias’s feminism, she is won over, beginning to see her own colleagues and neighbors as hypocrites, seeking understanding of the attempted collaboration of students and workers through reading *The Communist Manifesto*, and happily celebrating her son’s wedding, at which Giulia wears a mini-skirt.⁴⁸

Anna Avallone might seek enlightenment in *The Communist Manifesto*, but to grasp what happened, and what did not happen, during the cultural revolution it is vital to keep firmly in mind that there was never any possibility of a revolution on the Marxist model. Because it is no longer viable to use the word “revolution” in that sense, we are now free to talk of all kinds of other “revolutions”—“a youth revolution,” “a rock revolution,” “a standard of living revolution,” “a consumer revolution,” “a sexual revolution,” “a communications revolution,” “a paperback revolution.” Perhaps the best way of summarising the cultural revolution of the long 1960s is by saying that it consisted of a simultaneous series of overlapping revolutions of that type. There was no overthrow of one type of society by another: what happened was that new ideas, new developments, new practises, some emanating from youth culture, some from other sources, and all assisted by the processes of measured judgement, *permeated* society.

Notes

1. Jean Fourastié, *Les Trentes Glorieuses ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris, 1979); Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London, 1994).
2. See in particular, James S. Coleman, *The Adolescent Society: The Social Life of Teenagers and its Impact on Education* (Glencoe, New York, 1961).
3. Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c.1958–c.1974* (Oxford, 1998), 31–38.
4. I make these points in *ibid.*, 536–63.
5. *Ibid.* 706–11.
6. Reported in *Epoca*, 25 May 1974.
7. Marwick, *Sixties*, 3–38.
8. Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried, and Karl Christian Lammers, eds. *Dynamische Zeiten: Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften* (Hamburg, 2000).
9. Quoted by Gottfried Niedhart, “Ostpolitik: the Role of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Process of Détente,” in *1968: The World Transformed*, ed. Carole Fink, Philip Gassert, and Detlef Junker (Cambridge, 1998), 178.
10. Mary Quant, *Quant on Quant* (London, 1966), 105.
11. H.N. Smith Papers, Box 6 F8, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.
12. I quote extensively from these and other youth magazines in *The Sixties*, 105–10, 461–74.
13. Genevieve Dreyfus-Armand et al., eds. *Les Années 68: Le temps de la contestation*, (Brussels: Editions Complexe). Politics and conflict are also stressed in the most recent book on America in the sixties, Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York, 2000).
14. In particular, see documents printed in Rene Viénet, *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Paris, 1968).
15. Marwick, *Sixties*, 104–5, 110, 354–55, 606–7.
16. James Henke, “Introduction” to *I Want to Take You Higher: The Psychedelic Era 1969–1969*, ed. James Henke with Parke Puterbaugh (San Francisco, 1997), 11.
17. Jim Haynes, *Thanks for Coming! An Autobiography* (London, 1984), 174.
18. Moureen Nolan and Roma Singleton, “Mini-Renaissance,” in *Very Heaven: Looking Back at the Sixties*, ed. Sara Maitland (London, 1988), 25.
19. Barry Miles, in Henke, 33. Much of what is in Henke is repeated and elaborated in Barry Miles, *In the Sixties* (London, 2002).
20. John “Hoppy” Hopkins, in Henke, 86.
21. Steve Howe (guitarist), in *ibid.*, 88.
22. Frederick George Friedmann, *Youth and Society* (London, 1971), 25–26.
23. Marwick, *Sixties*, 461–64.
24. Quoted in Godfrey Hodgson, *America in Our Time* (New York, 1976), 341.
25. There is a good account in Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968: Das Jahr das alles verändert hat* (Munich, 1998), 277–79.
26. See Pierre Sorlin, *The Film in History: Restaging the Past* (Oxford, 1988).
27. Edgar Morin, *Commune en France: la métamorphose de Plodémet* (Paris, 1967), 71–72.
28. Feliks Gross, *Il Paese: Values and Social Change in an Italian Village* (New York, 1973), 45.
29. Gisele Podbielski, *Twenty-Five Years of Special Action for the Development of Southern Italy* (Milan, 1978).
30. Gross, *Il Paese*, 126.

31. The latest example is Peter N. Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: the Global Transformation of Desire* (London, 2001).
32. Marwick, *Sixties*, 257–59, 269–70.
33. *Ibid.*, 185–92, 316, 319–20, 324.
34. *L'Express*, 24 February–2 March 1969.
35. All of these quotations are from *L'Express*, 21–28 September 1968.
36. Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, eds. Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr. and Herbert Marcuse (Boston, 1969), 81–123.
37. Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir* (New York, 1988), 452.
38. Marwick, *Sixties*, 118, 123–24, 131, 136, 143, 527.
39. Michael Seidman, "The Pre-May 1968 Sexual Revolution," *Contemporary French Civilization* XXV, 1 (Winter/Spring, 2001), 28.
40. Klaus Hildebrand, *Von Erhard zur Großen Koalition 1963–1969* (Wiesbaden, 1994), 381.
41. *Paris Presse*, 23 June 1963; *Figaro*, 23 June 1963.
42. Marsham Papers, Box 2, Division of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, New York. Among several collections at Cornell, The Challenge to Governance Project Papers and the Perkins Papers are specially useful.
43. Malcolm Burnstein Papers, Box 1 F1.15, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. The Free Speech Movement Participant Papers at Berkeley are also very rich on adult-student relationships.
44. Marwick, *Sixties*, 604–8.
45. Information generously supplied by Professor Michael Seidman, University of North Carolina at Wilmington.
46. *Elle*, special issue, 17 June 1968, in "Brochures mai 68," 14 AS. 238, Archives Nationales, Paris.
47. Marwick, *Sixties*, 745.
48. Anna Avallone, "Il mio sessantotto: ricordi di una 'madre' e 'insegnante,'" Archivio Diaristico, Pieve Santo Stefano, Tuscany.