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REACTION AND REVOLUTION:

The Origins of Division in the French Student Revolt

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Student unrest received international attention during the 1960's. Riots, strikes, and demonstrations disrupted colleges and universities in almost every country. Although students have always been politically active, the magnitude and the international character of the new wave of revolt shocked scholars and statesmen alike.

The postwar "Baby Boom" was a central factor in the sudden increase in student unrest. At first, as the world was dividing itself into two camps during the initial stages of the Cold War, the demographic change was a blessing. The new consumers helped the world economy adjust back into peacetime production. As the "Boom" matured, problems in the economy and society developed. In the 1950's, the primary and secondary school systems were flooded with too many students. In the 1960's, the influx of youth entered the universities and the job market, which were designed for smaller

numbers. Most nations could not adjust; unemployment, especially among the young, became a serious problem, the world economy fluctuated, and the universities feel apart. The increasing enrollment caused an increase in the number of graduates, and with the growth of the 1950's no longer present, even the future of college graduates was not guaranteed.[1]

The troubles in society created discontent among the younger generation and the student reaction to the change started violently in Japan during 1959 and 1960. In 1964, unrest began in the United States and, a year later, Europe. On the continent, the universities, weighed down by centuries of tradition, their rigid bureaucratic structure, and distant professors, faced a new generation of students who were woorried about their future and demanded change. Spanish students wanted their schools to be independent from the government. German students wanted to create "Critical Universities." Italian students wanted nothing more than the complete destruction of their colleges.

The French students were the last in western Europe to rise in protest. Only the Italian system rivaled their universities for ineffectiveness: Over two-thirds of the students enrolled in 1962 survived the three years of required study and received a licence.[2] The rapidly expanding national system was administered by the Ministry of Education in Paris, which enforced strict academic conformity throughout the nation with a bureaucracy designed for the 1950's and rules regarding teaching essentially unchanged since the reign of Napoleon III.

Student protests in France are commonplace occurrances, but

during the 1960's the protests turned against the university system. There was an activist minority within the student population, but before the Events of May and June, 1968, its influence over the apolitical majority was slight. The activists were divided along issues and regions. Before the crisis, large protests, scattered in various university cities, did occur, but there was no national movement or uniting issue present. When the increase in enrollment strained the university system, the radicals were given a new issue which bridged all regional and political divisions, but the mass participation did not occur until May 1968.

Approaching the French student movement and the Events of May and June, 1968, historically, two separate "movements" appear to mesh during the crisis. The first is a radical leadership or elite whose ideology of opposition to the university and the state developed years before the Events. The second is a mass reaction, staged by the "Baby Boom" and activated by the mistakes made by university and government officials. The leadership grafted itself onto the larger group and redirected the mass discontent against the university system to challenge the entire nation and society.

Some of the first explanations came from the leaders of the "action groups" who directed the revolt. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the "lo speaker" of the March 22 Movement, believes that the Events were the b ginning of a youth revolt which would one day tear down the social ord designed by and for capitalists and bureaucrats. In Obsolete Communis the Left-Wing Alternative, Cohn-Bendit points to French society as the cause of the crisis. Disgusted by "the dead, empty lives of their paren and alienated by the university system that served the technocracy, the students wanted a change. Sensing the opportunity, radicals within the student body transformed disgust and alienation into rebellion.

Daniel Ben Said and Henri Weber, members of the Jeunesse communiste revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist Youth, or J.c.r.) back-up Cohn-Bendit in Mai 1968: une répétition générale. Weber and Ben Said champion the younger generation as the new revolutionary Force in France and the World. They, too, blame French society for the Events: Two "crisies", the stagration of the French economy and the problems within the university, led to a "crisis of values" among the youth. They were tired of being a commodity exploited by the capitalist elite. When overcrowding in the university worsened and the students realized that there would not be enough jobs to employ all the university graduates in the future, Weber and Ben Said believe that the students chose to reject their destiny and took to the streets.

Raymond Aron, a sociologist who taught at the Sorborne during the Events, challenges the idealism of the student leaders. He saw nothing positive in the Events of May and June. Instead, Aron believes that the student movement broke down "the wall of the old order through which other irrational, unpredictable forces may flood."[2] Aron presents his explanation

of the student movement and the national crisis it sparked in The Elusive Revolution, a combination of his newspaper articles, which appeared in "Le Figaro" during May and June, 1968, and his responses to questions posed by Alain Duhamel, a writer for "Le Monde." According to Aron, the overcrowded classrooms and the rigidity of the university bureaucracy frustrated the students. The revolt came when a handful of students, without enough patience to wait for reform, decided to disrupt the system. Their revolt was a "psycho-drama": A true revolution was impossible without the support of the Parti communiste francais (French Community Party, or P.c.f.) and the labor unions, so the radicals vented their frustration in a reinactment of the Great Revolution of 1789.

It may have been senseless, but the student revolt somehow led to a national crisis. Aron gives the radicals credit for sparking the strikes that paralyzed France, but he believes that was caused by four problems in French society: The lack of intermediary groups between the individual and the state through which the public could channel its grievances; the lack of mutual cooperation outside of "bureaucratic hierarchies"; the rigidity of all government and capitalist bureaucracies; and de Gaulle's monetary policies which raised unemployment, slowed economic growth, and angered the nation. These factors gave France enough reasons to follow the example of the students and strike.[3]

To Alain Touraine, a sociologist who observed the growth of the movement at Nanterre University, the conflicts of May and June, 1968, were not a "psycho-drama." Touraine presents the rebellion as a serious event in French history which revealed the contradictions within the post-industrial society and "re-invented the class struggle." In The May Movement, Touraine reunites the student movement with the national crisis, unlike Aron who views

the two topics as related by separate phenomenon. The events of May and June, in Touraine's opinion, were not sparked by any specific act; instead the student movement was part of a social, political, and cultural rebellion against the "apparatus of integration, manipulation, and aggression" which predetermine the lives of everyone in modern society.[4]

The radical students were not simply venting frustrations. Instead, Touraine believes that the May crisis was a battle for "control of the power to make decisions, to influence, and to manipulate."[5] This struggle was caused by two contradictions inherent in modernization: the power the technocrats against the rights of the "worker-consumer" and the "technical and cultural realities of modern society" against "inherited organizational and institutional forms." In other words, the student movement was part of a broader struggle, an update of an older conflict, revived by the battle between modernization on one hand and the state, university, and social structures on the other which could no longer be adapted to accomodate change.[6]

Touraine clarifies the role of the students as part of a greater social movement in The Post-Industrial Society. He dismisses the idea of a separate student rebellion against the university as too simple: Original protests were indeed directed against the university structure, but as the revolt progressed, the students turned their attack against the entire society. Then Touraine rejects the definition of the student movement as anti-capitalist, since there were no clear economic objectives voiced by student leaders. Touraine prefers to leave the student revolt as part of a broader movement "carried out by particular social groups in order to take control of social change."[7]

To define the movement, Touraine separates the different "aspects" of the revolt from the "dynamics." He names four "aspects", or parts of French society, that fostered the movement: A university crisis, rigidity of political institutions, anti-technicisms, and a cultural revolt. The university crisis was caused by a rapid growth of enrollment and the accompanied construction of new facilities without any change in the style and administration of education in France. This angered the students, whose needs were no longer being served by an elitist, competitive university system that eliminated two-thirds of its students before graduation.[8] The second "aspect", the rigidity of French political systems, left the students with no place to turn once the reform efforts initiated by university administrators failed. When the politicians refused to take action, the students were forced to express their anger in revolt. The agitation, caused by the university crisis, and the revolt, caused by the lack of action by the government, gave birth to an anti-technocratic movement: The university, an important supplier of staff personnel for government, businesses, and industries, was linked by student leaders to the technocracy, and the revolt against the university expanded to a movement against the technocratic state. This in turn became a broader, cultural revolt when the rest of the nation moved in support of the students; the movement originally concentrated on and isolated in the universities then became a nationwide battle between the forces of modernization and the traditions of French society.[9]

The "dynamics" of the movement were the actions, by individuals or groups, which brought the "aspects" together during May and June, 1968. The leadership of the March 22 Movement, which "amalgamated a disorganized but rapidly spreading student agitation movement" and shifted student

protests away from the university crisis and onto society as a whole, became an important part of the national movement thanks to the actions of the university administration: Ordering the police to suppress the demonstrators and the closing of Nanterre broadened the support of the radicals and shifted the center of the conflict to Paris, where 150,000 students lived. Once the crisis moved into the confrontation between students and police combined the "aspects" and strengthened the movement, and the revolt expanded in the end onto a cultural level.[10]

Touraine's argument is based on structural conflicts and much of his terminology is vague. His explanation of the Events reduces the scattered protests, acts of repression, and violence to inevitable products of the contradictions inherent in society. Bernard Brown, who wrote Protest in Paris: Anatomy of a Revolt three years after Touraine's May Movement, derives his explanation from specific events. He prefaces his explanation of the revolt and the student movement with four "propositions": That the revolt was not "a single explosion", but instead a series of stages; that there was no single "May Movement", nor were there any large, homogeneous masses known as "the students", "the workers", or was there anything that could be called "the revolution"; that the crisis was not spontaneous; and that the student movement was not "play-acting", as Aron believes, but a serious event in French history.[11]

Using these four points to build his argument, Brown then blames modernization for causing the crisis. The reconstruction after World War Two and de Gaulle's economic programs turned France into an "advanced industrial nation", but with this advancement came troubles. The modernization and rapid change during the post-war years mobilized an opposition force to the state which, in Brown's words, "reflected the ambiguity of all

political reactions to the process of modernization:"

> Most students, workers, and professionals accepted modernization as a goal and wished to eliminate archaic barriers to facilitate mass participation in modern society. Some wished to quicken the march towards ever elusive modernization by imposing totaliterian control and ruthlessly eliminating all leftovers of traditionalism. Still others were revolting against modern society and all its works in order to return to an idyllic or imagined past. 12

Brown calls the May revolt an anomic reaction, referring to Emile Durkheim's theory of Anomic, which predicts that when the rules of society breakdown, as in times of rapid change, the individual "may react in altogether unforeseeable ways." Durkheim hypothesized that apathy and terrorism, two characteristics of the student population before and during the Events, as possible reactions of individuals in an anomic state, and Brown uses Durkheim's theory to explain the reactions of the French nation to modernization.[12]

Brown uses hindsight to his advantage. His explanation combines the structural conflicts, which Touraine and Aron identified as the cause of the revolt, with the reactions of individuals, the university, and the state, which shaped the Events. In a sense, his theory identifies both the fuel and the spark of the crisis. Brown improves on Touraine, Aron, and the student leaders, all of whom gave explanations during or just after May, 1968, by putting the Events and the student movement in a historical perspective. They were not spontaneous phenomenon nor were they a single, massive event. He starts his narrative with the "Strasbourg Scandal" in 1966, although he admits that student protests have been an "annual event" in France since the Liberation. To find the origin of the groups which directed the revolt, the narration should begin in 1877, when

the first student society was formed at the University of Nancy. The idea quickly spread throughout the French university system and on May 1907, delegates from various Association générale des étudiants (or A.g chapters met at Lille and created a national association, christened th Union nationale des étudiants de France (National Students' Union, or U.n.e.F.).

The first associations were not political, and the U.n.e.F. contin in the same tradition. In many respects, it resembled American fraternit with expensive fees and a recommendation system regulating membership.[14] This function, as a social organization, served the pre-war student popu-lation well, as long as the university remained "elitist", a training ground for a small class destined to serve in France's state bureaucracy, and enrollment stayed low.

The traumatic experience of the Great War, which killed off a large portion of France's youth, brought what Jean-Pierre Worms calls "the golden era of student folklore" to an end. Education became a serious business in the inter-war years, as students from the middle classes en-tered the universities for the first time, in search of a degree to help them through the post-war economic troubles. The U.n.e.F. reacted to this change in the students' attitude and needs. The union became a "cor-porate"[28] organization to meet the material needs of its members. Member-ship fees were reduced and the organization's operating costs were covered by a government subsidy, awarded in 1929. Grants from the government for needy students, the establishment of students restaurants, subsidized housing, and improved student health care were some of the accomplishments of the U.n.e.F. in between the world wars.[15]

While the union "adhered to the most restrictive interpretation of its 'non-political' constitution", national politics became a student concern. A. Belden Fields, who presents one history of the U.n.e.F. as part of his book Student Politics in France, believes that the French students ignored politics before the second World War, with the Dreyfus Affair the only example of significant student involvement.[16] Jean-Pierre Worms contradicts Fields in his essay "The French Student Movement." Worms concedes that the U.n.e.F. stayed out of politics to remain on friendly terms with whatever party that was in control of the government, but students, as individuals or as part of political groups outside the university, did participate on the political left and the right. This "dichotomy between the political involvement of students and their involvement in everyday preoccupations" existed because the political issues never directly affected the universities.

World War Two introduced drastic changes in France that neither the U.n.e.F. nor the students could escape. Although the National union operated during the war years as it had before, cooperating with the Vichy Government to maintain the same benefits it received from the Third Republic, students rose in protest to the Occupation. Students organized the first demonstration against the Germans on November 11, 1940, which resulted in the death or the deportation to concentration camps of hundreds of students. For the remainder of the war, students participated in the Resistance, as members of the Forces unies de la jeunesse patriotique (United force of patriotic youth, or F.u.j.p.) or with adult organizations, and from this experience came the leaders of a new "politicized" student body.

The Resistance veterans took control of the U.n.e.F. in 1946 at the union's national convention in Grenoble. Disillusioned by the failu of the politicians who led France to humiliation in 1940, wary of any rigid ideologies, and disappointed with the Naional union's inaction during the Occupation, the new leadership embarked on a new direction, which was formalized by the Charter of Grenoble:

> PREAMBLE. The representatives of the French students legally assembled at a national congress in Grenoble on April 24, 1946, aware of the historic significance of the times,
>
> When the French Union is elaborating the new declaration of the rights of man and the citizen,
>
> When a pacific Statute of Nations is being drawn up,
>
> When labor and youth are elucidating the bases for a social and economic revolution at the service of man,
>
> Assert their willingness to participate in the unanimous effort of reconstruction.
>
> True to the example of the best of them who died in the fight for freedom of the French people,
>
> True to the traditional aims of French students when they were at the peak of awareness of their aims,
>
> Recognizing the outdated character of the institutions that govern them,
>
> Declare their decision to be in the vanguard of French youth as often in the past by freely defining the following principles as the basis for their action and demands;
>
> Article I: The student is a young intellectual worker.
>
> Rights and duties of the student as a young person
>
> Article II: As a young person the student has a right to particular consideration from society from the physical, intellectual, and moral standpoints.
>
> Article III: As a young person, the student has a duty toward national and world youth.
>
> Rights and duties of the student as a worker
>
> Article IV: As a worker, the student has a right to work and live in the best possible conditions, to be independent, both personally and socially, as guaranteed by the free exercise of Union rights.

Article V: As a worker the student has a duty to acquire the highest competence possible.

Rights and duties of the student as an intellectual

Article VI: As an intellectual, the student has a duty:
--to define, spread, and defend truth which comprises the duty to propagate and enrich culture and to assess the meaning of history.
--to defend freedom against all oppression which is the foremost consideration for an intellectual. 17

The phrase "young intellectual worker" symbolizes the new phase in the history of the student movement, called "Student Syndicalism" by Jean-Pierre Worms.

The new leadership wanted to crate an active political force, modeled after the labor unions, which would represent the students as a distinct class. The new direction was expressed in student strikes: In 1947, students protested for lower university fees and increased government grants-in-aid, and in 1948, they demanded a separate health service for university students. Considering the rhetoric of the Charter of Grenoble, these goals were no improvement over the materialistic concerns of the "Corporate" years. Only in the act of striking did the students live up to the ideals of their new charter or the student "class". To further lessen the importance of the Grenoble Charter, the activist phase spawned by the Resistance was short lived. In the 1950's, the post-war economic troubles and the Cold War brought on a new wave of conservatism in French politics; students followed the ideological shift of their parents, and the activists were left without popular support. The doctrine of "Student Syndicalism" was forgotten and the U.n.e.F. returned to its role as a student-service organization.

There were always a few French students interested in more than their own needs. While the majority of students ignored their "duties" a minority of activists continued to work in the International Union of

Students, formed in 1946. Their efforts were not appreciated. In 1950, the few activists left on the national governing board of the U.n.e.F. were voted out of office. This isolated the leftists in regional student associations, at Lyon and Grenoble, where there "was a sufficiently strong minority to influence the decisions of the majority."[18] Strikes and demonstrations continued at these two universities while students in the rest of the nation remained calm. The actions of the leftists at Grenoble and Lyon kept alive the ideals of the Grenoble Charter, until the Algerian Crisis resurrected for a brief time the national student movement.

Pierre Vidal-Naquet sees the "extra-parliamentary" opposition organized by the U.n.e.F. as a precedent for the massive explosion of May, 1968, but few other historians mention its significance: After all, the "spectre" raised by Cohn-Bendit and the students resembles the Communist Revolution in Russia or the great French Revolution more than the anti-war movement in the early 1960's.[19] Vidal-Naquet's point is well taken in a country famous for revolutions that started as riots. The demonstration in October, 1960, was an important shift; for the first time, students, independent of adults, took the lead in protesting a political issue not directly related to the university system.

The protest developed slowly. The first opposition came from intellectuals, journalists, and other writers who were angered by the government's censorship policies. Slowly, news of attrocities and torture, committed by both the French and Algerian armies, reached France and became a central issue in a national outcry against the war. Students initially remained isolated from the political debate. Divisions in the national governing board prevented any official protests coordinated by the U.n.e.F.,

and students themselves were still occupied with their own futures and therefore too busy to worry about a colonial struggle. When the Minister of the Army limited the number of student draft deferments, the Algerian Crisis became a student issue.

Jean-Pierre Worms credits the U.n.e.F. for sponsoring "an intensive educational campaign" to alert the student masses to the repression of Algerian nationalism by the "colon" population and the French Army.[20] This is an overstatement. As A. Belden Fields points out, the Union's inaction motivated eight student associations to walk out on the National Conference in 1957 and form a rival union, the Mouvement des étudiants de France et de l'union Française pour la réunification de l'U.n.e.F. (French Student Movement and the French Union for the reunification of the U.n.e.F., or M.e.F.). In fact, the U.n.e.F. waited for four years after the initial public outcry in 1956 before it took a stand against the war. On June 6, 1960, the Union issued a joint communique with the Algerian student union, which condemned the war, called for an immediate cease-fire, and demanded negotiations between the French and the Front de libération nationale (Algerian Liberation Front, or F.l.n.).

The public sentiment against the war continued to build, and "a different type of movement appeared to accompany and relay" the initial opposition. Although draft resistance and the "Jeanson network", an underground force of French nationals who aided the F.l.n. in France, never involved large numbers,[21] the publicity provided by the "Manifesto of the 121", a document supporting the right to resist the draft signed by 121 artists and writers and published on September 5, 1960, and the trial of nineteen alleged members of the Jeanson network that began on

the same day were examples of direct opposition to the government's involvement in Algeria, that Vidal-Naquet believes were sources of encouragement for the U.n.e.F.'s own protest movement.[22] On October 27, 1960, the first big demonstration against the war, organized by the U.n.e.F. and supported by the non-communist labor unions and political parties, occurred. De Gaulle listened to the protests from the left and cautiously moved towards a policy of Algeria for the Algerians.

The protests of 1960 cannot be compared with the "manifestations" of May, 1968, but to borrow a phrase from the radicals, it was only a beginning. After the original demonstrations, de Gaulle's policy change in favor of Algerian independence satisfied the major aim of the protesters; any remaining dissent was silenced by the "Generals' Putsch" on April 22, 1961: The possibility of a fascist coup pushed the leftists behind the Gaulists, and let Charles de Gaulle settle the crisis in his own way.

The end of the Algerian Crisis left the liberal activists in control of the U.n.e.F. without a cause. "With no clear issue at hand", writes Jean-Pierre Worms, "The involvement in politics of some students (became) more abstract and theoretical."[23] Ideological differences reduced Union meetings to debates and splintered the U.n.e.F. into separate regional groups, which were themselves divided along the political spectrum. Membership dropped quickly: In 1960, the U.n.e.F. represented 100,000 students out of a total population of 214,672; by 1968, Union membership fell to 50,000 while enrollment increased to over 500,000.[24] Internal dissention grew worse. After 1965, no national governing board completed a one-year term.

What was left of the U.n.e.F. made two attempts to increase student activism and participation. In 1963, the idea of student unionism was revived by the Fédération des groupes d'études de lettres (the Federation of Literary Study Groups) at the Sorbonne. Their goal was the creation of student and faculty commissions to examine university curriculum and graduation requirements. This idea was ignored by the student body and rejected by the faculté assembly on November 23, 1963. The U.n.e.F. continued to fight for a student voice in determining curriculum until "Marxist-Leninists" took over the national governing board in 1966. The new leaders waged a campaign against "a class university", but their program never caught on.[25]

From 1961, when the internal divisions began, until the eve of the Events, the French students were without national leadership. No organization, to the left or to the right, rose up to fill the political vacuum. The Union des étudiants communistes (Union of Communist Students, or U.e.c.) formed in 1956 by the French Communist Party, suffered the same fate as the U.n.e.F. The condemnation of the ideas of Louis Althusser by the P.c.f. divided the communist students. The radicals, who supported Althusser, left the U.e.c. and formed two new groups, the Jeunesse communistes révolutionaires (Young Communist Revolutionaries, or J.c.r.) and the Union des jeunesses communistes--marxiste-léniniste (Union of Young Communists--Marxist-Leninist, or U.j.c. (m-l)). The original union lost its most radical and active members to the new groups and was left in a state of "impotence."[26]

On the other side of the student political spectrum, the Fédération nationale des étudiants de France (French National Student Federation, or F.n.e.F.), which was formed by the gaullists to challenge the U.n.e.F. during

the Algerian crisis, attracted some conservative students but was less popular than its rival.[27]

When the Algerian crisis ended, the majority of the French stud body returned to their studies. The loss of mass support did not brin a complete halt to student unrest. Protests, demonstrations, and march still occurred on a smaller scale, organized by the "action groups." O issue, the Vietnam War, inspired a number of "action groups", such as the Comité Vietnam national (or C.V.n.) and the Comités Vietnam de base (or C.V.b.), which together organized a mass protest, supported by the U.n.e.F. and other student groups, that attracted 10,000 students, to th Mutualité in Paris. After this demonstration, protests against the American involvement in Vietnam continued on a smaller scale and remained one of the few issues of interest to the French students.

The only other concern of the French students seemed to be graduation. While apathy spread over the French universities, students in other countries became active: American students organized the "Free Speech Movement", which started on the Berkeley campus of the University of California in September, 1964; the next year, Spanish students asserted their independence from the Franco regime with their demand for university autonomy; unrest spread to Italy in 1965, when riots broke out on the nation's college campuses; two years later, Italian students occupied the University of Turin; and in 1967, German students led by Rudi Dutschke and the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (S.D.S.) tried to take control of their colleges in an attempt to establish "Critical Universities."[2

Unrest in other countries focused the radical students' attention on the French university system. Established by Napoleon on March 17, 1808, to provide an "elite" to serve in his imperial bureaucracy, the

national primary, secondary, and university educational system has remained essentially unchanged. Pierre Vidal-Naquet describes it with three words: "Centralization, authoritarianism, and elimination."[29] Education, like all government bureaucracies in France, is centralized in Paris. The courses, teaching, and educational standards throughout the nation are set by the Ministry of Education. It was a cumbersome system but not a critical problem until university population advanced beyond the available facilities in the 1960's.

"Authoritarianism" was a more obvious problem for the students, who were isolated from the professors even in the primary schools. Teachers lectured and students took notes. No questions were allowed and office hours were unheard of. Many students in the universities skipped classes and purchased lecture notes at the end of the year to prepare for their examinations.

"Elimination" was the main problem. The yearly examinations were one method, but the elimination process begins in the primary and secondary schools. Children destined for the university are first separated from other students by the type of preparatory school they attend. Students in the lycées receive a special education that prepares them for the baccalauréat, the university entrance examination, while students enrolled in the Cours complémentaires and the Ecoles primaires supérieures get a general education. Before 1945, only members of the upper-class, with a few exceptions, attended the lycee and, according to Pierre Vidal-Naquet, the baccalauréat "was the equivalent of a diploma guaranteeing a good bourgeas background."[30] By 1950, members of the middle-classes and a small percentage of working-class children were admitted, took the baccalauréat and entered the universities.[31]

Once in the universities, the elimination process continued: Students took examinations at the end of each year to qualify for the next higher level of study. And, at the end of two or three years, a student competed in written and oral tests to earn a licence, which qual field a graduate for teaching positions in the primary schools or for a position in government or business. The continual battery of examinatio was originally designed to produce an "elite", but during the 1960's the rapid growth of enrollment caused by the "Baby-Boom" made the Napoleonic university system obsolete. Even though one-half of those applying for the university failed their baccalauréat and only one third of those enrolled survived three years and earned their licence, the university still produced too many graduates for the job market.[32]

The "Strasbourg Scandal" foreshadowed a new phase of student unrest. Taking advantage of student apathy, a small number of radicals joined the Association générale des étudiants (or A.g.e.) at the University of Strasbourg in November, 1966, and appropriated assocation money to pay for the printing and distribution of a pamphlet, "De la misère on milieu étudiante" ("On the Poverty of Student Life"), written by a member of the group Situationist International. The pamphlet criticized the French students for not recognizing their position in society, as parts of the "reality" that dominates everything else, the capitalist economic system. The pamphlet urged the students to rise above their role and their university, which is nothing but a factory that turns out graduates incapable of thinking for the benefit of the capitalist, and change the system.[33]

"De la misère. . ." was a call for revolution against the university and society, and it drew a quick response from the university. The Strasbourg Administrators set up a disciplinary panel, examined the evidence,

and, for their disruptive influence, expelled the Situationists in January, 1967. The "Strasbourg Scandal" was more a Situationist plot than a student protest, but the issues of university autonomy and the establishment of workers' councils to replace the capitalist structure would soon become ideals of the student movement.

Student agitation in other universities started immediately. Just as the incident at Strasbourg was ending, the Parti-socialiste unifié (United Socialist Party, or P.s.u.) launched a national compaign against "sexual repression" in the universities. The P.s.u. demanded the abolition of the regulations that separated the men and women who lived in university housing. At that time, the sexes were housed in separate dormitories and visitations by members of the opposite sex were not allowed. The liberation of the dormitory residents was the first issue to gain a sizeable following since the Algerian War. Since it was a personal rather than a political topic, the radical minority and a political majority were both involved in the protest.

One of the leading campuses in the protest was Nanterre, were 1,500 students lived on campus. There, the sexual separation was aggravated by the lack of public transport out of Nanterre after 10 p.m., which left the students isolated on campus. This made libre circulation even more popular. Protests at Nanterre started on March 16 and continued for twelve days. At first, the students' demands were ignored by the University administration, so the protesters changed their tactics. On Marcy 28, nearly 200 men invaded the women's dormatory and refused to leave. This direct challenge to the regulations caught the officials by surprise, and they called in the police. A compromise was reached: All students with dormatory keys, as proof that they lived on campus, would be allowed to

leave unmolested. The administrators hoped to separate those who lived on campus from any outsiders, who were believed to have instigated the occupation, but their plan failed. Thanks to the cooperation of the wome residents, every male had a key; since the police had no way to distingui between keys from different dormatories, no one was arrested. As a resul of the protests at Nanterre and elsewhere, the rules prohibiting visitatio by members of the opposite sex were repealed throughout France on February 14.[34]

The occupation of the women's dormitory was the first "explosion" in the student revolt which put the activists there at the center of the national movement. The Fouchet Reform provided a new issue and caused a second "explosion." First applied in 1966, the Reform added a new degree, the maitrise, which was an advanced degree designed to produce researchers for scientific and technical trades. The reform was implemented to ease the overcrowding in the universities by separating future teachers and white collar workers from future technicians, but unfortunately the change was poorly administered. Instead of a gradual switch, the reform was put into practice in one year. The separation of courses between the licences and maitrise programs confused professors and angered students, who in some cases lost credits because of the change. To the leaders of the budding protest movement, the Fouchet Reform was an adaption of the university to the changing needs of the technocracy, while the average student viewed it as an inconvenience forced down their throats.[35]

Sensing the anger of the student body, the U.n.e.F. decided to fight the university system. In a motion presented before a national conference held in July, 1967, at Lyons by the Rennes branches of the F.g.e.l.

and the A.g.e., the goals of a new national campaign were outlined: The U.n.e.F. sought the destruction of "regressive constraints" which limit the enrollment of students from the lower classes, a change in the teaching methods used in the university which would "allow students to take an active, conscious part in the way their studies are managed", and the end of "specialist training" which makes education the servant of the technocrats.[36]

When the new school year opened, the U.n.e.F. at Nanterre, with only 500 members among a student body of 12,000, organized a strike. The Fouchet Reform and the terrible conditions at Nanterre, which was over-enrolled by 2,000 and still lacked a library after three years of operation, made the U.n.e.F.'s job easy. The strike started on November 17 among the students in the Sociology Department, spread throughout the university by the 20th, and continued for five more days. The students returned to class on November 25 when the Faculty Assembly agreed to set up departmental commissions, with student and faculty representatives, to review curriculum and teaching methods.[37]

The commissions were ineffective and their failure drew criticism from the student left. A leaflet written by the "Phantom Student Group" appeared, it criticized the strike as "characteristic of the students' preference for cinema and green cheese in place of the moon." The Phantoms dismissed the strike as "practically useless, except that people cut class for a week," and accused the strike's leaders of calling "a few well-intentioned resolutions" a complete victory. The strike discredited the U.n.e.F. at Nanterre and the failure of the commissions ended any chance for a solution through reforms.[38]

The radicals decided to change tactics. On January 8, 1968, the Minister of Youth, Frangois Missoffe came to Nanterre to dedicate a new campus pool. The pool was a topic of controversy among the students because it, as well as other on-campus recreational facilities, could only be used by the 1,500 dormitory residents. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a local activist, confronted the minister. He asked him why his recent "White Book" on young people said nothing about sexual issues. Missoffe advised Cohn-Bendit to solve his sexual problems by jumping in the pool, which angered the other students who had gathered to watch the spectacle. The confrontation, planned for no apparent reason, symbolized a shift in the movement. Reforms, which would solve the university crisis and satisfy the majority of the student body, wre no longer the goal. Instead the entire system must be challenged.

The radicals had lost all respect for the university system. Disruption of classes began, demonstrations were common place, and even tests were sabotaged. On January 26, pictures of undercover police officers, seen patrolling Nanterre, were posted around campus. On the same day, eighty students entered the administration building and harrassed office personnel. Dean Grappin called in the police, who arrived just as classes adjourned for lunch, and the original eighty became a mob of hundreds. Outnumbered, the police withdrew beneath a volley of rocks thrown by the students.

The agitation continued in February and March. Classes were interrupted regularly by students with questions about Vietnam or the situation of the workers in France, demonstrations against the university were frequent, and the rumor of a "black list" of radical students compiled by the administration brought out additional student protests: Nanterre University ceased to function.[39]

The "Tet" offensive in Vietnam was a third explosion that added another issue to the movement. The American involvement in Vietnam was a topic of protest beginning in 1964; the offensive and the announcement that the Peace Talks would begin in Paris on May 13 inspired new protests throughout the university system.[40] The Comité Vietnam de base (or C.V.b.) and the Comité Vietnam national (or C.V.n.) organized a protest march on the night of February 21. In the Latin Quarter, renamed "Heroic Vietnam Quarter" in honor of the event. In March, the students directed their anger at the United States' presence in France: On the 17th and 18th, the Bank of America, the Trans-World Airways office, and the Chase-Manhattan Bank in Paris were bombed, and on the 20th, vandals broke the windows of the American Express Office, also in Paris. Six members of the C.V.n. were detained as suspects in the American Express incident, including on student from Nanterre. In retaliation of the arrests, 142 radicals occupied the Council Hall of Nanterre during the evning of March 22. The occupation involved members of the Comité de liason des étudiants révolutionnaires (Liaison Committee of Revolutionary Students, or C.l.e.r.). the J.c.r., and "an 'anarchist' nucleus," who represented all the factions within the student left.[41] With little else to do, the occupiers argued until 2 a.m.; they discussed the evils of capitalism, the problems within the university system, the struggles of the Third World against imperialists, and the common lot of the students and the workers. The next day, the group, now known as the Mouvement 22 du mars (March 22 Movement) published a leaflet which called for a "vast debate" of the issues they had discussed. They invited the Nanterre student body to a planned occupation of the classroom in Block C on March 29, but their plans were blocked by Dean Grappin, who ordered the closure of the university from

Thursday, March 28, at 7 a.m. until April 1, the following Monday. F
hundred students showed up anyway, and a peaceful discussion of the to
was held in front of the locked classrooms on the lawn.[42]

The formation of the March 22 Movement was a "decisive conversi
towards French objectives of the force that had been acquired in the
struggle in favor of the Third World and Vietnam."[43] The action groups
once separated by different issues and conflicting ideologies, were now
united in a new organization "created for specific actions in an equally
specific context." The inter-group rivalries "that had been paralyzing
the revolutionary student movement" were swept aside: Through common
action, the student leaders realized that they were all fighting the
same enemy, and that action to defeat that enemy mattered more than their
political differences.[44]

When the university reopened, student unrest intensified. Attempts to meet the demands of the radicals failed; whenever the administration granted a concession, the students increased their demands. Another general meeting of the student body was scheduled for Tuesday, April 2. The Dean allocated a room with 400 seats to the students for the meeting to avoid another occupation, but the compromise did not work. The 1,200 who showed up for the meeting occupied a larger amphitheater and spent the day discussing the "prospects" of their movement.

The Easter Vacation, that started on April 4 and ended on April 18, provided a temporary break in the agitation, but when classes resumed on Monday, April 22, the protests returned. The disruption of classes was now physically enforced, which created a rift in the newly formed student movement. While the March 22 Movement published a Bulletin with a "recipe" for a molotov cocktail, the leaders of the U.n.e.F. and the C.l.e.r. "spoke out against the cult of violence."[45]

The growth of the movement had been rapid. In less than two years, the splintered leadership was united in the March 22 Movement, the activists, once fighting amongst themselves, were now working together, and the number of students sympathetic to the movement was now estimated at 1,500.[46] The majority of the Nanterre student body remained unattached, but the force directed against the university was sufficient to make teaching nearly impossible. The administration finally realized that it could no longer handle the situation and Dean Grappin gave the order to close the university indefinitely on April 25.

While the unrest at Nanterre successfully brought the university to a halt, the student movements in other universities were not as strong. In France, student protest is an institution, and issues like Vietnam, the assassination of Che Guervara, and an attempt on the life of Rudi Dutschke, the leader of the German S.D.S., inspired large demonstrations in Paris and other University cities, but the challenge to the university and society earned little support outside of Nanterre: There were action groups in every university, and they tried to imitate or act "in solidarity with the March 22 Movement, such as Mouvement d'action universitaire and the "Sorbonne aux étudiants" Committee, but none could match the total distruption achieved at Nanterre.[47]

With the action at Nanterre behind them, the radicals tried to build a new base of action in Paris, where 150,000 students lived.[48] On May 1, student representatives from the March 22 Movement, the J.c.r., and other action groups marched with the workers in the first May Day parade since 1953. Meanwhile, a counterattack began. Eight radicals were summoned before the University Council at Nanterre and charged with "assault and battery." A more serious threat appeared when a "commando" from the

right-wing group Occident firebombed the Paris office of the F.g.e.l. The attack aroused the student left; a meeting was scheduled for noon, May 3, in the courtyard at the Sorbonne.[49]

Only a few hundred students, including members of the March 22 Movement attended the meeting which was officially adjourned at 1 p.m. The students remained in the courtyard after the meeting and formed small "study groups" to discuss politics. The worries that once plagued Dean Grappin where now faced by the Rector of the University of Paris, Jean Roche. The presence of the radicals and the rumor of a possible attack worried Roche; around 4 p.m., he asked the police to "please reestablish order within the Sorbonne by expelling those who are disorderly."[50]

The police, backed up by members of the gendarmes mobiles, surrounded the area. Their arrival surprised the students, who initially refused to leave, but after a few minutes, they made a deal: If there was no violence, the students could leave without being arrested. The deal was a trick. At 4:45, without warning, the police moved in, arrested all the students they could catch, and loaded them into vans. A large number of students had gathered outside to watch, and the sudden police charge provoked them. The bystanders intervened, and from 5:30 until 10 p.m., students battled with police throughout the Latin Quarter. The police action turned a peaceful meeting of a few hundred into a riot that involved thousands.

The police intervention was the fourth "explosion" that the radicals believed would lead to a national student revolt. The radicals tried to capitalize on the riot and bring more groups into the struggle. The first to express their unity with the students was the Syndicat national de l'enseignement superieur (National Union of University Teaching Personnel,

or S.n.e.sup.) which voted to go on strike indefinitely. The riots continued on Saturday, May 4, and 600 students were arrested. Pamphlets appeared which urged fellow students to form their own "action groups" and the movement's own "combat newspaper", "Action" was distributed to spread the student version of the Events.[51] The students planned additional protests for Monday, May 6.

By 9 a.m. on Monday, 8,000 students arrived for a demonstration inspite of an order by the Prefecture of Police that banned any additional protests. Their numbers grew and by 6:30 p.m. 20,000 people had gathered at the Place Denfort-Rochereau. Fights with police started in the early afternoon and continued until the next morning, with 422 more students arrested and 600 additional rioters and policemen injured.[52]

The next day, another demonstration was planned, and with only a few hours notice, 50,000 people assembled at the Place Denfert-Rochereau, marched to the Etoile, and then marched back to the rue de Rennes, where another night of rioting started at 11 p.m. After three hours, 475 demonstrators were arrested and another 800 people were injured.[53]

The students' battle in the Latin Quarter earned the respect of the working class. "l'Humanité," the Communist Party's newspaper at first criticized the students as "provacateurs" and "pseudo-revolutionaries", but by May 6, their tone changed: Violence in Spain and the peace talks between the United States and North Vietnam took up the front page, but "l'Humanité" now believed that the communists and the students share the same interests. In the next issue, after the violence of May 6, the student revolt moved up to the front page, and the paper accused the government of provoking the crisis.[54]

"Le Figaro" remained firm. As the violence increased, it bla
the "false revolutionaries" among the students for the riots and con
to support the forces of order well into May.[55] "Combat" supported t
students from the start, and its reaction to the May 6 riot was summed
up by the headline: "Massacre in the Latin Quarter."[56]

President de Gaulle said on May 7 "we cannot tolerate violence i
the streets,"[57] but the repressive action of the police, now reinforced
by the Compagnies républicaines de securité (Armed Security Police, or
C.r.s.) which were used specifically for civil disorders, encouraged
popular support for the students, who armed with paving stones looked
like victims before the clubs, leaded capes, and tear gas of the police.
Even the union leaders, who objected to the revolutionary ideas of the
radicals, expressed their solidarity with the rioters; on May 8, the
Communist Party, the Confédération générale du travail (General Confed-
eration of Labor, or C.g.t.), and the Confédération française démocratique
du travail (Democratic French Confederation of Labor, or C.f.d.t.)
halted all criticisms of the students and on the 10th began a propoganda
campaign to aid the students.[58]

Alain Peyrefitte, the Minister of Education, tried to calm the
students with the pledge that the Sorbonne would be reopened to the students
if the situation calmed down, but the students rejected the pledge, and
sent Peyrefitte three demands: Amnesty for all arrested demonstrators,
the withdrawal of the police from the Latin Quarter, and the unconditional
reopening of the Sorbonne. Negotiations were no longer possible.

May 10, the day that was the climax of the violence, started with
a meeting between Jacques Sauvageot, the acting President of the U.n.e.F.,

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, and Rector Jean Roche. The students stated their demands, listened to the rector, and left.[59] While the two leaders spoke with Roche, 50,000 demonstrators, including students from the lycées, assembled in the Latin Quarter. Government forces surrounded the area and at 2:17 a.m. on the 11th, the worst night of police repression began. In less than four hours, 500 people were injured and 347 students were arrested.[60]

The government was quiet during the first week of violence. The Prime Minister, Georges Pompidou, was out of the country visiting Afganistan from May 4 to May 11. When he returned, he assessed the situation, and then went on television to announce the government's concessions to the students. Pompidou agreed to reopen the Sorbonne on Monday, May 13, and promised to release all demonstrators then in jail. The students were victorious.

The unions made their support official on the same day; a 24 Hour strike nationwide was planned for May 13 to show the workers' sympathy for the students. This was what the radicals had been waiting for. The movement had finally spread to the heart of society. A demonstration was scheduled for the same day as the strike and it was a huge success. Close to one million students, teachers, and workers marched peacefully through Paris. Later that evening, the students reoccupied the Sorbonne.

The student movement became the May movement when the workers at the Sud-Aviation plant in Nantes, who had been negotiating for a new contract since April 30, decided to occupy their factory and continue the strike. The next two days, May 15 and 16, Renault workers at Flins, Billancourt, and Clear occupied their factories without the permission of

the national union. The strikes continued to spread and within a week ten million workers were on strike. France was paralyzed: Gasoline was not available, telephone service was stopped, and garbage began to pile in the streets.

The Fifth Republic, which tried to ignore the students and isolate the movement in the Latin Quarter, reacted quickly to the strikes. De Gaulle went on national television on May 24, and promised to solve the crisis through new elections and a referendum, but his speech "fell flat".[61] Students, joined by workers and sympathisers, reacted with another night of violence. 50,000 rioters marched out of the Latin Quarter, burned the Bourse, Paris' stock exchange, and fought with the plica and the C.R.S., leaving over 500 people injured.[62]

Meanwhile, Georges Pompidou met with labor union representatives at the Ministry of Social Affairs on the rue de Grenelle. An agreement, promising wage increases, improved working conditions, and additional employee benefits was reached after 25 hours of negotiations, but the rank and file rejected the pact and continued the strike. The U.n.e.F., C.g.d.t., and the P.s.u. organized a mass meeting at Chartety Stadium, on the 27th, just after the rejection of the Grenelle agreement. With the hopes of the workers and the students high, the first parliamentary challenges to de Gaulle began.

Frangois Mitterand, the leader of the socialist opposition in the National Assembly said he would be willing to step in if the Fifth Republic fell,[63] and Pierre Mendes-France, a former Prime-Minister, made the same promise.[64] The Gaullists were on the verge of losing power when on May 29 at 11 a.m. Charles de Gaulle "disappeared". Leaving the nation in suspense for five hours, the President travelled to Germany and met with

General Jacques Massu, the commander of the French army. Assured of the army's loyalty, de Gaulle returned to France. The next day, he delivered a second speech that "froze" the situation: He refused to resign, cancelled the referendum, and dissolved the National Assembly with new elections scheduled for June 18. Raising the spectre of "totalitarian communism", de Gaulle asked the nation to rally behind him.

They did. His speech turned the momentum away from revolution and the death blow to the May movement came the same day. A counter-demonstration and march along the Champs-Elysees drew nearly one million of the "silent ones" who chanted "de Gaulle is not alone." Labor leaders regained control of the rank-and-file by negotiating with each striking group, plant, or organization separately; by mid-June, the number still on strike was reduced to 150,000, and by the end of the month the crisis was over. The elections were a Gaullist victory. After two ballots, the Union pour la défense de la république (the Gaullist Party, or V.d.r.) and the pro-Gaullist moderates won 358 seats in the Assembly out of a total of 485.[65]

When the movement spread to the workers, the revolution was over. The workers occupying the factories did not have the same political and social desires as the students. Instead, the workers demanded better pay, more fringe benefits, and shorter working hours. The "action groups" lingered on, but the student movement, once united in combat against the police, splintered into three directions. The Servir le peuple movement, which hoped to mobilize a revolutionary force within the working class, grew out of the U.j.c. (m-l) after the first week of the riots, but never gained much success.[66]

The second direction was the formation of a political opposition to the Fifth Republic. The opposition movement originated with the May 13 demonstration which involved students, workers, and teachers. It built up slowly, uniting the labor unions, reformists within the student and teacher groups, and the political left. By the 21st, the opposition brought up a motion of censure in the National Assembly. After the President's unsuccessful speech on May 24, Frangois Mitterand and Pierre Mendes-France offered their services as leaders, but by then, the movement had already reached its peak. Within six days, de Gaulle reversed the situation and all political opposition scattered.

The third direction was an attempt to establish an alternative society. The majority of students, attracted to the struggle by the police action on May 3, set up their own commune at the Sorbonne. Students and workers at Nantes went as far as establishing their own government. The commune movement had its problems. Student radicals were capable of confronting society but very few had any specific ideas for any practical alternatives. They were bogged down by the realities of regulating the commune: Sanitation, care of the injured, food, and housing.

When the movement won its battle and the police pulled back from the Latin Quarter, the student movement stagnated. The splintering of the leadership and the gradual weakening of popular support suggest that something else, some addition factors not mentioned by the students and observers of the movement, that helped create a national crisis. The structural contradictions and the crisis of modernization were important causes which mobilized a revolutionary "core" of students at Nanterre, Paris, and throughout France, but the masses who joined the fight after

the Sorbonne incident on May 3 were inspired by actions not ideology. This divides the movement into two parts: The ideological, revolutionary leadership announced by the Grenoble Charter in 1946 and formed during the period of "grouposcularization" after the Algerian War, and the rank-and-file mobilized by the mistakes made by the university and government authorities who hoped to contain the movement.

Students have historically been an activist force in all societies and during the nineteen-sixties, campuses throughout the western world were in turmoil. Students of the Zengakuren (All Japan Federation of Student Governments) began a decade of renewed student unrest in 1960. Next, the "Free Speech" movement at Berkeley in 1964 brought student activism to American campuses. From the United States, the movement spread throughout Europe with active student groups in Spain, Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Through the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS) in Germany, led by Rudi Dutsche, the challenge to the established university and society came to France. The French students inherited a movement with an ideology already well defined and with traditions from centuries of struggle worldwide.

In 1966, when the German movement was already at full strength, the French students were divided into every political faction imaginable, without the traditional coordination and leadership normally provided by the U.n.e.F. Unity came only in action against a common enemy: The University. In 1968, leadership arrived in the form of the March 22 movement, an action group born out of the occupation of the administrative offices at Nanterre on March 22, and through the group's "loudspeaker", Daniel Cohn-Bendit. The March 22 movement coordinated the actions and

directions of the various, and at times politically antagonistic "groupuscules" during the events of May until the movement began to disintegrate in late May and early June. Gradually, as the days pass and the participants entered into discussions, the French prototype for an alternative society was formed:

> The principles of the movement are:
>
> To take collective responsibility for one's own affairs, that is, self-government;
> To destroy all hierarchies which merely serve to paralize the initiative of groups and individuals;
> To make all those in whom any authority is vested permanently responsible to the people;
> To spread information and ideas throughout the movement;
> To put an end to the division of labour and of knowledge, which only serves to isolate people from one another;
> To open the university to all who are at present excluded;
> To defend maximum political and intellectual freedom as a basic democratic right. 67

This general statement represents the culmination of student political and social thought in the 1960's, but their ideas are not new. The French students who directed the rebellion in 1968 borrowed from the philosophies of anarchists, socialists, and existantialists of the past and contemporary world to create their own doctrine.

As a start, the democratic organization, elimination of elites, the ultimate authority of the people, and the opening of the universities to all classes reflects the influence of anarchist thought. This influence is demonstrated by a comparison of ideology of one anarchist, Mikhail Bakunin, with the desires expressed by student leaders. To liberate the masses, Bakunin believed every person must be educated in the operations of science and society, to let everyone use the technical and material advantages of the industrial revolution for their collective

benefit.[68] To give everyone this education, Bakunin proposed that the people should work and go to school, thereby ending the separation of students and workers.[69] This idea was adopted by the French students almost verbatim. At Nantes and in Paris, the students invited the workers to eat, live, and study with them in their own version of "critical university".[70]

As the Events progressed, the revolt moved from the universities to the factories and the cities throughout France. The student radicals broadened their goals and redirected the revolt against the economic and social base of society: "If an analysis has shown anything, it is that the modern university is not the place for solving social contradictions, which can only be removed by the transformation of that society of which the university plays an integral part."[71] A change in the university alone would leave the capitalist base of society intact. Even a "critical university" would still provide the cadres to run an increasingly efficient system of exploitation. For change to be beneficial it had to be complete.

With anarchism as the heart of their political doctrine, the French students, following the lead of their contemporaries in Germany, Italy, and elsewhere, turned to the philosophies of Karl Marx to form their economic doctrine. The students believed that the alienation of the worker within the capitalist system was similar to the alienation of the student within the French university system, and after graduation, the ex-student, if lucky enough to be employed, faced the same plight as an industrial laborer. Students directing the movement in France viewed the exploitation of the mental and manual proletariat as one and the same in the modern, technological world.[72]

The students believed that true equality would come once this alienation between the worker and the product of labor ended. How this would be done was stated as autogestation or worker self-management. Ideally, autogestation involved no elite or leadership above the collec mass of workers or students, but in practice the ideal was not realized. The workers did not want to take over their factories and the students, who occupied the Sorbonne, chose to divide up responsibilities among vari work groups.[73] This combination of anarchism and marxism, though never put into use, was the heart of their revolutionary doctrine.

The end of capitalism and the bourgeois state were the primary goals of the movement's leadership, but a revolt against the comparatively simple institutions that inspired both Marx and Bokunin would be unsuccessful in the modern world. The capitalist system had grown increasingly complex: The exploitation of the working classes was softened, with higher wages, shorter hours, improved working conditions, and vacations, that combined, made alienation seem bearable; the privileged elite was now separated from the physical laborers by layers of corporate structure, filled with white-collar workers who supplied ideas in exchange for paychecks, promotions, and prestige; even the purpose of society had changed, with the civilization now measured in terms of efficiency and progress, with all things geared towards an optimization of production and growth of returns. Each sector of society works for capitalism. The universities, once isolated in thought, are now mobilized to produce technicians. Government is no longer concerned with the welfare of each man. In the modern world, positive economic forecasts bring in more votes than progressive civil rights programs.

Jacques Ellul was one of many philosophers who recognized the threat that economic thinking posed to humanity. In The Technological Man, Ellul regards the development of "techniques" as a menace to man's independence:

> There are two essential characteristics of today's technical phenomenon. . .The first of these obvious characteristics is rationality. In technique, whatever its aspects or domain in which it is being applied, a rational process is present which tends to bring mechanics to bear on all that is spontaneous or irrational. . .The second obvious characteristic of the technical phenomenon is artificiality. Technique is opposed to nature. 74

Techniques, aimed at the optimization of the benefits of production, both in profit and use, control society, the state, and humanity. All thought and action is directed towards the improvement of techniques, bringing a rationalization to all parts of society: Economic, political, and social. Ellul believes that the university plays an important role in this process of rationalization:

> Education, even in France, is becoming oriented towards the specialized end of producing technicians; and as a consequence, towards the creation of individuals useful only as members of a technical group, on the basis of the current criteria of utility--individuals who conform to the structure and the needs of the technical group. 75

> According to this conception, education no longer has a humanist end or any value in itself; it has only one goal, to create technicians. 76

The leaders of the student movement, in France and elsewhere, agreed with Ellul. They saw a grave danger in the growth of economic thinking:

> In the capitalist system, the only standard of value is money, hence the worker himself has a price tag that fits neatly into a social pigeon-hole and is set apart from the rest. He has become just another commodity, not a man but an economic abstraction, whose relationship with other men is governed by arbitrary laws over which he has no control. 77

To liberate modern man politically and economically, the thought of man must be set free. Daniel Cohn-Bendit stated that "if a social organization is repressive, it will be so on the sexual and cultural levels no less than on the economic planes."[78] Freedom of thought, expression, and imagination were added to the demands for economic and political revolution by the students in France.

These demands, expressed in the libre circulation and "critical university" movements, appeared in pamphlets, interviews, and on the walls as posters or graffiti during the events.[79] They reflect the influence of Herbert Morcuse, who came to France through the American and German student movements. Daniel Cohn-Bendit comments on the influence of Marcuse upon the French student movement:

> In his critique of capitalist society and his rejection of so-called socialist society, Marcuse is a base of operations for us, chiefly through three ideas. He shows that it is not a matter of forms of external repression like the police. He shows man's one-dimensionality--in other words, that in fact our society shapes precisely its own type of man. Third, he demonstrates that criticism and destruction are a start towards construction. 80

Using the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud, Marcuse emphasizes the importance of Eros in the creation of a non-repressive society and criticizes the modern world for suppressing the desires of mankind, which forced the sublimation of Eros. Capitalism necessitates the sublimation of Eros to make man to accept less than a complete satisfaction of his desires; the "real freedom and happiness" that liberated minds could attain is replaced by a "psuedo-freedom and happiness" where temporary or partical satisfaction of desires through material comforts stands in for true liberation:

> His erotic performance is brought into line with societal performance...The conflict between sexuality and civilization unfolds with this development of domination. Under the rule of the performance principle, body and mind are made into the instruments of alienated labor; they can function as such instruments only if they renounce the freedom of the libidinal subject-object which the human organism primarily is and desires. 81

Marcuse recognizes a hazard in the continuance of a repressive civilization: "The perpetual restrictions of Eros ultimately weaken the life instincts and thus strengthen and release the very forces against which they were 'called up' -- those of destruction."[82] War attrocities, advancing crime rates, and the use of man's genius to create increasingly deadly weapons are all symptoms of these restrictions upon Eros, which will eventually lead to the end of society.

Eros is only one factor in the liberation of thought and subsequently the liberation of man. A new method of thought, Positivism," which forms the academic counterpart of socially required behavior,"[83] is being used, in Marcuse's opinion, to strengthen the dominance of the capitalist elite over the unprivileged classes: "Many of the most seriously troublesome concepts are being 'eliminated' by showing that no adequate account of them, in terms of operations or behavior can be given."[84] Criticism is eliminated by concentrating on what is present within the social reality. The continuation of the established society is left without challenge and the antagonism between alternatives and the current reality is removed:

> ...and through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien, and transcendent elements in the higher culture by virtue of which it constituted another dimension of reality, this liquidation of two-dimensional culture takes place not through the denial and rejection of the "cultural values," but through their wholesale incorporation into the established order, through their reproduction and display on a massive scale. 85

A society whose only reason is Positivist, whose only "logos" is "Techno-logy," turns "everything it touches into a potential source of progress and exploitation, of drudgery and satisfaction, of freedom and oppression."[86] To break out of the repressive society, thought must transcend that which is already present and go beyond observable fact; according to Marcuse, Reason must become Metaphysical:

> Civilization produces the means for freeing Nature from its own brutality, its own insufficiency, its own blindness, by virtue of the cognitive and transforming power of Reason. And Reason can fulfill this function only as a post-technological rationality, in which technics is itself the instrumentality of pacification, organon of the 'art of Life'. 87

Through Metaphysical thought, society can transform the repressive reality into a truly free reality, where technology works towards the liberation of man through the satisfaction of all of his needs.

In their proposals to revolutionize the universities, the student movement incorporated Marcuse's ideas for a revolution in thought. They demanded a change from specialist training, that made education a training camp for capitalists, to a critical university system that aimed at re-educating society, in schools, open to all classes, where the future, egalitarian society would be planned.

Using the theories of Jacques Ellul, Herbert Marcuse, other sociologists and philosophers, like Henri Lefebure, Louis Althusser, and the Situationists, the student activists updated the criticisms first posed by Marxists and anarchists in the nineteenth century and created the dream of an egalitarian society as a challenge to the repressive, technological civilization of the twentieth century. They had a goal. All they lacked was a method.

Mark Poster, author of Existential Marxism in Postwar France, defined their problem this way: "The pressing political problem became one of constituting a new type of revolutionary group that surpassed the inherent alientation effects of the institution, while rejecting the anarchistic notion of spontaneity."[88] Existentialism, exemplified by the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, was their ideological solution. The "fused group", where members exist in "reciprocity" or mutual respect and understand, formed and modified by action was the new revolutionary organization. Poster states "for Sartre, liberal social theory characterized the ideal group as a discussion group that attained consensus, agreement through open debate, with complete toleration for verbal self-expression."[89] This ideal was imitated by the March 22 Movement who "never had any intention of creating a new party, but rather an objective situation that would make self-expression possible at all levels."[90]

The leadership of the movement, the "action groups", were like Sartre's "third parties":

> In practice, this means I am integrated into the common action when the common praxis of the third party posits itself as regulatory. I run with all the others; I shout: 'Stop!'; everyone stops. Someone else shouts, 'Let's go!' or, 'To the left! To the right! To the Bastille!' and everyone moves off, following the regulatory third party, surrounding him and sweeping past him; then the group reabsorbs him as soon as another third party; by giving some order or by some action visable to all, constitutes himself as regulatory for a moment. 91

An "action group" would suggest more than direct. This is why the students in the movement said they had no real leaders. They were a "fused group."

The importance of existentialism on the revolutionary structure of the student movement is revealed by Cohn-Bendit in Obsolete Communism. He states in his conclusion that the type of organization the students

formed was neither "a vanguard nor a rearguard:"

> Effective revolutionary action does not spring from individual or 'external' needs - it can only occur when the two coincide so that the distinction itself breaks down. Every group must find its own form, take its own action, and speak its own language. When all have learnt (sic) to express themselves in harmony with the rest, we shall have a free society. 92

"Act with others, not for them" symbolizes the spirit of the movement.

With "existential Marxism" as their borrowed ideology, the leadership tried to guide the masses in revolution. Their ideals were betrayed by the lack of ideological consciousness among the masses who fought in the streets and marched in the demonstrations. The large majority of the students were mobilized by concrete problems limited to their own situation, like the crisis of the university or the intervention of the police. Returning to the narration, the separation between the revolutionary leadership, the hundreds who attended the meeting in the Sorbonne Courtyard to discuss their collective future, and the thousands who battled the police after the police intervention of the meeting. In reality, the student movement was destined to fail. The revolutionary goals were not considered by the rank-and-file, who were interested in university reform or venting their frustrations in the face of approaching examinations.

Today, the university remains "elitist" and overcrowded, the French economy still fluctuates, and a university degree is still no guarantee of a comfortable future. The revolutionary dreams of the radicals is still present; Pierre Vidal-Naquet notes that after the Events, the ideals of the movement were presented by the students at Vincennes, an experimental university created for the 1968-69 school year, which still

exists as "a time-bomb inside the French university system,"[93] but the situation, the events that sparked the movement have not been repeated. The student movement was essentially two movements, an ideological elite that developed in the two decades before the Events and continued on after the failure of the strikes, and a reaction to the specific situation, the crisis of the university and society which were staged by the "Baby Boom" and the acts or mistakes of the authorities who dealt with the radicals during early stages of the crisis.

Bernard Brown and Alain Touraine agree that the Events of May and June, 1968, constituted a serious crisis in the post-war history of France. The students declared that their movement was only a beginning, but whether a start of a new social revolution or a reaction to a particular situation, the significance of the Event's and the movement will be revealed in the future.

Footnotes

Introduction:

1. Colin Dyer, Population and Society in Twentieth Century France, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1978) Ch. 5,6 pp.132-
2. Raymond Boudon, "From One University to Another," in Youth and Society,2(December, 1970) p.152.

The Paper:

1. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism,(New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968) p.44.
2. Raymond Aron, The Elusive Revolution,(New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969) p.5.
3. ibid, p.160 and pp.76-77.
4. Alain Touraine, The May Movement,(New York: Random House, 1971) p.28.
5. ibid, p.24.
6. ibid.
7. Touraine, The Post-Industrial Society,(New York: Random House, 1971) p.91.
8. Alain Schnapp and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, The French Student Uprising,(Boston: Beacon Press, 1971) p.14.
9. Touraine, Post-Industrial Society, pp.92-106.
10. ibid, pp.106-118.
11. Bernard Brown, Protest in Paris: Anatomy of a Revolt, (Morristown,N.J.: General Learning Press, 1974) pp.59-60.
12. ibid, p.211.
13. ibid, pp.217-218.
14. Jean-Pierre Worms, "The French Student Movement," Student Activism, edited by Alexander DeConde,(New York: Scribner and Sons, 1971) p. 73.
15. A. Belden Fields, Student Politics in France,(New York: Basic Book Publishers, 1970) p.21.
16. ibid, pp.17-18.
17. Worms, "French Student Movement," pp.78-80.
18. ibid, p.81.
19. Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism, pp.199-201.
20. Worms, "French Student Movement," p.83.
21. John Talbott put the total at 3,000 in War Without a Name,

21. (continued) (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1980) p.168, while Pierre Vidal-Naquet, in the introduction to French Student Uprising, estimates the total at no more than a "Few Hundred," p.5.
22. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, The French Student Uprising, p.5.
23. Worms, "The French Student Movement," p.84.
24. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, p.9.
25. ibid, p.10
26. Daniel Ben Said and Henri Weber, Mai 1968: une repetition generale,(Paris: Francois Maspero, 1968) p.50.
27. Fields, Student Politics in France, p.35.
28. See Students in Revolt, edited by Seymour Lipset and Philip Altbach, or Student Activism, edited by Alexander DeConde.
29. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, p.12.
30. ibid, p.14.
31. Raymond Boudon,"From One University to Another," in Youth and Society, 2 (December, 1970) p.152.
32. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, p.14; Boudon, "From One University to Another", p.145.
33. See Pierre Feuerstein, Printemps de révolt a Strasbourg.
34. Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism, p.29.
35. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, pp.15-16.
36. Vladimir Fisera, Writing On the Wall, May 1968: A Documentary Anthology, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1978) pp.66-68.
37. Touraine, May Movement, p.134.
38. Document 10 in Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, pp.99-101.
39. Adrien Dansette, Mai 1968, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1971) p.71; also in Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, p.120.
40. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Revolt, p.69 and pp.190-191.
41. Document 16 in Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, pp. 122-124.
42. Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism, p.50.
43. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, p.126.
44. Interview with two members of the March 22 Movement in The French Student Revolt: The Leaders Speak, edited by Herve Bourges (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), p.48.
45. Brown, Protest in Paris, p.8; Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, p.126.

46. Dansette, Mai 1968, p.80.

47. Jean-Louis Brau, Cours, camarade, le vieux monde est derriere toi!,(Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1968) pp.14-15; and Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, pp. 95-96, 102-103, and 148-149.

48. Daniel Singer, Prelude to Revolution,(New York: Hill and Wang, 1970) p.117.

49. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, p.147.

50. Brown, Anatomy of a Revolt, p.9.

51. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, pp.151-152.

52. Brau, Cours, camarade, p.15.

53. ibid.

54. l'Humanite, May 4 and May 6, 1968.

55. Le Figaro, May 4-11, 1968.

56. Combat, May 7, 1968.

57. The Leaders Speak, edited by Bourges, p.107.

58. Brau, Cours, Camarade, p.15, and list in Fisera, Writing on the Wall, p.37.

59. Brown, Anatomy of a Revolt,pp. 11-12.

60. Brau, Cours, camarade, p.16.

61. Brown, Anatomy of a Revolt, p.18.

62. ibid, p.19.

63. Le Monde, May 29, 1968.

64. Brown, Anatomy of a Revolt, p.22.

65. ibid, pp27-30.

66. for an explanation of the workers' strike movement, see Richard Johnson, The French Communist Party versus the Students, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972) pp. 185-188; for documentation concerning the "Servir le peuple" movement, see Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, pp.85-95, 166-168, p.196, and pp.205-239.

67. Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism, p.90.

68. G.P. Maximoff, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, (New York: Free Press, 1953) p.215.

69. ibid, p.328.

70. Documents 62, 63, and Chapter III, Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, p.196, pp.196-197, and pp.205-239.
71. Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism, p.40.
72. see Touraine, May Movement, or Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism.
73. Document 128, Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, pp.343-345.
74. Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1964) pp.78-79.
75. ibid, p.349.
76. ibid, p.348.
77. Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism, p.106.
78. ibid, p.104.
79. Mark Poster, Existential Marxism in Postwar France: Sartre to Althusser,(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975) pp. 382-383.
80. Philippe Labro, "This is Only a Beginning", (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969) p.45.
81. Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) p.46.
82. ibid, p44.
83. Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) p.13.
84. ibid.
85. ibid, p.57.
86. ibid, p.78.
87. ibid, p.238.
88. Poster, Existential Marxism in Postwar France, p.296.
89. ibid, pp. 290-291.
90. Interview with members of the March 22 Movement in French Student Revolt: The Leaders Speak, edited by Bourges, p.58.
91. Jean-Paul Sartre, Critique of Dialectical Reason, (London: NLB, 1976) pp.379-380.
92. Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism, p.256.
93. Schnapp, Vidal-Naquet, French Student Uprising, p.597.

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