

1968 Revisited: Storming Heaven

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A storm swept the world in 1968. It arose in Vietnam, and then blew across Asia, crossing the sea and the mountains to Europe and beyond. The signs and portents had been there for some years, but the speed with which it spread was not foreseen. A brutal war waged by the United States against a poor South East Asian country was seen every night on television. The cumulative impact of watching the bombs drop, villages on fire and a country being doused with napalm and Agent Orange triggered a wave of global revolts never seen on this scale before or since. Solidarity with the communist-led Vietnamese resistance intermingled with numerous local contradictions. If the Vietnamese were defeating the world's most powerful state, surely we, too, could defeat our own rulers. That was the dominant mood amongst the more radicalised segments of the Sixties generation.

In 1966-67 I spent six weeks in Indochina on behalf of the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal. My diary for 29 January 1967 records:

'...A new bombing raid has begun and our visit to the town [Than Hoa] I, scheduled for 2.30 that afternoon is off. I argue strongly that we should go, but suddenly the bombs seem very close. We can hear them. I plead again that we should move since this our task: to report on what is being bombed and why. Major Van Bang refuses to permit us to leave. The Mayor of Than Hoa looks worried. He's convinced they're bombing the heart of the town. Two hours later, after the raid, we visit the city. We were supposed to have been at the hospital at 2.30. At 3 pm it was bombed. Several patients were killed by the first bombs. While they were being removed from the hospital and taken to the first-aid station there was another attack and the first-aid station was totally obliterated...we saw houses still smouldering. Mrs Nguyen Thi Dinh had rushed out of her house just in time to see it burn to the ground. She was weeping silently when I spoke to her. 'Do you think I will ever forgive them for what they are doing to us? Never, never. They must be punished for this'. Two hundred dwellings have been destroyed. Dang Batao, the local Red Cross organizer was burnt to death. Ms Ho Thi Oanh is also dead, a few weeks before her wedding. Her trousseau lies scattered, half-burnt and scarred...impossible to visualise this agony in the West...'

The devastation and daily deaths of civilians, mainly women and children remain etched in the memory. How can one forget? Agitating for a different world that would outlaw all wars and for solidarity with the Vietnamese was the logical outcome for many from our generation. It was a ten-year struggle. In 2003 people came out again in Europe and America, and in much larger numbers than ever before, to try and stop the Iraq war. The pre-emptive strike against the warmongers failed. The movement lacked the stamina of its predecessors. Within forty-eight hours it had virtually disappeared, highlighting the changed times.

The eruptions of '68 challenged the power structures north and south, east and west. Countries in each continent were infected with the desire for change. Hope reigned supreme. In February that year the Vietnamese communists launched their famous Tet (spring) offensive attacking US troops in every major South Vietnamese city.

The grand finale was the sight of Vietnamese guerrillas occupying the US embassy in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) and raising their flag from its roof. It was undoubtedly a suicide mission, but incredibly courageous. The impact was immediate. For the first time a majority of US citizens realised that the war was unwinnable. The poorer amongst them brought Vietnam home that same summer in a revolt against poverty and discrimination as black ghettos exploded in every major US city, with returned black GIs playing a prominent part as snipers. Seven years later, helicopters evacuating US diplomats would take off from that same Embassy roof in

Saigon, marking the most severe political defeat the US had ever experienced. Empires never learn. A majority of US citizens realised that the war was unwinnable. The poorer amongst them brought Vietnam home that same summer in a revolt against poverty and discrimination as black ghettos exploded in every major US city, with returned black GIs playing a prominent part as snipers. Seven years later, helicopters evacuating US diplomats would take off from that same Embassy roof in Saigon, marking the most severe political defeat the US had ever experienced. Empires never learn.

This single spark set the world alight. In March 1968 the students at Nanterre came out on to the streets and the 22 March Movement was born with two Daniels (Cohn-Bendit and Bensaid) challenging the French lion: Charles de Gaulle, the aloof, monarchical President of the Fifth Republic who, in a puerile outburst would later describe the events as 'shit in the bed'. From demanding university reforms the students soon moving on to revolution. That same month a Vietnam Solidarity Campaign demonstration outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square turned violent.

Like the Vietnamese, we wanted to occupy the Embassy, but the mounted police was deployed to protect the citadel. Clashes occurred and the US Senator Eugene McCarthy watching the images demanded an end to a war that had led among other things to 'our embassy in Europe's friendliest capital being constantly.' Compared to elsewhere (as Mick Jagger sang in 'Streetfighting Man') not all that much happened in Britain that year: university occupations and riots in Grosvenor Square did not pose a real threat to the Labour Government, which backed the US but refused to send troops to Vietnam.

The war had entered its third and final phase. Occupied by France, later Japan, briefly Britain and then France again, the Vietnamese had honed the skills of popular resistance to an art form that wasn't pretty or decorative. Despite half a million soldiers and the most advanced military technology ever known, the US could not defeat the Vietnamese. It was this triggered an anti-war movement inside the US and infected the military. "GIs Against The War" became a familiar banner, with tens of thousands of ex-GIs demonstrating outside the Pentagon and hurling their medals at the building.

The epochal shift that took place in 1989 relegated most things radical to the museum of horrors. All revolutions and all revolutionaries are monsters, mass murderers and, of course, terrorists. How can the lyrical sharpness of politics in 1968 be anything but alien to the spirit of this age. The radical politics and culture of 1968 not cater to the currents needs of the governors any more than it did to the rulers at the time. The autonomy of the past has to be defended.

The glorious decade (1965-75), of which the year 1968 was only the high-point, consisted of three

concurrent narratives. The uncontested primacy of politics was the dominant feature, but there were two others---sexual liberation and a hedonistic entrepreneurship from below---that left a deeper imprint. The first two would be considered impious by many who have sought refuge in religion. The third is now happily integrated. We were constantly appealing for funds from readers when I edited *The Black Dwarf* in 1968-9. One day a guy in overalls walked in to our Soho office and counted out twenty-five grubby five pound notes, thanked us for producing the paper and left. He would do this regularly every fortnight. Finally, I asked who he was and if there was a particular reason for his generosity. He had a stall on the Portobello Road and as to why he wanted to help, it was simple. 'Capitalism is so non-groovy, man. Its only too groovy now and far more vicious. The Sixties were a response to the shallow, fading Cold War decades that characterised the middle period of the last century. In the United States, the McCarthyite witch-hunts had created havoc in the Fifties before the Senator went too far and had to be unceremoniously dumped. Blacklisted writers could work again, though the executed Rosenbergs could not be brought back to life; in Russia, hundreds of political prisoners were released, the Gulags were closed down and the crimes of Stalin were denounced by Khrushchev as Eastern Europe trembled with excitement and hopes of rapid reform. They hoped in vain. The spirit of renewal infected the realm of culture as well: Solzhenitsyn's first novel was serialised in the official literary magazine Novy Mir and a new cinema took over most of Europe: differences in content and style could not disguise a common cinematic language. Censorship persisted nonetheless and not just in Spain and Portugal ruled at the time by NATO's favourite fascists, Franco and Salazar. D.H. Lawrence's {Lady Chatterley's Lover}, written in 1928 was first published in Britain in 1960. The publishers (Penguin) were tried for obscenity in a British court and after a dramatic trial lasting weeks were acquitted. The book was then published in its complete form and sold two million copies. Homosexuality in Britain was only decriminalised in 1967. In France, the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre was at the peak of his influence. His views now beginning to disturb the sterile counter-position of ends and means so loved by Stalinist apologists. Sartre argued that there was no reason to prepare for happiness tomorrow at the price of injustice, oppression or misery today. What was required were improvements now that would prepare the path to the future. Socialism must be defined in terms of freedom and creation. His criticisms of Hegelians and Marxists for constructing a dialectic of History that ignored China, Japan and India, regions that had fifty centuries of history behind them, now seem incredibly prescient. For him the first contingency of history was demography, the number of human beings who set it in motion. Nor was he alone. An invigorating political, cultural and intellectual fever dazzled the world. It was as if contemplating the heavens at night one saw the sky occupied by comets and shooting stars. The tale has been told many times and in many languages. When a revolution is defeated all its attributes, good and bad, go down with it, but 1968 refuses to die. The desire to re-inscribe Utopia on the map of a globalise world remains strong. France finally exploded in May-June of that year, making it an uncommonly memorable and beautiful summer. We were preparing the first issue of {The Black Dwarf} as Paris erupted on 10 May. Jean-Jaques Lebel, our tear-gassed Paris correspondent was ringing in reports every few hours. He told us: {' A well-known French football commentator is sent to the Latin quarter to cover the nights events and reported: " Now the CRS [riot police] are charging, they're storming the barriocade--oh my God! There's a battle raging.

The students are counter-attacking, you can hear the noise—the CRS are retreating Now they're regrouping, getting ready to charge again. The inhabitants are throwing things from their windows at the CRS—oh! The police are retaliating, shooting grenades into the windows of apartments..." The producer interrupts: "This can't be true, the CRS don't do things like that!" "I'm telling you what I'm seeing.." his voice goes dead. They have cut him off.'} The police fail to take back the Latin Quarter now renamed the Heroic Vietnam Quarter. Three days later a million people occupied the streets of Paris demanding an end to rottenness and plastering the walls with slogans: Defend the Collective Imagination, Beneath the Cobblestones the Beach, When the finger points at the moon the IDIOT looks at the finger, Commodities are the Opium of the People, Revolution is the Ecstasy of History. Eric Hobsbawm writes in *The Black Dwarf*: {"They know that the official mechanisms for representing them—elections, parties, etc---have tended to become a set of ceremonial institutions going through empty rituals. They do not like it—but until recently they did not know what to do about it...What France proves is that when someone demonstrates that people are not powerless, they may begin to act again."} About to leave for Paris, something we have been discussing at the paper, I receive a late night phone call. A posh voice says: ' You don't know who I am, but don't leave the country till your five years here are up. They won't let you back.' In those days citizenship for Commonwealth citizens was automatic after five years. Labour Cabinet ministers had been discussing in public whether or not I could be deported and friendly lawyers confirmed I should not leave. Clive Goodwin, the publisher of our mag, vetoed the trip and went off himself. I went a year later to help Alain Krivine's Presidential campaign, but after a big rally in Toulouse as the plane touched down at Orly, the French police surrounded it. 'Hope its you, not me', muttered Krivine. It was. I was served an order banning me from France till Francois Mitterand's election victory many years later. The revolution did not happen, but France was shaken by the events. De Gaulle, with a sense of history, was considering a coup d'etat, but slapped down his Interior Minister for suggesting that Sartre be arrested. 'You cannot imprison Voltaire, ' he riposted. The French example did spread, worrying bureaucrats in Moscow as much as the ruling elites in the West. An unruly and undisciplined people had to be brought to heel. Robert Escarpit, a {Le Monde} correspondent, wrote on July 23, 1968: {"A Frenchman travelling abroad feels himself treated a bit like a convalescent from a pernicious fever. And how did the rash of barricades break out? What was the temperature at five o'clock in the evening of May 29? Is the Gaullist medicine really getting to the roots of the disease? Are there dangers of a relapse? ... But there is one question that is hardly ever asked, perhaps because they are afraid to hear the answer. But at heart everyone would like to know, hopefully or fearfully, whether the sickness is infectious."} A decade before the French Revolution, Voltaire had remarked that 'History is the lies we agree on. Afterwards there was little agreement on anything. The debate on 1968 was recently revived by the Nicolas Sarkozy, who boasted that his victory in last year's presidential elections was the final nail in the '68 coffin. The French philosopher Alain Badiou's tart response was to compare the new President of the Republic to the Bourbons of 1815 and Marshal Petain during the war. They, too, had talked about nails and coffins.

"May 1968 imposed intellectual and moral relativism on us all," Sarkozy declared. "The heirs of May

'68 imposed the idea that there was no longer any difference between good and evil, truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness. The heritage of May 1968 introduced cynicism into society and politics."

He even blamed the legacy of May '68 for immoral business practices: the cult of money, short-term profit, speculation and the abuses of finance capitalism.

The May '68 attack on ethical standards helped to *"weaken the morality of capitalism, to prepare the ground for the unscrupulous capitalism of golden parachutes for rogue bosses"*. So the 60's generation is responsible for Enron, Conrad Black, the subprime mortgage crisis, Northern Rock, corrupt politicians, deregulation, the dictatorship of the "free market", a culture strangled by brazen opportunism.

Were the dreams and hopes of 1968 all idle fantasies? Or did cruel history abort something new that was about to be born? Revolutionaries - utopian anarchists, Fidelistas, Trotskyist allsorts, Maoists of every stripe, etc - wanted the whole forest. Liberals and social democrats were fixated on individual trees. The forest, they warned us, was a distraction, far too vast and impossible to define, whereas a tree was a piece of wood that could be identified, nurtured, improved and crafted into a chair or a table or a bed. Now the tree, too, has gone.

"You're like fish that only see the bait, never the line," we would mock in return. For we believed - and quite a few of us still do - that people should not be measured by material possessions but by their ability to transform the lives of others - the poor and underprivileged; that the economy needed to be regulated and reorganised in the interests of the many, not the few, and that socialism without democracy could never work. Above all we believed in freedom of speech. The events of 1968 were, apart from everything else, an elegy for the print revolution.

A libertarian bulletin published by French students in 1968 was a hymn to the written word:

"Leaflets, posters, bulletins, street words or infinite words: they are not imposed for the sake of effectiveness ... They belong to the decision of the present moment. They appear, they disappear. They do not say everything; on the contrary, they ruin everything: they are outside everything. They act, they think in fragments. They do not leave a trace ... as speech on walls, they are written in insecurity, communicated under threat, carry danger in them, then they pass by along with the passers-by, who pass them on, lose them or even forget ..."

In Prague, too a lot of leaflets and documents were being produced. Communist reformers - many of them heroes of the anti-fascist resistance during World War II - had earlier that spring proclaimed "socialism with a human face".

The country was bathed by the lava of the resulting debates and discussions in the state press and on television. The aim of Alexander Dubcek and his supporters was to democratise political life in the country. It was the first step towards a socialist democracy and seen as such in Moscow and Washington. On August 21, the Russians sent in the tanks and crushed the reform movement. In every West European capital there were protests. The tabloid press in Britain was constantly attacking us as 'agents of Moscow' and were genuinely taken aback when we marched to the Soviet Embassy denouncing the invasion in strong language and burning effigies of the bloated Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev. Alexander Solzhenitsyn later remarked that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had been the last straw for him. Now he realised that the system could never be reformed from within but would have to be overthrown. He was not alone. The Moscow bureaucrats had sealed their own fate.

In October, Mexican students took over their universities demanding an end to oppression and one-party rule. The army was sent in to occupy the universities and did so for many months, making it the best-educated army in the world. When the students poured out on to the streets they were massacred just before the arrival of the Olympic flame. Afro-American gold and silver-medallists raised their fists in a black power salute to express their solidarity.

And then in November 1968, Pakistan erupted. The students took on the state apparatus of a corrupt and decaying military dictatorship backed by the US (sound familiar?). They were joined by workers, lawyers, white-collar employees, prostitutes and other social layers and despite the severe repression (hundreds were killed) the struggle increased in intensity and toppled Field Marshal Ayub Khan.

When I arrived in February 1969, the country was in a state of total excitement. The mood was joyous. Speaking at rallies all over the country with the poet Habib Jalib, one encountered a very different atmosphere to Europe. Here power did not seem so remote. The victory led to the first general election in the country's history. The Bengali nationalists in East Pakistan won a majority that the elite and key politicians refused to accept. Bloody civil war led to Indian military intervention and ended the old Pakistan. Bangladesh was the result of a bloody caesarean.

Much of this seems utopian now and some for whom '68 wasn't radical enough at the time have embraced the present and, like members of ancient sects who moved easily from ritual debauchery to chastity, they now regard any form of socialism as the serpent that tempted Eve in paradise. The daughters of Eve were on the march. In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir's pioneering work, *The Second Sex* was published in France and became the inspiration for a new generation of women. In December 1966, Juliet Mitchell fired off a new salvo. Her lengthy essay, 'Women: The Longest Revolution' appeared in the *New Left Review* and became an immediate point of reference, its opening paragraph summarising the problems faced by women :

"The situation of women is different from that of any other social group. This is because they are not one of a number of isolable units, but half a totality: the human species. Women are essential and irreplaceable; they cannot therefore be exploited in the same way as other social groups can. They are fundamental to the human condition, yet in their economic, social and political roles, they are marginal. It is precisely this combination—fundamental and marginal at one and the same time—that has been fatal to them. Within the world of men their position is comparable to that of an oppressed minority: but they also exist outside the world of men. The one state justifies the other and precludes protest. In advanced industrial society, women's work is only marginal to the total economy. Yet it is through work that man changes natural conditions and thereby produces society...But women are offered a universe of their own: the family. Like woman herself, the family appears as a natural object, but it is actually a cultural creation. There is nothing inevitable about the form or role of the family any more than there is about the character or role of women. ..Both can be exalted paradoxically, as ideals. The 'true' woman and the 'true' family are images of peace and plenty: in actuality they may both be sites of violence and despair."

In September 1968, US feminists disrupted the Miss World competition in Atlantic City, the first shots of a women's liberation movement that would change women's lives by demanding recognition, independence and an equal voice in a male-dominated world. Macho socialists in parts of South America who locked up their wives to prevent them from joining women's protests on International Women's Day became a rarity. The compulsory fulfilment of three functions---providing sex on demand to their partners, giving birth to children and rearing them while the man worked---was no longer acceptable. The Black Dwarf cover on its January 1969 issue dedicated the year to women. Inside we published Sheila Rowbotham's spirited feminist call to arms whose message escaped our hippy designer. He had put Sheila's carefully crafted words on a pair of luscious

breasts. We parted company with the designer and the breasts. As I write this Professor Rowbotham, now a distinguished scholar, is under threat from the ghastly, grey accountants who run Manchester University. They have no idea who she is and are desperate to get rid of her. Student support for her confirms their corporate prejudices. We are now in an epoch of production-line universities with celebrities paid fortunes to teach eight hours a week and genuine scholar dumped in the bin.

And yes, there was also the pleasure-principle. That the Sixties were hedonistic is indisputable, but it was different from the recuperated and corporatised version of today. At the time it marked a break with the hypocritical puritanism of the Forties and Fifties when film censors prohibited married couples being shown on screen sharing a bed and pyjamas were compulsory. Radical upheavals challenge all social restrictions. It was always thus.

In the prefigurative London of the 18th century sexual experiments required the cover of break-away churches like the imaginative Moravians and surreal Swedenborgians (for whom 'love for the holy' was best expressed in the 'projection of semen'): both preached the virtues of combining religious and sexual ecstasy. Sexual orgies were a regular feature of Moravian ritual according to which penetration was akin to entering the wounds in Christ's side. William Blake and his circle were heavily involved in all of this and some of his paintings depicting this world were censored at the time. I hope this does not come as too much of a shock to my old friend Tony Benn and others who innocently sing 'Jerusalem' without realising the hidden meaning of:

Bring me my bow of burning gold!

Bring me my arrows of desire!

Bring me my spear!

Gay liberation movements erupted as well with activists demanding an end to all homophobic legislation and Gay Pride marches, inspired by the Afro-American struggles for equal rights and black pride. All the movements learnt from each other. The advances of the civil rights, women and gay movements, now taken for granted, had to be fought for on the streets against enemies who were the fighting the 'war on horror.'

History rarely repeats itself, but its echoes never go away. Take, for instance, the North American poet Thomas McGrath, who in the middle of the last century defended the radicalism of the 20s and 30s against the cynics and the worshippers of accomplished facts who dominated the conformist and cold-war dominated Fifties. His poem *Letter To An Imaginary Friend* remains apposite in relation to the '60s:

Wild talk, and easy enough to laugh.

That's not the point and never was the point.

What was real was the generosity, expectant hope,

The open and true desire to create the good.

Now, in another autumn, in our new dispensation

Of an ancient, man-chilling dark, the frost drops over

My garden's starry wreckage.

Over my hope.

Over

The generous dead of my years.

Now, in the chill streets

I hear the hunting and the long thunder of money ...

I heard distant echoes in the fall of 2004 when I was in the United States on a lecture tour that coincided with Bush's re-election campaign. At a large anti-war meeting in Madison I noticed a very direct echo in a utopian bumper sticker: 'Iraq is Arabic for Vietnam'. The sound engineer in the hall, a bearded Mexican-American came up and whispered proudly in my ear that his son, a twenty-five year old Marine had just returned from a tour of duty in the besieged Iraqi city of Fallujah, the scene of horrific massacres by US soldiers, and might show up at the meeting. He didn't, but joined us later with a couple of civilian friends. He could see the room was packed with antiwar, anti-Bush activists.

The young, crew cut Marine, G., with bristling muscles spoke in a calm, staccato voice, as he recounted tales of duty and valour. I asked why he had joined the Marine Corps? He tensed but responded confidently: 'There was no choice for people like me. If I'd stayed here I'd have been killed on the streets or ended up in the penitentiary serving life. The Marine Corps saved my life. They trained me, looked after me, and changed me completely. If I died in Iraq, at least it would be the enemy that killed me. In Fallujah all I could think of was how to make sure that the men under my command were kept safe. That's all. Most of the kids demonstrating for peace have no problems here. They go to college, they demonstrate and soon they forget it all as they move into well-paid jobs. Not so easy for people like me. I think there should be a draft. Why should poor kids be the only one's out there. Out of all the Marines I work with, perhaps four or five percent are gung-ho flag-wavers. The rest of us are doing a job, we do it well and hope we get out without being KIA (killed in action) or wounded.'

We talked for nearly an hour as he consumed water by the jarfuls. I was chilled by the ease with which he appeared to have imbibed the Marine code and yet, I could not help feeling, that underneath it all, he and his soldier friends were undergoing a different experience. They were seething with anger and despair, but felt alienated by our presence.

Later G sat down on a sofa between two older men. He soon discovered they were both former combatants. On his left was Will Williams, 60, born in Mississippi. At 17 he had enlisted in the Army---his mother signed the papers to get him away from home. A rebellious youth, he refused to accept discrimination and racist abuse. He was sure that had he not left Mississippi, the Klu Klux Klan or some other racist gang would have killed him. Earlier he, too, had told me that the military 'saved my life.' Following a stint in Germany, he was sent to Vietnam and ended up doing two tours of duty. Wounded in action, he received a Purple Heart and two bronze stars as well as the highest decoration awarded by the puppet regime in South Vietnam. While there 'I began my turn around' , following a rebellion by Black troops at Camranh Bay protesting racism within the US Army.

Daniel Ellsberg the State Department dissident whose release of the "Pentagon Papers"---revealing the lies told to drag young men to war---was instrumental in his transformation. Following a difficult period 'readjusting,' Williams, an autodidact, read deeply in politics and history. Realizing that, 'we were being lied to again,' he and Dot, his companion of over 43 years, decided they could not remain silent in their opposition to the war on Iraq. They joined the antiwar movement at its inception,

bringing their Gospel choir voices to rallies and demonstrations, including the one I had just addressed.

On G's right was Clarence Kailin, 90 years old that summer and one of the few remaining survivors of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade that had fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. He, too, has been active in the movement against the war in Iraq.

'In mid-January, 1937, six of us from my home state of Wisconsin decided to go help defend the Republic. Our passports were stamped "not valid for travel in Spain." So, fearing arrest, our trip was made in considerable secrecy — even from our families. I was a truck driver, then an infantry man and for a short time a stretcher-bearer. I saw the brutality of war up close. Of the five Wisconsinites who came to Spain with me, two were killed....later there was Vietnam and this time kids from here died on the wrong side. Now we have Iraq. Its really bad, but I still believe there is an innate goodness in people, which is why so many can break with unworthy pasts'.

In 2006, after another tour of duty, G could no longer accept any justification for the war. He was admiring of Cindy Sheehan and the Military Families Against the War, the most consistently active and effective antiwar group in the United States.

The collapse of "communism" in 1989 (how will that anniversary be marked next year?) created the basis for a new social agreement, the Washington Consensus, whereby deregulation and the entry of private capital into hitherto hallowed domains of public provision would become the norm everywhere, making traditional social democracy redundant and threatening the democratic process itself.

Some, who once dreamt of a better future, have simply given up. Others espouse a bitter maxim: unless you relearn you won't earn.

The French intelligentsia that had from the Enlightenment onwards made Paris the political workshop of the world today leads the way with retreats on every front. Renegades occupy posts in every West European government defending exploitation, wars, state terror and neo-colonial occupations; others now retired from the academy specialise in producing reactionary dross on the blogosphere, displaying the same zeal with which they once excoriated factional rivals on the far-left. This, too, is nothing new. Shelley's rebuke to Wordsworth who, after welcoming the French Revolution, retreated to a pastoral conservatism expressed it well:

In honoured poverty thy voice did weave

Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,

Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,

Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

P.S.

* From Counterpunch:

<http://counterpunch.org/tariq04302008.html>

* Tariq Ali's memoir of the period, *Streetfighting Years: An Autobiography of the Sixties* is published by Verso.