THE YEAR 1968 WAS A SIGNIFICANT MOMENT in the cultural history of European integration. The events of that year marked a turning point in the emergence of a cohort of young people who had come, through travel, to conceive of themselves not merely as members of a particular nation, but as a continent-wide, transnational social group.¹ It was a group based largely on age, and one that professed culturally internationalist sensibilities in addition to, and often instead of, nationalist sensibilities. As young Europeans traveled between protest sites, they expressed this solidarity explicitly; some even demanded the abolition of national borders and the establishment of a united Europe with unhindered mobility. Thus, one aspect of the general internationalism of 1968 was specifically Europeanist and was expressed within the context of ongoing European integration. The experience of travel within the emergent youth culture helped to shape a politicized European identity among the young protesters of 1968.

The ease and frequency with which middle-class young people in the 1960s traveled to cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin, London, Paris, and Prague created interpersonal solidarities that were crucial to the formation of movements that challenged national demarcations of power. More than mobilization, travel became the foundation for a youth identity that emphasized mobility and built a shared political

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culture across national boundaries. These qualities challenged the frontiers of dominant state powers, which were used to contain, segregate, and frequently close access for groups across societies. In this sense, through physical and ideological movements, young people in the late 1960s sought to create their own kind of European community.

In the spring of 1968, for example, twenty-two-year-old Richard Holmes had just completed a degree at Cambridge and was living in a poor neighborhood of London near Paddington station in a building full of young people who formed a kind of quasi-collective. He wrote,

It was a restless time. The window of my attic room overlooked the shunting yards of Paddington station, and my dreams were shaken by the whistle and roar of departing trains. The sense of movement and change was everywhere. News of disturbances in Paris had been reported piecemeal in the English papers for weeks, but largely in terms of isolated disruptions by students at Nanterre, or syndicalistes at Renault. Then I began to get letters from friends already in the city, speaking in confused, rapturous terms of the long “sit-ins,” the great marches and demonstrations, people coming from all over Europe—Berlin, Rome, Amsterdam—to celebrate the new spirit of liberté, and take part in some huge, undefined événement. It was a carnival, they wrote, and a revolution too, the world would never be the same again, the authorities were cracking, the old order was in retreat.²

Holmes received a letter from his friend Françoise, who insisted he should come to Paris. He listened excitedly to live radio coverage, “and the noises seemed to fill my room. I could hear the huge crowds shouting, the crack of CRS gas-canisters, the brittle, thrilling sound of breaking glass, the sudden ragged bursts of cheering. And suddenly the idea of ‘the Revolution’ came to life in my head.” This idea excited him as “something utterly new coming into being, some fresh, immense possibility of political life, a new community of hope.”³

In Paris at the end of May, Holmes was leaving the Place de la Sorbonne with an armful of pamphlets and leaflets when he was caught up in a sudden police sweep. He found himself pinned against the iron fence of the Cluny monastery with the barrel of an automatic rifle pushed against his chest. “I felt lonely, unheroic and unrevolutionary,” he wrote. Meekly he whimpered, “Je suis anglais.” The trooper paused, poked Holmes in the belly with his rifle, and responded in French, “Englishman, mind your own business, go home,” adding with a roar, “Leave me the fuck alone!” Holmes saw this advice as a real challenge to his perspective: “If I were English, why indeed didn’t I mind my own business and go home? I was a foreigner, an outsider.” When confronted with the power of the state, he had sheepishly retreated behind his nationality rather than declare his international solidarity. Although challenged and chastened, Holmes stayed in Paris. Brooding on this encounter, he decided that he wanted to be there to make sense of what was happening among the young people who had gathered there; in particular, he wanted to understand why this new French revolution appealed to young Europeans just as its eighteenth-century predecessor had.⁴

The upheaval in May caused ordinary tourists to stay away from Paris in the

³ Ibid., 74–75.
⁴ Ibid., 78.
spring and summer of 1968; at the same time, however, the number of young people traveling there reached a new record peak. Like Holmes, they had been drawn rather than repelled by the political tensions there. Similarly, once Paris had calmed and Charles de Gaulle had successfully reasserted control, the young of Europe, including many from France, began traveling instead to Prague, which became the new destination for rebellious youthful camaraderie. They were all participating in a new cultural phenomenon, the mass mobility of Western European middle-class youth, which had emerged over the course of the 1960s. This mobility had been explicitly promoted by the nation-states of Western Europe after the Second World War as they sought through intergovernmental cooperation to promote international understanding among the younger generation as a means of postwar reconciliation. In some ways, these efforts were a cultural complement to the ongoing process of economic cooperation and integration. These communities of young travelers contributed to the ethos of integration through their familiarity with one another and their experiences with foreign places, peoples, and cultures. Most importantly, they came to see themselves as belonging to a transnational community of youth, a sense of identity that they recognized in one another through their personal relationships and the cultural practices of travel.

In the late 1960s, international youth movements, in the sense of both mobility and activism, crossed national borders repeatedly. Young people were increasingly viewing the world in international terms and participating in it in transnational ways. The iconic example, of course, is Che Guevara, the young Argentinean who fought for victory in Cuba before continuing the revolution in Bolivia. Rudi Dutschke was from East Germany but led the West German student movement; Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the face of the events of May in Paris, had German citizenship; and Tariq Ali, the prominent organizer in Britain, was from Pakistan. Young activists did not feel constrained by nationality and, like the more general emerging travel culture, sought to cross European borders freely. By the late 1960s, however, national governments in Western Europe were taking measures to prevent the free movement of youth in response to such political activities. Most famously, in May 1968, France tried to deny Cohn-Bendit’s return to France from Germany, and later in June there was controversy in Britain, most prominently in Parliament, over his visit to appear on the BBC. Both events inspired further international protests by the young, who demanded free movement across national borders while expressing solidarity as an international age-based social group. These young people regarded themselves as a community with mutual interests and an interconnected well-being that was maintained through mobility.

As a cultural practice, travel had become fundamental to the internationalism of the postwar years, specifically for young Europeans. An alternative community was developing on the basis of informal interchanges and transnational cooperation. These international cultural relations were outside the framework of national diplomacy, although they had often been facilitated by intergovernmental cooperation and subsidy. In 1968, young travelers sought, both intentionally and unintentionally, to use this cultural internationalism to reformulate the relationship of European

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6. For a history of cultural internationalism, see Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World*
states to each other and to their citizens. This movement of the young that culminated in 1968 helped lay the cultural foundation for the transformation of the Common Market into the European Community and its subsequent expansion.

In the years immediately after the Second World War, reconstruction camps and projects, exchange programs, and hostel networks were organized in Western Europe to facilitate travel by the young for the purpose of promoting international understanding and cooperation among populations who had been engaged in brutal and repeated warfare. Western European governments invested significant resources to welcome young travelers from abroad through the establishment, expansion, and transformation of their national youth hostel networks, shifting the focus away from domestic and toward international travel. By the 1960s, there was a significant transition in the programmatic emphasis on hosteling. The young people of Europe were now encouraged to travel abroad, to visit other nations and meet and interact with other nationalities, a marked contrast to the nationalism with which many hostel networks had been founded in the 1920s and 1930s. Further, in December 1961, the Council of Europe agreed to relax passport controls for anyone under the age of twenty-one as a way to further and facilitate travel by young people between the countries of Western Europe. This measure had been pushed by the Common Market countries, the Europe of the Six (France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Italy), who were promoting travel, particularly by the young, as a means of integration.7

Yet this form of independent travel by the young and the culture they carried with them was often characterized primarily by what Holmes termed a “challenge to conventions and structures of authority.” Holmes described the 1960s traveling culture as marked by a “tone of confrontation, which took place daily, whether in the matter of clothes, art, sexual morality, religious piety, or politics. Such confrontation was international: the counter-culture took on the road and passed all frontiers, entered all cities.”8 In the years leading up to 1968, there was an intersection between the emergent international youth culture, travel, and an attitude of oppositional rebellion.

Likewise, many 1968 activists came to develop a critical awareness of their societies through travel and by interacting with foreign youth. British feminist Hilary Wainwright found that the time she spent in Portugal as a teenager in the mid-1960s had radicalized her sense of politics and her conceptualization of the world as being more than just Britain, in part through meeting and befriending Portuguese young people living under António de Oliveira Salazar’s dictatorship.9 The young New Left activists in West Germany consistently attributed their development of a sense of Weltoffenheit, or openness to the world, to their travels and interpersonal transna-

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8 Holmes, Footsteps, 76.
9 Fraser et al., 1968, 81.

Order (Baltimore, 1997); for a focus on the post-1945 era, see Iriye, Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World (Berkeley, Calif., 2002).
tional connections, believing that this contributed directly to their politicization in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{10} As another observer proclaimed about the impact of youth travel on the politics of 1968, “More or less spontaneously, youth had become an Internationale!”\textsuperscript{11}

Joe Mack, an American college student who was hitchhiking through Europe in the summer of 1968, said that in every youth hostel he visited, “talking politics was what young people did.” As Mack traveled around, not only did people talk politics, but they also interrogated him on where he had been, what he had seen, and what he had done. In August, while hitchhiking in Sweden and Denmark, he was repeatedly questioned about Prague, which he had visited in July. When he arrived in Copenhagen in mid-August, the hostel there was abuzz with news, rumor, and gossip about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.\textsuperscript{12} For anyone who was young and traveling in Western Europe in 1968, it was hard to avoid politics, even outside the major centers of protest, because not only were young individuals being politicized through travel, but the very places and practices of youth travel, such as hostels and hitchhiking, had become politicized spaces and politicized activities. Traveling was a way to share political news and political opinion, even if not direct political participation.

Toward the end of May 1968, the \textit{Times} of London ran a series of articles on the international youth rebellions. While the \textit{Times} had been unable to find any evidence of an organized conspiracy, it did recognize a remarkable phenomenon at work: “National frontiers mean less than generational frontiers nowadays.” This sense of collective identity and purpose inspired a great deal of “cross-pollination” as young people visited each other, swapped books and ideas, corresponded, and organized demonstrations of mutual support. The article noted the continual traffic in exchange students over the 1960s as having particularly facilitated the movement. It went on to point out the prominent role played by Germans in the Grosvenor Square demonstration in London of March 17, the large numbers of British and German youth who had gone to Paris in May, the Americans present throughout Western Europe, and the efforts of Italian students to foster relations everywhere, with Italian contingents having demonstrated in Berlin in April and in Paris in May. “European student leaders now believe that international cooperation is important. Contacts and visits are becoming steadily more frequent and systematic,” the \textit{Times} noted with some concern.\textsuperscript{13} These interpersonal political contacts were not only European, of course, but transatlantic, as many European activists had traveled westward and Americans eastward throughout the 1960s.\textsuperscript{14}

Astounded by the scale of events in Paris, Americans Barbara and John Ehrenreich decided to leave graduate school in early May and cross the Atlantic to Paris to try to make sense of what was happening there. They continued their travels around Western Europe that summer, and wherever they went, they met other for-

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ginier, \textit{Les touristes étrangers}, 380.
\item See Klimke, \textit{The “Other” Alliance}, for specific political connections between the United States and West Germany; for how New Left advocates traveled around the United States to expand their reach, see Doug Rossinow, \textit{The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America} (New York, 1998).
\end{enumerate}
eign young people, Americans, British, Dutch, French, Germans, and Italians, who were all seeking to experience, understand, and participate in this international movement of youth. According to the Ehrenreichs, a “migrant” youth culture developed in 1968 as young people “traveled to Paris, Munich, Florence, or London, moving in the new underground of escaped students.”

The Ehrenreichs’ description of these travels as a migration is indicative of the larger global migration into Europe at the time. Indeed, the massive influx of immigrants into Western Europe provided the backdrop against which the youth movements would be understood. The distinctions are important, however, because on the one hand we have the migration of mostly non-white, non-European poor for economic reasons, while on the other hand we have the travels of mostly white Western European middle-class young people for political reasons. The economic boom and interventionist welfare states of the postwar period had led to a substantial broadening of the middle classes and an exponential increase in the number of university students in the 1960s. Meanwhile, the category of “youth” itself had become an ideological site of power and an object of political, economic, and cultural interest in the wake of the postwar baby boom. Young people, more numerous than ever before and now part of the social body of “youth,” had been empowered. Where the Ehrenreichs saw a “new underground” of mobility made up of “students” who had “escaped” the sedentary constrictions of university life, others saw the emergence of a revolutionary and international social class.

Jerome Férrand specifically attributed the events of 1968 to the formation of “youth” as a new international social class, or as he described it, “the new Third Estate, who were nothing and became everything.” He ascribed this development to the expansion of transportation, travel, and communication, so that “behavior overflows frontiers and forms a specific civilization extending to millions of young people.” He claimed that “their tastes and customs tend to unify them on a worldwide scale; young people today form a vast, coherent mass that is definitively a social class.” Moreover, this class was “conscious of having goals, a role to play, and an incontestable power.” Although Férrand—and there were many others like him—exaggerated the future role of youth as a revolutionary social class, the new Third Estate or Proletariat, he was not off base in claiming that the formation of this new youth culture and its internationalist attitude had been facilitated by travel. In August 1968, a young Danish woman asserted that because young middle-class Europeans were now regularly visiting each other’s countries, “today students feel more European than Danish, German, or French.”

The link between international travel and political citizenship had been at the forefront of state-led efforts to get the young of Western Europe to interact. Interestingly, a 1960 intergovernmental study of exchange programs and travel by European youth had concluded that

16 See Richard Ivan Jobs, Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War (Stanford, Calif., 2007).
17 Jerome Férrand, La Jeunesse, nouveau Tiers état (Paris, 1968), 60, 61.
18 Mack, 1968 and I’m Hitchhiking through Europe, 275.
the final goal of exchange programmes is a learning process, the learning of an international role, which should exist in addition to or perhaps above the national role. We must also realize that we live in a world of many cultures, in a world in which a revolutionary change in our way of life has occurred through technology and industry. International understanding therefore is a question of attitude, it is the result of an education to a pluralistic view of the world, to intercultural understanding.19

Yet the report also concluded that “we must ask ourselves more critically whether our aims with respect to ‘international understanding’ and the methods which we apply to this end produce a readiness to political action on the part of the participants . . . The main goal should not be to educate to passive understanding, but to a readiness to take on political responsibility.”20 The report highlighted the fact that the increased emphasis on travel by the young was intended to do more than simply promote “international understanding”; the idea was for young people to use this understanding for “political action” to make them responsible citizens in a plural Europe. Yet the politicization and political action that resulted was not the benign citizenship these nation-states had envisioned.

The Dutch Provo movement in many ways anticipated the cultural practices and political critiques that prevailed among the young protesters of 1968. From May 1965 to May 1967, a group of young people in Amsterdam who referred to themselves as Provos combined a novel mixture of art and politics with a dose of alternative youth culture to produce a political and cultural critique built on spectacle. The Provo movement began as simple acts of street theater at Spui Square and eventually grew into a full-blown political movement with a newspaper that reached a circulation of 20,000. The Provos adopted white as their color of “provocation,” wearing white clothes, issuing what they called “White Plans,” and even proposing that central Amsterdam be closed to traffic, with white bicycles to be provided for free use. Most famously, in March 1966, they set off a series of white smoke bombs during the Dutch royal wedding cortege, creating a wild, chaotic scene. By June of that year, they even managed to get one of their leaders elected to the Amsterdam City Council.

Through the international publicity they generated with their outrageous stunts and the violent police crackdowns that often followed, the Provos became the darlings of European youth. Young nonconformists were enthralled by the excitement and activity that surrounded the Provos, and thousands of letters and visitors poured into Amsterdam from all over Western Europe and beyond. Traveling to Amsterdam was becoming characteristic of international youth culture generally, and those who came had the opportunity to mingle not only with the Dutch Provos, but with each other as well. In fact, in the summer of 1966, the Dutch tourism board encouraged the young of Europe to come to Amsterdam with a promotional campaign that pro-

19 This was a conference of twenty-eight representatives from twelve countries, including ten from Europe. Although there were participants from elsewhere, the papers were focused on the experience of Western Europe. UNESCO Youth Institute, An Analysis of the Impact of International Travel and Exchange Programmes on Young People: Report of a Study Seminar, May 9–13, 1960 (Gauting/Munich, 1960), 33.
20 Ibid., 32.
claimed “Meet the Provos!”\textsuperscript{21} By the spring of 1967, the number of young Europeans loitering in Amsterdam’s Central Station led authorities to sweep through and close the main hall to all but “genuine” travelers.\textsuperscript{22} Although there were only a few dozen core Provos, thousands of young European supporters floated in and out of Amsterdam, each staying an average of three weeks.\textsuperscript{23} Le Figaro littéraire lamented that “there exists in Western Europe a new place of pilgrimage: Karthuiserstraat in Amsterdam. The pilgrims come from Scandinavia, Germany, England, France, and even the United States. They are angry young people who have come to learn the latest techniques and perspectives of a new type of subversion.”\textsuperscript{24} It is true that in the summer of 1966, many French young people, particularly in Paris and Strasbourg, had become fascinated by the Dutch Provos and their calls for an international “pro-votariat.” A number of them went to Amsterdam to see, listen to, learn from, and experience an international youth movement that had declared itself to be revolutionary. A magazine article warned that young French people were going to Amsterdam out of a desire not just to see the Provos, but to identify with them, to become Provos. It was, in their words, a “contagion” that was spreading to France through the mobility of the young.\textsuperscript{25} Thus a circuit was developing in the late 1960s involving like-minded young people who were traveling and visiting one another as part of an international youth culture, and it was becoming politicized. They were not simply being inspired by one another; they were actually seeking each other out.

By early 1968, Germany seemed to be the place where student activism was the most promising, the most radical, and the most effective. Young people came from all over Western Europe to meet and learn from the militant German SDS (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund), particularly in the wake of the massive Berlin Vietnam Conference in February. After the rapid escalation of events in early May, however, Paris became the destination of choice, including for young Germans. A vanload of Germans with radical leaflets were turned away by French border police at Strasbourg on May 7; a week later, two members of the German SDS rallied a large crowd at the Sorbonne.\textsuperscript{26} Overall, there were a significant number of Germans in Paris. Some were hardcore revolutionaries from the SDS, but most had come out of curiosity once the events were under way.\textsuperscript{27}

Young people from all over Europe were drawn to the events in Paris that spring, much as Europeans from abroad had been drawn to Paris during the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century, and as the revolutions of 1848 had inspired

\begin{itemize}
\item Daniel Gordon has pointed out the prominence of Germans, both SDSers and others, in Paris. Rather than seeing a conspiracy, however, he notes that most were simply eager to get to France only after the events broke out. Ibid., 135–137.
\end{itemize}
Giuseppe Mazzini’s “Young Europe” movement.\textsuperscript{28} As a young William Wordsworth, who had traveled to Paris in July 1790, wrote,


twas a time when Europe was rejoiced,  
France standing at the top of golden hours  
And human nature seeming born again.  
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven!\textsuperscript{29}

A vanload of young Belgian radicals from Leuven came to Paris to share their recent experiences regarding how to deal with institutions and police.\textsuperscript{30} Dozens of Roman students visited Nanterre and invited their French compatriots back to Rome.\textsuperscript{31} In the middle of May, twenty-year-old Ron Hijman sat with four friends, one of them an attractive young nurse, drinking in a pub in Amsterdam. They were excitedly discussing the events in Paris, and “within an hour we decided, the five of us, to go that same night to Paris. Why? Thrilling senses; young and wild; all of us in love with the nurse?” They dashed home to get their passports and drove for hours through the night crammed into a small Renault, with Hijman strategically squeezed into the back seat beside the warm body of the nurse. They managed to talk their way through border control, arriving in Paris at dawn, where they stayed three days.\textsuperscript{32} As the events in Paris had escalated, they wanted to join the other young Europeans who were already gathered there. Some, including Ika Meulman-Sorgdrager from Haarlem, were travelers who simply happened to be in Paris when the events broke out.\textsuperscript{33} Western Europeans in general were very well represented. They had come to identify with other young people regardless of borders, emphasizing what the \textit{Times} had called “generational frontiers” over the traditional “national frontiers.”\textsuperscript{34}

Thus, there were mutual efforts by young people to move back and forth between European protest sites throughout 1968. The hope was that they could help invigorate each other’s local movements through transnational mobility—if not by participating fully, then at least by witnessing and expressing support. As travel had become a fundamental aspect of the new European youth culture, so it was fundamental to the youth political movements of 1968 and their transnational, even Europeanist, sensibility. The events of May–June inspired travel not only to Paris, but from it as well.

\textit{Just as the early modern grand tour} of the aristocratic young had been as much about visiting and identifying with other people as it was about seeing other places, travel by middle-class youth in 1968 functioned as part of a collective identity across Europe based on age and politics. Young people were traveling specifically to meet

\textsuperscript{28} See the essays in the two-volume special issue “Voyage et Révolution,” \textit{Biblioteca del Viaggio in Italia} 43–44 (1992).


\textsuperscript{30} Horn, \textit{The Spirit of ‘68}, 74.

\textsuperscript{31} “Rome: La visite d’étudiants de Nanterre prélude à une relance des manifestations,” \textit{Le monde}, May 31, 1968, 12.

\textsuperscript{32} Interview with Ron Hijman, August 2007.

\textsuperscript{33} Interview with Ika Meulman-Sorgdrager, August 2007.

\textsuperscript{34} Davy, “Mutual Inspiration but No International Conspiracy.”
one another rather than to visit a particular location; destinations were determined by activism more than tourism. And just as the traditional Grand Tour preceded the rise of the modern nation-state, the Grand Tours of 1968 challenged the nation-state by anticipating its decline.

The travels of one particular young man, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, became the concern of multiple governments and inspired transnational protests featuring thousands of young people. Because like-minded youth across Western Europe were following the events in Paris quite closely, and because Dany Cohn-Bendit had become the face of May, he was invited to speak at several campuses and meetings around Western Europe. Feeling that he was at a bit of an impasse in Paris, Cohn-Bendit decided to accept these offers to explore the international solidarity of 1968, while also, he later admitted, indulging his new celebrity. But his Grand Tour across the frontiers and borders of Western Europe proved problematic, as several nations considered free movement by the young to have become threatening, particularly when it involved someone such as Cohn-Bendit. Notably, both the radical youth and the nation-states of Western Europe recognized that the movements of 1968 were not contained within national borders; like the young themselves, the ideas of revolt and the sense of solidarity were traveling freely. Thus, governments sought to curtail such mobility. Cohn-Bendit’s first scheduled destination on his Grand Tour was Brussels, but the Belgian government barred him from entering the city on May 22, for fear that he might inspire further revolt there.

Cohn-Bendit then traveled to Berlin instead, where he spoke to an enthusiastic crowd of a few thousand people before heading to Amsterdam in the company of some members of the German SDS. After he had arrived in Amsterdam, on May 23, the French government announced that he was now considered an “undesirable” in France, and that he would be turned back at the border if he tried to return. That night, thousands of protesters in Paris demanded “Cohn-Bendit à Paris!” as they marched from the Latin Quarter to the National Assembly. In Amsterdam, meanwhile, Cohn-Bendit announced that he was determined to return to France to continue the struggle, viewing it as his “duty.” He gave a speech in a large cinema, after which his audience swarmed the University of Amsterdam’s campus and occupied several buildings—exactly the kind of behavior that government officials had feared he would inspire wherever he went.

French and German students gathered together at their shared border to protest France’s refusal to let Cohn-Bendit return. His interdiction had united them in a way that enabled them to express their own sense of common identity. In fact, one coalition announced that it intended to march en masse and escort Cohn-Bendit across

37 In fact, as early as March, Roger Peyrefit had wanted to expel Cohn-Bendit, but Interior Minister Christian Fouchet refused on grounds of university privilege and the possibility of exacerbating the situation at Nanterre. See Michael Seidman, The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian Students and Workers in 1968 (New York, 2004), 74.
the Pont d’Europe connecting Kehl with Strasbourg; if necessary, they said, they would “seize” the bridge. Meanwhile, Cohn-Bendit announced his intention to cross the border the following day, Friday, May 25. Members of the German SDS said they would accompany him, and Karl Dietrich Wolff, their leader, declared, “We will not let the friendship between French and German youth be hindered and destroyed by authoritarian governments and their means of power!” He challenged the authority of nation-states to use their borders as a means of inclusion and exclusion, particularly with regard to the young.

In the end, a thousand students from Saarbrücken University escorted Cohn-Bendit to the border at Forbach in the Saarland, where he officially presented himself at the Brême-d’Or customs house with a bouquet of yellow forsythia and a battered German passport. He was taken to the local prefect, who presented him with his official expulsion form, which he refused to sign. He was in France for all of ninety minutes. Security had been tightened, and riot police, mounted police, and canine patrols were stationed along the entire French border, encouraged in their work by local veterans who had come out to protest against Cohn-Bendit. In fact, there had already been an increase in border controls all along France’s eastern frontier, with a stringent application of identity controls to prohibit the entry of “provocateurs,” who, unsurprisingly, were profiled primarily by their age.

Given the ease with which Cohn-Bendit later slipped into France clandestinely, this public display at Forbach seems an obviously symbolic act, intended to undermine the nation-state’s emphasis of power and control over its borders and frontiers, as if a nation were a fortress. After he had publicly presented himself at the border station to be officially rebuked by the state, his appearance days later in Paris heightened the artificiality of national borders and the inability of governments to maintain them effectively. Specifically, he mocked the Franco-German border, the very landscape where millions of French and Germans had died in the past century fighting for meager territorial gains along the most heavily fortified section of France’s frontier. Compounding the symbolism, of course, was Cohn-Bendit’s own Franco-German transnationality and his personal history of moving freely between the two nations.

Late in the evening of May 28, a young man with dyed jet-black hair and dark sunglasses mounted the rostrum at the Sorbonne. He stood there for a few moments with no reaction from the crowd. He removed his glasses, and “after a few seconds there was a tremendous ovation. People were standing and shouting ‘Les frontières on s’en fout!’” As the crowd gradually recognized Cohn-Bendit, a repeated chorus of “Fuck all frontiers!” grew in strength and volume. He declared to them, “I am

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41 “M. Cohn-Bendit est soutenu par des étudiants allemands et français”; “One Day in the Students’ Revolt.”
43 “M. Cohn-Bendit est soutenu par des étudiants allemands et français,” 4.
44 For more on fortified French frontiers, see Roxanne Panchasi, “‘Fortress France’: Protecting the Nation and Its Bodies, 1918–1940,” Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques 33 (2007): 475–504.
45 Fraser et al., 1968, 226.
not a foreign agent, but I am an international revolutionary,” emphasizing that being “international” was not the same as being “foreign.”

Soon after his triumphant, if brief, return to Paris, Cohn-Bendit was invited to London by the BBC to participate in a televised roundtable. To be titled “Students in Revolt,” it would include twelve student leaders from around the world. The pro-

gram nearly did not air, as British immigration attempted to keep the young radicals out. Cohn-Bendit arrived on June 11 and was almost sent back to Frankfurt on the next plane by the immigration office at Heathrow.\textsuperscript{47} James Callaghan, the Home secretary, interceded on behalf of the BBC and its invited guests. In the end, Cohn-Bendit was granted a two-week visa, which he used to travel in the UK and attend rallies at the London School of Economics (LSE) and other campuses.

As news of the upcoming program and the arrival of the young radicals became known, there was a great brouhaha in the press decrying the fact that the BBC, without government approval, had invited young agitators and revolutionaries to London, where, many feared, they might incite further revolt. Both the House of Commons and the House of Lords debated the problematic and dangerous situation of having such young extremists in London, especially “Dany the Red.” The opposition Tories even submitted a motion condemning the BBC for inviting foreign students to the UK to take part in the broadcast. The BBC received 750 letters, postcards, and telegrams and 700 phone calls of protest during and after the program, with only 70 letters of appreciation.\textsuperscript{48} The letter writers were outraged that the BBC had run the risk of importing revolution across national borders by facilitating the travel of these young people. Many letters referred to them as “parasites,” as if the movements of 1968 comprised some kind of invasive species that ought to be quarantined at national frontiers. Cohn-Bendit was mentioned frequently, which is not surprising since the BBC used his participation to promote the program, and he was easily the best-known and most recognizable of all the participants.

Robert McKenzie moderated the program, which lasted forty minutes. The participants expressed mutual sympathies, but they insisted that each of their movements was distinct and determined by local conditions, although there might be certain commonalities among them. Karl Dietrich Wolff did acknowledge a shared sense of solidarity and the emergence of a new kind of “Internationale.” At the same time, Dragana Stavijel from Yugoslavia noted that this was the first time that they had all met, and it was only because of the BBC. There was no conspiracy, she insisted, and no organized movement. In the end, the conversation was congenial, if a bit dull and dominated by the conventions of Marxist rhetoric. As the \textit{Daily Telegraph} wrote after the program, “If this is revolution, one felt, it ought to be made of sterner stuff.”\textsuperscript{49}

Cohn-Bendit also appeared alone on the BBC interview program \textit{24 Hours} with Michael Barratt. During the interview, he compared the situation in France to 1940, when de Gaulle was determined to fight the authoritarian fascism of Philippe Pétain even from exile abroad. Barratt retorted, “But apart from the other obvious differences, there is one very crucial difference between de Gaulle and Dany, isn’t there? He was a Frenchman. That’s pretty crucial. And you are not.” Cohn-Bendit responded, “Well, put it this way. I am born in France . . . I live in France, so I am in French politics. And I think the most important thing that we had in France in

\textsuperscript{47} Students in Revolt File, BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham, Berkshire, T32/1934.
\textsuperscript{48} Student Unrest and Demonstrations 1968, BBC Written Archives Centre, R78/694/1.
the last days, was the demonstration in the Gare de Lyon where sixty to seventy thousand young people chant[ed] ‘We are all German Jews.’”

This emphasis on Cohn-Bendit’s nationality is an important one. The BBC itself had emphasized nationality in organizing the panel for “Students in Revolt,” inviting one participant each from Belgium, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Japan, Spain, the United States, and Yugoslavia, and two each from France and Germany. Noting this, one viewer wrote in to ask, “Were there any English students present? I do not regard Mr. Tarqui [sic] Ali as a representative English student.” Indeed, Ali’s Pakistani nationality was problematic, like Cohn-Bendit’s German citizenship. Over the summer of 1968, as Ali became increasingly visible as a leader in England, the blatant racism of the tabloid press and various MPs inspired a large crowd at LSE to chant in support of him, “We are all foreign scum! We are all foreign scum!”

In contrast to England, where Ali’s foreignness was obvious because of his name, his accent, and his face, in France the public could be excused for not realizing that Cohn-Bendit was technically German, since he came off as so, well, French in his interviews and public appearances. When it was announced that he was not being allowed to return to France, Le monde made sure to emphasize that his nationality was, in fact, German, recognizing that the French public might be confused on this point. Of course, Cohn-Bendit had spent the bulk of his life, all but three years, in France; that was where he had grown up and gone to school. His national citizenship was thus rather complicated.

Born in Montauban, France, in 1945, the son of German Jewish refugees, Cohn-Bendit described himself as having been for the most part “stateless” since birth, a fact that France’s 1968 rejection of him had confirmed for him. Although his older brother had French citizenship, in 1959 Dany chose to adopt German citizenship, an option open to him as the child of Jewish refugees, for the purpose of escaping mandatory French military service. His decision to be “German” was a strategic rather than a nationalistic choice. As he said, he did not give “a damn about nationality.” He later wrote, “Neither French nor German, I am a bastard.” This kind of wordplay was typical of Cohn-Bendit; the term bâtard means not only illegitimate but, importantly, ill-defined and hybrid as well. “I proclaim my transnationality with pride,” he wrote. His refusal to subscribe to a national identity placed him in marked contrast to those who wanted to emphasize it.

Indeed, others repeatedly insisted on his foreignness, his alien status, and his German nationality. On the left wing, Georges Marchais of the French Communist Party (PCF) famously called Cohn-Bendit a “German anarchist.” The PCF denounced him as a foreigner and stated that French workers did not need lessons from a “German Jew”—a double emphasis on his outsideness and alien nature. They claimed that he was an agent of an international network and thus a threat to the

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50 Extract from 24 Hours, June 12, 1968, BBC Written Archives Centre, Talk Scripts 24 Hours.
51 Letter from Harry Robinson, Students in Revolt File, BBC Written Archives Centre, T32/1934.
55 Fraser et al., 1968, 173.
56 Cohn-Bendit, Nous l’avons tant aimée, 9.
French nation, ignoring the irony that the Communist Party was itself supposed to be both internationalist and revolutionary. The right wing, too, emphasized his Jewishness and Germanness. When the student protesters demanded “Cohn-Bendit à Paris!” after his expulsion, the right wing responded with “Cohn-Bendit à Dachau!” The nationalist politician Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancourt proclaimed that the French regime was being “overwhelmed by a young German fanatic.” Cohn-Bendit’s Germanness was reemphasized by the press throughout its coverage in May. Even in the Times of London, he was usually referred to as “Herr Cohn-Bendit” when readers were not being reminded of his German nationality more explicitly. The debate in British Parliament on June 13 focused on Cohn-Bendit and his foreignness. MPs and Lords referred to him repeatedly as “this alien” or “this young foreigner” or “foreign student” or “German professional agitator.” Yet while those in power used foreigners and outsiders to explain away the domestic upheavals of 1968, the young tended to embrace foreignness as an expression of their alienation from their own nation-states while also avowing solidarity with those being targeted by such attacks, specifically immigrants.

While Cohn-Bendit was in the UK and Parliament was debating his presence there, French government officials announced three emergency measures on June 12 meant to curtail the ongoing events altogether, which in large part they did. In addition to announcing a ban on all demonstrations and outlawing leftist student organizations, the government publicly announced its intention to deport from France aliens who, it claimed, had disrupted public order and who were, as Interior Minister Marcellin insisted, part of an international revolutionary conspiracy. By January 1969, more than 1,000 people had been deported, although most of them were not young European radicals but rather young foreign residents in France who had come as immigrant labor. Foreign participation in the events was significant, particularly as May 1968 provided a platform to critique governments around the world, and most foreign protest by immigrants was aimed at their countries of origin.

Media coverage of the events varied, but noting the presence of foreign nationals was clearly a priority. Le Figaro, in particular, exhibited a strong streak of xenophobia, making consistent reference to the numbers of foreign nationals who had been arrested on any given evening. The proportion of foreigners who were detained is startling. During the events of May–June, more than 16 percent of arrestees were foreign nationals. Not surprisingly, the police continually blamed the events

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57 As quoted in Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution*, 222.
58 Charles Hargrove, “De Gaulle Bans All Demonstrations,” *Times*, June 12, 1968, 1. Germany was the only government that seems to have protested this measure. See “Plusieurs dizaines d’expulsions,” *Le monde*, June 14, 1968, 2.
59 For a detailed account of these expulsions, see chap. 4 in Gordon, “Immigrants and the New Left in France”; for more on France’s use of political expulsion as a means of bolstering the nation-state, see Daniel A. Gordon, “The Back Door of the Nation State: Expulsions of Foreigners and Continuity in Twentieth-Century France,” *Past and Present* 186 (2005): 201–232.
61 Ibid., 111–115.
62 Ibid., 130. There is some evidence that the police targeted foreigners for arrest, so these numbers
in Paris on a conspiracy of foreign revolutionaries, as did de Gaulle in his influential speech of May 30.  

Emphasizing the sizable numbers of foreigners or non-students participating in demonstrations in France was a means to delegitimize the movement altogether. The same was true elsewhere, including London, where press reports anticipated an invasion of young foreign revolutionaries, and a later government report ascribed considerable responsibility to young American “missionaries of student protest.”  

In the wake of the Prague Spring, during the period known ominously as Normalization, a government narrative developed in Czechoslovakia that identified the whole episode as supposedly propagated by American hippies. The political menace of the Prague Spring was repeatedly shown to be “foreign” and “alien,” and thus not native to Czechoslovakia. According to the new regime, this foreign insurrection had traveled to Czechoslovakia through the Western youth culture. The whole episode had been partly a result of the mobility of the young, or so the government claimed.

After the French Communist Party denounced Cohn-Bendit as a German Jew in early May, thousands of protesters proclaimed through marching, shouting, and posters that “We are all Jews and Germans!” When it was announced that Cohn-Bendit had been barred from reentering France for being an undesirable alien, tens of thousands of protesters resumed marching, chanting new slogans such as “We are all undesirables!” “We are all foreigners!” “We are all aliens!” And upon his clandestine return to Paris on May 28, their new mantra became “Fuck all frontiers!” and “Frontiers = Repression.” (See Figures 2–5.)

These declarations—“We are all Jews and Germans,” “We are all undesirables,” “We are all aliens,” “We are all foreign scum,” “Fuck all frontiers”—were not only proclamations of solidarity with those who were seen as being persecuted, including poor immigrants facing discrimination, but also a repudiation of nationality and the nation-state in favor of internationalism or transnationality. In West Germany, too, activists had come to identify with the non-Germans in their midst as a means to further protest, even making foreign concerns their own. Meanwhile, the nation-state’s stakeholders, the MPs, ministers, and party leaders, repeatedly emphasized nationality and the integrity of national borders precisely as a means of defense against the internationalism through which the young were clearly seeking to challenge national sovereignty. Border controls, deportation, and xenophobic denunciation became the line of defense against international youth movements.

This conflict over mobility, migration, and national borders was taking place in

should not be taken as indicative of overall participation. For detailed numbers of arrests on a nightly basis, see 112–131.

63 Seidman, The Imaginary Revolution, 243.
66 “A l’interdiction de séjour de M. Cohn-Bendit,” 5.
68 Even Francisco Franco and Georgios Papadopoulos in Spain and Greece, respectively, thought the origins of their student movements lay with foreign agitators. See Kostis Kornetis, “Spain and Greece,” in Klimke and Scharloth, 1968 in Europe, 260.
FIGURE 2: “We Are All Jews and Germans,” declares this poster featuring the gleeful face of Daniel Cohn-Bendit.
the highly charged context of massive immigration into Europe. As a component of
decolonization and the labor demands of the postwar economic boom of the 1960s,
immigration was roiling Western Europe. The newcomers were arriving mostly from
former colonies and were distinguishable by their racial, cultural, and religious back-
ground. Thus, the nation-states of Western Europe were already dealing with the
phenomenon of migration into and across Europe, which appeared to many to be
beyond control. Enoch Powell, a conservative MP, became infamous for his virulent
anti-immigration politics in the UK, particularly his “rivers of blood” speech, which
predicted oncoming racial conflict there. Significantly, this famous speech dates from
April 1968. Hence, young people were not in motion across a stagnant, immobile
Europe. Rather, the challenge of their political mobility heightened the tensions over
the sovereignty of nation-states to police and control their borders. It is no surprise,
then, that these nation-states relied upon xenophobia and threats of deportation as
means of response. This global migration provided the vocabulary for talking about
and dealing with the 1968 movements of youth; the borrowed formulations reso-
nated.

The evolution of the concept and practice of the frontier is directly tied to the
evolution of the sovereignty of the state.69 While the frontier had been an expres-
sion of the limit of feudal power, in the modern period it became the linear demar-
cation of power and authority between nation-states. Thus “frontiers,” as such, are
weighted with history, an accumulation of past victories and defeats; they remain an
expression in the present of past national struggles and serve as the legitimation of
nation-state authority and power.70 The multiplication and proliferation of national
borders in twentieth-century Europe marked and was a result of the hyper-nation-
alism that had contributed to both world wars. The fortified and articulated frontier
is one of the most apparent products of the modern nation-state, with its notion of
individual inclusion and exclusion in the national body. We thus have the emphasis
of those in power on “foreignness” and the stricter application of border controls
in 1968. Yet the modern nation-state’s use of territoriality as a powerful geographic
strategy to control people and things by controlling area begins to unravel at precisely
this moment, most notably in Europe.71 Thus, 1968 symbolically marks a turning
point when the privileging of the national community for personal identification and
the territorial authority of the nation-state were both under assault.72

Much has been made of the internationalism of the 1968 movements. The primary
focus has been the “Third-Worldism” of New Left activists in Europe and the United
States, who looked to the developing world for inspiration amid postcolonial strug-

69 Lucien Febvre, “Frontière: The Word and Concept,” in Febvre, A New Kind of History: From the
70 See the essays on “Le territoire” in Pierre Nora, ed., Les lieux de mémoire, 7 vols., vol. 2: La Nation
71 This is the argument of Charles S. Maier, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Al-
ternative Narratives for the Modern Era,” American Historical Review 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 807–831.
FIGURE 3: The same image with a new message, “We Are All Undesirables,” following France’s refusal to let Cohn-Bendit return.
gles and revolution. It has been well documented that Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, and Mao Zedong, among others, were all considered heroes, while the war in Vietnam offered the most consistent target of protest. Notably, internationalism and the encouraging of international solidarity between French and immigrant foreigners was the subject of two dozen posters in May–June. When the French government made its June 12 announcement that it would deport foreign nationals, French students were preparing to hold the first of a number of planned protest rallies in support of immigrant workers, whom they viewed as being persecuted. However, the rallies were effectively shut down by another of the June 12 decrees, which made all demonstrations illegal. But we should not forget that for all the protests and rhetoric in support of the Third World or immigrant poor, 1968 remained predominantly Eurocentric.

There was a distinctly European element to much of this internationalism. Slogans of European solidarity, such as “Rome, Berlin, Warsaw, Paris,” began to appear as early as May 7. The radical newspaper Black Dwarf in London ran a cover story about Paris using the headline “We shall fight, We will win, Paris, London, Rome, Berlin,” which indicated the underlying premise of solidarity across Western Europe.

73 See, for example, Kristin Ross, May ’68 and Its Afterlives (Chicago, 2002); Gordon, “Immigrants and the New Left In France”; and Belinda Davis, “A Whole World Opening Up.”


75 For more on this, see Gordon, “Immigrants and the New Left In France,” 201–205.

and a sense of collective identity and purpose among young European protesters.77 Even the U.S. State Department concluded that protests there were now “European in character” rather than nationally determined.78 And yet this was more than just an expression of transnational solidarity; there was also a demand for the abolition of borders and frontiers, a confrontation with the very concept of nationality and the nation-state, with an enthusiastic appeal for European integration.

The integration of Europe and how 1968 was both affecting it and being affected by it was on the minds of many, particularly regarding border controls. During the parliamentary debates about Cohn-Bendit and the other young radicals, the MP Alfred Norris warned, “Speaking as one who is concerned for the future of Britain’s application to join the Common Market, can my right honorable Friend give an assurance that any restriction on the free movement of our fellow West Europeans will not hurt our prospects as a prospective signatory of the Treaty of Rome?”79 On Radio Luxembourg, Cohn-Bendit commented on his being barred from returning to France: “I don’t see why today, when we speak of a Common Market, of international harmony, of peace, we expel someone from a country.”80 The evolving European integration was helping to frame the debates about his travels.

When German and French students banded together to protest and to escort Cohn-Bendit across the Franco-German border, the choice of location was intentional. As a stretch of territory heavily weighted with nationalist conflict, Alsace serves as a “memory frontier” for both France and Germany.81 Additionally, France and Germany had been leading the movement for European integration, and the Pont d’Europe, which the students planned to seize for Cohn-Bendit’s return, had been built in 1953 to acknowledge this endeavor and to emphasize the connections and bonds between these formerly belligerent nations. Thus, the young demonstrators were interested not only in defying the authority of nation-states to police their own borders but in expressing the transnational identity of their movement through their sense of common purpose and common identity across the Bridge of Europe.82

Throughout the events of 1968 in Paris, there was an ongoing demand for European integration by the young. In April, the Action Committee for the Independence of Europe issued a manifesto seeking a climate of peace, cooperation, and

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77 Although I would not claim that this demonstrates the emergence of a European polity, it does suggest that 1968 can be considered a significant development in the “Europeization” of contentious politics; while still influenced largely by domestic concerns, the emphasis among some protesters of Europe was significant. See the work of Sidney Tarrow, especially “The Europeanisation of Conflict: Reflections from a Social Movement Perspective,” West European Politics 18 (1995): 223–251; Doug Imig and Sidney Tarrow, eds., Contentious Europeans: Protest and Politics in an Emerging Polity (Lanham, Md., 2001); and Sidney Tarrow, The New Transnational Activism (Cambridge, 2005). Also see the work of Donnatella della Porta, especially “1968—Zwischennationale Diffusion und Transnationale Strukturen,” in Gilcher-Holtey, 1968, 131–150.

78 As quoted in Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, “1968 in Europe: An Introduction,” in Klimke and Scharloth, 1968 in Europe, 6. There was even a U.S. diplomatic conference held on the subject of European youth in revolt in Bonn in June 1969.


80 “M. Cohn-Bendit est soutenu par des étudiants allemands et français,” 4.


82 For more on how borders can serve as staging grounds for political protest, see Aitzpea Leizaoa, “Mugarik ez! Subverting the Border in the Basque Country,” Ethnologia Europaea 30 (2000): 35–46.
independence from American and Soviet influence. Citing the ongoing events in Prague, it called for expanding the Common Market eastward, to unite all of Europe into a single integrated community, independent of the superpowers. A week after the Strasbourg protests, the Action Committee for Franco-German Solidarity in Paris declared that it was essential for the young of both countries to expand their political connections through youth exchange and travel programs. It added that the Youth Internationale had become a reality, and that the profound fraternity of the young would prove transformational and call into being a new kind of Europe.

A tract from May, “What European Students Want,” expressed solidarity with students in Tübingen, Heidelberg, Munich, Liège, Turin, and Rome and demanded the “definitive abolition of frontiers between European countries.” Further, it stated a desire for a European parliament elected by direct suffrage, an increase in the powers of the Council of Ministers, and an expansion of the Common Market to include Great Britain and Scandinavia. Likewise, it said that students should be able to move freely between European universities in pursuit of their studies. In boldface type, it ended with the words “THE STUDENT REVOLUTION WILL BE EUROPEAN OR IT WILL NOT BE!”

In early June, the Action Committee for the Abolition of Frontiers was formed to protest the closure of national borders to the young in response to the events of May. But, its young members said, “this effort will not succeed because the ideas of May 1968 cannot be stopped by a barrier or a cop. Young people cannot be stopped any more than ideas can.” Thus, they demanded the abolition of frontiers and border controls for the free movement of people and ideas across Europe. In a second tract from later in June, they declared, “We are all European” and “The revolution of the twentieth century will be European.” Advocating the formation of a federal Europe, they added the slogan “The awakening of the university strikes the European hour!” The rise of student activism across the continent, and the internationalist attitudes inherent to it, led them to hope for, and demand, a united Europe. To their mind, the first step toward this united Europe was to abolish the frontiers and border controls that were inhibiting youth movements. Borders represented not only lines of division but thresholds of passage; travel and mobility were fundamental to the Europe they envisioned for themselves.

84 “Motion du Comité de Solidarité Franco-Allemande,” ibid., docs. 4544 and 4545.
85 “Ce que veulent les étudiants européens,” ibid., doc. 3752.
86 “C.A.A.F.,” ibid., doc. 4950.
87 “Nous sommes tous européens,” ibid., doc. 4951.
88 There were several other Parisian groups and action committees that expressed similar ideas, including the European Federalist Students, the European Federalist Youth, and the more established European Federalist Movement, which in June called on the young to work toward an integrated Europe that denied the lingering nationalism of the nation-state and the absurdity of borders. See “Appel à la jeunesse européène,” in Bibliothèque nationale, Les tracts de mai 1968, doc. 6805. The Committee for European University Federalism demanded a halt to French nationalism, the continued construction of Europe, the establishment of a United States of Europe, and the French ratification of the European Rights of Man. Ibid., doc. 9681. Interestingly, there is a strong possibility that some of these tracts emerged from the extreme right rather than the left. That is, young right-wingers, like those on the New Left, saw 1968 as a revolutionary moment, and this was often articulated in terms that challenged the French state by demanding a unified Europe of nationalist regimes. There were groups, such as Occident, that sought a revolutionary nationalist strategy to overthrow the Gaullist regime, but in the context of...
FIGURE 5: “Frontiers = Repression” emphasizes the state’s use of force to hinder mobility, and by extension, freedom.
In early July, a feature editorial published simultaneously in multiple European newspapers by the Italian diplomat and Europeanist Mario Toscano argued that the moment had come for the European project to boldly move forward because of the events in France and beyond. The consistency of the 1968 crisis across Western Europe had shown how interconnected the nations of Europe had become since the Second World War. Asking to whom this revelation was owed, the author answered, “The young who look to each other across national borders.” They reflected each other’s subjective experiences despite nationality, “as if a single ‘internationale’ united them all.” It would take European countries working together to solve problems jointly, to advance and progress. The events of 1968 showed how the problems extended beyond national borders. “The immediate construction of Europe has been revived, with no possibility of reversal, by the shake-up of these last weeks.” He continued, “The great crisis of 1968 has brought the builders of Europe—the Europe of Six and the larger Europe—to their moment of truth.”

Indeed, the European project, as Toscano suggested, had stalled by 1968, but it was revived in 1969. It was the policies of de Gaulle, in particular, that had helped to slow integration in the late sixties, so among the Europeanist demands being made by the French young was an effort to reinvigorate the process that had been slowed by their own government. The renewed emphasis that followed came about particularly under the combined guidance of Georges Pompidou, who succeeded de Gaulle as president of France, and Willy Brandt, who succeeded Kurt Georg Kiesinger as chancellor of West Germany. As the domestic turmoil of the late 1960s encouraged the world’s leaders to work together for Cold War détente as a means to better focus on their internal problems, likewise in the wake of 1968 the governments of the European Community adopted a frequent and regular summit schedule to better coordinate their domestic policies and the concerns they held in common, leading to the optimistic “Spirit of the Hague” Europeanism that dominated the early 1970s. Indeed, it was at this moment that integrationists first began to discuss the need to develop “A People’s Europe” and a European citizenship; culture and identity emerged for the first time as areas of policy in the economic and political aspirations of the European Commission.

At the 1969 Hague summit, Pierre Werner, the prime minister of Luxembourg, spoke about the disgruntled young and their “quarrels about issues which . . . can admittedly be regarded as a form of European collaboration.” Italian prime minister Mariano Rumor urged his fellow heads of state to work toward further integration “using all the energies of our countries and responding to the rightful and vigilant impatience of youth, which today thinks and acts with a European mind.”

a broader, proto-fascist New Europe. Thus, the political articulation inherent to these tracts resonates to some degree with the discourse of right-wing 1968 revolutionaries too. Either way, whether left or right, the challenge to the French nation-state in favor of a Europeanist paradigm is clear. See Robert Gildea, The Past in French History (New Haven, Conn., 1994), 336; more specifically, this is the subject of ongoing research by Todd Shepard, as yet unpublished.

90 This is the argument of Suri in Power and Protest.
93 “Address by Mariano Rumor,” ibid., 45.
Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, in the midst of the May crisis, made a speech in London in which he advocated a deepening and broadening of the European project, which seemed to him “to be the only way to give the troubled youth of our continent the modern and vast ambition allowing it to devote its fiery strength to a positive task.”94 The protests of 1968 allowed Europeanists to justify further integration and inter-governmental cooperation as a means of dealing with transnational problems while at the same time they used the transnational nature of 1968 to declare an emergent European consciousness among the young, thus legitimizing their endeavors.

Meanwhile, the movement and protests of young Czechoslovaks in 1968 helped make them a part of a larger international and specifically European movement. They sought to break away from the influence of the Soviet Union and looked to the “Europe” of the West. For example, the sixth of the “Ten Commandments for a Young Czechoslovak Intellectual” read: “Don’t think only as a Czech or a Slovak, think also like a European . . . You live in Europe; you don’t live in America nor in the Soviet Union.”95 Caught between the superpower East and West, young people in Czechoslovakia tended to emphasize and identify with Western Europe for distinction in the Cold War context; they strove for a sense of unity through Europeanness.

Indeed, once Paris had calmed in June, Prague became the new destination of choice for the young of Europe. In the mid-1960s, the Czechoslovak government had begun encouraging tourism to and from Western Europe. Young people from the West took advantage of these policies and began to travel to Prague. In the wake of the loosening of travel restrictions, there had been a distinct exchange of people and ideas as Western books, newspapers, and music became accessible to Czechs.

Perhaps the most visible by-product of these policies, which had been pursued for currency and economic reasons, was the decidedly Western youth culture developed by young people in Prague, complete with music clubs, student activism, and a hippie counterculture.96 Significantly, the many liberal rights and reforms demanded in the Manifesto of Prague Youth in March 1968, such as freedom of the press and freedom of association, included the freedom to travel, as if this, too, constituted the most fundamental of political rights for the Prague Spring.97

While cross-border travel in 1968 was becoming more difficult for the young in Western Europe, in Czechoslovakia the borders were opened. With unrestricted travel now possible, thousands of young people packed their bags and went abroad. Despite the excitement of what was happening in Prague, they seized the new opportunity for unfettered mobility.98 One Prague activist predicted that with so many young Czechoslovaks traveling westward that summer, they would gain “new expe-

98 Some 300,000 Czechoslovaks visited the West during the spring and summer of 1968; see Alan Levy, So Many Heroes (Sagaponack, N.Y., 1972), 163.
riences with the student struggle,” which would inspire further reform and protest in the coming autumn. He expected Prague youth, through travel, to gain experience, develop ideas, interact with the broader Western youth culture, and become a part of it and its transnational movement for social change.99 The Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in August impeded such further efforts, and many of the young consequently opted to remain abroad rather than return home.

Meanwhile, Prague was awash with young Europeans who had come in the summer of 1968 to express or experience an age-based solidarity that transcended national identity. In early August, the New York Times declared, “If you are under 30, Prague seems the place to be this summer,” as the city was “thronged with young sympathizers from the West.” Robert Engle, a Harvard Law School graduate who had been touring Europe on a skimpy budget since the previous fall, said that he hoped to “get a few ideas in Prague” about what kind of society he wanted to live in and what role he wanted to play. Monique Chaillot, a humanities student from the Sorbonne, had hitchhiked and taken trains across Europe with a girlfriend after de Gaulle’s triumph in June. Disappointed with Paris, they had headed to Prague. “This is exactly what we wanted to do in Paris this spring,” Monique enthused. She found herself “discussing endlessly with Czechoslovak students the various experiences each one [had] had during the last few months.” Helmut Krone, a literature student from Hamburg, was excited about the youthful and international camaraderie he had found in Prague, where the young who had gathered there talked “about everything.” The reporter noted how difficult it was to tell whether young people were Czech or foreign; clustered along the Charles Bridge with their long hair, beards, turtlenecks, and jeans, “they all look alike,” he wrote. Thus, not only had the international youth culture come to Prague, but so had international youth: the revolutionary graffiti covering the city’s medieval walls that summer was written in Czech, English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian.100 Even after the August crackdown, young Westerners continued their journey to Prague. Immediately after the military invasion, Peter Tautfest spontaneously left Berlin with three friends and headed to Prague, where they spent a few days distributing leaflets, confronting Russians, and conveying their support.101

Michael Korda’s experience in the Budapest uprising of 1956 offers an important contrast to Prague in 1968. In late October 1956, Korda, then twenty-three, left England for Hungary, because “if you wanted to be where the action was, Budapest was the place, not Uxbridge or Oxford.” He had been inspired by the young Hungarians who were at the forefront of the revolt there. He and two friends took off across Europe on a road trip to revolution in a rusty old Volkswagen convertible. Using a Baedeker as a guide, they roamed around Budapest during the Soviet crackdown, helping little but offering a bit of international solidarity as they joined the young revolutionaries on the barricades.102 But they did not encounter any other foreign youth who had crossed the open border to reach Budapest. This is a striking

101 Fraser et al., 1968, 266–267.
contrast to the situation twelve years later in 1968, when the young of Western Europe rushed from protest to protest, including across the Iron Curtain to Prague. Something significant had changed in the span of a decade.

In 1964, Richard Holmes set off for adventure in Europe after ten years of English boarding schools. “Free thought, free travel, free love” was what the eighteen-year-old wanted. He associated mobility and travel with personal freedom, and this freedom was to be found within the emerging traveling culture of youth—the itinerant young who had begun to see themselves as a community, and often a specifically European one at that. Excited by the events of Paris in 1968, and particularly by the fact that young people from all over Western Europe were gathering there, Holmes ventured to Paris seeking to discover “something utterly new coming into being,” something he described as a “new community.”

A New York Times reporter in Prague described the confluence of European youth there as a “pilgrimage,” a term that brings to mind the work of anthropologist Victor Turner. The experience of pilgrimage, according to Turner, puts travelers in a liminal space, one that is anti-hierarchical, democratic, and full of potential for transformation; they are “betwixt and between.” Once in this liminal space, the pilgrims or travelers experience communitas, an intense and spontaneous community spirit of equality, fraternity, and solidarity generated by their marginality and flux, however temporary or fleeting it may be. Significantly, Turner saw communitas as subversive, as a challenge to the structures of authority, because it makes a reordering of relations between ideas and people both possible and desirable.

Holmes and the others were literally part of a mass movement as the young interacted with one another through travel and protest in the late 1960s. Although in

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103 Holmes, Footsteps, 15.
104 Ibid., 74–75.
105 Crouch was a participant who then wrote a sociological thesis on the topic; see Colin Crouch, The Student Revolt (London, 1970).
107 For a recent historical work that applies Turner’s theories to travel, see Mark Rennella, The Boston Cosmopolitans: International Travel and American Arts and Letters (New York, 2008).
experience and significance he is quite different from Daniel Cohn-Bendit, they share something important—a sense of community based on age and premised on transnational mobility—which helped to shape the political worldview of millions of young Europeans. As a figure of 1968, Cohn-Bendit traveled from Paris to Berlin to Amsterdam to Frankfurt to London and places in between to promote youth movements and mobility. And as his many supporters articulated, among the things they wanted to see reformed were the border and frontier controls that hindered their mobility. Their sense of international identity was partially based upon transnational travel and a voluntary shared purpose that was experienced as a kind of transformative communitas. Meanwhile, those in power repeatedly emphasized nationality, foreignness, and the sanctity of borders and frontiers in response to the transnational aspirations of this young community. They rightly recognized that there was a fundamental challenge to the configuration of the nation-state implicit in the demands and activities of 1968, even if there was no organized conspiracy of revolution.

So if there was no organized conspiracy, how can the breadth of transnational interaction in 1968 Europe be explained? It is not that the young of 1968 were simply inspired by one another; a cultural practice of travel existed in Europe that undergirded a sense of solidarity, common purpose, and common identity that facilitated revolt and collective action by the physical movement of young protesters from place to place, whether the destination was Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, or Prague. As Europe, and the world, became more integrated in the decades following the Second World War, it became more politically turbulent, too, in part as a consequence of this growing interaction and interdependence. The sovereignty of the nation-state was being challenged both by the physical movement of the young and by their international activities, particularly their desire for a more open and integrated Europe.

We should be careful not to dismiss this phenomenon as “revolutionary tourism”—a pejorative term that emerged in the era itself to dismiss as dilettantes those who came and went. Degrees of political commitment and militancy varied widely among the revolutionary youth of 1968. The mobile young, and their attendant polyvalent sympathies, are perhaps better described as “fellow travelers,” which invokes their mobility, politics, and communitarian sensibility. Although this term, too, is often used pejoratively, particularly in the United States, it seems more appropriate, because it was the informal political actors, as opposed to the militant leftist vanguard, who made these protest movements—in Paris or Prague or elsewhere—so

109 Notably, Cohn-Bendit has remained politically active, becoming a Member of the European Parliament, and one of his issues has been to create a cosmopolitan Europe to replace the homogenous nation-state, especially regarding immigration policy. See Daniel Cohn-Bendit, “Europe and Its Borders: The Case for a Common Immigration Policy,” in Sadako Ogata et al., Towards a Common Immigration Policy (Brussels, 1993), 23–31; and Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Thomas Schmid, Heimat Babylon: Das Wagnis der multikulturellen Demokratie (Hamburg, 1992).

110 This was even the conclusion of the CIA’s 1968 report “Restless Youth” prepared for President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who was convinced of a communist conspiracy. See Tom Hayden, “Afterword: Restless Youth,” in Klimke and Scharloth, 1968 in Europe, 325.

111 This is the argument of James N. Rosenau, Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity (Princeton, N.J., 1990).
massive, involving millions of young people. These youth movements do not fully explain 1968, of course, yet they are an important component that has remained unexplored. It resonates with the interrelated emergence of the transnational social body of youth, the cultural phenomenon of youth travel, and a leftist, cultural internationalism that was often expressed explicitly in terms of European integration. The internationalism of 1968 is usually viewed as at best ideological and at worst merely rhetorical, but the revolutionary exchange of young people across Europe shows that this internationalism was to some extent expressed as a communitarian cultural practice—one that would intersect and anticipate the institutional efforts of European integration in the years to come.

Finally, the integration of Western Europe has happened in ways distinct from the diplomatic negotiations of treaties between governments. There has been a cultural process at play, too, in the sense of the popular activities, values, and behavior of Western Europeans themselves, in addition to the economic, political, and legal ones of government. Instead of the European Community as a policymaking institution, what we see developing among the young travelers of 1968 is a European community as a transnational social group.


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