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The World Sixties

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The map of the world Sixties would have battle sites and action points—
Algiers 1957, Bissau 1959,Watts 1965, Mexico City 1968, Saigon 1975—
trajectories, linkages, alliances—Black Panthers with Algeria, Italy, South
Africa; Mao to Berlin, Oakland, and Havana; Bandung to Sri Lanka, Egypt,
and Senegal. It would map the slogans of metaphoric and ideological co-
presences—"Vietnam is in our factories," "Viva Che"—and the rhetoric
and syntax of the big-character posters combating revisionism and extol-
ling people's war that traveled from China to Calcutta, Boston, and Paris.
The politics of the Sixties—and here I refer to the long Sixties, beginning
with the rise of third-worldism as a political force at Dien Bien Phu (1954)
or Bandung (1955), and ending with the mid-Seventies conjuncture of the
end of the post-War expansion (1973–74), the September 11 bombings
ending the Allende regime (1973), the end of the Vietnam War (1975), the
death of Mao (1976)[1]—were always fully worlded, whether we refer to the
widest scale of conflict—third-world vs. first-world imperialism—or to
the political, intellectual, and material links among those who challenged
the capitalist order in word, heart, or deed.

The world Sixties were the time of the politics of *we*—the we that
claimed victories in Algiers and Saigon, that spoke itself in the widest,
most inspiring range of worlded imagining. *We,* that point of enunciation,
is very much at stake in the present time. The assaults on the social prod-
uct, on the commons—in its material, spatial, imaginative, and financial
forms, the assault on the vast accumulation of social property, on the
material bases on which this worlded *we* is said: this is the Bush project,
the Putin project, the privatization project worldwide.

Anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian, anti-colonialist, and anti-imperi-
alist movements were worlded long ago. Those conjunctures marked by
the First, Second, and Third Internationals were as worldwide in scope, in
linkages, and in inspiration as the Sixties was to be. The density of linkage
in those earlier periods easily refutes the claim that the Sixties new media

1. The long Sixties basically follows Jameson's
periodization, in Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing
the Sixties" and Fredric Jameson, Anders
Stephanson, and Cornel West, "A Very Par-
tial Chronology," in Sohnya Sayres, Anders
Stephanson, Stanley Aronowitz, and Fredric
Jameson, eds. *The Sixties Without Apology*
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984),
pp. 178–215. Jameson's article remains, in my
view, the strongest conceptualization of the
Sixties. Further references to this article will be
in the text as "Periodizing."

were the instrumental forces in guaranteeing a new level of revolutionary or oppositional internationalism. The Sixties trajectories forged some new paths, and followed many old ones. For the struggles that world capitalism engenders, if truly engaged with the antagonist, will always be worldwide in scope, even if the links forged are not always visible to all participants. Many have argued, for example, and with some reason, that during the Cultural Revolution China was more isolated from the world than at any time in recent history. But I will argue below that Cultural Revolution Maoism was a fully worlded presence, and not only to those outside China.

Here I must insist on the particularity of the Sixties. This was not the coordinated worldedness of the Comintern, which marked some of those earlier moments, nor was it the worldedness called for today by left strategists of the new International, from the World Social Forum to formations further to the left. The worldedness I claim for the Sixties is one of links and of co-presence; it is a worlded claim for periodization, and a periodization with global stakes: the awakening sense of global possibility, of a different future.

The relationality that activated this worldwide we, that furnished oppositional politics with a chain of connection and co-presence, was equality. Equality has been a goal at the heart of liberatory politics for two hundred years. Since the assault on the Sixties began, equality has been subject to a series of ideological attacks and reversals, some successful and some not, in a battle which has been joined again, by the Bush administration, with unprecedented ferocity.

A worlded Sixties links the movements and struggles of that era to the long history of struggle, movement, and oppositional organization that has coexisted with capital's ever more penetrating reach; and it also serves as another scene of possibility, another set of conjunctures, a lens through which we can reflect on change and transformation, on the dialectics of success and failure, and on the current situation. And what is the current situation? Globalization, as we all know. This latest, 1990s worldedness, though, began as a victory for the right. The collapse of the socialist regimes meant that there was no outside, no limit to capital's

flow; in the famous dictum of Margaret Thatcher, "no alternative." All of our questions, all of our struggles, our total context, became, in this rhetoric, "global."

The left is still working out its relationship to this new stage. In contrast to the new forms of hopefulness signaled in works such as Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, some of the left's most important analysts of global phenomena (Wallerstein and Amin, for example) are far more pessimistic. This pessimism is a forceful presence in Eric Hobsbawm's 1994 *Age of Extremes*,[2] the last word of which is "darkness," a quality that grows as his narrative reaches its terminus. But the darkness has not been total. The collapse of the authoritarian regimes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe brought some liberatory energy to some sectors of their populations—this relief was in many cases temporary and in nearly all cases a measured one. And the post-1978 market reforms in China, too, represent an experiment, more hybrid in quality than is often realized, whose outcome is not predictable. But in general, the becoming global of the 1990s diminished rather than opened a sense of global possibility.[3] In that sense, Fukuyama's *End of History*, which subsequent events proved wrong in many of its assumptions and conclusions, well marked the tenor of that juncture: the sense of an ending was dominant. If the Bush regime's departure from the 1990s neo-liberal consolidation has the odd effect of making one nostalgic for the Nineties, it has altered our sense of the future, from Fukuyama's prediction of a world that is unchanging, and uninteresting, to one that is simply changing for the worse. And to be sure, Fukuyama's prediction that human history had seen the end of all beginnings was already a profoundly pessimistic one. On the left, the concept of anti-globalization, characterizing the new social movements that came to prominence in Seattle, Genoa, and elsewhere, had a short life. A wide range of organizations and spokespersons on the left, perhaps recalling the long history of oppositional internationalism, sought, as the Nineties advanced, to embrace the global terrain and the global reach of possibility, rather than concede it *a priori* to capital. "Anti-globalization" was over. Another globalization, an alternative globalization, a real International, was possible. This embrace of new possibility, a renewed politics of the

2. The first UK edition is titled without the definite article, a point commented upon by Perry Anderson in his important review. Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–91* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994). The US edition was titled *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Vintage, 1996). Perry Anderson, "Confronting Defeat," *London Review of Books*, vol. 24, no. 20 (October 17, 2002).

3. Michael Denning's argument, which I engage later in this essay, is one of several that sees post-1989 globalism as a new era of possibility for a real global cultural front. His "age of three worlds" thesis de-emphasizes the global character of Sixties movements. Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (New York: Verso, 2004).

future, is further ground for linking the new conception of struggle to those of the earlier period.

"Global" was never really an adequate term for post-1989 capitalism. In this age of niche marketing, production-on-demand, and flexible outsourcing, there is something crude and massive about the global *per se*. The real contours of what has passed for the new globality have by now become too clear, suggesting not only an unprecedented acceleration of the unevenness that has always characterized capitalist space, but a new overtness, in the ideological sphere, of global differentiation, wherein large sectors of the human population and their living space are classified as irrelevant or surplus. Nineties globalization was, from the perspective of dominant capitalist power, the time of negative interpellation: global capital brought large sectors of the population wholly under its dominion, but as negative presences: without hope, future, or alternative. In this respect, the now vanished era of modernization theory and the discourse of development, from which the world is in all other respects lucky to be delivered, seems almost utopian, given the now widespread evidence of its failure. The writing out of large sectors of the globe was already evident in the late Cold War years: the tough-guy *realpolitik* of Kissinger's dismissal of the entire African continent marked the end of the era of the African proxy war, though not, certainly, out of any regard for the welfare of the African people, who still live with the legacy of those wars.

The global character of capitalist-socialist conflict was not always to the disadvantage of oppressed peoples and nations. The USSR, Cuba, and the People's Republic of China pointed continually to the US treatment of African Americans and Native Americans as indicative of the real character of US power, and US government concessions to those groups during the long Sixties were made with an attentiveness to the global signifying power of civil rights progress or regress. In Latin America, checking the power of Cuba could not be accomplished solely through alliance with military dictatorships, but required some promise, no matter how hollow, of "progress" as well. During the Cold War years, the United States ultimately failed to build anything in Africa quite as impressive socially as the Tanzania-Zambia railway, constructed by Chinese workers with Chinese

government support in the early 1970s, but there was still some recognition that the battle for hearts and minds was a real battle, with adversaries and stakes. Post–Cold War, the United States became more and more openly indifferent to global hearts. It remains to be seen whether the current talk of the spread of "democracy," whose sole content is the electoral process itself, will buy the dominant power any time.

The post-1989 period has seen an unrelenting process of global triage: for every state, region, social sector, or industry taken into the fold of globalization, huge numbers have been given nothing: the US poor and underemployed, largely African-American, as well as third-world peasants, many of whose migrant populations fuel the growth of the new "planet of slums," Mike Davis's term for the sprawling growths of impoverished populations in the world's largest cities—Lagos, Jakarta, Dhaka, Mumbai—as well as in former secondary towns such as Douala, Bamako, and Belém.[4] Within advanced capitalist economies, this logic of separation insinuates itself into the minutiae of daily life's transactions. Compulsory participation in multi-leveled consumption has fueled recent US economic growth, albeit at the cost of massive middle-class indebtedness. This intensive marketing of the goods of the New Economy is reserved, however, for those able to assume the debt: more massive penetration of the haves, through stimulated demand and reclassification of necessities, coupled with disregard for the have-nots. Nineties globalization, then, has been Janus-faced: globalization for capital, separation and anti-globalization for humanity.

Will this result, though the cunning of history, in a truly globalized oppositional force? Let's hope so. But the dominant discourses of globalization—the boosterism, the advertising images, as well as the regnant academic mythologies of linkage, hybridity, and imbrication—all mask the fact that, outside the regimes of the market and abstract labor, in terms of a global social project, or even a total frame of reference, humanity's integration is at a remarkably low ebb. Systemic challenges to the dominant arrangement are particularly weak. Reexamining the world Sixties could help in the imagination of global possibility, of global potentiality, of a global project: the world Sixties against the global Nineties.

4. See Mike Davis, "Planet of Slums," *New Left Review* 26 (May/April 2004), pp. 5–34. See also the text on which Davis bases much of his article: UN-Habitat, *The Challenge of the Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements: 2003* (London: Earthscan, 2003).

5. "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," *Social Text* 1 (Winter 1979), pp. 130–148; "The Politics of Theory: Ideological Positions in the Postmodernism Debate," *New German Critique* 33 (Fall 1984), pp. 53–65; "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 29(1) (1984), pp. 55–73; "Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (July-August 1984), pp. 52–92; Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* (New York: Verso, 2002). For "Periodizing the Sixties" see note 1.

Periodization

Among contemporary thinkers, Fredric Jameson has made the strongest theoretical and political claims for historical periodization, and it is significant that these claims have been made from the left. Periodization was a concern in Jameson's work present in strong form in 1979 and 1981, coming to fruition in 1984, which saw the publication of three articles on postmodernism, notably "Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," as well as "Periodizing the Sixties." The work on periodization reached a sustained theoretical elaboration in his 2002 *A Singular Modernity*.[5] Jameson's Sixties article, as well as the postmodernism pieces, adapted Mandel's periodization of late capitalism, marking the early Seventies as the onset of the period of contraction, or B-phase, in the long Kondratieff wave that began in the 1940s, a wave whose A-phase carried capitalism, in Mandel's analysis, to a qualitatively new stage: lateness, which shared something of Adorno's lateness as well.

Adorno's and Mandel's periodization of late capitalism mark a degree of capitalist penetration whose systemic, social, and economic effects are baleful, but their work has also been important to oppositional imagination. Outside the realm of the aesthetic—art history has long had the most sustained discourse of periodization—periodization's political stakes are clear: periodization allows beginnings and endings, change and possibility. These are useful structurings of the political imagination in times like these (2005), when the spaces of hope seem so eroded.

If hope or, more modestly, a sense of possibility is what we want, what can we learn from, what can we do with the stories that Sixties periodization allows to be told? Jameson's Sixties is unified by the common objective situation of capitalism, and his narrative is disjunctive. The Sixties, after all, marked a rare concurrence of capitalist expansion and systemic revolt. The capacity of the Sixties to offer to the political scene new subject positions, new modes of signification, new thought, new politics, new circuits of imagination and inspiration is born of a kind of superstructural leap: propelled by the momentum of A-phase expansion, the historical dynamic allows or inspires multiple yet articulated sites of emergence and

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opposition, which surpass, in their energy, the very economic substrate that formed their condition of possibility.

The Sixties were in that sense an immense and inflationary issuing of superstructural credit: a universal abandonment of the referential gold standard, an extraordinary printing up of ever more devalued signifiers. With the end of the Sixties, with the world economic crisis, all the old infrastructural bills then slowly came due once more; and the Eighties will be characterized by an effort, on a world scale, to proletarianize all those unbound social forces which gave the Sixties their energy, by an extension of class struggle, in other words, into the farthest reaches of the globe as well as the most minute configurations of local institutions (such as the university system). The unifying force here is the new vocation of a henceforth global capitalism, which may also be expected to unify the unequal, fragmented, or local resistances to the process ("Periodizing," p. 208).

History post-Eighties took a different turn, whose ultimate character is still not clear. What I find important in Jameson's periodization of the Sixties, though, is the very disjuncture between the political/cultural and the economic. What this means to the imagination of and possibilities for systemic change is still unclear. The end of the Sixties seemed to Jameson to prefigure a recombination of these separated strata, with perhaps a reemergence of opposition along more clearly economic lines. Other Marxists, such as Henri Lefebvre and those he has influenced, particularly in the area of uneven development, focus less on the single economic dominant and more on the "lags" in capitalist temporality, those differentials between overdeveloped and underdeveloped elements in the social sphere, which can often be productive of explosions, crises, or other vectors of change. The lag is what must be kept in mind when considering another, better-known corollary to Jameson's periodization of the Sixties, in the article's second sentence:

> The following sketch starts from the position that History is necessity, that the Sixties had to happen the way it did, and that its opportunities and failures were inextricably intertwined, marked by the objective const.aints and openings of a determinate historical situation, of which I thus wish to offer a tentative and provisional model. ("Periodizing," p. 178)

History as necessity is far from determinism: it is, in an important way, its opposite. What "had to happen" was the fact of the entire combination, the totality of forces, whose interrelations consisted of lag, disjuncture, and unexpected openings. Jameson's argument in the Sixties essay shares many features of his postmodernism essays. The classic example of the piece's periodizing reasoning is found in the juxtaposed readings of the fate of autonomous art in Wallace Stevens, and of Guevarist revolutionary strategy as elaborated in Régis Debray's theory of the revolutionary *foco,* the small guerrilla band in a liberated zone, whose achievements and example could spread far beyond the limitations of its size. As one would expect in an argument for periodization, both the high-modernist aesthetic and revolutionary strategy are shown to partake of a homologous cultural, rather than explicitly political logic.

But when we shift from periodization and historiography to the sphere of the political itself, a somewhat different terrain emerges. Jameson has been mistakenly read as a kind of "advocate" for postmodern aesthetic and cultural practice, simply by virtue of naming it. The equivalence of the "endlessly elaborating poem" and the *foco* is a logical one, but it would be impossible to mistake his political energies in the Sixties work: "periodizing the Sixties" gives primary place to the eventfulness of Sixties rebellion, in the Third World and elsewhere. Although *foco* and Stevens's high-modernist autonomism reach similar historical dead ends, the spread of the *foco* is defeated in struggle, by forces in the world; it does not die by the self-destructive force of its own content. The Sixties were, ultimately, a different kind of promise: their beginning signaled the eruption of energies and impulses that would never be exhausted as long as injustice and inequality reign; their end was not an end to those energies, but the passing of an oppositional dominant, whose energies and whose newly developed forms remain available to future conjunctures: the Sixties add new forms to the *longue durée* of revolution and refusal, coexistent with capitalism itself.

When we are considering the history of revolt and refusal, whether of individuals, classes, subject positions, nations, or other social groups, another set of politics enters the dominant historiographical field, and that is the contest over the very existence of opposition. Histories have

been cleansed of their bad subjects for generations, and that of the Sixties is no exception: since the mid-Seventies, a range of forces worldwide has sought to erase the Sixties, in discourse and in deed. US conservative politics have since the Nixon presidency been open about the intention to bury the Sixties; the post-1978 Chinese state has defined itself against the Cultural Revolution, about which it has largely prohibited discussion. Kristin Ross's *May '68 and Its Afterlives* is a comprehensive analysis of the range of forces in French political and intellectual life that have had at their core the forgetting, trivialization, or containment of the French explosion. In Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, the buried histories of Sixties social and revolutionary movements, and the buried histories of their brutal repressions, have limned the politics of intellectual life for decades. The presence of the Sixties, in the authoritarian, neo-liberal, or imperial variants of postmodern hegemonies, is always a politicized presence, a challenged and a challenging presence.

Eric Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes* has emerged as an authoritative version of twentieth-century history. It too is written from the left, and it too is a periodizing text, structured around a particular narrative. Hobsbawm divides the "short twentieth century" into three periods: "the age of catastrophe," 1914–1945; "the golden age" of postwar expansion, 1945 to the early Seventies; and "the landslide," the crisis decades following the mid-Seventies decline in the advanced capitalist economies. The short twentieth century itself is framed by the coexistence of the Soviet Union and the capitalist powers. The Bolshevik Revolution, for Hobsbawm, stands as the twentieth-century's significant revolution, and all other revolutionary energies—third-world, Chinese, and Sixties—are comparatively insignificant. The Bolshevik Revolution's importance for Hobsbawm lies not merely in what it accomplished in Russia, and in the defeat of fascist Germany. The character of Golden Age capitalism in the West was shaped by its social democratic contract and its Keynesian admixture of centralized planning. Both of these were correctives to the excesses that had produced the Great Slump, and both took some part of their dynamic from socialist values. As the landslide approached, both sides lost their dynamism. What wrecked the USSR was détente—an entry into a world

6. Régis Debray, *Modeste contribution aux discours et cérémonies officielles du dixième anniversaire [de mai 68]* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1978). A shortened version of this text was published in English as "A Modest Contribution to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Tenth Anniversary." *New Left Review* I, 115 (May-June 1979), pp. 45–65. Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958–c. 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

system on what ultimately could only be losing terms, with the foregone opportunity to carry out internal systemic reforms in a de-linked Socialist bloc. What damaged capitalism, claims Hobsbawm, was the emergence of an unfettered, uninhibited, advanced capitalism, following the triumph of the individual and the decline of class and other social formations in the Sixties. The pure capitalism that was to be ideologized as neo-liberalism re-opened itself to the dynamics of crisis to which earlier capitalism had been subject, and from which "planning" had provided a provisional way out.

> As we take for granted the air we breathe, and which makes possible all our activities, so capitalism took for granted the atmosphere in which it operated, and which it had inherited from the past. It only discovered how essential it had been when the air became thin. In other words, capitalism had succeeded because it was not just capitalist. It was the cultural revolution of the last third of the century that began to erode the inherited historical assets of capitalism and to demonstrate the difficulties of operating without them. . . . The market claimed to triumph as its nakedness and inadequacy could no longer be concealed. (*Age*, p. 343)

Hobsbawm emphasizes something important in capitalism's dynamic: the capacity to absorb elements and modes outside itself, whether from the Soviet Union, from "nature," or from workers' sociality. But his demarcations are revelatory, too. Hobsbawm places post–World War II third-world revolution within an earlier or other historical dynamic—peasant rebellions or anti-colonial uprisings—and, even more than many historians, disconnects its temporality from the first-world Sixties. In his representation of 1968 and first-world anti-systemic movements, he is not wholly unsympathetic, understanding the fundamentally unsatisfactory character of capitalist social existence. Yet in large part, his narrative is the same as Régis Debray's "Modest Contribution to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Tenth Anniversary," or Arthur Marwick's bid for historiographical authority, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958–c. 1974* (1998, 903 pp.).[6] Debray's influential essay, written while still in his third-worldist phase, figured first-world youth rebellions as a kind of advanced guard for the fashioning of the

autonomous, neo-liberal subject, whereby the libidinal pleasures of revolt transferred easily into the libidinal pleasures of consumption. Marwick writes of a Sixties that changed everything—sexual mores, popular culture, fashion, religion, the family, intergenerational relations—everything except capitalism and the nature of political authority. The familiarity of the narrative of always-already cooptation—Heath and Potter's *Nation of Rebels: Why Counterculture Became Consumer Culture* (HarperBusiness, 2004) and Thomas Frank's *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago, 1998)—is a sign of the strength of what is an ideologically driven distinctive temporal vision. Hobsbawm sees first-world Sixties rebellion as coincident with the demise of class antagonism itself, a demise figured in the massification of culture across the economic scale and, more importantly, in the end of first-world industrial working-class identity as such, the end of the period "of the domination of 'us' over 'I.'" (*Age*, p. 306) This story, of the end of the class subject and the rise of other subjectivities, is a familiar one in other versions of oppositional politics, in Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe, and elsewhere. But it is a story that can only be told with particular spatial demarcations. The United States, for example, with its particular class structure, fits uneasily into this picture. But more importantly, for Hobsbawm's, Debray's, and Marwick's stories to be told, the first-world Sixties needed to be divorced from the third-world Sixties. This has political consequences.

In a revolutionary situation, in the midst of a revolutionary event, there is always a suffusion of possibility, an opening to the shining through of the future, and any politics of the future will be a political figuring of the temporal itself. Alain Badiou has referred to the "faithfulness to the event": May '68, of course, but also the Sixties more broadly is the time of eventfulness, an eventfulness that right-wing pseudo-events—September 11, now—exist to obscure. A periodization of the Sixties that is to foreground the presence of possibility, to keep the hope of a utopian future alive, and to forestall the narratives that see the Eighties, the Nineties, even the present as the Sixties' future, as its end result, as the work the Sixties did unawares (history's cunning)—such a periodization must have at its core logic not causality, progression, or even succession, but

7. For abstract time, see Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Rodney Livingstone, trans. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 90 ff.

the radical co-presence of its component elements. This co-presence—of Vietnam in Calcutta and Oakland; the versions of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in Havana and Paris—not only worked to break up the global system of separation, it was a claim for a new time.

Jameson clarified the political stakes in periodization *per se* in the Sixties and postmodernism essays, which he wrote in the 1980s. This 2007 worlding of the Sixties, written at a time when the Sixties has entered that intermediate zone, passing from memory to history—and that might, in many ways, be a fortunate thing—is not simply a respatialization of the temporal category, but rather a gesture towards what I would identify as the Sixties politics of temporality, a politics visible in multiple locations, multiple political projects, and explicitly posed against a variety of dominant temporal structures. Sixties time was, in so many of its registers, a stand against given time, against capitalist time, against abstract time.[7] This is the temporality of the third-world revolutionary project that sought a bridge to a liberatory nationhood, one not paced to the temporality of development or modernization; the revolutionary skipping of classical Marxist stages, in Cuba and in the China of the Great Leap Forward. It is the temporality of the anti-revisionist struggles in China and elsewhere, against what seemed an entropic law of bureaucracy-fueled decay of the revolution; and in the overdeveloped world, the confounding or abandoning of the prescribed paces of the staged life: from school, to specialization, to apprenticeship, to worker, and even to boss. Even the revolutions within revolutions were revolts against back-sliding, against the reemergence of capitalist time in moments of flagging revolutionary energy. The worlded Sixties are also Sixties time.

"Two, Three, Many Vietnams"

The era of third-world revolution fits uneasily into any of the dominant periodizations, and one must guard against all frames that deny the Third World its own history on its own terms. Periodization will always be relational, selective, and political: never absolute. Decolonization and peasant wars have their *longue durée,* and one could argue that my mid-Seventies terminus—omitting Nicaragua, El Salvador, the release of

Mandela and the end of South African apartheid in the Eighties and Nineties, and, more recently, the FARC in Colombia, the CPP in the Philippines, and ongoing struggles in Palestine—is in certain respects arbitrary. The mid-Seventies onset of what Hobsbawm terms "the landslide" is centered on the advanced capitalist regions; East Asia's temporality of boom and bust would have a different dynamic[8] and might contribute to a different periodization, albeit one with different political stakes. The collapse of the socialist world in 1989 looms large in the periodizing logic of many recent thinkers: Hardt and Negri, and especially Michael Denning, in his *Culture in the Age of the Three Worlds,* where 1945–1989 forms one coherent period, highlighting what he sees as the very different terrain of resistance following the 1989 "crisis of the three deals—The Keynesian Deal, the Stalinist Deal, and the third-world nationalist Deal."[9] In Denning's vision, Chiapas is the significant nodal point, where the seizure of state power is no longer the primary *telos,* and where Genoa and Seattle prefigure the new combination. Time will tell the extent to which the character of anti-capitalist struggle has changed, and what breaks and continuities will prove to have been most significant for our current condition.

While the Tricontinental Conference of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, held in Havana in January 1966, could be said to represent the world Sixties conjuncture,[10] the strong argument for the world Sixties, a third-world-centered Sixties, an argument that Che Guevara made in his address to the conference, remains the fact of the American War in Vietnam. The nature of the emergent post–World War II capitalist world older, whose rules, institutions, and regimens were being drafted in Washington, Wall Street, and Cambridge, was, over the course of the Fifties and Sixties, becoming clear to the world. Vietnam resisted this order and became the relay, the reference point, for worldwide refusal.

Satyajit Ray's 1970 film *Pratidwandi (The Adversary),* based on the Bengali novel by Sunil Ganguly *(Gangopadhyaya),* is set in Calcutta during the hot period of Naxalite urban politics, when, following the defeat of the peasant uprising in the rural sector, radical and China-inspired revolutionary politics had shifted to Calcutta itself. Siddhartha Chowdhury, the film's relatively apolitical protagonist, meanders through a city punctu-

8. The most important treatment of the crisis remains Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bust: The US in the World Economy* (London: Verso, 2002). For a critique of Hobsbawm's periodization based on third-world and East Asian growth timelines, see Perry Anderson, "Confronting Defeat." There are many critiques of the third-world concept *tout court.* Probably the best remains Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997). I periodize the 1974–1989 period, giving centrality to East Asian economic growth, in Christopher Connery, "Pacific Rim Discourse: The US Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years," *boundary 2* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1994), pp. 30–57.

9. The original reference is to the Midnight Notes Collective. Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (New York: Verso, 2004), p. 46.

10. Robert Young sees in the Tricontinental Conference the birth of the postcolonial subject, and dates postcolonial critique—he prefers the word tricontinentalism to postcolonialism—to that Sixties moment. Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 2001), esp. pp. 212 ff.

ated by explosions and political action. In the film's first scene, he arrives for a job interview at the Botanical Survey of India, presided over by three bored managers. Early in the interview, when the officious interviewers ask him a question that referred to "independence," Siddhartha asks them to whose independence they refer. "Our independence," one official admonishes. The interview ends as follows:

> Interviewer: What do you regard as the most outstanding
> and significant event of the last decade?
> Siddhartha: The . . . war in Vietnam, sir.
> Interviewer: More significant than the landing on the moon?
> Siddhartha: I think so, sir.
> Interviewer: Could you tell us why you think so?
> Siddhartha: Because the moon landing . . . You see. We . . . we . . .
> weren't entirely unprepared for the moon landing. We . . .
> we . . . we knew it had to come sometime. We knew about
> the space flight, the great advances in space technology
> . . . so we knew it had to happen. I'm not saying it wasn't
> a remarkable achievement, but it wasn't unpredictable.
> The fact that they did land on the moon . . .
> Interviewer: Do you think the war in Vietnam was unpredictable?
> Siddhartha: Not the war itself, but what it has revealed about the
> Vietnamese people; about their extraordinary power of
> resistance. Ordinary people. Peasants. And no one knew
> they had it in them. This isn't a matter of technology,
> it's just plain human courage. And it . . . takes your
> breath away.
> Interviewer: Are you a communist?
> Siddhartha: I . . . I don't think one has to be one in order to admire
> Vietnam, sir.
> Interviewer: That doesn't answer my question. However, you may
> go now.

The earlier question about independence underscores the issue of the postwar nation-state form, and suggests why the issue of state power had

such resonance. What kind of nation would the new nations be? Who would determine the nature and political character of the new states?[11] The Kennedy and Johnson administrations' involvement in Vietnam was a new kind of imperialism, an imperialism that sought not direct rule, as in the old imperialisms, but a new world order, an application of the "New Frontier's" rationalist model to a global state system,[12] a system that would parcel the capitalist world into a structure of regional hegemons (Japan, Germany, Mexico, Brazil) under a central US hegemon. The system would mandate in the new states an integrated industrial and rural development, with civil society and governmental institutions designed to accommodate the state economy to the international order. Siddhartha's question to his interviewers—whose independence?—pointed to the unresolved character of postwar national self-determination. Vietnam's answer—not the United States' independence, but our independence—inspired the world. The incremental failure of the initial Kennedy-Johnson plan—"middle ways," strategic hamlets, and proxy politics all fell victim to "local realities"—was not on its own sufficient to discredit the efficacy of the US model. That discrediting, that defeat, happened in armed struggle.

It would be impossible to overestimate the importance that Vietnam held for revolutionaries and activists around the globe, in the Third World as well as the First, and as Ray's film documents, not only to activists. US technological, industrial, and financial superiority, its command of global futurity, and its willingness to project its power on a global scale, were always accompanied by a relentless message of inevitability. Although it was Khrushchev who declared "we will bury you," that was in fact the daily message that the United States bombed, broadcast, and bullied into the world. This was a battle joined everywhere, but ground zero was Vietnam. Vietnam was the battleground, but also the model, as Che Guevara's *Message to the Tricontinental*, a widely circulated pamphlet whose injunction is the title of this section, makes clear.[13]

But what did "many Vietnams" actually mean? World socialism, as the Cold War domino imaginary would have it? A series of anti-Stalinist, anti-bureaucratic alternatives to capitalism, as Marcuse claimed?[14] A dominant left analysis of the Vietnamese side of the war held that it was conditioned

11. The significant presence of the "new states" is an important dimension of the period, and the utopian character of the emergence of Sixties-era new states stands in marked contrast to the literature around the emergence of the post-Soviet new states. For a still-useful typology of the new states, see Clifford Geertz, "After the Revolution: The Fate of Nationalism in the New States," and "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

12. There is considerable literature on the nature of US imperialism in Vietnam. The concept of liberal imperialism as I use it is taken from Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

13. Che Guevara, *Message to the Tricontinental: "Create two, three … many Vietnams."* Havana: Executive Secretariat of the Organization of the Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL). April 16, 1967. The text can be viewed at www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1967/04/16.htm. It was published in English.

14. Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

15. Frances Fitzgerald, in *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 1972), and in her earlier journalism on which this book was based, was an important voice for the anti-Cold War interpretation. Her work drew on that of the French orientalist Paul Mus, who taught Southeast Asian studies at Yale in the Sixties. Today, much of what Fitzgerald wrote about "Vietnamese character" seems dated in its essentialism, though the political character of that essentialism was quite different then.

by purely national factors, either "civil war" between competing national interests, or as part of a long history of Vietnamese nationalist anti-imperialism. Overwhelmingly, in global discourses of solidarity with the Vietnamese war, the national character of the war is affirmed. "The Vietnamese people," and their struggles, were the objects of left identification, in the Third World and the First. Socialism—the organization of national social life—was generally understood not as the national component of a global political project, but as the form of self-determination aimed at eliminating exploitation, inequality, and a rationality imposed from the outside, in a world where the force of exploitation and inequality had a name: the United States. On the left, this amounted to a kind of domino theory in reverse: the spread of socialism in the Third World was always concretized at the local or national levels, but it constituted real and symbolic cumulative roll-back against the power that sought global unity on its own terms. In the first-world left, the war in Vietnam was primarily understood as a conflict between Vietnamese self-determination and US global imperialism. On one level, the argument for the local, national character of the conflict was an argument against the Cold War consensus in the United States, which saw North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front, as well as Cuba, as simply proxy expressions of the force of global communism.[15] The inspirational force of the Vietnamese revolution did not derive primarily from specifically Vietnamese revolutionary practice. More important, ultimately, than the writings of Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap, which circulated widely during the Sixties in European-language editions published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Hanoi, was the actuality of Vietnam—its very existence against a globalized US power. In this sense, the nation was not a diminished sphere. Rather, it represented the engagement of struggle on the level of the everyday, where the inroads of capitalist domination were actually felt. Vietnamese communism was overwhelmingly national in its orientation, but the force of its oppositional power, its actualization of the Great Refusal, had a significance that was international, and multiple. If the United States could be resisted in that place, it could be resisted elsewhere. Multiplicity—two, three, many—was on the side of the anti–United States forces.

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Che Guevara had been deeply hostile to the United States from his pre-revolutionary days, and his writings were among those instrumental in naming the United States as the primary enemy of liberatory energies. But what kind of enemy did the Vietnam War reveal the United States to be? We find in Guevara too the deep admiration for the courage of the Vietnamese people, and the conviction that US imperialism, not totalitarianism of any kind, was the main enemy of liberty and social justice. Guevara's pamphlet was illustrative of the particular character of the worlded Vietnamese war: the way Vietnam was figured simultaneously in its seriality and its specificity. Like many of Guevara's writings, the pamphlet evokes José Martí, using Martí's phrase "Our America" to indicate the coming theater in the anti–United States world struggle, and the place within it of the Cuban revolution. The US line on Latin America—"We will not allow another Cuba"[16]—underscores this dominant logic of seriality: just as, from the US standpoint, Cuban exemplarity must not be allowed to spread in Latin America, Guevara's Vietnam is the situation that must be multiplied. The inspirational character of Vietnam, throughout the resistance but particularly after the Tet offensive in 1968, was significant throughout the Third World—for India, for the revolt in the Philippines, for Cuba, for other Latin American revolutionaries, and for Red Guards in the Chinese Cultural Revolution, small bands of whom traveled to Vietnam to join the fight. Not only did the war show that resistance was possible, but it underscored a conviction about Sixties struggles worldwide, an insight repeated in Chinese publications on US imperialism, that the war in Vietnam was further revelation of the weakness of the newest version of the imperial project: that the United States was a "paper tiger."

Although the Tet offensive in early 1968 was a huge military defeat for the North Vietnamese and the NLF, it transformed the conflict into one of total war. As Jeremi Suri points out in *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente*, Tet marked the real end of the ideology of "liberal empire," the US ability to portray its presence as oriented toward development, toward the fashioning of South Vietnam as an exemplary bulwark against communism. Now it was full-scale technowar, salvation through destruction.[17] With the sheer violence of Tet and its bloody after-

16. This and other quotations are from the Web version of Guevara's pamphlet.

17. Suri, op. cit., pp. 161 ff. (See note 12.) For the idea of technowar, and a clear demonstration that the US war in Vietnam was in no way a "limited war," see James Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly, 1986).

18. Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 10.

19. Jorge Volpi, *La Imaginación y el Poder: Una Historia Intelectual de 1968* (Mexico DF: Biblioteca Era, 1998).

math—My Lai, Rolling Thunder—came the worldwide cry to "bring the war home." Bringing the war home—the phrase originated in the Weatherman leadership of the Students for a Democratic Society—had multiple registers, and represented a significant internationalization of the Vietnam conflict. It was a project that sought, through a turning of the citizenry against the nation, a dismantlement of the core capitalist states by a massive refusal of participation, a massive dropping out of the "we" that had been the ideologized expression of first-world national purpose. It was also a manifesto for pure, existential opposition: by simply existing in defiance, outside the system, left opposition was repeating the facticity of Vietnam, an ungovernability within the terms of the new world order. For some, in Europe and the United States, it meant the turn to armed struggle, a turn which, applying the logic of Debray's *foco*, found its political efficacy, as Jeremy Varon puts it, "simply in existing," rather than in tactical success or failure.[18] Bringing the war home worked: domestic opposition made further escalation difficult, and hastened the pullout of US forces from Vietnam. It brought European states to the verge of political crisis, threatening the post–World War II structure of alliances.

The ability to imaginatively inhabit the Vietnam War, to see its local resonances around the world, was a significant unifying element of the world Sixties. In Mexico, for example, the generation of 1968 struggled against not only the long history of United States–Mexican conflict, but against what many saw, in a newly worlded imaginary, as the repetition of the Vietnam War in Mexico itself.[19] The Vietnam War, in the end, did not multiply, and the United States continued to pursue its hegemonic aims in different ways. But the Vietnamese victory, though hardly acknowledged as such, and the domestic opposition the war engendered, had been a defeat for the US consensus. In Jeremi Suri's analysis, the period of east-west détente which came in the Seventies marked a global management of political crisis, a settlement pursued by powers more concerned about internal, domestic opposition than about great power rivalry. The forces arrayed against "many Vietnams" were considerable, but the political terrain had shifted. US weaknesses exposed during the Vietnam War have not been bandaged over. This exemplarity of Vietnam remains.

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Global Maoism

Each of the twentieth century's revolutions changed our understanding of the nature and historicity of revolution, and altered thinking about the spatial and temporal character of revolutionary possibility. The existence of these revolutions, particularly the successful ones, became part of oppositional thought worldwide, entering ideologies, struggles, and discourses. Ho Chi Minh, nationalist though he was, framed much of his revolutionary rhetoric and strategy in the terms of "People's War," whose model was China. But Maoism, and the Chinese 1960s, remain an uneasy presence in left discourse, particularly in the West. It is easier to find sympathetic analyses of the Cultural Revolution in China itself, whose post-Mao government is largely based on a repudiation of the Cultural Revolution.[20] Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes* refers to the Cultural Revolution as "madness" (p. 260); among leftist intellectuals of almost all stripes, it marks the extreme that should not have been reached. In the dominant version of revolutionary memory in the United States, the Sixties mass movement was badly damaged by Maoist groups such as the Progressive Labor Party or the Revolutionary Communist Party, whose furious sectarianism, and whose grim, joyless, anti-countercultural energies sapped any mass appeal that the revolutionary left could have had.[21] And then there were the geopolitical consequences of China's identification of the USSR as the main imperialist enemy in the world. This split had enormous and largely negative consequences. Just as the long Sixties were over, for example, China took the US side against the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) in Angola, contributing to the buildup of Savimbi's forces that condemned that country to nearly three decades of civil war. One could indeed link Maoism to a narrative of failure and defeat, and there are doubtless elements of global Maoism that in retrospect proved to have been dead ends. Soviet-oriented communist parties were damaged worldwide by the Maoist current.

Did this, in some way, contribute to the great debacle of 1989? Perhaps. Many chroniclers of the Sixties have succumbed to the temptation to view Maoism, particularly Cultural Revolution Maoism, as the devil's music, one that sent all who danced with it to hell. But let's be wary of

20. Although much direct positive evaluation of the Cultural Revolution is not publishable in contemporary China, sympathetic politics can be found in radical and left critics associated with Chinese rural reform. On the new rural movements, see the forthcoming work of Alexander Day, PhD candidate in history at the University of California Santa Cruz.

21. Max Elbaum, in an important history of the US left, writes from a position far to the left of, say, Todd Gitlin, whose *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* is a negative model of Sixties history. In Elbaum's view, the embrace of and presence of Maoism was a primary cause of the waning of revolutionary energy in the United States. Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (New York: Verso, 2002).

22. The founding of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1969 signaled the orientation of the revolutionary movement away from the USSR and toward China.

23. The quotation is from Shu Riping and is cited in Arif Dirlik, "Modernism and Antimodernism in Mao Zedong's Marxism," in Arif Dirlik, Paul Healy, and Nick Knight, eds., *Critical Perspectives on Mao Zedong's Thought* (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 1997), p. 68. The anthology, and Dirlik's essay in particular, are very important reconsiderations of Maoism, including global Maoism. The reference to "military Marxism" is in another essay in that volume: Liu Kang, "The Legacy of Mao and Althusser: Problematics of Dialectics, Alternative Modernity, and Cultural Revolution."

24. For the Philippine case, see Benedict Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 92–93.

the politics of causality and roads not taken. Global Maoism was a central political element of the world Sixties, and a reframing of its world presence is consequential. Under global Maoism, I would include the following: revolutionary movements in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines.[22] Guinea-Bissau, West Bengal, Nepal, Cuba, Peru, Uruguay, to name just a few; in the United States not just the Progressive Labor Party, but the Black Panthers, Weather Underground, late SDS; in France, besides the Maoist parties, the *Gauche Proletarienne*, the intellectuals around the journal *Tel Quel* in the early Seventies, and radical trade unionists. More important than specific parties or named movements, though, is a set of dispositions and tendencies that informed political life and liberatory dreams across a broad spectrum.

Maoism has been broadly defined as the sinification of Marxism— *makesizhuyide zhongguo hua*, "the integration of universal principles of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution," or as Li Zehou has described it, a military Marxism, grounded in the specific situation of guerrilla or revolutionary war, a set of tactics, strategies, where practice is not application of theory but anterior to theory.[23] The primary texts of this Maoism—"Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" (1927), "On Practice and On Contradiction" (1937), "On New Democracy" (1941). and "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art" (1941)—are texts written within and from the situation of guerrilla war. This experiential character of Maoism was also reflected in the nature of its global spread. Emulation of the Chinese revolution was not primarily through the medium of Maoist theoretical texts. Journalism was just as important—that of Agnes Smedley and Anna Louise Strong, for example, but especially that of Edgar Snow, whose 1937 *Red Star Over China* was translated into many languages, and served as a revolutionary manual for the Hukbalahap rebellion in the Philippines, and for Che Guevara in Cuba.[24] It is tautological, but not inaccurate, to equate Maoism with the practice of the Chinese revolution: stance, practice, tactic, position, situation, revolution—these are the applicable terms. Arif Dirlik has called Mao's relationship to the world, Mao's empiricism, "the empiricism of an activist who constructs knowledge in the process of reconstructing

the world with revolutionary goals "—an appropriate and useful description of Maoism, but which needs the qualification that that reconstruction has a national rather than a properly global scope.

So in its simplest form, the question, what is Maoism? can be answered as: the practice of the Chinese Revolution. And Global Maoism? I will enumerate some of its qualities and modalities below. But its enabling condition is also the fact of the Chinese Revolution, which I would like to date from 1921 to 1976, marked most saliently by the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 and the Cultural Revolution. Of course, the actuality of Maoism, as a global or even as a Chinese phenomenon, does not begin to coalesce until after 1949, after the revolution during which most of what was to prove the textual content of Maoism was written. On one level it is paradoxical, but it is also true to the praxis character of Maoism, that Maoism, in a way similar to the world-significance of the Vietnamese war, was globalized as a specific, situated practice. It was globalized without being universalized, a "theory" if we can still call it that, whose effectivity was praxis. Maoism becomes equated with global revolutionary praxis, as a concrete global event—through a logic that is in key respects a kind of universalism in reverse.

The logic of the situation is not a new element in Marxism, nor was praxis at all absent in Marxism. Indeed, as Fredric Jameson suggested, the relationship between a revolutionary situation and revolutionary theory was central to twentieth-century Marxism:

> In retrospect, it can be suggested that much of left dialectics, from 1917 onwards, was generated by the conceptual dilemmas offered by precisely this conflict between the particular and the universal, between a specific historical fact or datum—the Soviet Union, with its own local and national requirements, and the universalism of a left class politics which aims at abolishing even the specificity of class itself, and lays claim to a general validity across national borders.[25]

China introduced a new element into this dialectic. Although the Chinese Communist party had long given a positive evaluation to Stalin, worldwide reactions to the phenomena associated with Stalinism

25. Fredric Jameson, *Brecht and Method* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 111.
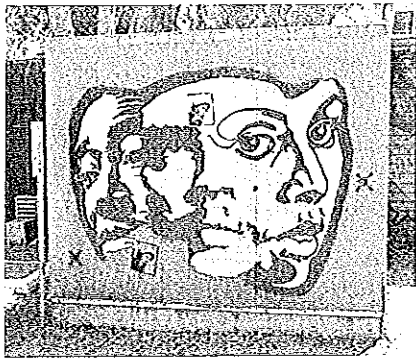
had consolidated a critique of the Soviet Union as a place where the revolution had come to a premature end, a place to which younger, third-world revolutions—China, Cuba, Vietnam—were counterposed.

The fundamental content of Maoism is the fact of the revolution itself—revolutionary praxis in China. This is constitutive of what are generally taken to be global Maoism's primary "theoretical" components:

1. Practice itself was central, and was the central determinant of revolutionary identity. When Che Guevara writes, "The duty of a revolutionary is to make revolution," he is articulating this access to identity through practice. Guevara often wrote that one of the important lessons he learned from the US-backed coup in Guatemala in 1954—which under the parliamentary socialist Arbenz government had been a center of Latin American third-world revolutionary internationalism and where he met Castro—was that "political power comes out of the barrel of a gun," that there is no revolution without revolution. The *Quotations of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, probably the most widely printed and widely read political text during the world Sixties, is a register of the formal praxis character of revolutionary ideology. These quotations, drawn largely from pre–World War II writings and arranged topically, were meant in their very material existence—small, single-hand-held books with waterproof covers and easy-to-read typescript—to facilitate the material insertion of theory into practical activity. Their oracular form was designed to encourage recitation and applicability. The *Quotations* suggested that a theoretical formulation was not to find its truth in textual adumbration, but in direct application.

2. Contradiction and the levels of contradiction formed an analytical means for a strategic understanding of a particular historical conjuncture, often at the level of the nation state, but including those characteristics that are perhaps generalizable to the level of the "underdeveloped world," as developed in the essay "On New Democracy." This concept, widely thought to be the most important component of Maoism and to be the essence of Mao's original contribution to Marxist thought, is essential to a praxis-oriented project. The correct

identification of the primary contradictions, at the local level, would prevent party cadres from forcing circumstances into conformity with some abstract model. Practice, then, is the key link, to which I would add, in adducing Maoism's global and to some extent even national effectivity, the following characteristics which, as will be clear, are not all meant to be considered at the same level.

26. Robert Jay Lifton, *Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1970).

3. Thirdness. By this I refer to the Third World as Mao conceived it—neither developed capitalist nor Soviet-bloc. Politically speaking, a sector of the world population with no material interest in the current state of affairs. I say thirdness instead of third-worldism, a concept I wish to subsume under thirdness, because of the appeal of Maoism—in revolutionary or potentially revolutionary situations in much of Western Europe, India, and even the United States—as an alternative to Soviet-oriented communist parties. Third-worldism reaches its historical moment at Bandung, and Zhou Enlai was the victor in the contest between him and Jawaharlal Nehru for third-world ideological hegemony. The theory of Soviet Socialist imperialism was never a coherent one—but Maoism's "thirdness" allowed the Soviet Union to stand in for failure, revisionism, or revolutionary death. We could even view this thirdness as a new ontology, the anti-death space of "revolutionary immortality," in Robert Jay Lifton's terms.[26]

4. Anti-revisionism, a related concept. Maoism isn't the only position associated with opposition to bureaucratic and revisionist tendencies. The Trotskyist vocabulary of de-formation covers similar ground. Cultural Revolution Maoism's vocabulary of anti-revisionism was of particular global salience. During the height of the Cultural Revolution, 1966–68, very little news of China entered the world. But in Europe particularly, the anti-Lin anti-Confucius movement, which occurred when many European left intellectuals and communists visited China, provided a widely adopted vocabulary and position. This has its caricaturable dimensions, and anti-revisionist sectarianism is recalled with fondness by few on the left today, but it gave revolutionary currency to the examination of daily-life practices. Who was a revolutionary and who a revisionist? Who was with the people

and who was with the pigs? These questions, asked worldwide, were questions that Maoism put on the agenda.

5. The centrality of the peasantry. Mao did not invent peasant rebellions, as a practice or as a concept, and the revolutionary capacity of the peasantry was present across a variety of marxisms before Mao addressed the subject. Neither Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* nor Indian Subaltern Studies, though, would have taken the forms they took without Mao's articulation of a peasant-centered revolution. It's worth remembering that the Subaltern Studies project had its origins in the Naxalbari rebellions in Eastern India in the 1960s. The Naxalite movement was explicitly Maoist, down to Kanu Sanyal's "Report on the Peasant Movement in the Terai," which is directly modeled on Mao's Hunan report of 1927. On another and perhaps more important level, China's revolution remains the one successful peasant-identified revolution in world history. As some of the recent work of Ken Pomeranz suggests, what the emergent field of World History might describe as the primary fact of the history of the nineteenth and the twentieth century is a global war waged against the peasantry, with the People's Republic of China as the significant global exception to the conclusion of that war.

6. The idea of the liberated zone, or the base area. The establishment of a liberated zone, which in some of its more abstract 1960s forms could refer to the mind itself, was associated with the Maoism of the Jingangshan and the Yanan base areas. The base area introduced a spatial dimension into revolutionary theory and praxis that was a persistent figure, and of great strategic importance, in India, Cuba, the Philippines, Malaysia, Burma, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

7. The devaluation of intellectuals. This is really a subset of the discussion above of praxis and revolutionary identity, and functions at the level of class authority and of style. This was not a universal feature of global Maoism; Brecht's Maoist disparagement of what he called the TUIs, *tellekt uell in*—the ideological classes—would certainly have included US polemicists in the Maoist parties such as the Progressive

Labor Party or the Revolutionary Communist Party. Global Maoism made it difficult, however, for revolutionary authority to be instantiated in the subject position of the intellectual.

8. Cultural Revolution. In Europe and North America, the sphere of the cultural was where much revolutionary energy and activity was directed, and the Cultural Revolution in China was a central point of reference, even though its actual content was incompletely understood. Mao's work directly shaped Sixties Euro-Anglo-American theories of the cultural, and its relation both to class and to revolutionary politics. As important as the intellectual filiation, though, is the fact of the Cultural Revolution, the fact that it had been given a name. One of the purported "failures" of the global 1960s is its confinement to the sphere of the cultural, and it is commonplace to devalue the achievements of the Sixties as "merely cultural." This is an intellectual battle that is still being waged.

9. Voluntarism. This, and related concepts, are normally pejorative, and Marxists largely share the belief that over-reliance on the force of will and belief have been destructive to the revolutionary project. Mao's own writings, of course, have nowhere the programmatic of voluntarism—he explicitly condemns it—but ultimately we can say that all praxis has its origination in the will, and that voluntarism is on one level simply the will to rebel. The Maoist concept of self-reliance—*zili gengsheng,* properly translated as reconstruction through one's own efforts—was central to the third-worldist project of de-linking. In Ghana under Ike Achaempong in 1973, it was still possible to mobilize the population for "Operation Feed Yourself," opening up urban and other spaces to food production, often by collectivities. Voluntaristic self-reliance was a refusal of modernization's temporality, a refusal of developmentalism and dependency: it was an immediate and situated opening into the future. Marcuse's Great Refusal, shouted to capital in Europe and North America, is a related gesture of will. Voluntarism will produce excess: it will be antagonistic to reality, and in the logic of success and failure, it will often be deemed a tactical and strategic er-

ror. Yet if what is desirable, in this day, is a politics that refuses the logic of success and failure, it might be useful to acknowledge the inseparability of some version of voluntarism with the utopian impulse itself.

The Cultural Revolution spread in China in remarkable ways. In 1981 I visited a small, quite isolated town on the Yangtze River in Sichuan province: few of its residents had ever left it. When I asked some young men whether the Cultural Revolution had taken place there—the Cultural Revolution was largely an urban and town phenomenon, leaving many agricultural villages untouched—I was assured that it had. How, I asked, had it reached the town? "We heard about it on the radio, and did it here, too," was the reply—a massive translation of the vocabulary of revolution and anti-revisionism, crafted in Beijing and Shanghai, into local situations: traveling praxis. Global Maoism was the internationalization of the Chinese revolutionary experience, and in this respect had much in common with the Vietnamese revolution's serial character. It was also a powerful language of world-making. One could begin from nowhere, from a situation, like Mao's peasants, that was "poor and blank," and reconstruct humanity again, from anew. That sense of beginning was powerfully felt in Detroit, the Sierra Maestre, in Guinea, and in the ghetto of Oakland. Maoism posited a new temporality, a rejection of the measurements of capitalist time and an embrace of the apocalypse: humanity would change into something else; nothing would exist forever. And it was about speed: stages of development would be skipped in the Great Leap Forward. Out of the swirling vortex of the Cultural Revolution, where old habits, old social relations, and the old world disappeared, the new society would arrive fully formed.

The Work of the World

Hobsbawm and many others found it paradoxical that the Sixties rebellions in the over-developed world took place during a time of nearly full employment. The postwar expansion was at its height, and the Fordist guarantees could not have seemed more solid: employment, salary, consumption. There were significant fissures, of course. African Americans and other minorities in the United States and elsewhere in the over-

developed world had not shared equally in the Fordist settlement, whose family-based single-wage-earner logic also relegated most women to subordinate or unpaid positions.

Perhaps it was the best, ideologically speaking, that the compulsory labor system could manage. But for those inside and outside its promise, it was unacceptable. Across the over-developed world, the futures thus offered to the young were refused. A cold look at the world revealed a built environment, urbanisms, transportation networks, and educational, social, political, and economic institutions that were the products of enormous human labor and tremendous productivity, but not the world that many in society had wanted. The explosion of world-making energy in third-world revolution signaled that world-making and re-making was possible; construction and reconstruction could be placed on the imaginative agenda. In the advanced capitalist societies, that meant revolt against the logics of separation, alienation, and instrumentalization that the compulsory labor regime, with the cooperation of educational institutions, political parties, and trade unions across the political spectrum, had cemented into place.

In 2005, it is clear that the work regime has failed: the mass of the human population lies outside it, with no real hope of integration into its logic. To some today, the demand for total employment seems to be the utopian demand, one that exposes capital's inability to deliver a social solution on its own terms. But perhaps a more cogently utopian demand would be for the end of work as we know it. The politics of anti-work were central to the struggles of the world Sixties and constitute an important part of the period's legacy. Viewing a range of struggles through the lens of anti-work is a fruitful conceptual experiment.

By the height of the post–World War II expansion, it was clear that human societies could reproduce themselves without the endless toil of their masses. Without being articulated into a coherent political program, but rather realized at the level of daily life, the possibility of life not organized around compulsory labor deeply shaped life in the socialist world. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the dictum to "put politics in command" radically altered the content of daily life, in schools, factories, and government work units. Political discussion, study, and meetings

27. Lynn T. White, *Unstately Power. Vol. 1: Local Causes of China's Economic Reforms. Vol. 2: Local Causes of China's Intellectual, Legal, and Governmental Reform* (Armonk, NY: M. A. Sharpe, 1998).

took up much of what could hardly be called a "work week." Published autobiographical records of Cultural Revolution life, whatever their political position, attest to these hours, and to the equally long hours spent in idleness. Visitors to China during the Maoist period, especially those (like me in 1976) with Stakhanovite expectations, were often amazed at the casual attitude toward work and industriousness: so many discussions, so much tea drinking, so much sitting around in the factories. It took an American factory worker traveling with my group to point out that in his view the absence of hustle, bustle, and constant activity was a better way for factory work to be carried out. Right-wing condemnation of this wasted time, this time lost to the sort of economic growth and development that has characterized post-1978 China, takes today's 70-hour southern Chinese work weeks as the norm, as the basis for China's current productivity. The productive legacy of nonwork in China, and in other socialist countries, is more complicated, and may not be as simple as the growth advocates suggest. Lynn White has convincingly shown that local social networks developed during the Cultural Revolution gave the late Seventies and Eighties reform and growth much of their momentum.[27] His book demonstrates the productivity of social organization and the ways the organizational gains from this politicization could serve a variety of productive functions.

Linking this politicization to capitalist-style high-productivity growth, however, should not suggest that such a development was the only course that Cultural Revolution nonwork could take. For putting "politics in command" was also the actualization of a non-productivist mode of social being; it was, in terms of lived experience, a critique of work as such, despite the later use to which politicized networks were put. The Cultural Revolution's "Great Link-up" *(da chuanlian)*, when hundreds of thousands of Red Guards and other young revolutionaries were given free transportation, food, and lodging in cross-country wanderings, was a mass mobilization of nonwork, and it is a movement that is viewed with considerable nostalgia by its veterans. The Great Link-up was only one of the experiments that mobilized the country's infrastructure for purposes other than speeded-up productivity. It gave to many of its participants an enduring sense of life's possibilities.

The socialist bloc had never instilled in its citizens the "work ethic" that twentieth-century industrial capitalism, with the help of the trade unions, was able to ideologize. Self-exploitative industriousness was a virtue common to socialist state cinema and other mass media, but it was rarely achieved in lived experience. It was to be expected that the decoupling of compulsory work from the more strict regime of abstract time and its management that obtained under capitalism produced a different relationship to labor. Yet neither was the socialist bloc politically able to ideologize an alternative relationship to labor: nonwork thus had a negative rather than positive character. What obtained there was a system of compulsory labor whose overemphasis on compulsion was matched, or made tolerable perhaps, by an underemphasis on labor. But the nonwork ethic also spread into the citizenry's will to participate in the political or military life of their states, a problem that over the course of the Fifties and Sixties grew particularly acute. It was thus for many reasons unlikely that an alternate political program could be built on this foundation.

Yet in Czechoslovakia, Dubček's Action Program, published in May 1968 and approved by Brezhnev, initially promised to be a new way forward, a new way to mobilize society by allowing broader social forces to participate in the determination of the social and political agenda. What doomed Dubček's program was its conflict with the state logic of coercion, on the one side, and the power of Western-oriented dissidents, who demanded Western-style democracy, on the other. Readers in the capitalist world sometimes forget that the initial impulse of Prague Spring was not in the direction of capitalism, but of a renewed socialism. Ultimately, the socialist bloc was unable to build positively and innovatively on its externality to the regime of capitalist-style compulsory labor, an externality that could have provided a base on which radical alternatives to this regime could have been constructed. This failure to reform socialism from within, combined with concerns about a dissatisfied and potentially rebellious urban populace, led the socialist states to détente, with further integration into capitalist cultures of production and consumption.[28] This integration produced structural contradictions that were ultimately untenable, leading to the collapse of 1989. Robert Kurz, in a series of books

28. This idea of détente as a reaction to internal dissidence is the thesis of Jeremi Suri (see note 12).

29. Robert Kurz, *Der Kollaps der Modernisierung: vom Zusammenbruch des Kasernensozialismus zur Krise der Weltökonomie* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1994). A selection of Kurz's work in English translation, including the *Manifesto Against Labor* by Kurz and the *Krisis* group, of which he was a part until recently, can be found at www.exit-online.org. More recently, Wolfgang Engler has proposed a politics for a post-work society in Germany, in his book whose translated title would be *Citizens Without Work: For a Radical Restructuring of Society*. Wolfgang Engler, *Bürger, ohne Arbeit: Für eine radikale Neugestaltung der Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2005).

30. Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

31. Georg Lukacs (see note 7) makes a case for the spatialization of capitalist time and counterposes abstract time to "history." Moishe Postone critiques the idealism inherent in this dichotomy and makes a strong case for including "history" as a component of capitalist time. Yet I think that that linkage was precisely what was at stake in the Sixties rebellions. See Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), especially chapters five and eight.

32. Kristin Ross cites Peter Dews, who makes the claim that the arrival of US and UK countercultural modes and styles into France and Italy marks a waning of political energies. Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002), p. 13.

and articles, has suggested that the fall of the socialist bloc around 1989 was the first collapse of a compulsory labor society, and that the collapse of the work-society in that region was a prefiguration of its coming collapse in the capitalist West, a collapse that was already evident in oppositional politics in the 1960s.[29]

In that the Sixties struggles in the overdeveloped world were about the content of life, the work regime was the ultimate horizon of life's content, the total content of society. Anti-work politics found their clearest expression, theoretically and on the streets, in France, and the Situationists provided its most memorable movements and slogans, many of which, as Greil Marcus has shown, became important in Sixties countercultural expression in the United States and the United Kingdom.[30] But anti-work was a latent content in many other struggles, and it was a message that would ultimately reach the masses in Sixties popular culture. In the overdeveloped world, when the Vietnam War was brought home, when the Cultural Revolution was waged in these streets, the content of daily life was among the primary stakes. The broad politics of anti-work, the refusal of abstract time, was a characteristic of what I referred to earlier as Sixties time, a relation to the future, to history, and to co-presence. It marked a challenge to a fundamental pillar of capitalist temporal organization, and thus to history itself.[31]

The question of the Sixties counterculture in the overdeveloped world has long been a vexing one. The usual impulse on the theoretical left is to downplay its importance, to accentuate the gap between real politics and that sphere of the everyday whose common denomination—lifestyle—is always encumbered with the taint of commodification, reification, and the marketplace of style.[32] As I have outlined earlier, those historians and commentators such as Arthur Marwick who want to minimize or critique the political significance of Sixties counterculture are also eager to emphasize its positive contributions by tracking its impact within capitalism.

It should be clear by this point that I want to include under the sign of the Sixties the widest range of political, revolutionary, social, and cultural opposition, including the counterculture, and that I believe that narratives of the counterculture which stress commercialization, dumbing-down

of content, and massification should not obscure the source of much of Sixties popular countercultural energy in opposition and refusal, in, to use John Holloway's term, "the scream."[33] The counterculture achieved near hegemonic status in English-language massified popular culture, and brought into the mainstream its roots in the long histories of refusal and resistance: Diggers and Ranters, William Blake, Boxcar Bertha, the Wobblies, and early twentieth-century anarchism, the folk surrealism of the "Invisible Republic," the Beats. That these mostly marginal currents were brought into a culture industry that reached tens of millions, proclaiming an end to work on Maggie's farm and strawberry fields forever, is a victory, an inroad, not simple co-optation.[34] Twentieth-century capitalism proved remarkably capable of incorporating modalities and energies from its outside, and marketing's embrace of certain countercultural modalities is no exception. This could be a sign of capitalism's bloodless vampiric weakness as much as its strength. The Sixties in the overdeveloped world put pleasure and ecstatic excess into broad social and cultural play, and Arthur Marwick is right to stress the profoundly transformative character of that moment. The culture industry responded with impressive dynamism, and proved able to satisfy the libidinal explosions that came in its wake.

But Marwick and critics like him are wrongly confident that capitalism's dynamism, according to some predictable rhythm of explosion and containment, ensures the perpetual manageability of those energies. As consensus cracks, as gruesomely anachronistic experiments like the G.W. Bush presidency expose the fundamental irrationality of the system, as market-ideological promotion of the "ownership society" leaves its subjects with nothing worthwhile to own, it will be more and more important for a different dynamic to emerge, one that can draw on humanity's long history of refusal, of which the world Sixties was a shining moment.

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33. John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* (London: Pluto, 2002), pp. 1–11.

34. The invisible republic is a reference to Greil Marcus's book by that name on Bob Dylan and the long tradition of American folk surrealism exemplified in the Henry Smith folkways anthology. Greil Marcus. *Invisible Republic: Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997).