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STUDENT MOVEMENTS

When French students took to the streets once again in October, 1998, they brought to a close a thirty-year period of academic unrest that has left an indelible mark on modern culture. To the extent that students as a group and student movements as a category of social action can be identified throughout European culture from the Renaissance to the present, this most recent period in the history of student movements has been unique. Nonetheless, coordinated behavior on the part of those enrolled in educational institutions has always played an important role in larger processes in society. Students alone, as a social elite with specific requirements and specific connections to the institutions of power, have created episodes of protest with a lasting impact on the lives of subsequent generations of students as well as on their societies at large. And students as intellectuals have contributed a crucial ideological element to larger movements for social change.

To be sure, the demands of the students in 1998, mainly of high-school age, were far more modest than those of the student protestors in both Spain and France in 1986. All they wanted was more teachers and better school facilities; whereas their predecessors demanded modifications in university entry requirements and other reforms aimed at leading their societies ever further along the path to democracy. Similar to the latter

were the protests of Italian university students in 1977-78, sparked by grievances concerning projects for university change that were then before the government.

All these recent student protest movements in Western Europe paled by comparison with the movements in Eastern Europe in 1988-89, in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, East Germany and Yugoslavia, which helped bring about the collapse of the Soviet-backed regimes. Closer in kind to the movements in Eastern Europe, at least from the standpoint of the link between academic grievances and more or less profound social and political ones, as well as from the standpoint of the depth of the impact on contemporary culture, were the student movements of 1968. These were briefly brought to mind in the waves of anti-nuclear protest that hit Western Europe in 1980 and 1983.

Social scientists have offered several explanatory models for the recurrence of student protest through European history. Some have given a prominent role to generational conflict. Members of a rising generation imbued with notions of modernity and change, they say, may wish to vent on the one preceding it all the frustrations accumulated during their young lifetimes (Lewis S. Feuer). Some observers have pointed to identity and personality crises due to problems of socialization affecting large groups of individuals. Especially in periods of social upheaval, many young people may refuse to enter adult roles on the terms set for them by adult society (Erik Erikson). Others have seen the

presence of alienated and at the same time talented leadership types as a major factor determining whether a student population will be given to revolt (Kenneth Keniston). Still others have turned attention to class conflict, pointing out that even students from privileged backgrounds may for a time share a status of dependency with, for example, factory workers (Gianni Statera).

As elements in a larger society, some theorists have pointed out, students may share in generalized social pathologies like the anomie described by Émile Durkheim or the various new threats to individual autonomy that go under the names of "iron cage" (Max Weber) or "the colonization of the Lifeworld by system imperatives" (Jürgen Habermas). Work on political opportunity structures has tried to show how the political and social consistency of a whole society may lend itself more at some times than at others to the expression of widespread discontent, taking into account variables such as social cleavages, institutional stability, and strategies within the movement and the regime (Sydney Tarrow).

For the more remote history of student movements, however, it should be kept in mind that almost all explanatory models have been elaborated on the basis of events in the last several decades for which accurate survey data has been available. Moreover, there are some problems with pinning down the specific historical characteristics of students as a group. They share

their status for a far shorter period of time than categories like laborers or mothers. Only in the beginning of the nineteenth century did they begin to develop a self-conscious identity. In every case and in every period, the vastly different circumstances make long-term generalizations an imperfect way of analyzing the phenomenon.

The Early Modern University

Social historians have shown how universities evolved in the Renaissance into mainly elite degree-producing institutions for entrance into the professions of medicine, law and the Church. Typical student organizations at this time included brotherhoods, drinking clubs and duelling fraternities, intended mainly to extend to students the same corporate protections guaranteed to other groups. These organizations have so far received no more scholarly attention than have the sporadic eruptions of "town vs gown" violence. Disputes with a town were caused as often by ordinary bread riots as by perceived acts of disrespect for the honor of the citizen or noble families to which the students belonged. Occasionally a "translatio studi" resulted, in other words, the movement of an entire student body away from a town, the last of which was from Göttingen to a nearby woods in 1790. Especially at Padua, the contested election of a Rector could bring about rioting between student factions. As universities

came under the control of political officials in the various states, the imposition of discipline was accepted in return for guarantees protecting the universities' privileges and immunities.

By the sixteenth century, governments began to regulate what had been the most common "student movement" of the time, namely, the so-called "peregrinatio academica," or "academic peregrination," whereby students in France, for instance, tested the waters in no less than three universities, on the average, before getting their degrees. Due to religious disputes and, especially in the less-popular places, fears of a decline in the numbers of students, governments began to insist on restricting the exercise of the professions in their states to those who had received their degrees locally. Unwittingly, they set the stage for local organizational activity in the centuries to come.

More incisive student actions affecting religious, intellectual and political life in the period usually began outside the university and found echoes within; so they cannot be analyzed as products of a particular student culture or ideology. In the religious category may be mentioned the Little Germany organization in early sixteenth-century Cambridge, in support of the Lutheran Reformation. Intellectual movements included the formation of academies, a typical expression of the Renaissance ideals of polite conversation, usefulness and pleasure, to which university students in Italy made significant contributions.

Most likely in order to increase patronage opportunities, law students at the University of Rome founded debating clubs where they gave harangues and disputations in preparation for their exams, inviting prominent local personages to listen in or take part. Political movements were exemplified by the factions at Oxford in the support of the dynasties of Lancaster and York before Edward IV's decisive victory in the Wars of the Roses. Two centuries later, political sympathies at Oxford remained largely with the king even while civil war was going on and Puritan religious ideas had made serious headway among students.

Students and Revolution

During the French Revolution, students imbued with late Enlightenment ideas and perhaps less reconciled than their elders to the Ancien Regime began playing a more radical role in pushing events in new directions. An organization called the Society of Law Students at Rennes devoted itself to studying the deteriorating political situation of the country and engaged in violent protests against the local nobility, side by side with the unemployed laborers in the Young Citizens' society. And after the University of Paris was drastically reduced by the legislation of February, 1792, a considerable number of students enrolled en masse as volunteers in the People's Army, proclaiming their adherence to the ideals of equality and freedom. The

French Revolution attack on Ancien Regime corporatism raised serious questions about future university organization even in areas where guilds and corporations were not abolished. Without immediately doing away with the brotherhoods, drinking clubs and duelling fraternities of old, students began casting about for new forms of organization.

Modern student organization began in Germany with the so-called Burschenschaften, founded in Jena in 1815 but rapidly diffused throughout the country. In this case, for the first time, social historians have identified a real youth crisis, as students began defining a specific public sphere for themselves, distinct from the political establishment of Restoration Europe. Students often shared a radical nationalism drawn from writers such as Johann Fichte, as well as an anti-regime fervor galvanized by disappointment in the Napoleonic wars. And although they often agreed with Wilhelm Von Humboldt's new concept of university education as forming civilization rather than mere encyclopedic knowledge, they did not find this ideal embodied in any existing institutions. The Burschenschaften offered an opportunity for self-reform. Against what was viewed as the political and intellectual establishment's effete Francophilia, they set the new image of the physically fit, self-disciplined and Teutonic youth.

An expression of the new movement was the first student festival, at Wartburg in 1817, where some 1500 students gathered

to express their ideas about freedom and fatherland. At Giessen, a radical right-wing version of the movement, called the Blacks, was formed by Karl Follen, whose program supported an interpretation of German nationalism that excluded French, Slavic or Jewish elements in the country. When certain acts of violence attributed to members of the student organizations brought about their suppression under the Carlsbad Decrees in 1819, they began a more radical and subversive career underground. In Poland, where libertarian and patriotic ideals inspired by the Burschenschaften combined with opposition to the Russian regime, official decrees banned all secret student societies in 1821. To drive home the point, students were arrested and some executed in Wilno in 1823 in connection with anti-Russian statements.

All over Europe, students contributed significantly to the unrest that built up between the 1830s and 1840s; and social historians so far have not distinguished student motivations from the motivations of other elements of the populations involved. Students were as deeply affected as anyone else by the heady mixture of socialist ideas and romantic patriotism that had no room for expression under the prevailing sociopolitical system. In France they took part in the agitation that led to the fall of the Restoration monarchy and the establishment of the July monarchy in 1830. In Göttingen the following year, they were largely responsible for the creation of a communal council that briefly stood ground against the Hanover government of King

Wilhelm in Münster. In 1832, over 30,000 students and other participants celebrated patriotism and future German unification at the Hambach festival. In 1833, prefiguring the revolutions of 1848, students at Frankfurt belonging to a group called the Vaterlandsverein unsuccessfully sought worker and peasant support in a failed attempt to seize the federal treasury and bring about a universal uprising. Even in Switzerland, a student group known as the Radicals formed in 1839 to advocate a closer union of the cantons and democratic political reforms.

In Paris, one of the triggers of the 1848 revolution was the suppression by Louis-Philippe's government of a politically motivated course by Jules Michelet at the Collège de France, which brought the students out in force one month before actual fighting began. Here as elsewhere, what encouraged student participation in the events that were to follow, besides constitutional ideals, was the specter of intellectual unemployment raised by rapidly increasing enrollments in a regime of economic stagnation. In Germany, the Eisenach festival was intended to provide a forum to discuss these as well as more specifically German issues democratically. Some 1200 delegates from all over Germany presented their resolutions to the National Assembly then meeting in Frankfurt to draw up a constitution for a new German empire. Although no answer was given, the students were somewhat mollified by the establishment of democratic bodies

like the Prussian Landestag and by the suppression of the Carlsbad Decrees.

Russian Populism

The failure of the 1848 revolutions in Europe and the defeat of Russian militarism in the Crimean War combined to set the stage for some of the farthest-reaching student movements of the age, in Russia. Often from provincial backgrounds, students were quickly acculturated to the latest trends on their arrival at the universities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Imbued with the ideas of Marx, the French socialists and Alexander Herzen, they rebelled against what they perceived as the failed modernism of their elders. Rather than capitalism and state authoritarianism, they turned to agrarian socialism as the solution to society's ills, viewing in the countryside, where many of them originated, the seeds of a more complete rebirth than any possible in the rest of Europe. This populist philosophy seemed all the more Utopian considering the dismal conditions most peasants in Russia continued to suffer, but its promise grew increasingly attractive as students from poor backgrounds poured into the universities under Nicholas I's new enrollment policies. For thirty years it formed a powerful undercurrent in student life, surfacing from time to time in more or less violent conflicts with the Imperial

authorities, and included many brilliant theorists and activists, from Mikhail Bakunin to Petr Kropotkin.

Organizational activity reached fever pitch with Tsar Alexander II's liberation of the serfs; but expectations were soon disappointed. The banning of student organizational activity in 1861, together with a reduction in the number of government scholarships, occasioned a major strike at the University of St. Petersburg. As strikes spread to Moscow and elsewhere, many students were jailed and the University was closed for two years. The government's apparent lapse into political intransigence drove the movement toward more desperate measures. Pyotr Zaichensky at the University of Moscow published the secret paper, Young Russia, calling for violent revolution as the only way to bring about constitutional reform, land reform, emancipation of women, nationalization of factories, and the abolition of inheritances. Other students there and elsewhere set up "Sunday schools" to disseminate such ideas among workers and peasants. Dmitri Karakozov, member of a terrorist faction at the University of Moscow called Hell, advocated and eventually attempted the assassination of the Tsar in 1865. The government reaction, known as the White Terror, led to the arrest of the ringleaders and staved off further terrorist action for a time. Soon, frustrated by peasant indifference and plagued by government repression, some participants turned again to terrorist tactics, attempting and actually carrying out several

assassinations of public figures. Disagreement about these tactics created a rift within the movement that led to the formation of the People's Will, responsible for the assassination of Alexander II in 1881.

The years before the 1905 revolution may be taken to exemplify the way responses to student demands can turn isolated incidents into a rationale for more incisive organizational activity. The disastrous Russo-Japanese war had hardened the students' resolve. Although they were not chiefly involved in the Bloody Sunday event, where soldiers fired on a crowd of demonstrators, about 3000 of them gathered at Moscow University to begin a strike that was to last nine months. In a huge meeting, they drafted the Second Moscow Resolution committing the student movement to "revolutionary" politics. They organized public propaganda programs and encouraged fellow-students to do the same at the universities of Odessa and Kiev. When railway and other workers joined the students in a general strike, Nicholas II finally issued the October Manifesto granting freedom of conscience, speech, and assembly and promising franchise and more powers to the Duma. His subsequent reassertion of autocracy set the stage for the Bolshevik revolution.

World War

In Bosnia and Herzegovina too, slightly later than in Russia, a new intelligentsia began to emerge; and the Russian revolution of 1905 inspired hopes for change. As students, they were exposed to ideas in sharp contrast with the realities of peasant life. Social historians have identified two distinct groups. A few went to university in Vienna or Paris, where they imbibed advanced ideas about universal brotherhood and the socialist future. Typically, though, they stayed at home and never got beyond local high schools, where intellectual prospects were dominated by less sophisticated notions of heroism against the tyrannical oppressor. To the latter group belonged Gavrilo Princip, a student member of the Black Hand movement, who assassinated the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on the eve of World War I.

After the war, the most active student organizations were in Germany. The most effective leaders were as much repelled by the chaotic world of communist revolution immediately to the East as they were by the indecisive Weimar government in their midst. When Weimar called for international cooperation to resolve the issue of war reparations imposed by the Versailles Treaty, they called for a stronger Germany in opposition to the rest of Europe. Their sentiments were confirmed as Germany slid deeper and deeper into economic chaos and the communist revolution began threatening from within. In 1919, the Deutsch Studentenschaft (DS) began to provide a system of representation for students

and, through a program called Studenthilfe, to finance poorer members. Its ideology of pangermanism and antisemitism, however, came in conflict with the liberal programs of the Weimar government. The antisemitic sections, especially those based in Austria, were eventually forced out; but not before the whole organization began to take on a radical nationalistic character.

In analyzing the German movement at this time, social historians have focused on explaining the climate in which Nazism eventually flourished. Even more radically nationalistic than the DS was the Fichte Hochschulgemeinde, formed in 1919 to celebrate the ideas of Johann Fichte. Along with other groups, it went on to form a part of the Hochschulring Deutscher Art (HSR) aimed at promoting the ethnic community. As the leading voice in student politics throughout the 1920s, it represented anti-parliamentarianism, antimarxism and authoritarianism. A major influence within the HSR came from the so-called Young Conservatives, especially strong in Berlin, who added the elements of irrationalism, antiintellectualism, assertiveness in foreign relations and nationalistic revolution to this heady mix. Some of the more radical members of the HSR were involved in the failed Nazi beer hall putsch of November 8, 1923. In 1924, a militant fragment broke off to form the Deutschvolkisch Studentenbewegung, which, allied with an Austrian sister-organization, spoke through a newspaper called Der Student. In 1926 a Catholic group seceded from the increasingly radical and

militaristic HSR, calling itself the Görres Ring. However, it too swerved increasingly to the Right in the 1930s, advocating the Mussolini government as an acceptable alternative to Weimar, and proclaiming ethnic nationalist concepts.

The first Nazi student groups emerged in München in 1922 and in Weimar in 1925; but a veritable national movement began only in 1926. Originally founded by the students themselves, they soon came under Nazi party leadership. By 1928 party leaders appointed Baldur von Schirach to lead them and opened recruitment to all elements of the university populations, from disenchanted proletarians to the members of the older duelling fraternities who had already been espousing right-wing political ideals. Soon the Nazi student network began organizing violent demonstrations against the Left. Older groups like the HSR began to lose ground; and soon the Nazis took control over leadership of the DS as well. In 1933, the DS emitted 12 theses "against the un-German spirit," denouncing Jewish and liberal literary works, and it organized the book burnings that took place at German universities between April 26 and May 10. Eventually the DS was placed under the direct authority of a Reichsstudenten Führung headed by Gustav Adolf Scheel, who coordinated it with the Nazi German Student Union.

To be sure, the German movement was not entirely Nazi at this time. In the midst of the war effort, students at the University of München staged the only public protest against the party since

its rise to power in 1933. Led by Hans Scholl and his sister Sophie, they maintained contact with anti-Nazi sympathizers throughout Germany by way of a correspondence network later dubbed the "white rose letters." To engage support for a wider uprising they printed and distributed pamphlets. When the pamphlets were discovered by the authorities, the Scholls were arrested, beaten and executed, as were many of their correspondents.

In occupied France, social historians have shown, anti-Nazism could become a student ideology. Students staged the Arc de Triomphe demonstration on November 11, 1940, celebrating the World War I armistice and protesting German occupation of Paris. Demonstrators were either killed or deported to Germany. Later, in 1943, students played an important part in the Forces Unies de Jeunesse Patriotique organized to protest the occupation and call for egalitarianism and democracy in the universities.

Toward 1968

The first postwar movements were provoked by Soviet-backed repression in Eastern Europe, and at first they were isolated reactions to specific circumstances rather than generalized protests. Supported by the Allied occupation forces, students objecting to manipulation and isolation within the Wilhelms University, located in Soviet-occupied Berlin, formed the Free

University in the Allied zone, with a radical new program and a new anti-hierarchical structure.

As students became more aware of the gap between political rhetoric and reality in their countries, they contributed to the workers uprisings in East Germany and Czechoslovakia in 1953, which occasioned the first armed Russian intervention in the satellite states. Fearing a workers' uprising also in Hungary that year, the Soviets replaced the repressive Mátyás Rakosi with the more moderate Imre Nagy. What followed has presented social historians with a typical case in which bungled policies provoked a wider movement. When Nagy immediately freed 80,000 political prisoners and revealed the terror tactics utilized by the previous regime, the Soviets restored Rakosi to power in 1955. As opposition to Rakosi grew, members of the Petöfi club, the university wing of the communist youth league, were among the most vociferous. By July, the Russians moved in, replacing Rakosi with the even harsher Ernő Gero. Nonetheless, inspired by the October 1956 revolution in Poland, students began organizing for an independent, democratic, socialist Hungary. About 5000 met on October 22 to adopt the Budapest Technical University Resolution, spelling out demands for peaceful change and demanding reinstatement of Nagy and the withdrawal of Russian forces. Some 300,000 demonstrators, led by students, assembled on October 23. But when security forces fired on the students, Hungarian soldiers called in as reinforcements joined the

demonstrators, and the Soviet-backed government took flight. Nagy thereupon took over and formed a cabinet, promising freedom and independence from the Warsaw pact. Soviet control was reestablished only by a full-scale attack on Budapest and severe retaliation, in which some 20,000 rebels were arrested, 50,000 died, Nagy and 2000 others were executed, and more than 80,000 were wounded. Nearly 230,000 Hungarians escaped to the West, and 10,000 students were deported to Russia.

The last episode of 1950s student activism in the Eastern bloc was the protest at the University of Warsaw occasioned by the closing of the student paper Po Prostu, which had taken a liberal line since the October Revolution of 1956, advocating political liberalization. Protesters who called for reinstating the paper were ambushed and beaten by police after a grant of safe conduct. Those who presented the petition to the government of Prime Minister Gomulken were arrested.

Several episodes, isolated at first, led to the massive student unrest unleashed in both East and West in 1968. All involved leadership structures perceived to be more interested in global security issues than in promoting democratization at home. At times, the protest was mainly confined to university-related issues. For instance, during the Week of Action in November, 1963, French students belonging to the Union National des Étudiants de France (UNEF) and several teachers' unions struck to demand better facilities, more scholarships and larger research

accounts. Other times, university issues combined with wider ones connected with differences in world-view between governments and students.

In this period, for the first time, echoes from the United States had an important effect on student action in Europe. Student involvement in the Freedom Summer in Alabama in 1964 and in the Berkeley student revolt that followed, showed the potential of mass action. The Vietnam War, hotly contested in the US from 1965, seemed to symbolize for many Europeans the worst effects of Western militarization and colonialism. At the same time, recent work confirms, young people were affected by social and cultural trends that had been transforming modern life on both sides of the Atlantic. In spite of increasing affluence, democratic ideas tended to advance beyond the democratizing potential of even the most open societies. Movements that once concerned a tiny vanguard now became part of mass youth culture—not only in politics, but also in other areas of life. Intellectual liberation was inspired by the Situationists, the neoexistentialists and Jean-Paul Sartre. Artistic liberation was inspired by the Beat Poets and by Abstract Expressionism. Sexual liberation, meanwhile, introduced behavioral patterns that conflicted with the traditional structure of the family.

A pattern of confrontation emerged and spread rapidly from place to place. In 1964, students at the Free University in Berlin protested the arrival of the Congolese Prime Minister

Moise Tshombe, thought to be a pawn of Belgian mining interests. When the administration refused student requests to invite Erich Kuby, a noted left-leaning critic of West German politics in general and of the university in particular, students staged a protest focused on issues ranging from the tenure case of an activist instructor to the Vietnam war.

In France, the rift between the De Gaulle regime and student politics had begun to grow from 1960, when the UNEF declared its support for Algerian independence and officially requested that the government begin negotiations with the rebels. After two years of confrontations on this issue, the government banned student public protests. Finally in 1963, rumblings of discontent culminated in the Sorbonne explosion, ostensibly sparked by the breakdown of university structures in the face of growing enrollments. After a day of struggle between 10,000 Sorbonne students and 4500 police, some 300,000 students in the nation's 23 universities went on strike, along with half the professors. The following year, on the occasion of a university tour by the Italian president, accompanied by the intransigent French education minister Christian Fouchet, University of Paris students and the UNEF organized protests calling for democratic reforms within the universities.

In Britain, protests in 1965 at the London School of Economics were concentrated against the white community in Rhodesia, which had declared independence from the black nationalist federation.

In Italy, the first protests, centered at the University of Turin in 1965, began with the question of official recognition for a degree in sociology, and spread out to include student governance, curricular reform, and the relevance of instructional programs to contemporary affairs. Likewise at Turin, a seven-month occupation of the university buildings in 1967 began by focusing on university issues and broadened out to include social issues of national concern.

German universities began to reach critical mass in June, 1967, when students protesting a state visit by the shah of Iran were subjected to a previously planned police attack involving brutal beatings and the execution of a bystander. About 20,000 students from throughout West Germany attended the funeral in Hanover on July 9. The Hanover meeting produced a manifesto connecting police brutality to the authoritarian and exclusionary structure of German government as well as to the general crisis of the university. The meeting and its outcome propelled the student leader Rudi Dutschke and the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (SDS) into prominence. The same year, students formed the Kritische Universität in West Berlin as an alternative to the increasingly bureaucratized Free University, offering student-taught courses.

1968 and Beyond

The 1968 season of student unrest opened in Czechoslovakia. In January, an unpopular neostalinist secretary of the Czech communist party was replaced by Alexander Dubcek, who introduced far-reaching reforms including democratization within the party, freedom of movement and freedom of expression. Students played an important role in the Prague Spring of discussion and protest that followed, with calls for a continuation of the reforming line and the dissolution of communist party rule. Encouraged by the Prague movement, students in Warsaw took the occasion of the banning of a nationalist drama to demonstrate for more freedoms and democratization in Poland. The brutal repression of both movements would be a point of reference for student leaders in 1989.

In the West, the power of the student movement in Prague inspired actions chiefly motivated by such issues as NATO demands on Europe, the Vietnam war, and the effects of US policies in the Middle East. In Rome, the via Giulia riots led to 250 student arrests. Next came Germany, where Rudi Dutschke was shot and severely wounded during the suppression of the Easter riots, crippling the movement.

In France, the expulsion of the student leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit from the University of Nanterre for his organizational activities moved the center of protest once more to the Sorbonne. On May 3, the rector called in police to remove the demonstrators, who responded by erecting barricades and flinging

cobblestones. A week-long battle ensued, in which hundreds of students and police were injured and 600 students were arrested. Police brutality and government intransigence brought the workers over to the side of the demonstrators, and a season of strikes ensued. By late May, some ten million workers were on strike, joining labor issues to the political ones, and the De Gaulle regime seemed on the verge of collapse. Only quick concessions by DeGaulle on labor issues, weakening the workers' support for the student movement, avoided political disaster; and a successful appeal brought conservative elements in the country to the government's side in new elections. Inspired by the May events in Paris, outbreaks occurred on 3-10 June in Zagreb and Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in Zurich later that month, in London, and still later in Warwick, where students discovered documents showing university administrators' investigations into student political activity.

The significance of the two-year period of protest is still a matter of debate among social historians. Most have agreed that the immediate results were less important than the long-term consequences. At least in the West, the movements produced few concrete gains besides more open enrollments and fewer entrance requirements. Over the long term, some studies have blamed the movement for driving the radical Leftist fringe toward a drastic change in tactics. Disappointed by the failure of the movement to bring about a general revolution, these studies say, some

organizers resorted to forming a tiny vanguard of violent operatives dedicated to subverting the system—the Red Army Faction in Germany, Direct Action in France. In Italy, the rise of the Red Brigades made the student movement of 1977-78 all the more radical and violent. On the positive side, studies have suggested that the movement drew attention to the persistent class divisions that seemed to prevent realization of the democratic dream, while the postwar political parties began to abandon ideology in the general enthusiasm that accompanied the economic boom. It drew attention to the negative side of capitalist development and modern technology, emphasizing the limits to economic growth and bringing environmental concerns to international attention, culminating in the Greens movement (begun by students in late 1970s Germany). Intellectuals, many of whom had been students or professors in the 1960s, including Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, in questioning the very concept of modernity, looked to the emergence of a new intellectual movement, eventually dubbed post-modern.

From this standpoint, social historians have been less stunned than political scientists, when workers who had lived through the 1970s in Eastern Europe as well as students who were just coming of age in the 1980s began questioning the technological and economic utopia of socialism, first in Poland and then elsewhere. For two decades, the movements for reform, democracy and pluralism had run up against increasingly intransigent and

entrenched administrations in these countries. Even convinced socialists saw that something had to change.

The Solidarity movement in Poland from 1981 showed that the regimes were not entirely invulnerable; and Gorbachev's reforms sent shock waves throughout the Eastern bloc. Inevitably, students became involved in what followed. They were on hand when the Honecker government crumbled and the Berlin Wall came down. They were in the vanguard of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. Prague Spring veterans who had organized themselves in early 1989 spearheaded a large commemorative demonstration that August. Government repression of a large student demonstration the following November pushed the protest over into revolt. The unofficial opposition party thereupon threatened a general strike. When the government realized Russian aid would not be forthcoming, it resigned. Here as elsewhere, the Soviet era was over.

Although the 1989 movements signalled the decisive end of an epoch in European history, they did not signal the end of student protest movements. The long view of university history suggests that the most recent flareups are merely foretastes of what may happen when genuine issues join the interests and the passions of the mass of students, sending them into the streets once more, proclaiming the power of youth, the oppression of the generations and of parents, and the desire for change.

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