

Chapter 5

THE STRAINS OF THE MOVEMENT

You will start out standing,
 Proud to steal her anything she sees.
 But you will wind up peeking through her keyhole
 Down upon your knees.

— Bob Dylan, “She Belongs to Me”

‘But turn your eyes to the valley: there we shall find
 the river of boiling blood in which are steeped
 all who struck down their fellow men...’

— Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* (XII, 46-51)

Like the generation that spawned it, the Movement was complex yet elemental, cooperative yet individualistic. In terms of politics, it included moderates, liberals, radicals and, on the far fringe, anarchists. Ideologically, to borrow from Talleyrand’s dictum, some saw the war as an avoidable blunder of a reformable system, while others saw it as an unavoidable crime of a system in need of being overthrown. Goals ranged from a negotiated peace to a victory for the NLF that would cripple the neo-imperialist beast. Most concretely, though, what people actually *did* was vote, march, sit in, or trash. Some, including me, did all four at various times, but everyone eventually came to rest somewhere along the continuum from Voter to Marcher to Sitter to Trasher, a continuum from acceptance to denial of the System and its accepted methods of change, from reason to revolt, from hope to despair, from loyalty to disloyalty, and from larger numbers to smaller.

Voters

By the early 1970s, when public opinion finally turned against the war, most people in the Movement were the millions who simply let candidates know in polls and at the polls that Vietnam was hazardous to their political health. Few of these Voters joined the Marchers in openly confronting the System, let alone the Sitters in resisting it or the Trashers in fighting it. Voters wanted

to cut their System loose from an enterprise that most of them had supported when the price appeared low and the chance of success appeared high. They were motivated less by the war's devastation of Indochina than by its disruption of America. The Movement had briefly captured the Voters' attention rather than their loyalty, but that was enough to define the limits of the war within which Nixon and Kissinger had to act, and fail. The Voters' support for the System as long as it was disengaging from Vietnam was epitomized by Nixon's defeat of George McGovern in 1972. It amazed and disgusted the other strains of the Movement, who wanted to end not just the war but also the foreign policy of domination of uncooperative states that had led to it.

As sympathetic historian David Farber has noted, the continuation of a pointless war dashed the hopes of the liberal leaders of the early Movement, transforming them into bitter radicals who needed to show "disrespect (for a) system that could perpetrate Vietnam and perpetuate racism and inequality." They were angered at the Moratorium's efforts to get the marching masses to ring door-bells for the reform wing of a Democratic Party that was controlled by the wealthy and powerful, and took great pains to stress their disinterest in who ran for office and who won, or what was in their bills. This stance was more than a bit of a sham. Paltry as they were, the Voters' actions constituted the unspoken goal of the rest of the Movement, the inevitable last link in the chain from protest to power.

The Voters' leaders were the congressional "doves" who, as their name implied, were genteel opponents of the war, cooing their opinions while the "hawks" screamed theirs. When I interviewed the archetypal dove, Senator Mark Hatfield, 25 years after he won his first race for the Senate in 1966 on an anti-war platform, it quickly became clear why he would have been considered suspect by the other strains of the Movement. Hatfield opposed US support in the early 1950s for the "French game" that was aimed at "re-establishing its dead imperialism... (and) forced us to turn a common ally (Ho Chi Minh) into a common enemy." He then opposed the introduction of "advisers," which he considered the result both of Kennedy's pro-military campaign in 1960 (featuring a phony "missile gap" and a charge of Republican "softness" on communism in Cuba, China, and Vietnam) and of his perception that "Krushchev had pushed him around at the Vienna

disaster." At governors' conventions in 1965 and 1966, Hatfield's was the lone vote against resolutions endorsing the Johnson administration's policy, leading to bitter denunciations from other governors and the famed lobbying "treatment" from LBJ himself.

Still, Hatfield played by the System's rules. In his first two years in the Senate, he accepted William Fulbright's plea to hold off on anti-war legislation that Fulbright argued would, by losing, even more strongly affirm administration policy. Then in 1968 he accepted Nixon's assurances that his secret plan to end the war would be a campaign against "social, economic, and political injustice" in South Vietnam, and he seconded Nixon's nomination and was almost chosen as his running mate. Hatfield served as Nixon's surrogate speaker in the campaign, using his impeccable anti-war credentials to tell hostile college audiences that Nixon, not Humphrey or Wallace, was the candidate who could end the war. After the election, he again held his legislative fire, "to give Nixon a chance to bring a peace initiative to fruition." Finally, when Nixon's version of a peace initiative turned out to be the invasion of Cambodia, Hatfield and George McGovern jumped into distinctly unsenatorial action, sponsoring a 15-minute appeal on national television to raise funds to support local anti-war resolutions and lobby other senators to support their "end the war" amendment. Why, the rest of the Movement might have asked, had it taken so long for so determined an opponent of the war to take off the gloves and use the power of his position to force a meaningful vote?

Part of the explanation was personal. A deeply religious pacifist, Hatfield is drawn to reconciliation and resists driving away with the form of his politics people he might slowly win over on substance. He eagerly makes his friends across deep ideological divides, clearly relishing the fact that the man Johnson asked to run against him as a pro-war candidate in the bitter 1966 race — who said that unlike Hatfield he supported "America's fighting men (because) "I'd rather fight the communists in the elephant grass of Southeast Asia than in the rye grass of the Columbia river basin" — later became a close friend and chaired Hatfield's re-election committee. When Hatfield denounced the war in a prayer at a White House breakfast honoring the Apollo astronauts, he saw it is an honest way of sharing his deepest con-

victions. Nixon, on the other hand, took it as a cheap shot, and as a result gave Hatfield a place on his "enemies' list."

But character provides less explanation here than institution. Hatfield intuitively followed the System's rules because he wanted to be an effective senator. He complained about the "the radicals, burning down ROTCs" who hurt his search for votes for his anti-war amendment because "the Senate...is scared of the street." He could not be part of the angry, convention-defying world of "the street" and still be a functioning part of the Senate. With disgust, almost anger, he sardonically criticizes US policy in Vietnam by saying: "This was not the way to mount geopolitics!" This implies that he was willing to see geopolitics mounted in some other way, and that implication is what made him, and the Voters, different from the rest of the Movement.

During the end of Johnson's term and the beginning of Nixon's, leaders of the Voters continued to call for suspension of certain aspects of the war, such as bombing the North or invading surrounding countries, and for negotiations. The rest of the Movement shifted to a simpler stance of "Out Now!" Doves were hit from the left and the right for occupying an inconsistent middle ground. The rest of the Movement saw partial measures as granting the assumption that we had any business at all in Vietnam, while hawks sneered at people who proposed negotiations but opposed US military action if they failed. But the doves knew exactly what they were up to: arguing for partial, inconsistent measures that reach swing voters is what winning within the System is all about. It was the fact that they were winning that enraged the right; it was the fact that they were doing so within the System that enraged the left.

Especially prior to Johnson's decision to de-escalate, calls for negotiations not only built a bridge for people to cross to out-right opposition, but weakened supporters of the war by forcing them to admit they were unsure of their goals. The doves wanted to end the war, and their political noses told them that more radical alternatives would lose them the swings they were trying to reach. It was misleading for SWP leader Halstead to say, for example, that by opposing the use of herbicides on crops but not their use to protect US base areas, Senator Ted Kennedy "left the war-makers latitude to drop herbicides anywhere they chose." Kennedy wasn't trying to leave anybody any latitude, but rather

trying to make the most out of his position in the minority. That is what Voters do.

Marchers

Marchers, Sitters, and Trashers were different from most of the Voters, because they cared enough to go public. For Marchers, this meant exposing themselves to judgment at marches, rallies, and teach-ins, or maybe just wearing an anti-war button that would bring a nod of support from the young and a sneer of ridicule from the old. At heart, though, Marchers were more like Voters than like the other two, because they still worked within the System, negotiating its approval for legal marches and meetings that called for, rather than forced, change.

The Marchers saw massive demonstrations as the best way to spread the anti-war message to the nation as a whole. They respected the Sitters' integrity, but opposed civil disobedience as counter-productive to the goal of reaching the average citizen, who was turned off by even non-violent rejection of authority. The Trashers they flatly repudiated as either guilt-ridden egotists or government agents. Paradoxically, the archetypal Marcher was the SWP's Fred Halstead, who fought to keep the Movement legal and peaceful when other groups tried to channel it into civil disobedience or violence that challenged the legitimacy of the very System that the SWP was, in the long term, dedicated to destroying. Halstead's approach was seconded by the world's most famous Sitter, Martin Luther King Jr., who thought that for tactical reasons the Movement should stick to Marching. After his speech at Riverside Church in April 1967, this oft-arrested son of the South rejected confrontation with the power of the state in favor of constant appeals to the nation. Notes from the news conference read as follows:

Q: Advocate for ord(erly) march? Y(ou) ag(ree) w(ith) mass C(ivil) D(isobedience)?

A: Many levels of protest. At moment — not p(oin)t to do so. Many prelim(inarie)s can and need to be done in hope that country's cons(cience) will be aroused. Need to inform — unaware of full historical need — massive teach-ins, preach-ins, non-violent demonstrations on sp(ECIAL) p(oint)s...

A few of the Marchers' leaders thought that the legal marches were complemented by the acts of civil disobedience and confron-

tation, which received more play in the media. Dave Dellinger, a pacifist who was one of the "Chicago 8" tried for disrupting the Democratic Convention, served as a liaison between the Marchers and Sitters and at times even the Trashers, trying to bring these disparate elements together just as vigorously as Halstead was to trying keep them apart. He eventually left the Marchers behind and joined the Sitters in the great split of the Mobe in 1970.

A shining example of the Marchers' tactics was the open anti-war movement in the armed forces. Not a law had to be broken, and only some unconstitutional regulations challenged, by soldiers who joined anti-war marches both in and out of uniform, published anti-war newspapers, and signed on to anti-war statements, but these actions, which numbered in the thousands and became ubiquitous by the early 1970s, were devastating to US policy. An army that protests its own orders as immoral is not an army that takes much initiative in carrying them out. When in a delicious mimicking of Movement practice members of the First Air Cavalry in 1971 placed their unit name by their own names in an anti-war newspaper ad "for identification purposes only," one could safely write off that unit's effectiveness in offensive combat. VVAW's troops also didn't break the law when they scored their media grand slam by throwing medals over the Capitol fence. This legal statement disrupted the war effort more than the Sitters and Trashers did in their May Day events the next week.

But how did that disruption take effect? That was the question the organizers of the Marchers had to answer as people became frustrated with taking part in marches that were successful in the sense that they were increasingly large and increasingly well-covered, but felt like failures in the sense that the war rolled on despite them. Ironically, all the strains of the Movement had a clear answer to this question except the Marchers themselves. For the Trashers, marches were opportunities to draw converts or unwitting bystanders into violent confrontation with the illegitimate empire, to "bring the war home" so that it couldn't focus so much of its repressive energies overseas. For the Sitters, marches were practice runs for general strikes and mass sit-ins that would force the System to choose between war abroad and peace at home. For the Voters, marches helped to create a consciousness that would elect an anti-war congress. But the Marchers could only

explain the point of their marching in mystic generalities, as in this pitch made by NPAC in 1970:

Mass demonstrations remain the anti-war movement's most effective method for communicating its message.... Demonstrations by themselves do not end the war. Nor do other methods of protest suggested by those who disparage demonstrations. The war will end when its catastrophic consequences become unbearable to those waging it and those burdened by it...The job of the anti-war movement is to educate, organize and mobilize tens of millions of people to hasten the day when those with the power to change governmental policy use that power to end the war.

This statement posits a mysterious link between the consciousness-raising of mass marches and a decision by the nation's rulers to wind down the war. Although written by people who opposed Sitting and Voting, it hints that both would work once Marching spread the anti-war message. Indeed, this murky proposition was confirmed in 1970: Congress had failed to enact legislation withdrawing US troops, yet the troops were coming out; draft resistance and other forms of civil disobedience had failed to keep the armed forces from getting their soldiers, yet the soldiers were refusing to take the offensive in the field. A resolute administration could have logrolled congress back to full-scale war and a resolute army could have crushed the informal mutinies, yet they both chose to respond to discontent by pre-empting rather than challenging it. The Movement had somehow created an atmosphere of crisis, convincing the Establishment not that the war was wrong, but that it risked social breakdown.

The marches were becoming a way for people to renounce not only the war but the war culture, the other parts of America they found oppressive. By 1970 the banners called for confronting America's rulers not just for the crime of Vietnam but also for domestic abuses. They demanded a freeze on the war rather than wages, and self-determination for both the Vietnamese and, variously, residents of local school districts, university students, and Indian, black, Puerto Rican, and Chicano communities. The banners showed a growing insistence on sub-national identity for blacks, gays, union members, soldiers, veterans, feminists, busi-

nessmen, welfare mothers, even Jews and partisans of Palestinians, although organizers kept those last two separated as far as possible. It all had the air of rejection of the prevailing system, of disloyalty to the prevailing culture, and it was that air that troubled the Establishment.

The war-makers protested too strongly their contempt for the Marchers. Johnson blasted us as cowards and his brain trust of Dean Rusk and McGeorge Bundy patronized us as blind students being led by dimwitted professors. Nixon pretended we weren't there, pointedly watching real Americans play football on TV during the un-American Mobe, and Agnew viciously attacked us as traitors and slyly hinted we were homosexuals, while their brain trust of Henry Kissinger dismissed us for being "brought up by skeptics, relativists and psychiatrists." But when they felt the unspecified trembling under their feet from the marching of the millions in this unsilent minority, they grudgingly complied with our demands, lest the trembling turn into a cataclysmic rumbling. The process by which this happened was so mysterious, and the continuing slaughter in Vietnam so great, that Marchers questioned their impact even in their time of victory. Over and over again, Marchers would ask each other, "So, what do we do now?" The only people with satisfying answers were those who said we had to do something more than just another march.

Sitters

Sitters crossed the line from appealing to the state to disrupting it. They refused to play by the rules of a government that was, as SDS leader Tom Hayden said, "an outlaw institution ...under the control of war criminals." Sitting included acts that were non-violent but illegal, like burning a draft card, refusing induction, patrolling to "search and evade," going AWOL, withholding taxes, occupying campus buildings and shouting down visiting war-makers, destroying files at draft boards, and symbolically attempting to shut down induction centers, troop trains, the Pentagon, and finally, in 1971, the entire capital. Not since the birth of the labor movement had America seen this large a rejection of what Johnson called "democracy" and Nixon called "law and order." The number of people charged annually with draft resistance rose to 5,000, or 18 percent of inductions, by 1972, hundreds

of thousands of students went on strike, and the US Army as a whole took a pass on offensive combat.

Sitters renounced democratically-determined laws and the regulations of democratically-approved hierarchies like universities and the armed forces. Some among the Sitters held that America was not a democracy: just as Dylan had presciently railed against the “masters of war” before there was even a war of which they could be masters, so had SDS, through the very name it adopted in 1960, insisted years before anyone else that there was nothing democratic about a society controlled by a monied elite, no matter how many elections they held. But most Sitters did accept America as a democracy, and simply argued after Thoreau, Ghandi, and King that if you couldn’t convince the majority to change oppressive laws, then you had the right and duty to break them. Some Sitters also cloaked their anarchy in an appeal to higher law, calling the laws funding the war and mandating the draft unconstitutional, but most just admitted they were taking the law into their own hands. That, after all, was how the West was and continues to be won, and nobody running a foreign policy of might makes right could credibly lecture Sitters about the need for majority rule.

Sitting means the end of debate and the search for consensus. It means you are rejecting reason. This crucial characteristic of the Sitters was captured and encouraged by Dylan’s cryptic and increasing alienation. His lyrics and even his way of drawling them, studiously insouciant yet desperately urgent, appealed to essence rather than intellect, to the need for empathy rather than for resolution. The title of his “Love Minus Zero/No Limit” parodied calculus classes in particular and the notion of college in general — the only difference between colleges and nursing homes, he said, was that more people died in colleges. The song itself was a paean to anti-intellectualism:

My love, she speaks like silence,
 without ideals or violence.
 She doesn’t need to say she’s faithful,
 yet she’s true like ice, like fire...
 In the dime stores and bus stations
 people talks of situations,
 read books, repeat quotations,
 draw conclusions on the wall.

Some speak of the future,
 my love, she speaks softly
 She knows there's no success like failure,
 and that failure's no success at all.

When a young reporter interviewed him, probing his songs for explicit meanings, Dylan skewered him viciously in the "Ballad of a Thin Man" for applying tawdry rationalism to poetry:

You've been with the professors,
 and they've all liked your looks.
 With rich lawyers
 you have discussed lepers and crooks.
 You've read all of F. Scott Fitzgerald's books;
 You're very well read, it's well known.

And in "On the Road Again," Dylan let the insanity of "normal" society explain why he refused to take part:

Well I woke up in the morning,
 there's frogs inside my sox.
 Your mama she's a-hidin'
 inside the ice-box.
 Your daddy walks in wearin'
 a Napoleon Bonaparte mask.
 And you ask why I don't live here...
 Honey, do you have to ask?

The YIPpies egged Sitters on with visual versions of Dylan's alienation. Historian David Farber is right to say that the YIPpies played "the game of fascism when they aestheticized politics." Like the directors of American presidential campaigns and the planners of Hitler's spectacles, they appealed to feelings rather than thoughts, to "thinking with the blood." Contrary to Gil Scott-Heron's song, the YIPpies thought the revolution would be televised. They staged insults of the System, touching off a scramble on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange by showering dollar bills down from the gallery, touting the candidacy of a pig for president, and gleefully threatening to spike the water supply of Chicago with LSD. In defense of the anti-rationalism of the YIPpies and of the Sitters as a whole, they were using their symbols to end bloodshed, not perpetuate it as Johnson and Nixon were with theirs. "To live outside the law, you must be honest," said Dylan, and the Sitters were that, overt and sassy in their rejection of reason.

Farber wrote that “to challenge Power is often to challenge reason, or, at the very least, reasonableness itself.” Johnson’s famed plea, which he made while raining bombs on Vietnam but had learned during his years in the moral swamp of the segregationist Senate, was: “Come, let us reason together.” Leslie Gelb and Richard Betts wrote a book whose thesis about decision-making in the Johnson White House is contained in its title, *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked*. The authors argued that their title was patently “ridiculous,” but accurate: the government did precisely what it was supposed to under broadly-accepted assumptions about America’s world role, and Johnson would have been pilloried for pulling out before thousands of dead Americans proved the assumptions unworkable. Somebody had to put their foot down to stop this mad reasonableness that was “working” when it brought pointless death, so like the hero of the apocalyptic movie “Zabriskie Point,” Sitters refused to engage the enemy in rational discourse. War is itself irrationality, a recourse to force and not ideas, and it poses the blunt, anti-intellectual question that both Dean Rusk and Bob Dylan agreed was fundamental: “Which side are you on?” This was a contest between the Establishment and the Sitters for our loyalties, and the Sitters were prevailing, when the Establishment surrendered by ending the war. Sitting crossed the Rubicon of reason, but the Sitters saw themselves as simply being in hot pursuit of the war-makers who had crossed it long before.

Professors who supported the war often criticized the Movement’s claims as exaggerations. A serious and so all the more hilarious defense brief, Guenter Lewy’s *America in Vietnam*, argued about just how many inches wide were the Tiger Cages in South Vietnam’s jails, just how many yards bombs from the average B-52 dispersed, just how many people on the Phoenix lists were assassinated rather than killed in combat, and whether admitted torture, napalming, and murder of civilians was unwritten policy or a statistical aberration. That kind of “rationality” is akin to analyzing a tape of someone who calls 911, screaming for the police to do something about a murder that is taking place just outside. Yes, we were hysterical. We were seeing a murder, many thousands of murders, before our eyes, and we were trying to stop them. In any event, these critics lost their standing when they affirmed what Christopher Lasch called the academy’s “in-

tellectual acquiescence in the premises of the Cold War," and failed to turn their analysis and contempt equally onto the administration's systematic whoppers, beside which the Movement's hyperbole paled.

Columbia professor Zbigniew Brzezinski labelled as "anti-modern fossils" the SDS leaders who occupied buildings and refused to negotiate, since he thought they lacked the ability to reason and bargain in "the new technocratic society" that had solved most social ills. Campus protest to him was merely "the death rattle of the historical irrelevant" whose vision of a just society was an ancient fairy tale; he was right if you took our vision literally, but in political terms, he was breathtakingly wrong.

That the Movement's vision of a peaceful world was unachieved doesn't mean that it was irrelevant. What Brzezinski was missing was that we were constructing a dream, as his compatriot Henryk Sienkiewicz did for partitioned 19th century Poland with romantic novels about Poland's 17th century glory, to "uplift the hearts" of people facing an apparently insurmountable challenge. Our certainty that a better world was possible if America would just get out of Vietnam and free the Black Panthers gave us enough hope to head out into the streets one more time. Eventually, it was Brzezinski's stand on the war and not that of his opponents that became irrelevant. But eventually wasn't good enough for some Sitters, who had declared the war unacceptable and felt forced by the brutality of Nixon's withdrawal to make good on their declaration by any means necessary.

Trashers

The Kennedy brothers, amoral representatives of corporate liberalism, understood that protest unattended to leads to violence. Jack argued that those who made peaceful change impossible also made violent revolution inevitable, and Bobby acknowledged as he came out of mine in Chile that if he worked in such conditions, he'd be a communist too. The Trashers, were proof of the Kennedys' maxims. By 1969 Trashers had been pushed along the scale from hopeful protesters to bitter revolutionaries by the continued prosecution of a lost war. They now considered "the people" they had tried to empower to be either dupes manipulated by the System into pledging perpetual allegiance, or villains who voluntarily supported an empire. Reform was impossible; all that was left was revolt. Where the Marchers wanted an end to

the Vietnam War and the Sitters wanted No More Vietnams, the Trashers wanted, in the words of Argentinean revolutionary Ché Guevara, “two, three or many Vietnams,” as body blows to US imperialism.

Led by the Weathermen, inspired by the gun-toting Black Panthers, and identifying with soldiers who “fragged” officers for ordering dangerous missions, the Trashers took a giant step past the Sitters and declared war on the System. The target of Sitters’ favored chant, “1,2,3,4, We don’t want your fuckin’ war,” was the System they hoped to scare into changing; the Trashers directed their chant, “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, Dare to struggle, dare to win,” at the Sitters, hoping to embolden them into revolt. The Sitters lined up to be jailed; the Trashers refused to be caught or stay jailed. They were the “crazies” who stormed the stage at rallies to eject liberals; the “plate-glass revolutionaries” who surged out from legal marches to smash store windows; the bombers who usually targeted the System’s structures, like banks, power plants, and draft boards, but at times used anti-personnel weapons. They were the Movement’s warriors, and like the System’s warriors in Vietnam, like all soldiers in combat, they were always tawdry and often absurd, but still tinged with a heroic glow, larger than life because they were risking death.

The other strains of the Movement said they detested the Trashers, but they privately respected the lunatic courage of “bringing the war home” and letting America feel some of the violence it had been exporting to the Third World. Even pacifists saw the Trashers as the moral equivalent of an NLF commando unit that had the right to float up the Potomac and start lobbing mortars in a “surgical strike” at the Pentagon, even if it scorched some of the surrounding suburbs. I didn’t consider turning in to the police people I suspected of connections to bombings, something I wouldn’t consider not doing 25 years later, and I sensed a saintly air to Sam Melville, the bomber who was shot to death during the 1972 police assault on Attica prison. Trading on such sympathies, the Trashers who went underground moved easily, frustrating the FBI’s feverish attempts to track them down by infiltrating the open Movement.

Doubt was not permitted in the ranks of the Trashers, lest it infect them and return them to being irresolute Sitters. The Trashers, with their origins in SDS’s intense analysis, reasoned

themselves into the need for revolt, but like the academics they hated — Allan Bloom, John Roche, the Bundy brothers, Kissinger, and Brzezinski — they failed to understand that in human affairs, the logical extreme required by absolutist reasoning is itself illogical. The Weathermen took their name from Dylan's call to reject authority: "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." But they ignored his instruction, just a verse later, "Don't follow leaders, watch the parking meters," and became a mirror image of the intolerance they were attacking. Compatriots who refused to conform to the decisions of this vanguard were expelled as cowards and counter-revolutionaries. Showing the way to this internecine warfare were the Black Panthers, whom the Weathermen idolized.

The Panthers adopted the rhetoric and emulated the internal methods of anti-colonialist Marxist-Leninists, in part because these Third World leaders were also non-whites battling Western empires, and in part because their ways found a resonance in black American culture. Florid alliteration, the call-and-response of stock phrases, and the use of a cascade of connected points to overwhelm an opponent were all attributes of Marxist-Leninist language that had black parallels, from the insults of "doing the dozens" on somebody's mother in the "signifying" and rhyming of the streetcorner to the soaring oratory of preaching the gospel and condemning the sinners in the pulpit. The secrecy, pompous ritual, cults of personal loyalty, quiet coups, and brutal purges of Marxist-Leninism were already the stuff of black street gangs and elite college fraternities alike, and the Panthers took to it with alacrity.

With their bravado and recourse to violence, the Panthers, had more in common with the cops, or, as they said incessantly, the pigs, than with the Movement. The Movement's previous strange bedfellows, Hell's Angels who had almost joined a peace march but instead attacked the marchers, had the same problem. Gonzo journalist Hunter Thompson wrote of how the Angels and their police nemeses both liked to strap on the leathers, fly their colors, rod about with power between their legs, and beat people up. Dylan registered the Movement's disappointment in these rebels to the right: "Picking up Angel, who just arrived here from the Coast, who looked so fine at first but left looking just like a ghost."

The same could be said for the Panthers, whose promise eventually disintegrated into a simple shake-down of white radicals. Despite their revealing, Freudian claim that “we are the people our parents warned us about,” the white, upper-class Weathermen knew that in fact those people were the Panthers, so they turned to them uncritically for guidance. The Weathermen tried to outdo the Panthers in tough talk, rigid discipline, purges, and bombings. Ironically, the Weathermen learned about bomb-making from the Panthers, who had in turn learned it from FBI and other police provocateurs trying to catch them in the act. Coming full circle, the Weathermen bombed the judge’s home in the trial of 21 New York Panthers who had been encouraged by a provocateur to bomb a police station.

The Trashers’ adoration of black rebellion was at times comic, as when SDS members decided that black kids who demanded their wallets were carrying out a revolutionary act and so should not be reported to the hated pigs, or when the Weatherman faction at SDS’s last convention asked Panthers to speak for them, only to listen aghast as they showed misogyny and a lack of sexual imagination by calling on SDS women to serve as “pussy power” whose position in the organization should be “prone.” But the adoration extended to the tragic as well, as in the final act of the Trashers years after the War, when Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert aided Brinks robberies by black criminals who used revolutionary rhetoric to cover up their drug habits. Two guards were killed, and Boudin and Gilbert are serving decades in jail. That two of the finest, kindest, most committed, and thoughtful minds we had should end up as lookouts for a bunch of thugs is a devastating indictment of the Trashers — and of the rest of the Movement for excusing their crimes and abetting their escapes.

It took a ton of rigorous theoretical analysis well-seasoned with guilt, frustration, and peer pressure to put Boudin in the New York brownstone that was the Weathermen’s bomb factory before an unintended explosion cast her naked out into the street and onto the run. And the transition of Gilbert from warm, generous campus leader to helmeted crazy throwing a garbage can through a plate-glass window in Dupont Circle during the 1969 Mobe left people who knew him literally speechless. But the Brinks murders were no mistake, as the Movement often said about the War, but rather the inevitable result of the Trashers’ two deepest

traits: disdain for democracy and anguish over injustice. A harsh test of maturity is what you do when your dreams fade and you see you are not part of a purposeful movement but rather, as Dylan said, "just...one more person crying." The strong ones among the Marchers and Sitters decided that they didn't need dreams of success to keep going, and the weak ones who needed dreams simply dropped out, but the Trashers found a third way to handle disappointment, the fanatic's way, by constructing an even more desperate dream of finding validity through violence.

There must be something about deciding that you have the right to use violence that flips a switch in your brain and turns you into an asshole, be you an assistant secretary of state or an anti-war activist. One only had to meet Trashers to lose one's starry-eyed admiration and realize that they had become dangerous bullies, contemptuous of those who stood in the way of their vision. It was shocking to hear someone actually talk like Mao's Little Red Book, as when an SDS leader in Chicago during the student strike of 1970 dismissed one of my suggestions with a retort like, "the dialectical response entails a disciplined Marxism," or when I questioned the wisdom of contributing local cash to a New York Panther who was fund-raising in Ithaca a few years later, and his front-man, SDS leader Dave Burak, said I was, "guilty of counter-revolutionary thinking by focusing on form and not content." Given what we know now about the Panthers' activities, it is reasonable to assume that Panthers bailed out by Ithaca's white radicals that day spent more time making bombs than serving up their famed breakfasts for children. *Sic Semper Tyrannis*, of all political hues.

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So who was right? What worked? Which was the driving strain of the Movement that should have absorbed the energies that were spent on the others? Many people in the Movement disputed even asking such questions as antithetical to its spirit and strength. Adopting Mao's dictum to "let a thousand flowers bloom" and the youth revolt's belief in "doing your own thang," they saw no necessity to try to bring the four strains together and find a single program they all could live with. At first, the Movement's strength had been its diversity, but that became a weakness when the one thing we all agreed on, the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam, began in 1969. Then, the "thangs" be-

ing done were often inconsistent and the flowers blooming tended to block each other's sun and leech each other's soil. People reacted by drifting from the Movement's optimistic, peaceful side to the jaded, angry point at which they would fold their tents or join the Trashers. At any point on the way they were likely to find themselves sneered at as irrelevant, patronized as foolish, and physically attacked, not only, as before, by the System, but now also by others in the Movement.

Certainly, there were brief moments like May 1970, in the aftermath of the invasion of Cambodia, when the four strains were helpful to each other. In that month, the specter of the Trashers and the reality of the mass Marchers scared university officials into surrendering to the demands of the small number of Sitters who were actually calling for strikes. The strikes, in turn, brought the depth of the Movement and the risk of ignoring it home to the public and the elite, creating more Voters than ever before, a brief majority for complete US withdrawal that gave congress the backbone it needed to convince Nixon and Kissinger once again that their options were limited. But such moments were rare, and owed more to serendipity than strategy.

In retrospect, the Trashers were the least effective of the strains. They promised to implement a vision from the song from which they took their name, "The pump won't work, 'cause the vandals took the handle." That promise was unfulfilled. It wasn't their symbolic bombings that broke the pump, that started the withdrawal from Vietnam and then kept it going, but rather the generalized resistance of the rest of the Movement to pro-war politicians, to campus calm, to the draft, and to fighting once you were there. The Trashers did pose a threat to the war by forcing people to focus on the sides and the stakes, but that could have been done just as well by dramatic Sitting. In the end, they probably drove more people away from the Movement than they attracted to it.

The Sitters' tactic of disruption was a double-edged sword, discrediting both the war and the Movement at the same time. The public was well-informed of their antics by the media, keeping the war in the forefront of national debate and helping to build a consensus against it. However, the very people who were being brought to the point of opposition by the publicity generated by the Sitters also felt threatened by their rejection of America and its

democracy, and negative ratings for the war and the protesters rose together. As a result, the Movement won the battle to end this war, but was weakened in its campaign to change the assumptions behind American foreign policy.

It is hard to see how it could have been any different. America didn't much care for any of the active Movement, from marchers to rioters. No matter how politely it is couched, activism makes the passive uncomfortable; no matter how patriotically it is cloaked, a challenge to national behavior makes the nationalist defensive. As Farber wrote, the very characteristics that were needed to get the Movement going ("naïveté, alienation, anti-intellectualism, stubbornness...") and even its primary strategy of mass rejection were themselves barriers to thoughtful evolution within the Movement and broad appeal outside it. The Sitters had chosen to be on the Outside, and were unable to make a transition after the War to the Inside they had rejected.

The Sitters we can rightly honor for their courage even as we criticize some of their tactical choices. The young draft resisters who refused to fight; the young soldiers who only pretended to fight; the draft-board raiding Berrigan brothers; the draft-card collecting adults who stood with us and brought their eloquent arguments to a large audience through their trials; the Berkeley students who tried to hold up troop trains and shut down induction centers — these were our heroes whom history will record as both brave and smart. People who saw every march as requiring a sit-down that violated the terms that Marchers had negotiated with local authorities; people who seized university buildings when they could have used legal tactics to build a stronger consensus against complicity with the war — these were our heroes who will be recorded as merely brave. Martin Luther King Jr. was accurate in his reading of the Movement: Sitting is a choice dictated not by conscience but by tactics, and it was premature in many cases.

Proof for this judgment can be found in the profound impact on public opinion of some of the large-scale or imaginative activities by Marchers, such as: the teach-ins of March 1965; King's first march in New York in April 1967; the Moratorium activities throughout the nation in October 1969; the Mobe that concentrated the people they had reached in two cities a month later; the 45,000 candles in the March Against Death; the GI coffeehouses and the

soldiers who took part in demonstrations; the giant reprise of the Mobe in April 1971; the memorial service at the Washington Cathedral attended by 400 soldiers in uniform; and the VVAW's casting of their medals on the Capitol steps. And musicians like Dylan, Hendrix, Country Joe, the Stones, the Airplane, and Aretha Franklin provided the covert beat and overt lyrics that broadcast the mood of the Marchers from Monterey to Woodstock. The Marchers were constantly in anguish over why they were failing to stop the war, but they were doing it, too slowly to be sure, but more effectively than any of the other strains.

Where the Marchers can be faulted is in their refusal to dirty their hands with the Voters. It was right to refuse to work for a presidential candidate like Hubert Humphrey who would not renounce the war and only hinted that he might be willing to wind it down, but wrong in the extreme to refuse to work for congressional candidates who were leading the anti-war effort. Yet the Marchers for the most part damned all collaboration with mainstream politicians. The non-communists who dominated the leadership and the ranks correctly fought against excluding from the anti-war coalition of even open communists, on the grounds that opposition to the war should be the only criterion for membership, but failed to extend this principle to potential congressional allies. In 1970 when some Marchers took a lead from the campus activists who had gone "clean for Gene" McCarthy in the 1968 primaries, and cut their hair and beards and put on coats and ties to campaign for doves in congress, their leaders criticized them harshly, taking the wind out of what could have been a massive effort to elect an anti-war congress.

Making common cause with members of the party that had started the war, let alone with the remarkable doves such as Mark Hatfield and Odgen Reid in the Republican party that was sustaining it, was certainly fraught with the danger. Leaders of the Marchers believed that collaboration with Voters, while it might help end the Vietnam War sooner, would gut the growing consensus against America's world power, and so would only result in more Vietnams. They were wrong, albeit for the right reasons: the Movement would rue the year it passed up a chance to pour its energies into replacing hawks with doves, or at least scaring the hawks into acting like doves. Even without a concerted effort by the Movement, congress drifted to the left on the war, respond-

ing both to polls and the many anti-war referenda that local activists forced onto the ballot. The drift could have been an avalanche had all the Marchers in the street for Mobe been on the phone and out front of the supermarket for doves the next fall.

And the representatives of the Voters, the doves in congress, what can we conclude about their harsh speeches and tepid amendments, the willingness of most to vote for final passage of the military budget each year after their position on Vietnam had been defeated? Only that they were lonely. The diffusion of anti-war sentiment in the many issues of a campaign meant that congressional opinion lagged behind the country in turning against the war. In addition, congress was controlled by Southern seniority, and anti-war sentiment was weakest in the South. The doves were bereft of support, besieged by their party on the right and the Movement on the left, and they muddled along as best they could. They took advantage of the uproar of May 1970 to pass Cooper-Church in the Senate, and although it never became law, it showed Nixon his limits. They took advantage of Watergate to pass the War Powers Act over Nixon's veto, and although it was progressively gutted over the next two decades, it did constrain President Ford from re-entering the fray as Cambodia and South Vietnam fell in 1975.

In the end, it was all just too much for the Movement to bear, the divergent agendas and attitudes of the four main strains, the confusion of simultaneous defeat and victory, the gnawing frustration within the core of the Movement because the war was continuing, and the draining lack of urgency on the periphery because it was ending. Even the civil rights movement, with its deep tradition of fighting within the family but pulling together outside it, failed to survive a similar set of challenges it faced in the mid-1960s; the callow anti-war movement didn't stand a chance.

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