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## The Double Matrix of the 60s: Progressive and reactionary legacies of the Sixties

"One of the reasons the 'sixties' continues to be a favorite punching bag of neocons and neoliberals is that it represented a decade of prolonged popular political education unique in American history." (Sheldon Wolin, *Democracy Inc.*)

"Revolution," once the totemic catchphrase of the counterculture, has become the totemic catchphrase of boomer-as-capitalist. (Thomas Frank)

The 1960s are usually considered, at least in the public sphere, as a unified whole or a "bloc" as the French Revolution also was by some analysts following Clémenceau's famous dictum that it was a "bloc" so could not be divided or dissected into various units or moments. This unified whole is mostly a *post facto* reconstruction which erases the complexity and contradictions which characterized not only the era but also what came to be known as the counterculture. Thus, rhetorically, the 1960s have become a matrix of all that is good or progressive for people or groups belonging to the progressive camp, loosely defined. The fight against racism, the anti-war struggle, feminism and some forms of pacifism, cultural diversity or multiculturalism, sexual liberation and the fight for gay and lesbian rights thus flow from the fights and intellectual ferment of the 1960s. The progressive matrix though is a response to the demonizing of the 60s by conservatives or rather reactionaries who created the first negative unified whole.<sup>25</sup>

For reactionaries, a term which is much better than the term "conservative"<sup>26</sup> even when referring to the so-called neo-cons, the 1960s are also a unified whole and the same phenomena that are claimed by progressives

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<sup>25</sup> Tom Hayden in his book which is part memory part history gives a list of all the progressive characteristics of the present which have their roots in the 60s. He typifies what I mean here by unified whole (or bloc) which is a counter-backlash strategy for progressives (19).

<sup>26</sup> Howard Buffet, writing in the conservative *National Review* run by the father of American conservatism in 1962 wrote: "When the American government conscripts a boy to go 10,000 miles to the jungles of Asia without a declaration of war by Congress (as required by the Constitution) what freedom is safe at home? Surely, profits of U.S. Steel or your private property are not more sacred than a young man's right to life." Conservatives were and still are often more progressive on foreign policy issues than liberal hawks or reactionaries deceptively calling themselves conservatives. See John Nichols in *The Long Sixties, From 1960 to Barack Obama* (2009). See also Mark Lilla's discussion of the different brands of conservatives and reactionaries in "Republicans for Revolution" (2012).

are presented in a negative way.<sup>27</sup> The 1960s and their utopias are thus a time of Anti-Americanism, idleness, cultural elitism, self-indulgence and promiscuity. In 1992 Patrick Buchanan summed up the terms of this reactionary interpretation of the 60s when he claimed there was “a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America.” going on in America when he targeted Clinton the so-called sex drugs and rock and roll child of the 60s.<sup>28</sup> The era also gave a new élan to the right in America and reshaped the politics of the Republican party which moved away from Keynesianism and became increasingly reactionary thanks to a backlash against the ideas of the 60s.

There is thus a rhetorical clash or matrixes which often seems to be a clash of Manichaeisms. Even Bill Clinton who should have a better memory has a binary view of this type.<sup>29</sup> I would therefore like to deconstruct the unity of a fantasized whole and move beyond a Manichaean apprehension of the sixties to show there were complexities and cross influences at the time which continue to produce effects now. I will also argue that this polarization was greatly encouraged by a reactionary demonization of the 60s which led liberals or progressives to counter the backlash by a unified defense. Thus Obama's election was considered as a belated triumph of some 60s ideas, notably the fight against racism, yet he himself distanced himself from the 60s by declaring “I come from a new generation of Americans. I don't want to fight the battles of the 1960s” (qtd. in Morgan 2).

In an article published by *Harper's* in 1968 Norman Mailer wrote about the 60s: “It was as if the historical temperature in America went up every month.” This is an example of what has come to be known as the acceleration of history. The 60s though were a time when many phenomena came to fruition after they had been developed earlier, in the 50s for example as far as Civil Rights and the fight against racism are concerned. But the “sound and the fury” of the 60s gave them a high profile. Retrospectively everything seems to have happened in that decade or in the period between 1964 and

<sup>27</sup> Thus a quotation of George W. Bush can illustrate the backlash against the so-called culture of the 60s. “The new culture, said if people were poor, the government should feed them. If criminals are not responsible for their acts, then the answers are not in prisons, but in social programs. People became less interested in pulling themselves up by their bootstraps and more interested in pulling down a monthly government check. A culture of dependency was born. Programs that began as a temporary hand up became a permanent handout, regarded by many as a right.” “A Charge to Keep” (Dec 9, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> “There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself.”

<sup>29</sup> “If you look back on the Sixties, and think there was more good than bad, you're probably a Democrat. If you think there was more harm than good, you're probably a Republican.” (*The Independent*, June 5, 2005).

1975. 1964 is the year when the Civil Rights Act was passed and also when the Gulf of Tonkin incident (and the lie about Vietnamese attacks) led to the escalation of the Vietnam War and 1975 the year when North Vietnam won the war and united the country.

In the 1964 election Goldwater was roundly defeated by Johnson and his kind of conservatism was then considered dead and buried. Yet two years later Reagan was elected governor of California, the very state where the Free Speech movement had started; so the culture war did not start later with the legacy of the 60s but was part of the 1960s. Goldwater was pro-abortion which also shows that neat categories are rather difficult to determine in American politics for today pro-choice Republicans are very few and far between. Johnson who was the true heir of the American liberal tradition after Franklin D. Roosevelt fought for a Great Society, he started a war on poverty and signed the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. Before Vietnam everything superficially seemed to be clear: liberals were progressives who fought for equality and social justice, conservatives against it.

### THE PROGRESSIVE MATRIX

The Vietnam War and opposition to it changed everything for the anti-war movement was first an anti-LBJ movement, a break within the Democratic camp and was fed by anger and disillusionment with a president who stopped fighting poverty to fight what he presented as communism in Vietnam. Slogans like “LBJ, How many kids did you kill today?,” signaled the demise of hawkish liberalism, among at least the young on campuses. The liberal hero proved to be a liar, a warmonger and the wrecker of his own social agenda. Activists challenged liberalism and the activism was first and foremost directed against the Democrats in power who were continuing the “permanent war” which was a consensus among “elites”, as defined by C. Wright Mills in *The Power Elite*.

The split between Johnson, a domestic liberal and a foreign policy hawk, and anti-war activists was in many ways a generational split and also a class one between campuses and factories. The 1968 “riots” and police repression around the Democratic Convention illustrate this split. The fight against racism and against the Vietnam War led to an unraveling of the liberal coalition which had dominated United States politics since Franklin D. Roosevelt. Martin Luther King also illustrates this trajectory: he moved from cooperation with Kennedy and Johnson in the battle for Civil Rights and Voting Rights to

outright opposition to the war. His radicalization indicates that the 1960s far from being a bloc were a time of quick changes and new battle lines. The post-1960s reconstructions do not generally take this constantly changing nature of issues into account.

The class divisions within the democratic camp were deep, workers in large part supported the war, believed in American exceptionalism and American righteousness. The New Left rejected these values and ideas and adopted anarchist-libertarian forms of dissent. The counterculture was in many respects a lifestyle clash with mainstream society which did not necessarily challenge some of its key organizing economic principles; notably for some groups the consumer society was redefined rather than contested. Yet retrospectively very different phenomena are perceived as a whole for the lifestyle revolution also affected New Leftists and the antagonism toward workers and racist Democrats was a link between many of the movements active in the 60s. In the progressive matrix created after the 60s, opposition to the Vietnam War became a kind of cement linking diverse groups and greatly exaggerating the numerical importance of protesters and the unity of the various oppositional movements. This paper does not wish to belittle the many progressive accomplishments of what is called the New Left but to problematize complex legacies.

Thus the 60s gave birth to what later became known as multiculturalism. In academia ethnic studies departments and women's studies departments are the legacy of the protest movement of the time. The fight for equal rights which was successful from a legal point of view but uncompleted and stymied by the war in Vietnam became a matrix for many kinds of protests. One offshoot of this fight however led to forms of ethnic separatism (SNCC excluding Whites) or forms of feminism which moved from a second universalistic wave to a third wave based upon the individualism fostered by market societies (Walker). The legacies of the 60s can be traced back to some splits within the 60s or to different trajectories starting from the same point. Thus Martin Luther King's universalism based on Christianity and inclusive non violent anti-racism clashed with Malcolm X's rhetoric when he was a member of the *Nation of Islam*. Later universalism itself became suspect and was attacked by some progressives taking their inspiration from the 60s.

The Black Panthers suggested a model of protest which was based on race, not class and resorted to violence to counter state violence. This model was in flagrant contradiction with King's attitude for he not only rejected violence but also never separated racial equality from socio-economic equality. His fight for equal rights for Blacks led him to leading a poor people's march

and to oppose United States imperialism and war in Vietnam. Later his legacy was co-opted by forces which were politically totally at odds with these views whereas Malcolm X became the embodiment of not only ethnic violence but ineffective opposition tactics. Yet although King is celebrated and has his own monument on the Mall now his link of race and class in his fights has almost disappeared from the political scene—with a few exceptions very recently. The rhetoric of diversity has swamped the rhetoric of equality and the legacy of the 60s led to a forgetting of the systemic exploitation of the mass of the people. Since workers and the so-called Old Left supported the war in Vietnam the generational conflict led to a junking of the class struggle in favor of anti-war activities and lifestyle revolts but the exploitation of the racist workers who supported imperialism was also forgotten.

In other words the legacy of the 60s on the progressive side could not be other than tangled and contradictory. The perfectly legitimate political and ethical opposition to the war in Vietnam led by what Hegel would have called a “ruse of Reason” to the decline of progressivism for the Democratic coalition was sundered and class became an academic discourse in a trilogy of “race, class, gender” where the systemic domination of the majority of the population disappeared. This is a paradox, not an indictment of specific actions or movements. Generational conflict erased the class struggle and resentment of anti-war activists also had some class roots for the poor were more likely to be sent to Vietnam than middle class students who got deferments or help from their parents to escape the draft.

In the case of feminism things are equally tangled. The revival of feminism after Betty Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique* and the setting up of NOW in 1966 is a key marker of the 60s and figures prominently in the progressive matrix. Feminism often had to fight with other movements, including SDS and the New Left and there was a racial split over feminist issues and actions. The gains of feminism in the 60s are tremendous and many fights have been won, from abortion to the opening of academia and business to women. Yet feminism also went from a universalistic inclusive stance to a particularistic or separatist and individualistic one. Feminism which had forgotten class and ethnicity (see bell hooks) from the start, got caught in the rhetoric of diversity, and as a reaction to the backlash which came with Reagan, moved toward very individualist definitions of what was originally a collective phenomenon.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> “At the very moment that poststructuralists and crucial historians were taking apart the category of gender and revealing the ways that sexuality was socially and historically constructed, some feminists were beginning to embrace the idea of feminine difference and putting forward essentialist or precultural

The New Left and the counterculture never managed to change the structure of power and the election of Nixon indicates that challenging a liberal hawk like Johnson did not lead in the direction wished for by radicals. Political power remained firmly in the hands of the same ruling class. In the progressive matrix there is the idea that activism, TV and the victims in all social classes explain the disaffection with the war and the subsequent pull out of Vietnam. Activism played a major part in shaping people's minds among young people but the nation that elected Nixon twice, including by a huge margin against McGovern in 1972, had not been swayed by anti-war demonstrators. Chomsky, who often claims that the United States did not lose the Vietnam war since it achieved its objectives, is one of the rare participants and analysts of the era to argue that by 1968 business had decided that the war was counterproductive and started thinking about ways to end it.<sup>31</sup> In the progressive matrix activism triumphed yet since there was no alliance between the various dominated and activist groups it was not likely that political victory could be achieved as the result of domestic action. As Todd Gitlin famously said after the 60s but also in large part during the 60s the left marched on the English department while the right took the White House (Gitlin: 1995, mostly chapter 5).

### THE REACTIONARY MATRIX

It took approximately sixteen years to count the vote in the 1964 election and Goldwater won. (George Will, *National Review* banquet celebrating Reagan's victory) (Morgan 241).

In terms of lifestyles and in many cultural spheres the protesters of the 60s seemed to have won the battle for ideas or at least the cultural battle for society was profoundly changed in its behaviors and consumption habits. This is a claim Tom Hayden makes in his book on the period<sup>32</sup>. Yet the right never lost the political battle. On the surface the United States had gone countercultural but deep structures remained very conservative and similar

explanations of gender and sexuality" (Echols 4).

<sup>31</sup> "The destruction of Indochina ensured that it would not provide a model that others might follow; it would not be a 'virus' that might 'infect others,' in the terms preferred by the planners. And the establishment of brutal and murderous military dictatorships in Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and elsewhere ensured that 'the rot would not spread.' These too are considerable victories, enhanced by the U.S. stranglehold to prevent recovery since and U.S. support for Pol Pot, via Thailand, to ensure the more efficient 'bleeding of Vietnam'" ("Memories," 1995).

<sup>32</sup> "The 1960s counterculture largely won the so-called culture wars of the past two decades" (Hayden 160).

to the 50s. Yet the 60s offered the Right opportunities to win hegemony, in Gramsci's sense of the term.

From the beginning the right demonized every moment and ridiculed it in order to take advantage of the class divide in the Democratic camp. From ludicrous accusations that "women's libbers" were "bra burners" to focusing on the long hair of hippies or demonstrators to using traditional Cold War anti-communist rhetoric, the right used the 60s, some of its excesses (for example Valerie Solanas's SCUM statements) but also its core ethical principles to defend its domination. There was a kind of political judo whereby the right often used the force of some aspects of the Left or the Counterculture which it equated with the New Left, to obtain what it wanted. Students and the young opposed the war in Vietnam and were active against segregation in the South so Nixon devised his "southern strategy" to drive a wedge between traditional Democratic voters.

The working class was encouraged in its nationalistic beliefs in American exceptionalism and reactionary gains were made easier by the rejection of hard hats by many 60s activists. The failure to link fighting against poverty and fighting against imperialism in the way Martin Luther King did, worse the very fact that Johnson the promoter of the war on poverty was also a promoter of war under false pretenses made a cohesive progressive fight impossible. Johnson did not want to be the first president to lose a war (as if Truman had won in Korea) but in the end he lost both his war on poverty and his credibility.<sup>33</sup>

The split between generations and Old and New Left was a godsend for reactionaries. The right was actually energized by the 60s even more than progressive causes. Radicals contributed to the death of the liberal dominance from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Johnson but in favor of the Right. The Right organized a series of backlashes and managed to redefine the core political issues which had structured oppositions for 40 years. Instead of progressives being united to fight "economist royalists" as Franklin D. Roosevelt had done elites were redefined by the right as being academics, intellectuals, movie makers and limousine liberals. Radical chic poseurs and the limousine liberals did make the ideological struggle of the right easier. The class struggle vanished and the substitute for a social class opposition was a new class struggle between the so-called "new class" of intellectual workers and welfare administrators and the mass of Americans calling themselves the middle class. Some writers on the left are developing this idea without demonizing

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<sup>33</sup> This may remind us of Churchill's famous remark addressed to Chamberlain after Munich in 1938: "You were given the choice between war and *dishonor*. You chose *dishonor* and you will have war."

the New Left (though sometimes criticizing the counterculture). For instance Tom Engelhardt.<sup>34</sup>

The right could summon decades of nationalist propaganda and praise for American exceptionalism and now benefit from a new willingness to listen among workers alienated from activists. The fight against racism was redefined as racial favoritism thanks to affirmative action or busing, feminism or the fight for gay rights were presented as an attack of traditional family values. In other words the feminist slogan “the personal is political” was stood on its head and became “the political is only the personal”: values, lifestyles, modes of consumption. The “economic royalists” could now hide behind a rhetoric of culture war; money and class domination were off the agenda.<sup>35</sup>

Conservatism (again a misnomer) changed radically after the 60s, to such an extent that on social issues today Nixon appears as a redistributive Keynesian closer to Franklin D. Roosevelt than to George W. Bush. Reactionaries created a ragbag called “the Sixties” and produced a new Manichaeian conflict between good and evil. The “long march through the institutions” advocated by the German 60s leader (Rudi Dutschke) did indeed take place but mostly on the reactionary side; it led to the triumph of neo-liberalism and monetarism which are responsible for the rise in poverty and in inequality in the United States.

The 60s were thus a historic opportunity for radical causes to become popular and major successes on the anti-racist and feminist fronts were won but they were also a historic opportunity for the reactionary right to impose its agenda. If we follow Naomi Klein’s “Shock Doctrine,” then the Vietnam War and the turmoil and revolutionary ferments opposition to it induced coalesced after the two stage defeat of the United States (1972 & 1975) (Klein). The theory of a so-called stab in the back which stopped United States generals from winning the war prepared the ground for a reshaping of “conservatism.”

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<sup>34</sup> Here is an excerpt of an extended interview he gave to Harry Kreisler at Berkeley on April 23, 2004: “The right wing. Nobody noticed at the time except them. The first thing they did was they took the Word. They were people of the Word. Of course, they had billionaire beer manufacturers to help them, but they formed think tanks, they put out project papers, they ran seminars, they started publishing books—just pouring the words out. This was the essence of the right: they captured the Word. And the left (what was left of the left after those years), kind of [...] a lot of people who thought of themselves as radical or on the left went into daily life and did wonderful things, and led normal lives. But the most vocal part went on campus and began to speak in an incomprehensible language.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bz4hRzHUXQ8>

<sup>35</sup> An example of the return of social Darwinism and a reducing of the political to the personal, a quotation by David Brooks in *New York Times*: “A person’s behavior determines his or her economic destiny. If people live in an environment that fosters industriousness, sobriety, fidelity, punctuality and dependability, they will thrive. But the Great Society welfare system encouraged or enabled bad behavior, and popular culture glamorizes irresponsibility” (2004).

This theory is not historically new; it was the one prevailing among rightists and future Nazis in Germany after WWI. Hollywood produced *Rambo*, the University of Chicago produced its Chicago Boys active in the neo-liberal wrecking of Chile just after the 1973 coup. So the groups that came to be known as “neo-conservative” started their long march through the institutions and used the shock of the Vietnam protests and the military defeat to promote their agenda. Irving Kristol famously said in that a neo-conservative was “a liberal who has been mugged by reality” (1979).

Reactionaries used lifestyle issues to drive a wedge between young rebels and older workers, a wedge offered by the activists themselves which remained in place until very recently and as a cover for the deep socio-economic changes they advocated and started applying after Reagan was elected. The continuation of Nixon's Southern strategy targeted workers while enlisting them in their own fake values fights. Neoliberalism led to a decrease of wages for 90% of the population and the return of the Gilded Age levels of inequality. The United States became even more of an oligarchy and the junking of Keynesianism at home accompanied a form of economic globalization which meant unemployment in the United States for the very social groups embarked in support for the new reactionaries. Reagan in this sense was the best Gramscian thinker (Reagan, of course, here refers not to the person but to the forces ruling the United States when he was President).

The 60s then provided the Right with new cards in the political game. Some of these cards were old ones: business never lost the real “power of the purse” in United States politics but the 60s weakened resistance to it. The progressive utopias of the 60s were painted as dystopias for “regular Americans” or as Gingrich called them “normal Americans” while the new robber barons despoiled those they claimed to defend against intellectual snobs. A few academics who fitted this other wise biased description did help in this task, as Chomsky repeatedly argued.<sup>36</sup> So one might argue that over and beyond the clash of matrixes between radicals and reactionaries, or between Franklin D. Roosevelt's liberals and neo-cons which was and still is a political reality, there was a form of underlying agreement about sidelin-

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<sup>36</sup> Referring to the difference between the pre-WWII period and the present he wrote: “Left intellectuals took an active part in the lively working class culture. Some sought to compensate for the class character of the cultural institutions through programs of workers' education, or by writing best-selling books on mathematics, science, and other topics for the general public. Remarkably, their left counterparts today often seek to deprive working people of these tools of emancipation, informing us that the 'project of the Enlightenment' is dead, that we must abandon the 'illusions' of science and rationality—a message that will gladden the hearts of the powerful, delighted to monopolize these instruments for their own use” (*Year 501: The Conquest Continues*, qtd. in Sokal XVII).

ing the class struggle which by a ruse of reason led to a victory of the most reactionary and war mongering group within the American right.

This is indeed a real *aporia* for opposition to the War in Vietnam was ethical, necessary and a major advance of progressivism and the 60s did launch many progressive changes. Yet not bridging the gap between campus and factories or offices inevitably carried the seed of political defeat from the progressive camp broadly defined. The phrase “blaming the victim” became popular in the 1970s (William Ryan: 1971) mostly in relation to racism and violence against women, quite justifiably so. Yet a systemic form of blaming the victim also took place among New Leftists and countercultural movements. The racist squareness of workers who supported the War occluded the fact that workers were also victims of the socio-economic functioning of capitalism. The New Left and the counterculture recoiled from the mass of workers and did not follow in Martin Luther King's footsteps to include them in their protest fights. The generational divide which intersected with a class divide doomed the political fight of activists. The right twisted the slogans and ridiculed the actions of the left so we can argue that it out-Gramscied the left.

### INEVITABLE HYBRIDITIES

Some counter-cultural forms hooked into what Christopher Lasch, problematically called a conservative, came to call “the culture of narcissism” (Lash). This denunciation of the consumer society induced forms of narcissism was already a key idea in the books of Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse.<sup>37</sup> Of course, Guy Debord famously denounced the *Society of the Spectacle* in the 60s. This buying into the values of the consumer society was a different form of cooptation for rebels with causes or lifestyle rebels did not consume the same products as their opponents in the pro-war movement. Yet sex drugs and rock and roll can fit smoothly in a consumer society. Timothy Leary seen in this light is not a rebel but a consumer with a different lifestyle. Leary is poles apart from activists like Zinn or Chomsky and their legacies are totally at odds.

Changing one's life to change society leaves the power structure in this society intact. In some ways the depth of the thinking in the lifestyle rebellion

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<sup>37</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (1956). The former was a kind of cult book for more than two decades. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man, Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964).

was that of advertising. Opposition became an attitude if not a pose. Slavoj Žižek later would show that multiculturalism was basically using the same market categories as advertising and was ideally suited to globalization (Žižek 1997). The market was quick to fetishize not only commodities which we've all known since Marx, but also rebellion (Frank & Weiland). Beyond the superficial cooptation exemplified by wearing Che Guevarra T-Shirts to suburban parties there is a deeper cooptation of the slogans and lifestyle rebellions typical of a political approach where "the political is personal" and therefore nothing is political.

Seen in this way the Sixties are split between a political and an attitude wing. Anti-imperialism, anti-war activism meshed in a complex and often contradictory fashion with other forms of apparent rebellions which were mostly a new kind of positioning oneself in the consumer society.<sup>38</sup>

Bill Clinton, who was really hated by the right and considered as a child who had to be replaced by adults when George W. Bush came to the White House, in a way typifies this contradiction between the various trends of 60s rebellion. From a lifestyle and musical point of view Clinton was indeed a child of the 60s. He played the saxophone, was sexually liberated, had smoked but not inhaled marijuana; he had no racist prejudices toward Blacks and had not fought in Vietnam (deferment and Rhodes scholar in England). Toni Morrison called him "the first black President".<sup>39</sup> Yet politically he also exemplified the Gramscian victory of the Right: he pushed a welfare reform which was detrimental to the poor (workfare), he proved to be another liberal hawk who did not challenge United States imperialism. While he talked a good multicultural talk and said he wanted an administration that looked like America and included many people of color in his Administration, he fought a war against the poor among whom African Americans were overrepresented and pushed through NAFTA against the wishes of unions with the help of Republicans which gave a new impetus to globalization and domestic unemployment. Clinton had created the new post-60s synthesis between lifestyle rebellion and political continuity. What remained of the activism of the 60s with him was a pose and a style. A hip liberal hawk. He had moved away from the liberal consensus and his economic policies were to the right of Eisenhower's—not enough to satisfy the new reactionaries yet. Even in

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<sup>38</sup> See what Domhoff wrote in *The Class-Domination Theory of Power* (2005): "Thus, it is important not to confuse freedom with social power. Between 1962 and the 1990s there was a great expansion in individual rights due to the civil rights, feminist, and lesbian-gay movements, but during that time the ratio of a top business executive's pay to a factory worker's pay increased from 41 to 1 to about 300 to 1."

<sup>39</sup> In the *New Yorker*, October 1998.

terms of foreign policy Clinton was more interventionist than some conservatives.

George W. Bush presented himself as the anti-60s hero after his father had said he had "kicked the Vietnam syndrome". The reactionary matrix seems perfect to characterize leaders such as Reagan or Bush (1 and 2). Yet even with the neoliberal victory which came after Reagan's election as president some lifestyle rebellions of the 60s left their marks on these leaders. Reagan the staunch defender of family values was a divorced man and he never attempted to cancel *Roe v. Wade*, Bush II was an alcoholic and substance abuser who did not fight in Vietnam (for his father had found a shelter for him in the National Guard) and his Administration was even more open to minorities than Clinton's. Condoleezza Rice was not only a friend but also the first female African American Secretary of State. This form of 60s anti-racist influence and multiculturalism did not mean that his administration was humble, tolerant or respectful of minorities if they were not lucky to be rich. Dick Cheney's daughter is a lesbian and enjoys the support of her family which is surely a gain of the 60s fight for gay and lesbian rights but she is the same sort of reactionary as her father, of the imperialist, soak the poor school. Bush like Clinton had integrated the spectacle of the sixties and many lifestyle issues but kept to his reactionary agenda aiming to eliminate all the social and political gains made by progressives in the XX<sup>th</sup> century. During his watch as well as during Clinton's the prison population exploded, residential segregation increased, poverty became worse but he pushed the war and attack on civil liberties much further. Conservatives like Patrick Buchanan who are anti-60s counterculture activists and make some ugly comments are also in opposition to what they call "the War Party". In other words being anti-war does not mean you are progressive on domestic issues and vice versa.<sup>40</sup>

The split between campus and the world of work which characterized 60s radicalism seems to be bridged now with new protest movements in Wisconsin, Ohio and of course the *Occupy Wall Street* movement. In the last few years, class has reappeared as a key organizing concept with the slogan "we are the 99%," for instance, but also in the mix of demonstrators in Wisconsin and Ohio. After huge support for two imperialist "wars of choice" in Afghanistan and Iraq, protesters are united in their opposition to war and its

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<sup>40</sup> Frances Fox Piven, a left-wing anti-war activist quotes Buchanan's "Whose War?" article published in *American Conservative* in Jan-Feb 2004 in her book entitled *War at Home, The Domestic Costs of Bush's Militarism*, New York, The New Press, 2004. She, of course, disagrees with Buchanan social views.

economic implications and also to the ideology of neoliberalism which led to pauperization. There is a new realization that the class struggle is alive and well and is being fought from the top down. The existence of the Tea Party or rather Tea Parties also indicates that the Gramscian battle for hegemony among the 99% is still going on with techniques that recall the battle of slogans in the 60s.

The fragmented mosaic of the sixties ironically gave birth to cohesive perceptions of the “years of hope and days of rage” (Gitlin: 1987). Activism and the counterculture did change the United States in many ways but some of these ways had nothing to do with the original intentions of the protagonists. The main ruse of reason in the political field is of course the facilitation of the “rise of the Vulcans” (neo-cons in James Mann's phrase) and the monetarist right. Lifestyle rebellions and utopias were absorbed by the consumer culture which commodified them and found new sources of profit in the process. “Malefactors of great wealth” as the phrase used by Theodore Roosevelt in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1907) actually came away with more and more power after the 60s. Yet the hope and the rage are now re-emerging in a context in which class has stopped being a mantra and is becoming central in activism again.

Pierre Guerlain<sup>41</sup>

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