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*Tout! in context 1968-1973:*

French radical press at the crossroads of far left, new movements and counterculture
Abstract

With this thesis on the aftermath of 1968 in France, I have recreated the moment and environment of the libertarian paper Tout! Usually associated in historiography with the birth of the gay liberation movement in France, my initial research revealed its influence as more penetrative and revealing of the diverse left and new, countercultural movements of the early 1970s. I sought the testimony of former militants, writers and artists to uncover historical detail and motivations, and consulted relevant textual archives, aiming to situate and examine the paper within a number of interrelated contexts. Results showed the paper’s historical touchstones of scurrilous Revolutionary papers and 19th/20th caricature typified by L’Assiette au Beurre. The parallel paths of Dada, surrealism and situationism, and the Marxisant legacy of the Russian Revolution, foreshadowed the blend of cultural and political in Tout! May ‘68 was the crucible of militant, festive currents and speech, a time of rupture and reorientation for the various activists later at Tout!, the paper Action and posters of the Beaux-Arts inspiring new forms of agit-prop. In the aftermath of 1968, mao-libertarian current Vive La Révolution converged with an ex-Trotskyist, faculty-based group seeking cultural revolution. Figureheads Roland Castro and Guy Hocquenghem oversaw the merger of these groups and outlooks, coinciding with the launch of Tout! as a ‘mass’ paper. With a new look and ‘new political attitude’, influenced by Italian radicals and the US underground, Tout! challenged all forms of authority in Pompidou’s France, climaxing with the eruption of gay liberation in no.12. It was Tout!’s role in promoting ‘autonomous’ gender, sexual and youth movements that led to the disaggregation of Vive la Révolution, and despite successful sales the paper came to a sudden end in the summer of 1971. Like the rest of the far left, Vive La Révolution and Tout! suffered State repression, but evolved from a ‘proletarian’ Marxist critique of capitalism to attack the life routine of work, school and the family, judging the political Right and the Parti Communiste Français as equally reactionary. The paper testified to the importance of international, indeed transnational activities of the far left in the early 1970s. It provided a formidable impulse for the gay liberation movement FHAR, and foreshadowed the first feminist paper Le Torchon Brûle. As such it was a crucial press conduit for American radical left forms and practices, spearheading a shift from gauchisme to the growing counterculture. Tout! exemplified a brief, intense and fast-changing moment in French subcultural history and set new trends in left political journalism for the 1970s.
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No.3, 29 October 1970
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No.5, 10 December 1970
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No.8, 1 February 1971
No.9, 18 February 1971
No.10, 12 March 1971
No.11, 29 March 1971
No.12, 23 April 1971
No.13, 17 May 1971
No.14, 7 June 1971
No.15, 30 June 1971
No.16, 29 July 1971

Acronyms: parties, organisations and other initials

AG: assemblée générale
AJS: Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme
APPP: Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris
BO: Base Ouvrière
BPP: Black Panther Party
CA: comité d’action
CAL: comité d’action lycéen
CAR: comité d’action révolutionnaire
CdB: Comité de Base
CVB: Comité Vietnam de Base
CRS: Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité
ETA: Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
FA: Fédération Anarchiste
FER: Fédération des Étudiants Révolutionnaires
FHAR: Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire
FLIP: Force d’Intervention et de Libération du Pop
FLN: Front de Libération Nationale
FROLINAT: Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad
FTP: Francs-Tireurs Partisans
GdB: Groupe de Base
GIP: Groupe d’Informations sur les Prisons
GLH: Groupe de Libération Homosexuel
GR: Gauche Révolutionnaire
IL: Internationale Lettriste
IS: Internationale Situationniste
JCR: Jeunesse Communistes Révolutionnaires
LC: Lotta Continua
LNS: Liberation News Service
LO: Lutte Ouvrière
MLF: Mouvement de Libération des Femmes
MOBE: National Mobilisation Committee to End the War in Vietnam
NLF: National Liberation Front
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This work is dedicated with love and thanks to my partner Naomi Vernon.
Dissemination

Talks


Articles


Introduction: Tout!, a project of reconstitution

For the ‘Movement of May’ the slogan Ce n’est qu’un début, continuons le combat! resonated through the events of 1968 and would become the rallying cry in their aftermath, as participants entered a Gaullist France that both attempted awkwardly to address the movement’s concerns and actively sought to suppress the tenacious contestation of radicalised students and leftists—now tagged as gauchistes by the political mainstream. Tensions between the far left and the authorities would persist into the 1970s, against a backdrop of conservative government, unruly workers’ action and persistent student unrest.¹ However, May’s grand upheaval in virtually all aspects of French society also set the scene for the growth of new socio-political movements, extending beyond the battlegrounds of university faculty and industrial atelier, that were festive, spontaneous and ‘underground’ in essence. Few were more dynamic and contradictory than the Maoist-libertarian hybrid that was Vive La Révolution (VLR).

Furthermore, 1968 conceived a far left, alternative press, typified by Action and infused with the slogans and graphic representations of the May events; this new, expanding press would subsequently become the conduit for the revitalised ideas and imagery of far left and new social movements alike. If activists, intellectuals and assorted radical groupings sought to define themselves through a paper, bulletin or review of one kind or another, then Tout! was the press affiliate of VLR, a vibrant, original addition to the press that superseded the traditional gauchiste propaganda to attain a much wider, or self-styled ‘mass’ audience.² However, Tout! has been an under-researched publication, overshadowed in the historiography of the 1970s alternative press by accounts of Jean-François Bizot’s successful underground journal Actuel and the dominant left wing daily Libération.³

¹ For general surveys of the ongoing social and political unrest, see sociologist Jean-Pierre Le Goff, Mai 68, l’Héritage Impossible, 2nd edn (Paris: La Découverte 2002); labour historian Xavier Vigna provides a detailed overview of French workers struggles in L’Insubordination Ouvrière dans les Années 68 (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes 2007).
² The term gauchiste has a generic sense of far left, or in France what militants describe as ‘everything to the left of the Communist Party’, used pejoratively by the latter to discredit their opponents. However, within the far left it carried another connotation, a Marxist-Leninist or Trotskyist critique of ‘ultra-leftism’, often directed against libertarian, anarchist and militarist tendencies; these in turn effectively rejected the appellation. Even then, gauchisme was taken up by sections of the far left movement, eg. the Trotskyist Lutte Ouvrière, as a badge of defiance against the declamations of the mainstream and Communists. These nuances are important in understanding the fidelities, re-alignments and self-perceptions of the post-’68 period.
³ For Actuel see Jean François Bizot’s 200 Trips from the Counterculture: Graphics and Stories from the Underground Press Syndicate (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd 2006) and Underground, L’Histoire
Despite the visibility of Tout! during 1970-71, its strong, occasionally sensational promotion of new sexual liberation movements and not inconsiderable readership, the experiment was to last no more than a year. As one close observer notes today: ‘The rocket took off, there was a wonderful explosion of colour, then it disappeared’.

Indeed, the very brevity of the paper’s publication warrants an investigation into the disruptive ideas it advanced, the dynamics of the currents it sponsored and the pressures it succumbed to. That a project once invested with great enthusiasm and hope could end so soon, begs important questions as to the tensions within the far left, particularly in the year 1970-71, and in the wider temporal arc that extended from May ‘68 to the mid-1970s. Subsequently, Tout! receded in the collective memory. My plan has therefore been to reconstitute the milieu, ‘moment’ and multi-faceted nature of Tout!, to identify its influences, its material and ideological connections within the broader militant and ‘parallel’ press fields, and to deduce its impact in the France of 1970-71. Indeed, this new press of the early 1970s, a vital aspect of May’s political and cultural legacy, acts as a prism through which the developing movements can be observed. Thus, by returning to the ferment of the period, I have sought to retrieve the role of Tout! in its full complexity, and thereby restore its contemporary significance.

**Why Tout!?**

Originally, my aim was to deliver a study of the range of alternative press, revealing the mixture of politics and (counter)culture of the period. While eventually realising that the project was too broad in scope, I found in my research that Tout! best represented this interface. In simple terms, the paper could be located somewhere between the Maoist paper *La Cause du Peuple* and flagship underground journal *Actuel* within the field, an unstable mix of doctrinaire positions and libertarian impulses that accompanied the dissolution of VLR in 1971 and in turn saw its own demise. But more fully, Tout! rested uniquely at the crossroads of three major trends in the post-1968 gauchiste milieu. To begin with, it straddled French Marxist and libertarian traditions that had emerged from May 1968. Secondly, the paper privileged new movements that broke from these traditional militant models, challenging hierarchy and oppression in more informal,

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Michel-Antoine Burnier, interview, 26 March 2009. Burnier was a founding member of countercultural *Actuel*, in many ways a sister publication to Tout! debuting only a month after.
provocative ways. And finally, it facilitated the influx of international, predominantly US ‘Movement’ or underground themes. This ‘moment’, a fascinating juxtaposition of contradictory ideas and styles, flagged up the remodelling of social and political movements in France, foreshadowing innovative experiences like the self-managing Lip strike of 1973 and indeed the daily Libération.

My tripartite framework for Tout! could to an extent be assimilated into sociologist Jean-Pierre Le Goff’s nèbuleuse, the broad, amorphous post-68 leftist Movement oscillating between three poles: militant-Leninist, cultural-libertarian and autogestion/self-management; Tout! relates less, however, to the latter aspect of May ‘68’s heritage, and was not entirely divorced from a militant revolutionary project. Similarly, the paper’s crossover singularity concords with Laurent Martin’s appreciation of the ‘new press’, which places Tout! at the centre of a semi-Bourdieuian field with its political-cultural and professional-amateur axes, highlighting the myriad influences at play, but also stressing the precarious, ephemeral existence of such ventures. Here though, my work goes beyond the understanding of the ‘new press’ as a category, to investigate organic links with the aforementioned movements.

Just as importantly, Tout! brought innovation to the French leftist press, first and foremost in its design. A cursory look at other militant papers of the time underlines its visual distinctiveness, primarily in the use of colour but also in an unorthodox assemblage of caricature, bold inscription, and stripped-down rhetoric, in contrast to the black, white and occasionally red layout of Maoist, Trotskyist and anarchist titles that tended to privilege analytical, Marxist speech. In this, the influence of the US underground press is apparent. Indeed, a much fuller appreciation is required of how Tout!, with Actuel, Le Parapluie and a raft of contemporary French underground titles, introduced and represented Anglo-Saxon countercultural forms and themes to the French ‘Movement’. The central, ground-breaking role of Tout! was its singular link to, and championing of the embryonic currents of women’s, and in particular gay liberation, publicised in its landmark twelfth issue (see cover image), also influenced by the American scene. My study seeks to understand the processes by which this nominally Maoist press milieu absorbed and pioneered sexual, ecological, immigrant, anti-psychiatric, and other themes, of groups that would define themselves as ‘autonomous’. By extension, I look to the reproduction

5 See Le Goff, op cit., p.132.
of language and imagery introduced by Tout! in the experimental press of these new movements, to ascertain the signal role played by the publication.

**Historiography and gaps**

My work does not represent the first academic examination of Tout! The paper has been considered in other dissertations as the press-ideological adjunct to the mutating radicalism of VLR; French Masters student Thierry Ferreira delivered a study of the organisation in 1995, an analysis of its ideological evolution that relies on many of the sources quoted here for its information. He points to the paper’s role in laying bare the contradictions that broke up VLR. For Anne-Lise Melquiond, Tout! was initially a vehicle for the feminist rupture that led to the group’s demise, in her part-oral history based Masters dissertation. While well-referenced and clear, these works still only offer a partial view of Tout!; in Melquiond’s case, too determinist in the belief that women were the primary gravediggers of VLR. But in another sense, my work adds to these studies, further analysing the paper’s relationship to other movements and publications in the militant and cultural fields of gauchisme. Indeed, the inventory of published material that follows identifies Tout! primarily as a component within these fields, thereby proving the need for a work that takes the publication as its central subject.

In the broader literature review of Tout!, the paper has either been analysed in terms of its place in a range of new press titles, or referenced with regard to its role in promoting certain movements, specifically gender and sexual. Starting in the mid-1970s, several compendia incorporate Tout! in their appreciation of the ‘new press’. In *Histoire Générale de la Presse Française, Vive La Révolution* and Tout! are fleetingly mentioned as elements in a series of titles that mushroomed following 1968, contemporary articles quoted from to underline the anti-bourgeois, anti-Communist virulence of such publications. With *L’Autre France*, author André Bercoff, in overly journalistic style, favours new, countercultural publications, holding Tout! to be one of the few groundbreaking journals in the wake of May ‘68 to push for the immediacy of

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revolt and the festivity of life.\textsuperscript{10} Tigres de Papier is an analytical survey of the range of French press titles by journalist Claude Boris, alias Claude-Marie Vadrot, one of the founders of l’Agence de Presse Libération (APL).\textsuperscript{11} More analytical than Bercoff, his work situates Tout! on ‘the very line that separates an organisational paper from a paper of global contestation and counter-information’, seeing in the VLR-propelled publication the opening onto a wider field of ‘parallel press’.\textsuperscript{12}

Slightly closer to the moment of VLR-Tout!, is L’Après-mai des Faunes, gay activist Guy Hocquenghem’s 1974 exposition of his developing thought, drawing heavily on his articles in Tout!\textsuperscript{13} Much of it is a sharp polemic against gauchiste conservatism and for cultural revolution, an internal and consistent critique of the radical movements, divulging editorial detail and insights into how he saw the role of the paper, and should therefore be considered a primary source. An interesting contemporary sociological perspective is provided by sociologist Rémi Hess, part-inspired by the author’s affinity with VLR. The combined political, social and sexual critique of Tout! is understood by Hess as the ‘libidinal analyzer’ of consecutive Maoist movements, heralding the obsolescence of organisational and ideological analyzers that stemmed from the mid-‘60s Maoist rupture with the Parti Communiste Français (PCF).\textsuperscript{14} A final 1970s survey of the new press can be found in Francois Samuelson’s Il était une fois Libération (1979), which places Tout! in a triptych of Maoist forerunners of the gauchiste daily Libération; Samuelson nonetheless fails to mention the real connections between the two papers, his focus resting on Tout!’s individuality (though victim to an excess of its own vitality).

\textit{Génération}, the keynote 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of May ‘68 text and audio-visual document, works Tout! into its shifting narratives of individual militants’ lives, and plays on the iconoclastic, destabilising influence of the paper in the gauchiste milieu, in particular around its promotion of sexual themes.\textsuperscript{15} However, I concur with historian Kristin Ross’s political critique of the double tome, for its focus on the layer of leading gauchistes, many of whom would deny or downplay

\textsuperscript{11} Claude Boris, Les Tigres de Papier, (Paris: Seuil 1975). The APL was a grassroots ‘counter-information’ network set up in 1971, gathering stories of strikes and incidents that the major press tended to ignore. In 1973, the agency melted into the new daily Libération.
\textsuperscript{12} ibid. p.214.
\textsuperscript{13} Guy Hocquenghem, L’Après-Mai des Faunes (Paris : Grasset 1974)
\textsuperscript{14} Rémi Hess, Les Maoïstes Français : une dérive institutionnelle (Paris : Editions Anthromorphos 1974)
\textsuperscript{15} Hervé Hamon, and Patrick Rotman, Génération 1.Les années de rêve & 2.Les années de poudre (Paris: Seuil, 1988)
the political character and heritage of the May revolt during the 1980s while re-integrating the system; a critique voiced publicly by Hocquenghem in 1986.\footnote{See Kristin Ross, \textit{May’68 and its Afterlives} (London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), and Guy Hocquenghem, \textit{Lettre ouverte à ceux qui sont passés du col Mao au rotary} (Paris: Albin Michel, 1986)} I have further sought to unearth the experiences of a swathe of discrete or forgotten militants, writers and artists, the ‘middle-ranking’ and ordinary members of VLR, \textit{Tout!} and other publications. Another twentieth year retrospective, \textit{Mai en Héritage} by \textit{Tout!} contributor Elisabeth Salvaresi, also traces the lives of fifteen of May’s ‘significant’ actors, but provides a few lines on several hundred more in her annexe. The subversive role of \textit{Tout!} can be found in her passage on VLR leader Roland Castro.\footnote{Elisabeth Salvaresi, \textit{Mai en Héritage} (Paris: Syros/Alternatives, 1988), p.71.}

Salvaresi, also one of my interviewees, was one of the early feminists to have contested the male domination of VLR, which brings me to the gender and sexuality writing on the period that has considered \textit{Tout!} as an important component. Ex-VLR member Françoise Picq devotes fifty pages of her rigorous overview of the Mouvement de Libération des Femmes (MLF) to its unravelling of VLR, with \textit{Tout!} as the subversive stage on which the contradictions are played out. In a 2008 retrospective, sociologist and one time VLR activist Nadja Ringart points to connections between \textit{Tout!} and the first MLF paper \textit{Le Torchon Brûle}.\footnote{Nadja Ringart, ‘Le journal \textit{Le Torchon Brûle} : l’éclosion des fleurs’, in Stéphane Gatti and Pierre-Vincent Cresceri, \textit{Ouvrir le livre de Mai/tracts et journaux} (Paris: La Parole Errante 2008), pp.189-216.}

association Arcadie, discusses not only Tout! but the FHAR publications Le Fléau Social and L’Antinorm in the light of the gay liberation movement’s contradictions.\textsuperscript{22} I draw additional information from all of these writings, and where relevant, confirmation of my own research, seeking to add perspectives on the paper’s other dimensions.

Far-left biographer Christophe Bourseiller’s Les Maoïstes: la folle histoire des gardes rouges français, is far less historically rigorous, with a confused narrative of the last year of VLR and Tout! He does however draw attention to another, overlooked tendency in the group, that of violence and armed struggle. State repression and gauchiste riposte are also themes of Jean-Pierre Le Goff’s Mai 68, l’Héritage Impossible, continually present in Tout!, amidst its promotion of new forms of contestation. Useful for its framework that places VLR in a nebulous, tri-polar movement, Le Goff’s work nonetheless elides the material connections between paper and movements. Tout! is weighed up by Laurent Chollet in L’Insurrection Situationniste (2000) who sees in Hocquenghem the principal vector of marginal, situationist ideas at the paper, moving away from the working-class; however, he mistakenly equates VLR with Tout!

Tenth, twentieth, thirtieth and more pertinently for myself, fortieth decennial anniversary retrospectives of May ’68 have not only added to the general historiography of the period but aroused polemics as to the meaning of the events, more recently given special piquancy by right-wing presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy’s (part-electoral pitch) avowed intention to ‘liquidate the legacy’ of May in 2007.\textsuperscript{23} I spent 2008 in Paris conducting my research, close to the fortieth anniversary conferences and debates surrounding May. Through my involvement, particularly in Nanterre’s April conference Mai 68 et L’Internationale, I was able to draw new and interesting perspectives and gain some important contacts in the construction of my thesis.\textsuperscript{24} Indeed, November 2008’s Montreuil exhibition project at Armand Gatti’s La Parole Errante on the radical press of May and after, included a selection of VLR and Tout! covers and interviews with VLR leaders Roland Castro and Tiennot Grumbach. The accompanying catalogue stresses

\textsuperscript{22} Jackson, Julian, Living in Arcadia: homosexuality, politics and morality in France from the Liberation to Aids (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).


\textsuperscript{24} Notably anarchist and former Tout! vendor Marc Tomsin, and Antonio Benci, who introduced me to the ex-militants and archives of Lotta Continua in Italy.
Tout!’s strong internationalist dimension, and its role in giving expression to all the anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchical impulses of late 1960s France.\textsuperscript{25}

I have drawn on most of these publications to supplement my overall understanding of the paper. While there is much of merit in these references, no single work delivers a detailed and rounded appreciation of the paper. The ‘historiography’ offers up a patchwork of assessments of Tout! and its impact, much of it delivering intellectual perspectives, written and oral testimony, and certain facts and figures. For the most part the accounts are partial or selective, tending to alternate between journalistic appraisals- essentially potted narratives- and intellectual or academic essays for which Tout! is less the subject, than a significant element in the thesis. The multidimensionality of the paper has yet to be fully understood. That said, some of the historical and sociological work concerning early 1970s youth movements in France does address the transformative role of Tout!, first and foremost the enquête-based articles of sociologist Gérard Mauger, that view the paper’s existence as a sign of the shift from political to countercultural gauchisme, a process that was, in a sense, completed by Actuel.\textsuperscript{26} Historian Chris Warne in turn draws on Mauger’s analysis to inform his essay on the role of Actuel ‘bringing counterculture to France’.\textsuperscript{27} Both Mauger and Warne’s pieces contain much of value in their assessment of changing youth cultures in this period; nevertheless, in light of my findings on Tout! I address some of their assumptions about Actuel as a paradigm, and the nature and fate of both political gauchisme and the French counterculture.

Methodology: context and analysis

At the heart of this work lies a detailed account of Tout!, a microhistory of the paper’s existence. For this I required the participation of its former editors and diverse participants, primarily through interviews, and readings of the paper itself. My line of enquiry was to ascertain the origins, launch, form, content and development before its expiry. I then sought to build up a fuller picture of the paper, its ideas and environment by analysing the diverse but interrelated contexts that shaped it, and those that the paper helped shape. At each step the aim has been to

\textsuperscript{25} Stéphane Gatti and Pierre-Vincent Cresceri, \textit{Ouvrir le livre de Mai/tracts et journaux} (Paris: La Parole Errante 2008), pp.165-188. Gatti, a former militant of ‘anarcho-maoist’ persuasion proved a fruitful interlocutor in my work.

\textsuperscript{26} G. Mauger, ‘Du gauchisme à la contre-culture (1965-1975) \textit{Contradictions}, 38, winter 1983-84, pp.39-62 (p.50)

introduce other, related elements of the left alternative press- titles, writers, cartoons and photographs- to flesh out the background detail, and provide a sense of the atmosphere of the time.

To begin with I investigated the historical dimension, the paper’s affinity with older political and satirical French press traditions. What were the press antecedents to Tout!? Secondly, my work necessitated a study of May ’68, as the foundation stone of the new press challenge to the status quo. Subsequently, the paper’s attachment to one of the numerous Marxist groupuscules that emerged from the political turmoil of late ‘60s France - VLR - called for further elaboration. It thereby retained an organic connection to the activist movements in the aftermath of May ‘68 that attempted to perpetuate its student and worker revolts in a climate of Gaullist, Communist and media hostility- the topic of a separate chapter. The role of Tout! in the promotion of nascent women’s and gay movements has been fairly well documented, but generally limited to the domain of feminist and homosexual discourse. Therefore the transformative impact of these ‘liberation’ movements, and other new trends such as political ecology, on the gauchiste milieu nurtured by Tout! has required a greater focus. The strong international outlook of Tout!, in particular its coverage of Italian and American far left movements led to an under-researched, transnational interchange of language and imagery. Moments of overlap and exchange between activists from different countries and continents were central to the paper’s self-location in a galaxy of radical movements. Indeed, the paper’s imitation of the ‘free press’ signified a broader permeation of US countercultural themes around 1970, the opening phase of ‘parallel press’ experimentation in France. This series of interconnected circumstances traces the multiple factors at work in Tout!, while designing a framework for my chapters.

As the primary object of research, Tout! and the left, alternative press can be read in several Parisian libraries, first and foremost the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale et Contemporaine (BDIC), the repository of left wing and labour movement archives. Militant documents indirectly associated with Tout! are also viewable there, notably the donated (leaflet) collections of ex-VLR members Michel Chemin, Tiennot Grumbach and Françoise Picq.28 Other ex-VLR/Tout!, and some independent archivists kindly lent me their paper sets and personal documental archives or allowed me to consult them. Some of the additional movement tracts, internal bulletins and posters I borrowed speak directly of Tout!, although their content more

28 Chemin and Grumbach supplied the BDIC with personal archives of the early 1970s base ouvrière at Flins, Picq a selection of leaflets and drafts from the early women’s liberation movement in France.
specifically addresses the evolution of VLR. A number of political documentary films, including *Générations*, *On vous parle de Flins*, *FHAR*, *Debout!*, *La Révolution du Désir* and indeed a range of Institut National de L’Audiovisuel (INA) online clips helped in the reconstruction of events and comprehension of the VLR-*Tout!* milieu. I was concerned with showing the strong visual dimension of *Tout!* and the alternative left press, the images witnessed at the end of each chapter deriving from the various aforementioned papers, archives and collections.\(^{29}\)

In the handling of *Tout!* itself, I drew up a typology of articles and issues that would yield a hierarchy of ideas and preoccupations for its makers; what percentage covered issues of demonstration and street-fighting, how many pages per issue were devoted to international affairs, and so on (see appendix 2.). This was used to help shape the questionnaire but, crucially, to provide a database for the contextual analyses of *Tout!* Readings of the paper, supplemented by the available documentation (leaflets, posters, etc) and pertinent secondary material, would flesh out this analysis and lay a basis for the writing of the thesis. Indeed, I often applied intertextual approaches when relating *Tout!* to historical antecedents (e.g. *L’Assiette au Beurre*), contemporary *gauchiste* publications (e.g. *Actuel*), and later borrowings, such as the adoption of the VLR slogan *changer la vie* by the Parti Socialiste. With each contextual chapter, a different dimension to the paper; I have aimed to build up a set of explanatory circumstances for *Tout!*

The conclusion to my writing involves a reconsideration of the original hypothesis in the light of the collective contextual findings.

**Oral history: the alternative press through the words of its creators**

The paucity of primary documentation, preparatory material, minutes of meetings at the paper itself, compelled me to turn to the former editors, writers and artists to conduct my enquiry into the story of *Tout!* This, and the location of paper sources, led to my year’s residence in Paris. Personal testimony would prove indispensable not only in providing answers to the concrete questions, the what, why and how of the paper’s production, but in identifying the lived experience of the actors, as well as their perceptions of May ‘68 and its aftermath. In addition to interviews with the creators of *Tout!* I came to speak to individuals or groups of writers and activists at other publications, enriching the broader picture of the left alternative press. However, I also experienced the difficulties of oral history, the complex interplay between public and private memory, the problem of how memories can be shaped in given periods or

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\(^{29}\) Most of the images are photographic, some scanned.
moments, and respondents’ simple forgetfulness, innocent or deliberate omissions. Here I took
cognisance that the distortions to which memory could be subjected, while problematic,
themselves constitute historical ‘facts’, objects of study that can reveal much about the evolution
of memory and its contemporary context. Moreover, I made a point of asking respondents to try to remember how they had lived through an event, as opposed to eliciting opinions or retrospective viewpoints.

In my approach to oral interviews (as opposed to the occasional written answers I gathered), I drew on the work of my supervisor Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War*, for ideas and techniques. Influenced himself by the ideas of the Birmingham’s Popular Memory Group and historian Alistair Thomson, Evans sought to ‘recreate the atmosphere of the period in order to show the particular climate in which people made certain choices’. His interviews of around sixty French and Algerian activists, part of a clandestine opposition to the French state and its proxy in Algeria, yielded a body of motivations for resistance, itself the basis of an ‘alternative ideology’ to official representations. VLR-Tout! was in one sense such an ‘underground’ force in the post-May panorama, elements of it guided by notions of secretive armed struggle, but principally in its desire to live outside of and in active opposition to all forms of bourgeois institution. Oral history would be crucial in uncovering the history of a moment and environment that was essentially undocumented. My line of questioning therefore incorporated both ‘factual’ questions - necessitating both oral and alternative documentary verification - but also questions about the feelings and hopes that informed people’s decisions. Moreover, my sample of interviews was somewhat broader than originally anticipated, extending as it did from a core of around fifty *Tout!* respondents, to actors across the range of alternative press.

The process by which interviews were conducted was arduous but engrossing. Having spoken only to Roland Castro, the ex-leader of VLR, and Jean-Paul Ribes of *Actuel* prior to the start of my PhD (notably in relation to my Masters on the posters of May ‘68), I picked out names from readings of *Tout!* and began to scan for them on the internet. I was fortunate to locate early on, via a publishing house, Marc Hatzfeld, jailed in 1970 for his involvement in an anti-racist action

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32 ibid., p.231.
33 As very few of the articles in *Tout!* were signed, I looked for names in the articles themselves.
organised by VLR, and subsequent participant at the paper. Through him I went on to contact around ten more ex-VLR-Tout! constituents, some of whom supplied me with the names and numbers of further potential interviewees. I took advantage of this snowball effect, sometimes taking in phone directory-led calls to difficult-to-find witnesses, to land as many relevant interviews as I could over the course of the year, some granting a second or third interview session when circumstances dictated. Generally speaking, questions were sent in advance by e-mail, for people to digest before they decided whether to respond in writing, prior to the one-on-one interview. Most, however, simply gave the oral interview. My questionnaire (see appendix 1.) followed a chronological, thematic pattern, addressing actors’ recollections of the pre-1968 period, the May events, the immediate aftermath and regrouping of the far left, and the shift from VLR to Tout! At each stage the aim was to get the respondent to explain how they felt at the time, in an effort to avoid retrospective reinterpretations. Subsequently the questions were devised to unearth memories of, and attitudes towards the French government and mainstream political parties, gauchisme and political violence. People’s views and experiences of international movements were probed, and their participation in new social movements and countercultural activities investigated. I sought wherever possible to sift through the copies of Tout! at hand with respondents, in order to pick up extra memories and telling reactions to the paper’s form and content. Opinions on other newspapers made up a vital part of the replies. For logistical reasons- time, style of response, cancellation- it sometimes proved impossible to obtain answers to all of my queries. However, I believe that the required amount of detail was amassed to provide an in-depth knowledge of Tout!, as well as a body of motivations that showed how actors rationalised the period and looked to the future. Sections were modified according to the identity of the respondent, in order to obtain necessary specific detail on a newspaper or event. Attention was paid to the language of the questionnaire, not to presume on a uniformity of meaning.

(Note on the writing: I have included distinct, original French quotes and passages of oral testimony within the text, including whole sentences, phrases and article titles. This allows for a more faithful rendition than if the citations were translated, taking into account the idioms, concepts and vernacular of the French radical left in this period. However, there are numerous half-sentences, phrases and words which I did translate to allow the English writing to flow in its own right. Generally speaking my rule has been: where whole sentences are cited, they remain in the original French, otherwise the ‘odds and ends’ have been translated. Several interviewees, notably Jean-Jacques Lebel, Michael Memmi, and occasionally Jean-Paul Ribes, spoke in English (spontaneously or volunteering); their contributions thus appear in English within the text)
1. Press traditions in the making of Tout!

In this opening chapter I establish the antecedents of Tout! in French history as well as the paper’s immediate, 1960s precursors. I want to show how it drew on press traditions and more particularly on leftist, deviant ruptures from social norms. Tout! blended politics and culture: on the one hand rhetorical devices such as slogans, Marxisant analysis and philosophy; on the other, the artistic content of poetry, caricature and graphic innovation, allied to proclamations of lifestyle and sexual freedom. Each of these strands had its roots in past left, oppositional ideas and their commensurate journalistic forms. By relating the explicit references in the paper and in actors’ testimonies to such historical moments, and uncovering implicit intellectual and visual imitations or influences, I aim to show how the past specifically shaped Tout!

Chronologically, I begin with the Great French Revolution, and its profusion of radical, popular sheets and tracts. Of this early subversive literature, the scurrilous Le Père Duchesne best represented the type of language Tout! and its provocative press bedfellows reproduced. The caricature of mid-nineteenth century artists such as Daumier and Grandville, set in a context of revolutionary upheaval and press censorship, became a template for left and republican newspaper skits in the decades to follow, culminating in the strong twentieth century press satire of Tout! and its contemporary Hara-Kiri/Charlie Hebdo. 1871’s Paris Commune was a major reference, the first example of a workers’ democracy in action. The coincidence of its centenary with the moment of Tout! prompted a revival of Commune symbolism and attempts to apply its precepts to modern-day Paris. Turn of the century anarcho-syndicalist movements provided the inspiration for Le Père Peinard and l’Assiette au Beurre, textual and pictoral references for our paper and the spectrum of post-May radical left press.

With the juncture of Dada-surrealism and the 1917 Russian Revolution I begin a consideration of the French counterculture, the creative effervescence of the war and 1920s seminal to later fusions of the political and cultural, of which Tout! was a prime exponent. After Revolution, Resistance; a brief discussion of Second World War heroes and villains who would people a substantial portion of Tout!’s historical world. The 1950s and ‘60s brought a revival of new left, anti-Stalinist currents that paved the way for the political gauchisme of Tout! Against the

1 By Marxisant I mean deriving from Marxism, or Marxist-like, because in truth the language and ideas of Tout! represented a sidestep from the predominant, classical Marxist discourse of class struggle.
backdrop of resistance to Algerian, then Vietnam Wars, political student papers such as Clarté and Servir le Peuple found small audiences eager to propagate new revolutionary messages. But there was also a juxtaposition of radical press forms: the anarchistic Hara-Kiri, and for the architects who would form the design core of Tout!, the small pop art-influenced architectural mag Melp!

**Early Revolutionary, utopian examples and the profusion of nineteenth century caricature**

De 1789 à mai 68 en passant par la Commune, un chemin fléché encore, lire les traditions révolutionnaires d’un peuple, lire dans 1789 l’élan communard, l’esprit de lutte d’un peuple.  

*Tout!* represented a re-assertion of French revolutionary traditions, in its interpretation of May ‘68 and its aftermath as a revolutionary process. Indeed, its writers suggested they might play a didactic role: ‘Le peuple a besoin de la connaissance d’ensemble du mouvement historique pour réussir la révolution’.  

The paper’s provocative language condemning lofty enemies and inciting the people to revolt found an antecedent in 1790’s Revolutionary paper *Le Père Duchesne*, one of many bearing the same title, named after a popular boulevard theatre character. This inflammatory publication, edited by the *enragé* Jacques René Hébert, worked the basic elements of its middle-class author’s political perspectives into the everyday language of the sans-culottes artisans and workers. Written as if spoken by its eponymous woodcut avatar, a small stove merchant, the language was laden with expletives—most commonly ‘bougre/bugger’ and ‘foutre/fuck’. Time-saving editorial devices of ‘grande colère’, ‘grande joie’ and ‘bon avis’ helped to simplify the topic of the day. Indeed, we know that *Le Père Duchesne* deliberately eschewed high production values: whereas Hébert’s printer also issued the finely-printed *Journal du Soir*, he brought out *Le Père Duchesne* in muddied or broken type, thus appearing rough-and-ready for its target audience.

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2 Tout! no.9, 18 February 1971, p. 2
3 Tout! no.1, 23 September 1970, p. 2
5 *Le Pere Duchesne*’s subversive influence could partly be measured by the role, albeit cursory, that Hébert and his allies, the far left of the Jacobins, played during the Revolution, spearheading the Terror against organised Christianity. The *Hébertistes* in turn fell victim to the guillotine.
6 Popkin, op cit, p. 156.
Directed against aristocrats and grand bourgeois, their attitudes and sense of dress, the paper established a tradition of scurrilous political journalism that was clearly present in the 1970s, cited by Jean-Pierre Le Dantec, one of its founders, as a model for his paper’s ‘permanent repetition and exaggeration’. In Tout!, outright insults were reserved for professional or middle-ranking authority figures rather than police chiefs or presidents, wary as the leftists were of repressive measures. Thus anonymous judges were characterised as ‘goinfres/gluttons’, a boss depicted as a pig, the CGT ridiculed as a ‘Con-fédération’, psychiatrists particularly vilified.

The radical ideas of the Revolution fed into the thoughts of early nineteenth century socialists. One important reference for the counterculturalists at Tout! was utopian socialist Charles Fourier, both in the work collectives he advocated as a solution to the drudgery of labour, and the phalanstères for cooperative living. Furthermore, his theory of human ‘passions’- including plurisexual freedoms- requiring liberation from human institutions and re-direction in the pursuit of happiness, were of inspiration to University of Vincennes teacher and philosopher René Scherer, tutor to Guy Hocquenghem the co-founder of Tout! Hocquenghem sought to resurrect Fourier, to resituate Marxism ‘in the field opened by Fourier’ rather than seeing the thinker as a simple precursor of Marxism. The new suburban communes of Paris in 1969 set up by Hocquenghem and friends echoed Fourier’s project of phalanstères, reference points for the new, countercultural movements. For VLR member Richard Deshayes, communal living represented the post-May ’68 ideal of an alternative society, counterposed to the seizure of political power:

Le désir du pouvoir corrompait forcément tous les projets qui le désiraient […] Nous on était anti-pouvoir, en gros on voulait inventer des communautés humaines dans lesquelles le pouvoir ne soit pas distribué de mode patriarchale, mais dans un collectif idéaliste, fourieriste, utopique.

Tout! stood in a longstanding tradition of French caricature that blended political derision with farce. The paper’s regular cartoonist Philippe Bertrand cites as mid-nineteenth century inspiration the artist Grandville, noted for his fable-inspired human-animal lithographs and

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8 See in particular ‘Psychiatre je vous emmerde!’ Tout! no.10, p. 11.
9 Phalanstères were large rectangular buildings designed to house the utopian, egalitarian communities, or communes that Fourier had in mind. While some of his followers managed to build some in the US, he was unsuccessful in raising money for the projects in Europe.
10 R. Scherer, interview, 8 December 2008.
woodcuts;\textsuperscript{13} anarchist Jean-Jacques Lebel, a late collaborator at Tout!, identifies Honoré Daumier as the primal nineteenth century influence on the crop of twentieth century artists, citing his sketches of street fighting during the 1848 revolution.\textsuperscript{14} Such imagery, emanating from pioneering satirical papers Le Charivari and La Caricature, was not directly referenced in the pages of Tout!, but the ideas, themes and influences were felt in the radical left press of the early 1970s. The sensational 1831 cartoon of King Louis Philippe’s head morphing into a pear was an early example of the transformative powers of caricature, resurrected in the work of Barbe at Politique Hebdo, and more psychedelically by Philippe Caza and US underground artist Robert Crumb in Actuel (fig.1.1). Daumier punctuated his satires of middle class life with biting attacks on monarchy and reaction, politicians and the judiciary, particularly during the popular risings of 1834 in Lyon, the 1848 revolution, and ultimately the 1871 Paris Commune. In an early example of State intolerance of political caricature, he was jailed and fined for a monstrous, scatological portrayal of the regent as the rabelaisian Gargantua (fig.1.2).

Daumier and his contemporaries also satirized the censors of their age, juxtaposing sarcastic personal attacks with an allegorical defence of the press. It was André Gill’s 1867 La Lune caricature of the Emperor as the fictional rascal Roscambole that earned the paper a ban at the hands of the censors, only for it to re-emerge several weeks later as L’Éclipse.\textsuperscript{15} In December 1970, the satirical weekly Hara-Kiri Hebdo underwent a similar reinvention, to become Charlie Hebdo, following its sarcastic quip at the death of De Gaulle and subsequent ban. That same week Tout! mocked De Gaulle, shouting ‘Adieu Papa!’ while his erstwhile rival and successor Pompidou pranced as ‘La Veuve Joyeuse’, the character of an old novel and comic operetta.\textsuperscript{16}

**Passion and poetry of the Paris Commune in Tout!**

Counting ten separate articles in Tout!, the 1871 Paris Commune, a two-month popular takeover of the city following the surrender of the government- decamped to Versailles- to the enemy


\textsuperscript{14} J-J. Lebel, interview, 28 February 2008. Lebel mentions Daumier’s depictions of street-fighting during the 1848 revolution.

\textsuperscript{15} Robert J. Goldstein, Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1989), p. 191. The renaming of the paper was down to a friend of the editor remarking ‘La lune devra subir une éclipse’.

\textsuperscript{16} ‘Assez de faire parler les morts alors que les vivants hurlent’, Tout! no.4, 16 November 1970, p. 1
during the Franco-Prussian War, would prove its principal historical reference, May ’68 posited as a type of present-day manifestation. A number of the actors involved in VLR-Tout! indicate their imagining of the Commune whilst on the barricades during May, and more generally as the heirs of its radical legacy. In anticipation of the Commune’s centenary, the first issue of the paper sported a sketch of the communards’ toppling of the Napoleonic Vendôme column, underlining the event’s symbolic import and Tout!’s iconoclastic approach. Correspondingly, Versaillais leader Adolphe Thiers was revived and likened to contemporary hate figures: Jordan’s King Hussein, the ‘puppet’ of imperialism, Pompidou as beneficiary of May’s political fallout. Again, showing the importance of historical regard to this milieu, post-’68 leftist papers carried the story and analysis of the Commune; the new, libertarian Le Cri du Peuple, a paper friendly to Tout!, even reproduced the title of the its most famous paper.

In a utopian turn, Tout! encouraged a modern popular takeover of Paris, carrying articles such as ‘La Commune refleurira’ and ‘La Commune vivante’ in early 1971. Feminist Elisabeth Salvaresi recalls that ‘the whole of VLR was mobilised around the Commune centenary’. Little came of the many initiatives proposed as an alternative to local elections (socialisation of housing, transport and services), though the paper threw its weight behind the Fête de la Commune in March, when VLR members and friends fronted a music and theatre parade at the Marché des Puces (fig.1.3). Furthermore, in their celebration of ‘deviant’ sexuality, writers assumed the mantle of ‘Communards’, to declare: ‘Nous sommes tous des anormaux’. In an emphasis on the historical continuity of (bourgeois) State repression, Tout! reported on the life-size silkscreen sheet portraits of massacred communards produced by artist Ernest Pignon. First deposited symbolically on the steps of the Sacré Coeur, built to expiate the crimes of the Commune, Pignon then laid them round the Charonne metro station as a reminder of the 1962

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17 Notably Marc Tomsin and Richard Deshayes.
18 ‘Qui encule qui ?’ Tout! no.12, p. 9.
19 ‘La Commune Vivante’, Tout! no.9, p. 3.
21 ‘Fête-Puces’, Tout! no.11, p. 8. The event was broken up by the police and demonstrators taken to the Beaujon police compound. This was one of a number of large left wing demonstrations to commemorate the Commune.
22 Tout! no. 12, op cit.
killings (fig.1.4). Elsewhere, statues of Thiers were defiled, and his mausoleum in Père Lachaise cemetery dynamited.

*Tout!* drew on other literary forms; the frequent appearance of poetry by writers and readers indicated an appreciation of culture impelled by historic revolutionary events. The Commune had moved visiting poet Arthur Rimbaud to compose several hymns to Paris and the masses, and it was his urge, *changer la vie*, in the wake of the event that would provide a type of watchword for VLR and *Tout!* in 1970. Denoting Rimbaud as ‘a visionary poet’, the artist and activist Jean-Jacques Lebel, a contributor to *Tout!*, cites the surrealist André Breton to explain the fusion of the political and poetic at work: ‘Marx a dit changer le monde, Rimbaud a dit changer la vie. Ces deux mots d’ordre ne font qu’un’. This was in turn summed up in the paper’s equation ‘poésie avec politique = UN’. The first issue framed the role of the paper in a semi-Maoist poetic rejection of misery:

Pourquoi? Pour que s’y manifeste la révolte et le mépris des classes dominantes qui n’en peuvent plus d’essayer de dominer pour que s’y manifeste l’apparition d’un peuple vainqueur, pour que s’y voie sa marche, de l’humiliation à la victoire — dans cette époque ou le rêve d’un poète, Rimbaud, devient une lutte sociale — changer la vie : le communisme.

Rimbaud would provide a seminal reference for *Tout!* and the underground press, one in a lineage of French avant-garde, countercultural figures to be resurrected in the wake of May.

**Turn of the century insult and caricature in *Le Père Peinard* and *L’Assiette au Beurre***

A worthy successor to *Le Père Duchesne* was late nineteenth century syndicalist *Le Père Peinard*, edited by the anarcho-communist, and co-founder of the Confédération des Travailleurs (CGT) Emile Pouget. From his boutique the eponymous ‘gniaff journaux/muck-raking cobbler’ witnessed everyday social injustice and in turn advocated radical class revenge: direct

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23 ‘Ernest colle des cadavres…’ *Tout!* no.14, p. 12. Eight people were killed on 8 February 1962 following a violent police assault on a demonstration against the far right Organisation de l’Armée Secrète (OAS) outside the Charonne metro station in Paris.


27 ‘Contre l’oppression, créons!’ *Tout!* no.3, p. 1.

28 *Tout!* no.1, p. 1.
action, strikes and revolution on the streets and in the factories. A 1900 issue declared its historical filiations:

Le programme du vieux gniaff est aussi connu que la crapulerie des généraux; il est plus bref que la Cons titution de 1793 et a été formulé, il y a un peu plus d’un siècle, par l’Ancien, le Père Duchêne: “ Je ne veux pas que l’on m’em…mielle!” C’est franc. Ça sort sans qu’on le mâche! Et cette déclaration autrement époilante que celle des Droits de l’Homme et du citoyen, répond a tout, contient tout, suffit à tout. Le jour ou le populo ne sera plus emmiellé, c’est le jour où patrons, gouvernants, raticons, jugeurs et autres sangsues tèteront les pissenlits par la racine.29

Le Père Peinard was an important antecedent, both in its derision and ridicule of authority figures and in a desire to communicate in street-wise language with workers. Eighty years later this publication would provide yet more reading matter for the writers of La Cause du Peuple.30 Tout! attacked its own authority figures in similar terms, ‘Brigitte Gros Salope!’, the headline of an article lambasting a local politician the paper suspected of turning the trial of VLR members to her own advantage.31 In this instance the charge was of political deception and sleaze, the language echoing Le Père Peinard’s defamation ‘Marianne la salope!’ in which Pouget laid down a range of feminine insults (garce, gueuse, gotton) to put down the nineteenth century female republican allegory.32

Pouget’s turn of the century pamphlet Le Sabotage was another signal work, produced in the late 1890s against a background of wildcat strikes, acts of industrial subversion, and the concomitant revolutionary syndicalist movement (fig.1.5).33 Tout! cited it as one of the libertarian, anti-productivist texts to fit the new, rebellious mood in the factories after 1968. The other was Paul Lafargue’s Le Droit à la Paresse, a diatribe against capitalist exploitation, for human fulfilment in sloth and leisure. Hocquenghem elaborated in the paper:

Deux ans après mai, près d’un siècle après Lafargue et Pouget, des gauchistes découvrent 1.qu’ils ne veulent pas prendre le pouvoir, pas eux, pas ce pouvoir qu’a la bourgeoisie. 2.moins facilement, qu’ils ne veulent pas faire travailler les gens pour l’édification d’un socialisme dont ils seraient les grands maîtres. Que sabotage et paresse sont au programme de la

30 J-P. Le Dantec, op cit.
31 Tout! no.5, p. 4. Alternate translations of salope as ‘bitch’ or, with its sexually derogatory connotation, ‘whore’, point to the term’s inflammatory purchase. Marc Hatzfeld explains in an interview that the term was exaggerated, unfair (interview, 14 April 2008).
32 Pouget, op cit.194. Gueuse and garce meaning wench and bitch respectively. Another controversial deployment of salope was in the subversion of the 1971 women’s abortion Manifeste des 343… salopes was added by the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo.
33 One re-publication by Claude Palmer of the Souterrain printshop, occasional working for Tout!, was run off in its thousands and distributed for free. C.Palmer, interview, 6 March 2010.
In line with the anarcho-syndicalist imagery of the turn of the (nineteenth) century, Tout! bore a number of cartoons of top-hatted capitalist bosses. Several portrayed unholy alliances of ruling-class interests: boss, judge, priest, police and military dominating the proletariat; others celebrated the tables being turned on the workers’ enemies (fig.1.6). Emphasising the timelessness of historical caricature, Tout!’s editorial team included sketches by nineteenth century artist Georges Delaw on the oppression of the miners, following a strike in the Merlebach pit in October 1970. In another reproduction from 1900s weekly L’Assiette au Beurre, a judge instructed a jury: ‘Vous êtes là pour juger, pas pour acquitter’, the critique of earlier judicial tyranny still of contemporary value (fig1.7).35

Turn of the century references continued to provide fuel for the writers for Tout!, which transposed the political debate of historical moments to the world of the 1970s. One was the Dreyfus affair of the late 1890s, itself inspiring a riot of caricature, of both pro-Dreyfusard and anti-Semitic persuasion (Dreyfus was Jewish).36 Framed, tried and found guilty of treason, army captain Albert Dreyfus served several years in a penal colony, only to be retried as the military sought to cover its tracks; the case provided an occasion for virulent anti-militarist sketches for Assiette artist Jules Grandjouan. Le Père Peinard abstained on the matter as Dreyfus was an officer himself.37 Hocquenghem referenced this attitude in the defiant introduction to no.12 of Tout! comparing the revolutionary left’s prior failure to challenge anti-Semitism with a contemporary refusal to acknowledge sexual diversity:

Les révolutionnaires qui refusent de reconnaître ce fait, d’en voir les implications, et leur actualité, ont la même attitude de ceux qui au moment de l’affaire Dreyfus, prétendaient représenter la classe ouvrière et la révolution et affirmaient que ‘c’était une affaire pour les bourgeois qui n’intéressait pas le prolétariat’.38

The satirical art periodical L’Assiette au Beurre ran from 1901 to 1912, covering La Belle Époque of French history. Far from celebrating the supposed grandeur of this period, the paper

34 Tout! no.1, p. 7.
35 Tout! no.4, p. 2.
36 Army officer Albert Dreyfus was accused of selling French military secrets to the Germans.
Writer Emile Zola’s open letter in defence of Dreyfus, J’Accuse, was of obvious inspiration to the Maoist Gauche Prolétarienne in their launch of a new topical broadsheet against a repressive Pompidolian regime in 1971.
38 ‘Oui, notre corps nous appartient!’ Tout! no.12, p. 1.
ridiculed French life across the social classes, yet reserved its spite for ‘the pillars of bourgeois society’: capitalists, army, police, judiciary, church and politicians.\(^39\) *L’Assiette* was not militant in the same sense as its contemporaries *La Guerre Sociale* or *Les Temps Nouveaux*, nonetheless it presented regular sketches standing in left republican, revolutionary and syndicalist traditions (fig.1.8). Accordingly, twentieth century publications like *Siné Massacre*, *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, *Tout!* and *Politique Hebdo* drew on its antiestablishment themes, reproducing caricatures of marauding police and brutal colonialists by *Assiette* regular Gustave-Henri Jossot to underline the continuity of State repression in the 1970s.

**Dada, surrealism and the early Communist movements in *Tout!***

Dadaist influences were appreciable in the collages and occasional cartoons that appeared in no.12 and subsequent issues, particularly with the critique of the family, bourgeois morality, and the advocacy of sexual freedom. The driving force of this late creative surge at *Tout!* was underground activist Lebel. In a presentation of *Tout!*’s deconstruction of Mother’s Day he explains (fig.1.9):

> This is a Dadaist image, the little girl shooting at her parents, in a revolt against the family. Nothing to do with Maoism, but they [VLR] accepted it, and not only that they put it in the centre pages of their paper.\(^40\)

Lebel had also co-produced *Le Pavé* in May ’68, a one-off, four page paper packed with quotes by revolutionaries, surrealists and poets, including early twentieth century artist Marcel Duchamp’s *LHOOQ* caption and his moustachioed *Mona Lisa*.\(^41\) He arrived at *Tout!* with a wealth of historical and cultural references, of which Dada was the fundamental vector of subversion, informing future situationist work:

> It’s a demolition of all belief systems. Any type of belief system, be it religious, Marxist, commercial or whatever, it was a real *tabula rasa* thing and in that sense the situationists came directly from Dada too. You can see the extraordinary influence of the situationists in the way this *BD* is, taking the actual style of the publicity and the magazines like *L’Express* and so on. But the concept of *détourment* [misappropriation] is something the situationists took from Dada, Dada invented *détournement*.\(^42\)

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41. LHOOQ when spoken means ‘she has a hot arse’, suggesting a sexually active woman.
42. Lebel, op cit.
Lebel cites John Heartfield (born Helmut Herzfelde) as of prime Dada inspiration, especially his anti-Nazi photomontages. In *Tout!* Lebel applied the Heartfield technique of photographic juxtaposition, blending representations of bourgeois order or reaction, with naked bodies, cheeky buttocks and provocative slogans that built the subversive sexual imagery for the final issues of the paper (see cover image). Another Dada influence was George Grosz. Siné expresses his love of Grosz in the German caricaturist’s fascination for the dark underbelly of German society:


Dada was also a reaction to mechanised slaughter of the First World War, and the movement adopted an anti-militarist stance, on display at the first Dada Fair in 1920 with the pig-headed effigy of a Prussian minor officer. Indeed, the first surge of the movement coincided with the Russian Revolution, itself part-war fashioned, and was to lead to Dadaists in Berlin siding with the working-class movement. Inspired by the sailors, soldiers and workers uprisings in 1918, Grosz joined the fledgling German Communist Party (KPD) the following year.

The parallel German Dadaist and Communist currents of the late 1910s foreshadowed the duality of French surrealist and Marxist milieus in subsequent years, a duality, according to future Trotskyist and *Actuel* writer Léon Mercadet, that characterised the evolving counterculture in France:

La dualité poétique politique a toujours existé dès ‘68 ; à la Sorbonne tu avais les amphis, avec des types qui faisaient des discours de Petrograd 1917, avec les mêmes mots, et d’un autre côté les slogans des situationnistes sur les murs ‘sous les pavés la plage’ ; il ya toujours eu cette dualité, la révolution russe c’est 1917 et le mouvement Dada c’est 1916. C’est assez exceptionnel à la France; le surréalisme c’est français. L’Internationale Situationniste elle même fille de l’Internationale Lettriste, c’était en France à Paris à St Germain des Près, on sait très exactement ou c’était.  

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43 The best known were from the 1930s exiled pro-Communist publication *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung (AIZ).*
46 L. Mercadet, interview, 5 February 2010.
Hocquenghem’s mention of the surrealists in Tout! came in the context of his call for total life-change: ‘Ici et maintenant’.\(^\text{47}\) Denoting the artistic movement as born of the double influence of Freudianism and the October Revolution, he criticised a view of surrealism as so much culture to be found in books or libraries- instead he urged the readers to smash the dream-reality division of a US-inspired ‘new culture’ and live this alternative life ‘on the other side of the barrier’, as a resistance to society.\(^\text{48}\) A parallel was drawn between what many activists denoted as le mouvement de mai and previous periods of revolutionary change. The ‘cultural’ revolutionaries of the 1920s were the surrealists, seeking to build on Dadaist derision and Freud’s psychoanalysis to liberate the imagination, and by extension revolutionise human experience. Graphically, Tout! had its surrealist aspects; cartoons were often humorous, absurdist takes on the repression of daily life: Siné’s manipulative négrier, Lebel’s toilet humour in ‘Qui encule qui?’\(^\text{49}\) Philippe’s sketch of a letter writer was a quieter yet strong subconscious image. But there was also a physical connection with an ongoing surrealist movement. This came again through Lebel, who had as mentor in the 1950s surrealist poet Benjamin Péret, and knew Surrealist leader André Breton.\(^\text{50}\)

The connection with the Russian Revolution of 1917 was less evident. Tout! did not directly follow the example of the 1960s Marxist-Leninist paper, itself a derivative of the Leninist model established as early as 1903 in Russia. Despite the proliferation of revolutionary Marxist groups of different denominations in the mid-to-late 1960s, there was a shared theoretical understanding of the paper’s role. Henri Weber became editor of the Trotskyist JCR’s Rouge in September 1968:

Nous étions léninistes, donc le journal c’est le fil à plomb de l’organisation, l’organisation se constitue tous les 15 jours autour de Rouge. C’est un instrument d’organisation formidable puisque ça permet de donner une cohésion à un corps militant et de faire une interface entre ses militants et des sympathisants.\(^\text{51}\)

\(^{48}\) ibid.
\(^{49}\) ‘Qui encule qui?’ Tout! no.12, p. 9.
\(^{50}\) Lebel speaks of Péret’s fighting with legendary anarchist Durutti Column during the Spanish Civil War.
\(^{51}\) Henri Weber, interview, 29 April 2008. As the building metaphor infers, members could follow the line of the party through the paper. Lenin also likened the paper to a ‘scaffolding defining the contours of the party, facilitating communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour’ V.I. Lenin, What is to be done? (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), p. 203.
Weber’s indication of the plumb or guiding line is taken from Lenin’s seminal What is to be done? As with his pamphlets generally, it was a forceful polemic directed against internal criticism of the Bolsheviks, or opposing wings of the Russian Social-Democratic movement, at a time in which revolutionary papers were published abroad owing to police persecution in Russia. Lenin castigated the writers of another paper Rabocheye Dyelo for their ‘economist’ attacks on his project to turn Iskra (The Spark) into an all-Russian political organiser, to train militants for both economic and political struggles.52

Theoretically, the paper not only supplied the party’s political line, but through its sales extended the party network, increasing its ability to intervene effectively at local and national levels. Whether the 1960s and 1970s French equivalents of Iskra managed to achieve this growth is another matter; papers like Rouge and Vive La Révolution were novices, arguably misread the post-68 potential for revolutionary change in France, and remained propaganda sheets with a limited audience.53 They also lacked the working class readership that the Bolsheviks assiduously fostered. However, they took comfort in the knowledge that Lenin and the Bolsheviks were once also a minority, and registered in the symbolic power of the Russian Revolution. Didier Sandman is today disdainful of the early VLR mentality:

> Qui connaissait VLR? La presse n’a jamais mentionné ce groupuscule. On était dans notre petit univers très limité. On pensait qu’on pouvait jouer un rôle important. L’UJ et puis même VLR par la suite. C’est un concept un peu putschiste. Les bolsheviks n’étaient qu’une poignée quand ils ont pris le pouvoir en 1917. Ils ont changé la face du monde. Je pense qu’on était beaucoup dans cette idéologie-là. Notre petit groupe, notre petite chapelle pouvait changer le monde.54

But if VLR ultimately became more libertarian than Leninist, it still looked to October as a model of sorts. Tout! contained several indicators of the Revolution’s challenging of oppression: anti-Semitism checked in Russia after 1917, and most importantly the recognition of sexual self-determination.55 Significantly, the paper pinpointed 1934- the height of Stalinism in Russia- as the moment of reversal of these individual rights, stating that the PCF had since stayed on the line of viewing homosexuality as ‘bourgeois, decadent’, even ‘fascist’; here again, the paper deployed historical antecedents to rile contemporary adversaries. A 1925 poem by the Russian Mayakovsky, reiterating the equation of communism with daily life-change, re-emphasised Tout!’s cultural engagement with the pre-Stalin legacy of 1917.

53 See appendix 3. for sales figures of the far left press in the aftermath of May.
54 Didier Sandman, interview, 9 March 2008
Resistance as inspiration, Vichy’s ‘family’ the enemy

Despite the apparent opposition to a Stalin-period PCF, with the proscription of the party by PM Edouard Daladier in 1939 and with France under the Vichy regime during the German occupation, the ‘Resistance’ PCF became a model of sorts again. Explaining his original adherence to Maoism around 1965, VLR activist Tiennot Grumbach states that he and his friends in the UJC(ml) were opposed to Stalinism:

On rigolait de Staline […] même au début de la Révolution Culturelle, quand on disait […] feu sur le Quartier General […] la référence chinoise à la Commune de Paris nous emmenait à penser que les chinois allaient abandonner Staline…tout ce que représentait la Révolution Culturelle était à l’opposé du centralisme démocratique […] On avait une vision idéaliste…moi j’ai été en Chine avant la Révolution Culturelle… Avec la Hongrie, la position des soviétiques pendant les guerres d’Algérie et d’Espagne, on était nourri de références […] On se sentait beaucoup plus proche de Tillon. Le respect pour les FTP, excus l’un après l’autre. Notre imaginaire était la Resistance, les FTP, Manouchian, un PC de Résistance, pas d’autre. 56

Indeed, Tout! periodically hinted at models of anti-Nazi resistance. During the Meulan trial in December 1970, when VLR members were prosecuted for organising a raid against immigrant trafficking, Tout! produced a supplement, Spartacus. It paid homage to ‘the living example of internationalism’ Missak Manouchian, an Armenian worker who led a Communist immigrant brigade of the Resistance, eventually caught and executed by the Nazis. 57 This was intended as a rebuke to the PCF and the gauchistes for their failure to recognise the autonomy of immigrants and their communities in the 1960s and 70s, and further underlined the importance of immigrant workers to the political outlook of VLR. Tout! revived memories of the Spanish Civil War in its publication of a poem by a veteran of the International Brigades; 58 the historical abhorrence of fascism was compounded by a number of pejorative references to the wartime Vichy regime, particularly Marshal Petain’s promulgation of the Nazi-like slogan ‘Travail, Famille, Patrie’, the outlawing of homosexuality, and the institution of Mother’s Day seen as reinforcing women’s oppression. 59 As ever, Tout! instrumentalised these historical hatreds for an assault on what it saw as the persistent ‘Pétainist beliefs’- the moral conservatism of the contemporary bourgeoisie and its perceived left counterpart, the PCF, and even fellow gauchistes. 60

56 Tiennot Grumbach, interview, 7 February 2008. FTP stood for Francs-Tireurs et Partisans, the armed wing of the Resistance PCF during the Second World War German occupation of France, of whom Charles Tillon was a leading organiser.
57 ‘Pour l’autonomie de lutte des immigrés’, Spartacus, supplement to Tout! no.5, p. 4.
58 Tout! no.10, p. 5.
59 See in particular Tout! no.14.
60 ‘Pompidou nous ne serons pas tes familles’ Tout! no.5, p. 1.
In the milestone twelfth issue of *Tout!*, a ‘homosexual, dirty, communist foreigner’ commented on the Nazis’ wartime labelling of gays with a pink triangle, linking it to the symbolic compartmentalisation of other minorities.\(^\text{61}\) The likening of gay oppression to a ghetto from which a barrier needed to be crossed to enter the ‘normal’ world pointed to the ghettoisation of Jews during the war.\(^\text{62}\)

Homosexuality, which had been decriminalised under the *code Napoléon* in 1804, was effectively recriminalised by the Pétain regime in 1942, when the age of consent for homosexual acts was set at 21, while that for heterosexuals was 15; this providing *Tout!* with more historical ammunition to attack rightwing mores.\(^\text{63}\) Legal and moral discrimination against gays persisted under de Gaulle and subsequent governments. Moreover, homophobic sentiment was not confined to the Right. Fourierist Scherer, during the 1950s, was expelled from the PCF ‘for homosexuality’.\(^\text{64}\) In 1960 Gaullist deputy Paul Mirguet described homosexuality as ‘*un fléau social*’ a social scourge’, against which ‘our children would have to be protected’ while proposing a measure to double the sentences passed down to gays for ‘*outrage à la pudeur*/indecent acts’.\(^\text{65}\) Social prejudice was manifest in the casual equivalence of the insult ‘pédé’ to a child-abusing paedophile.

During this time the main homosexual journal was the ‘homophile’ review *Arcadie*, of the eponymous movement set up and run by André Baudry from 1954.\(^\text{66}\) Baudry’s outlook was one of a dignified homosexual existence under the radar of mainstream French society, building of discreet social networks for gays kept in touch by the intermediary of *Arcadie*, which by 1960 was known to have around 10,000 subscribers.\(^\text{67}\) However, the journal addressed historical, cultural and lifestyle issues, avoiding transgression of the moral order. Thus, despite its

\(^\text{61}\) ‘*Le triangle rose*’ *Tout!* no.12, p. 3.

\(^\text{62}\) R. Deshayes, interview, 21 April 2008. Furthermore, with Manouchian and the Commune, the 1943 uprising of the Jewish Warsaw Ghetto against the Germans is said to have been one of the inspirations- a cult, even- for VLR’s Jewish leaders.

\(^\text{63}\) ‘*Les lois*’ *Tout!* no.12, p. 6. Furthermore, the paper rubbished the idea that the law only affected bourgeois men, quoting from a 1964 official statistic that showed a third of all sentences and fines were passed on to working-class gays.

\(^\text{64}\) R. Scherer, interview, 8 December 2008.


\(^\text{66}\) For a comprehensive history of Arcadie, see Julian Jackson, *Living in Arcadia; homosexuality, politics and morality in France from the Liberation to Aids* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

networking sociability - including for future gay revolutionaries like Françoise d’Eaubonne and Anne-Marie Fauret - Arcadie was not spared the wrath of the Front Homosexual d’Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR), effectively launched by Tout! in 1971. For one 1970s activist Jean Le Bitoux, the association resembled ‘a club, a nineteenth century club’. Another, lesbian activist, Marie-Jo Bonnet, goes further, describing Arcadie as ‘an odious thing, impoverished’. 

The Algerian War, clandestine press and Clarté

The question of immigration was the flip side of an anti-imperialist coin for VLR and Tout! Racism and resistance at home were seen as a reflection of colonialism and national liberation struggles abroad. Significantly, Roland Castro, Tiennot Grumbach, Jean-Paul Dollé and other contributors to the paper had been actively involved in the movement against the Algerian War in the early 1960s. Their opposition extended to campaigning against the far right Organisation de l’Armée Secrète (OAS), which engaged in a terrorist campaign against the government in the run-up to Algerian independence, and in support of the Algerian independence movement the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN). In 1960, Lebel himself collaborated in the radical, roving exhibition Anti-Procès, described by poet and art critic Alain Jouffroy thus:

\textit{Anti-Procès} contient une critique du procès contre le réseau Jeanson, et veut ‘protester contre toutes les formes de fascisme et d’autorisation qui gangrènent aujourd’hui le monde “libre”’. 

One of the products of this itinerant ‘happening’, \textit{Grand Tableau Antifasciste Collectif}, signalled the engagement of numerous artists and poets in the anti-war movement.

Frustrated and angry at the reports of the torture of Algerians and the brutality of the French army in mainstream liberal papers \textit{L’Express}, \textit{France Observateur}, \textit{Témoignage Chrétien}, Dollé turned actively against the war. From 1960, he started to follow \textit{Les Temps Modernes}, having read the work of philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and been encouraged by the journal’s outspoken

69 M.J.Bonnet, interview, 19.12.08. Significantly, the association was an almost exclusively male venture, its female membership never more than 2-3%. Baudry contended that the few \textit{arcadiennes} never submitted articles (Girard, pp. 42-43).
71 See \textit{Grand Tableau Antifasciste Collectif}. Lebel became the principal instigator of countercultural happenings in France in subsequent years.
support for the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN). However, it was the publication of the *Manifeste des 121*, a declaration by a string of high-profile intellectuals writers and artists against the war and support for army deserters, in the small journal *Vérité-Liberté* that appealed most to Dollé:

Le Manifeste des 121 a été décisif pour moi […] Ça m’a redonné du courage. Sartre était très connu mais il y en avait d’autres, des gens à qui je faisais confiance, des autorités intellectuelles. Il n’y avait aucune protection, aucun parti qui aidait les jeunes. Les seuls qui nous aidaient étaient les ‘intellectuels’. Alors ça a été une bouffée d’air pur. On voyait qu’on n’était pas tout seul. L’effet mobilisateur était énorme […] l’impact moral sur la jeunesse [étudiante] énorme.72

Indeed, the intervention of antiwar left intellectuals, in particular Sartre, in the public domain, set a precedent for the far left’s turn to intellectuals and personalities for protection in 1970. Sartre assumed the nominal directorship of *Tout!, La Cause du Peuple* and others in this later period, in a bid to thwart the State’s suppressive intentions. The 1960 manifesto further provided a model for the *Manifeste des 343* of 1971, a cornerstone of the modern women’s liberation movement.73

Subsequent to the *Manifeste*, Dollé came into close contact with the secret FLN support network. He denotes the declaration as a turning point in general political orientation, a rupture with the parliamentary left:

Ça a préparé à avoir une position anti-institutionnelle, parce que c’était un acte de transgression. Dire qu’on avait le droit à l’insoumission, ça, c’était énorme. Ça cassait la légitimité ordinaire. A mon avis ça a eu une très grande importance par la suite. Il s’est constitué une culture libertaire, presque insurrectionnelle. Ce qu’on appellera après gauchiste. Le gauchisme est né là, en gros. C’était le fait qu’on pouvait faire des choses en dehors des partis de gauche, qu’on pouvait avoir une position radicale. C’était extrêmement politique, mais anti-politicien. Le PS était déconsidéré. Pour moi c’était des assassins, des traîtres, à cause de la guerre d’Algérie. Le PC on le trouvait toujours stalinien, en plus il ne faisait rien pour la paix en Algérie […] il n’avait pas de positions nettes sur la décolonisation.74

This early *gauchiste* culture was circumscribed by the State’s banning of critical or pro-FLN publications, foremost of which was Henri Alleg’s *La Question*, instilling a clandestine atmosphere in the anti-war movement.75 However, as historian of French resistance to the Algerian War, Martin Evans argues, ‘suppression of this nature quickly became a dynamic

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72 Jean-Paul Dollé, interview, 22 December 2008
73 Le Manifeste des 343 listed women, some high-profile, who had had abortions, the practice then illegal in France. Some of the activists who helped compile it also contributed to *Tout!*
74 Jean-Paul Dollé, op cit.
element in the growth of opposition’.\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Actuel} writer and VLR sympathiser Jean-Paul Ribes, then a student and supporter of Algerian independence, confirms this analysis. He remembers having been a \textit{porteur de valise} and sold banned newspapers:

\textit{Vérité-Pour} was created by a little group of anti-colonialists. One of those responsible was a very committed Christian called [Robert] Barrat [...] he asked for our help to sell this clandestine paper... I did something you should never do in a clandestine affair, I mixed being a \textit{porteur de valise}, and carrying a valise of banned papers. People came to see our little team, asked "Have you got the latest issue of...?" We were sellers of a repressed press. It was very bad security but very much part of our political education […] At the same time we carried out the missions given to us, we got people into the networks.\textsuperscript{77}

Papers and bulletins like \textit{Vérité-Pour, Témoignages et Documents,} and \textit{La Voie Communiste} grew from the late 1950s, combining political critique with news, and providing an informational milieu for both \textit{porteurs de valise} and open antiwar activists. Indeed, Simon Blumenthal of the dissident communist \textit{Voie Communiste} group, prolonged his dissident militancy at his print-shop, producing the papers of numerous \textit{gauchiste} groups after 1968, notably \textit{La Cause du Peuple} and \textit{Vive la Révolution}.

Dollé’s itinerary followed that of a generation of other student militants who had experienced the movement against the Algerian war. They rejected Soviet communism, dubbing it ‘revisionism’ and moved closer to the Chinese model; Dollé speaks of the ‘25 point letter’ returning to a revolutionary position.\textsuperscript{78} The fight against colonialism, then imperialism, attracted them to Cuba and support for the revolutionary regime regime. Dollé and Grumbach both moved to Algeria for some time following Independence, where Grumbach met Che Guevara, and Dollé collaborated on the Third Worldist paper \textit{Révolution Africaine} with pro-Chinese lawyer Jacques Vergès and cartoonist Siné (fig.1.10).

In the early 1960s, the Communist student (UEC) paper \textit{Clarté} was gradually taken over by opponents within the movement. \textit{Clarté} can be seen as a forerunner of \textit{Tout!} due to its revolution in journalistic form and content. Then editor Jean Schalit explains the developing divergence from Stalinist conservatism:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item ibid. p. 144.
\item J-P. Ribes, interview, 5 October 2007.
\item Dollé, op cit. For the 25 point letter, see Chistrophe Bourseiller, \textit{Les Maoïstes: la folle histoire des gardes rouges français} (Paris: Points, 2008) p. 45. This was the Chinese Communist Party’s declaration of opposition to Kruschchev’s policy of peaceful co-existence with the West, the abandonment of Marx, Lenin and Stalin’s legacy.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Après le vingtième congrès, il y avait de l’agitation dans le mouvement communiste, le fait que Kruschev a ouvert les vannes ; en même temps, le PCF freinait beaucoup là-dessus, et ils avaient des positions très conservatrices sur la guerre d’Algérie. Ils disaient ‘il faut pas choquer le peuple’, ils étaient un peu colonialistes, leur slogan était ‘la paix en Algérie’. Et nous commencions à penser et à raisonner en termes ‘indépendance d’Algérie’. Pour le parti c’était un mot trop avant-gardiste, trop gauchiste [...] et puis peu à peu, puisqu’on était une organisation indépendante, on a commencé à réfléchir tout seul et on avait l’exemple du Parti Communiste Italien (PCI) qui était beaucoup plus libéral, beaucoup plus ouvert, beaucoup plus moderne. Et forcément on a commencé à diverger avec le parti, et le journal reflétait ça. Ce journal se vendait de plus en plus parce qu’il trouvait un écho ; tandis que le PCF était dans son ghetto, nous on était ouvert sur le monde. On était devenu le plus grand journal du Quartier Latin. De loin. Tout le monde nous lisait.79

Schalit, later editor of May ‘68’s Action, takes credit for training a generation of journalists, citing future Libération editor Serge July and Actuel writers Michel-Antoine Burnier and Bernard Kouchner as active members of the editorial team at Clarté. These were the so-called italiens, as Schalit intimates, admirers of the PCI, initially the strongest oppositional current in the UEC before the Trotskyist Jeunesses Communistes Révolutionnaires (JCR) and the Maoist Union des Jeunesses Communistes Marxistes-Léninistes (UJC(ml)) took shape and were excised from the parent organisation in 1965-66.

The openness Schalit speaks of encompassed cultural concerns and interests, including travel, jazz, literature, theatre, and particularly, film. Clarté championed the New Wave of French cinema and carried regular contributions by the latest directors including Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol and François Truffaut. There was space for discussion of delicate social and personal matters, issues like sexuality. For instance, both he and Roland Castro independently cite a Clarté article on flirting, ‘Est-il bon de draguer?’ as an unprecedented question, indicative of the period’s moral conservatism. Furthermore, Schalit transformed the appearance of the militant paper from a standard black-and-white information sheet into a colourful, graphic magazine. This was partly achieved by approaching famous painters, who agreed to donate pieces of artwork in solidarity; the paintings would grace the cover of Clarté, and the further sale of each piece would raise the necessary money to pay for the paper in colour. In this way Schalit obtained covers for the journal from, amongst others, Fernand Léger, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Marc Chagall (fig.1.11).

Clarté would also publish the sketches of Siné, probably the foremost antiwar cartoonist of the Algerian War period. His work then included, amongst others, the parachutists’ torture of Algerian militants, provocative cartoons alternately published and rejected by L’Express and other mainstream publications. In 1962, following Algeria’s declaration of independence, Siné quit L’Express and launched Siné Massacre, a journal of caustic caricature attacking de Gaulle, the pieds noirs, the OAS, racism and French colonialism, thematic sketches that would re-surface in L’Enragé of May ’68, and subsequently in Tout! The government’s prosecution of the artist, for each of the nine issues of Siné Massacre, underlined an authoritarian intolerance of dissent, particularly with regards to the impugning of the President and the figureheads of the French army that would endure into the 1970s.\(^8^0\)

Interestingly, Siné was sentenced not for his usual ‘insults and defamations’, the judges fearing the politicisation of the trial, but for outrage aux bonnes moeurs in no.7.\(^8^1\) One of the mocking sketches showed two gay men holding hands, sauntering towards a public urinal, the inference of homosexual cottaging plain (fig.1.12); the other the paedophilic lure of a young girl. Condemnation of this admittedly crude, reactionary humour stressed the State’s tight moral rein on questions of (deviant) sexuality, prefiguring the reaction to Tout!’s provocative advertising of plurisexuality. If Siné occasionally introduced sketches of erotic bawdiness, the humoristic, monthly Hara-Kiri, founded by François Cavanna in 1960, indulged in sexual, animalistic and scatological imagery. Employing staged photo covers and farcical photo-romans in its absurdist takes on everyday French life; politicians and police were more the targets of send-ups than of a real political critique. But in the 1960s Hara-Kiri revived the anarchistic defilement of tradition, on the fringes of French journalism. Nothing was sacred, says Cavanna:

> Foutons dehors à coups de pied au cul les vieux interdits, à commencer par le bon goût. A continuer par le sacré.\(^8^2\)

The journal also bred a stable of talented writers and cartoonists, among them Delfeil de Ton, Choron, Wolinksi, Cabu, Gébé and Reiser, regulars at the more political Hara-Kiri Hebdo to emerge after 1968, some contributors to Tout! and a number of other titles. Roland Topor, another major inspiration to the artists at Tout! added his dreamlike, nineteenth century-style

\(^8^0\) Siné, interview, 24 January 2008
\(^8^1\) ibid. Siné feels that the State being unsuccessful in its prosecution of his anti-militarist sketches, switched to outrage as a means of silencing him.
sketches to *Hara-Kiri*, before his ephemeral contributions to the radical press of May ’68 (fig.1.13).

*Melp! and the pop art sensibility*

Among the prime movers of *Tout!* were four students of the Beaux-Arts school of architecture: Castro, Jacques Barda, Jean Marie Léon, and Pierre Gangnet. Until 1968, Beaux Arts teaching was dominated by a network of ateliers run by *patrons* who rarely deviated from the school norm of neo-classical forms and techniques. Contestation of the art school system had begun to manifest itself moderately in *Melpomène*, the bi-monthly student journal. Further evidence of the students’ urge to break from the Beaux-Arts’ traditionalism was seen in the visits made by students, including Barda, to the ateliers of contemporary architects in the US and other European countries, returning with extensive reports for *Melpomène*. Castro references the British architectural group Archigram, whose walking city and space habitat concepts, visible in their yearly vanguard graphic journal, served to boost modernist, indeed futurist outlooks in architecture at the Beaux-Arts.

Student exasperation at the detachment of classical architectural training from the real housing concerns of the population, converged with a mounting leftist critique of the privatised *maison individuelle* and the domination of new urban developments by government and a profit-hungry construction industry: *les grands ensembles*. These were large scale concrete box and tower zones created in the 1950s and after to meet the huge growth in housing demand. Despite its original modernising promise, urban planning came under increasing fire for creating impersonal, socially divisive zones subordinated to the profit principle, alternative urbanist themes that would reappear in leftist papers of the ‘70s such as *La Gueule Ouverte, Actuel* and indeed *Tout!*.

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84 Named after the goddess of poetry, whose statue imposed itself in a large, eponymous hall of the school, *Melpomène* was a small, humorous cartoon pamphlet whose existence depended on the subsidy of small firms of construction materials.
85 R. Castro, interview, 18 March 2008. In fact the core editorial group of *Melp!* crossed the channel in June 1966 to join an international Archigram festival of young architects, a summary of which was delivered to the first issue of *Melp!* by Bernard Huet. Entitled ‘Archigram v. Archigram’ the article engages with the ‘iconoclastic fury’ of the conference, cheering on the denigration of French Prix de Rome architects Verillot and Parent and even the founders of Archigram, Denis Compton and Peter Cook, ‘prisoners of their own formulae’ (*Melp!* no.1, pp. 8-9)
In 1966 the minority left was able to lead a month-long strike against course content and teachers. With a small but vocal section of L’Union Nationale des Étudiants de France (UNEF) underway at the Beaux Arts, the militants took over Melpomène, renaming it Melp! in an ironic twist of the Beatles’ song *Help!* emphasising the frustrations of Beaux-Arts students. Barda, Castro and fellow radicals revolutionised the booklet’s format, layout and design, setting the buzzwords ‘malaise’ and ‘désespoir’ in the first issue alongside pictures of the Beaux-Arts strike, monolithic architecture and anti-Vietnam war protests. Barda’s design management of *Tout!*, described by his future comrade Marc Hatzfeld as ‘spontaneous, flexible’ was clearly prefigured by his work on *Melp!*, from the pop art graphics, notably the inclusion of William Klein’s *Polly Magoo*, futuristic fonts and intermittent page colours, down to the concept of alternate cover pages made possible by a folding technique (*fig.1.14*). A leader column poetically expounded the critique:

Les premières assemblées libres se sont tenues à l’Ecole; des idées circulent, des textes s’élaborent, ils parlent tous de jeter le quai Malaquais à la Seine, ils réclament l’effort de tout le monde et même des architectes pour ouvrir des portes, inventer des solutions, hiérarchiser les problèmes, les poser à leur niveau socio-économique réel.

It signed off with the first explicit reference to contemporary ideological revolt, quoting Mao: ‘Que cent fleurs s'épanouissent, que cent écoles rivalisent!’, a frontal snub to the School’s ‘no politics’ rule. *Melp!*, a fusion of the cultural and political, prefigured the Beaux-Arts students’ growing contestation, the poster ateliers of May ’68 and the State’s restructuring of the school into modern teaching units *unités pédagogiques* (UPAs) removed from the old academicism.

**The Maoist, Marxisant origins of *Tout!***

The new Marxist-Leninist, read Maoist UJC(ml), recently excluded from the PCF, was instrumental in the setting up of the Comités Vietnam de Base (CVBs) in 1966-67, and initiated

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86 There is also a reflection of *Melp! in Tout!* with its four-letter title and exclamation mark, but this was not raised in any of the interviews I conducted. Barda talks of a Beaux- Arts friends’ trip to Liverpool to visit the birthplace of the Beatles (interview, 2 June 2008).

87 M. Hatzfeld, interview, 19 January 2008. *Qui êtes vous Polly Magoo?* was Klein’s 1966 pop-art movie satirising the world of fashion.

88 ‘Le Malaise’, *Melp!* no.1 (*Melpomène* no.22), 22 July 1966, p. 3. The Quai Malaquais was the site of some of the Beaux-Arts ateliers.
a process of *établissement*, whereby largely student members took jobs in factories as part of a Maoist strategy of ‘going to the people’. They produced, successively, *Garde Rouge* and *Servir le Peuple*, ideological papers that celebrated Mao, Lenin and Stalin, sold primarily among the militants.  

International solidarity was expressed in the sale of *Le Courrier du Vietnam* on the marketplaces.  

These papers were forerunners of the ex-UJ papers *La Cause du Peuple* and *Vive Le Communisme*, later *Vive La Révolution*; the post-’68 accent was more on action, but although the VLR versions had the added aspect of humour, they shared with *Servir le Peuple* the black, white and grey layouts and dense ideological text. Indeed, most were run out, as with virtually all Maoist-leaning publications, at Blumenthal’s printshop in the 20th arr. Little of these Maoist publications would survive in *Tout!* besides analyses of third world liberation struggles and traces of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.  

Similarly, *Tout!* shunned any Trotskyist press heritage, despite Hocquenghem’s contribution to *Avant-Garde Jeunesse*, the student precursor to *Rouge*, in his earlier militant Marxist phase. However, the *Groupe de Base Censier*, excluded from the JCR in 1969, absorbed the ingrained anti-Stalinism of the Trotskyists, moving on to a libertarian reading of cultural revolution.

The third pre-’68 Marxisant influence heavily present at *Tout!* was situationism. The Internationale Situationniste (IS) had been ensconced in tiny, theoretical discussion groups since the 1950s, elaborating its hyper-critical stances on art, culture, urbanism and increasingly, politics and society. A corresponding intellectual influence was Henri Lefebvre, linked to the situationists through his critique of daily life and the theory of ‘moments’.  

For those VLR students at the faculty of Nanterre in the late 1960s, Lefebvre was a symbol— a ‘guru’ for some; his urge to change life inspired their own political-poetic revolt, for the Beaux Arts, his critique of urbanism fuelled the innovation of UP6.  

Nanterre student Stéphane Courtois relates that Lefebvre’s refusal to teach in academic gown alone set him out from his peers. ‘On faisait du mauvais Lefebvre’, states *Tout!* distributor Dominique Labbé, suggesting that *changer la vie* came as much from interpretations of Lefebvre as the musings of Rimbaud.  

Dollé expands:

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89 Despite later repudiations of Stalinism by ex-VLR members, the UJ’s papers did not shy from praise of the Soviet dictator, as in ‘Staline, grand révolutionnaire prolétarien’, *Servir le Peuple*, no.20, 1 May 1968, p.3.
90 M. Dixmier 29 April 2008. Militants went to pick up the papers at the North Vietnamese embassy.
91 More precisely, interpretations of cultural revolution.
92 Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001) p. 146. Lefebvre’s keynote work was *Critique de la Vie Quotidienne*, published in the late 1940s.
93 UP6 being *unité pédagogique 6*, one of the UPAs.
94 S. Courtois, interview, 5 June 2008.
95 D. Labbé, interview, 2 April 2010.
Changer la vie voulait dire changer la vie quotidienne [...] il fallait faire fusionner le marxisme, la critique prolétarienne, avec tout ce qui avait été fait dans l’art. Je pensais qu’on était les héritiers de toute l’avant-garde artistique, du surréalisme, du situationnisme. Donc il ne fallait surtout pas dissocier les deux. C’était le désir de révolution, pas simplement pour changer la politique, c’était pour changer la vie. 96

With the publication of De la Misère en Milieu Etudiant, following a radical student takeover of the Strasbourg UNEF in late 1966, the situationists pierced the world of French politics. 97 The pamphlet savaged the parlous spiritual, intellectual and economic state of the modern-day student and gave a critical assessment of the youth rebellions of diverse, autonomous international movements such as the Dutch Provos, the growing US counter culture, and the Zengakuren in Japan. 98 Echoing the message of contemporary situationist texts La Société du Spectacle and Traité de Savoir Vivre à l’Usage des Jeunes Générations, the pamphlet ended by advocating the refusal of work and the destruction of capitalism’s ‘new religion’, the ‘spectacle, earthly realisation of ideology’. 99 With its rejection of ‘pseudo’ left-wing groups and emphasis on the exhortation to live and to liberate creativity in all moments of life, the text both presaged the rebellion of May ’68, and provided some of the essential imagery for Tout!

Respondents recall finding De la Misère in kiosks on the Boulevard St Germain before May ‘68; high school student and future participant at Tout! Gilles Dinnematin describing it as ‘a personal treasure’. 100 For lycéen Stéphane Gatti:

C’était comme l’antidote absolu. L’époque était un peu bizarre [...] on avait l’impression que les choses devenaient plus drôles, un peu moins conventionnelles, un peu moins guindées, que ça bougeait un peu, et tout d’un coup il y a un texte… Le lycée c’était comme beaucoup, des lycées casernes […] tout d’un coup il y avait un pamphlet qui décrivait la misère intellectuelle, de quoi se nourrissaient les ambitions des étudiants contemporains. C’était extrêmement violent. 101

In the context of the spread of libertarian ideas at his lycée, Voltaire, and other establishments, anarchist Marc Tomsin, also a seller of Tout!, talks of a ‘network of complicity’, fed by the

97 Full title, De la Misère en Milieu Etudiant, considérée sous ses aspects économique, politique, psychologique, sexuel et notamment intellectuel et de quelques moyens pour y remédier.
98 Of these it considered the stick-toting Zengakuren, in their regular clashes with Japanese State forces, to be the only force not to have reproduced bourgeois ideology and relations of hierarchy and discipline.
100 G. Dinnematin, interview, 22 May 2008.
101 S. Gatti, interview, 4 December 2008.
hand-to-hand circulation of situationist writing and images, including *De la Misère*. Other texts included *Le Retour de la Colonne Durruti*, a photo-cartoon farce that highlighted the situationist technique of *détournement*, the subversion of received ideas in the misappropriation of conventional imagery. Crucially, the spirit and ideas of the situationists were picked up by younger, libertarian-minded students and *lycéens*, before and after May ‘68, not finding their way into VLR and *Tout!* until 1970, following militant, intellectual reassessments of May’s significance. By no.12 of *Tout!*, these ideas were pervasive in the paper, which espoused a revolution of ‘daily life’ that sought to reach beyond the formulae of traditional *gauchisme*.

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103 Buenaventura Durruti was an influential Spanish anarchist who led a force against Franco’s fascists during the Spanish Civil War; hence the term *La Colonne Durruti*. 


Figure 1.2: Daumier’s Gargantua, 1831.

Figure 1.3: Fête de la Commune, Marché aux Puces, March 1971, Politique Hebdo.

Figure 1.4: Ernest Pignon’s Commune cadaver prints laid on the steps of the Sacré Coeur, May 1971, Tout!

Figure 1.5: 1971 reprint of Emile Pouget’s Le Sabotage.
Figure 1.6: Ruling class alliances, in *Le Père Peinard*, and *Tout!*

Figure 1.8: ‘Voyez un peu ce sale ouvrier qui m’empeche de réaliser mon programme’ mutters Georges Clemenceau. Jules Grandjouan’s 1907 lithograph in *L’Assiette au Beurre*, attacking the rich and powerful, the CGT worker as hero.

Figure 1.7: ‘Vous êtes là pour juger, pas pour acquitter!’, Jossot in *L’Assiette au Beurre*, reproduced in *Tout!*

Figure 1.9: A Dadaist swipe at Mothers Day, *Tout!*
Figure 1.10: Siné’s publicity for *Révolution Africaine*, in *Dessins Politiques*, 1965.

Figure 1.11: A Marc Chagall cover for *Clarié*, 1961.

Figure 1.12: A gay couple saunter towards a urinal. Siné was charged with *outrage aux bonnes moeurs* for this sketch. *Siné Massacre*, 1963.

Figure 1.13: One of Topor’s surreal images, untitled, for *Hara-Kiri*, 1963.

Figure 1.14: The short lived, pop art, architectural journal *Melp!* 1966.
2. May ‘68 in Tout!

Whereas Tout! drew on past insurrections such as the 1871 Commune and the Russian Revolution for inspiration, the events of May-June 1968 were referenced in the paper as seminal to the subsequent movements of contestation. This chapter aims to show how May ‘68, two years past, was the progenitor of new press ventures and propaganda techniques symbiotic with those movements, indeed the very foundation stone of Tout! The paper sought to revive the experience and restore the spirit of May ‘68, to transpose its keynote themes and language, forms and practices to the France of the early 1970s. It thus reflected the heterogeneity of the May events, taking on a blend of interpretations. However, it was not indiscriminate in its choice of references, privileging essentially the sensual, libertarian impulses of what actors call ‘Le Mouvement de Mai’, as opposed to Marxist, vanguard discourses seen as chained to the old world.

Readings of Tout! reveal regular, multiple references to May demonstrating the closeness of feeling to the event(s) and a determination to perpetuate its transformative message. Several themes predominated: the seizure, and liberation of speech: la parole; the birth of La France sauvage as an unending grassroots resistance to the Gaullist social order; and the critique of daily life in order to change life: changer la vie. Many of the social struggles of 1970-71 were portrayed as echoes or reflections of May’s movement of strikes and occupations, a mass revolt that threw into sharp relief not only the continuing decadence of government, but all the hesitancies and reactions of attendant political leaders, parties, and trade unions. But for Tout! this was, to an extent, preaching to the converted. As a surge of freedom in all its vital, social and sexual aspects, May had to be revived to overcome the conservatism of gauchisme, from which the paper had emerged and against which it now polemicised.

Foremost in the actors’ testimonies is their recalled experience, their understanding of what was taking place. I want to show how their interpretation of May informed their later contribution to Tout! Therefore I have drawn from the oral evidence the commonality of thought and feeling, around the themes of communication, political action and cultural freedom that set up the new trajectory for the movements that would converge on Tout!

Tout! represented a meeting point of French radical left currents that predated May but were shattered and reoriented in the heat of the events. In order to establish the reasons for VLR-
Tout!’s rejection of strict Marxist organisational forms and language, I will examine the ideas and language of far left ventures such as La Cause du Peuple. More importantly I will evaluate the role of Action, the ‘paper of the movement’, and its relation with Tout!, which cast itself in a similar role. For the humour of 1968 caricature, L’Enragé took on a special significance, and a libertarian affinity with Tout! was evident in Le Pavé. A further relation to Les Cahiers de Mai could be understood through both papers’ desire to provide a platform for workers’ speech.

Finally, I seek to build on my previous work concerning the atelier posters of May ‘68. These set the tone on the streets and walls of Paris and beyond during the events, and further propelled the militant, creative practice of serigraphy well into the 1970s. Here, I examine the imagery of the posters, and do-it-yourself silkscreen technique that proliferated in the aftermath of May.

**Readings of May in Tout!**

Several editorial-style articles in the first issues of Tout! placed the meaning and legacy of the mass revolt of May ‘68 at the centre of their preoccupations. Characterised as a rupture, the movement both shattered the old Gaullist rigidity and projected new possibilities:

> Jour après jour – et là-dedans une grande déchirure, Mai 68, on a l’impression qu’on va tous parler, qu’on a tous quelque chose à dire, tous quelque chose à apporter. Surprise: bourgeoise affolée, même l’ORTF en grève, le doute gagne ton chef de bureau ou d’atteler. Et puis ils re saisissent et on te reprend en main - jour après jour. Mais plus tout à fait comme avant.

Most issues of the paper contained at least one or two mentions of the May events, predominantly in the context of their historical import, their legacy in the factories, on the streets, and in people’s heads. In a bittersweet article calling on readers and writers to create their own cartoons, Siné declared: ‘C’est vous qui en mai 68 m’ont aidé à vivre.’ Conversely, de Gaulle died, in both figurative and literal senses, from that part of history that was May.  

Free speech and communication were encapsulated in the expression *la prise de la parole*. This could be read two ways, as a metaphorical capture of the right to speak from the ruling orders- a revolutionary echo of *la prise de la Bastille* - and the straightforward act of speaking up, voicing one’s opinion. Additionally, it opposed, and replaced the Marxist-Leninist demand of power seizure. Castro provided another editorial on this theme in the second issue of Tout! Pointing to

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2. ‘Assez de faire parler les morts alors que les vivants HURLENT’ *Tout!* no.4, p. 1.
the graffiti-lined walls of Fiat Turin and the faculty of Nanterre, he called for the renewal, or recapturing of speech, without which ‘the struggle could not free the initiative of all’. In this he saw the inadequacy of economism, or simple material demands that failed to recognise the enslavement of the worker to the capitalist organisation of work, ‘cutting men’s heads and men’s arms into two irreconcilable worlds’. For the authors of Tout!, May ‘68 represented far more than just wage increases and a 40-hour week; it was the desire of millions, through the strikes demonstrations, and occupations to speak up and creatively transform their lives. Reference to la parole was made again by Guy Hocquenghem in a discourse against the ‘thieves of speech’. Recalling the gauchiste critique of the unions in May as bastions of social order, an issue 12 article damned the CGT for invoking a Petainist law to punish graffiti scrawlers, due to the union’s indignation at the ‘flowering of inscriptions since May ‘68’.

The second theme favoured in Tout! was that of La France Sauvage. Literally meaning wild, sauvage here took on the sense of social and political action bucking mainstream norms and mores. Thus, the wildcat strikes, political demonstrations, occupations and ‘autonomous’ movements of 1970-71, that found their roots in the spontaneous mass movement of May ‘68. In a keynote editorial entitled ‘Une nouvelle attitude politique’, Roland Castro distanced the paper from classical leftist models such as Russia 1917, opposing a Trotskyist transposition of the October Revolution to the France of 1970. Castro’s Maoist credentials were in evidence when he stated his admiration for the Cultural Revolution. But his regard was laced with sarcasm, against a certain kind of dogmatism that failed to match the concerns of the ‘movement of May’.

Crucially, the ‘new attitude’ engendered by May was apparent in the workplaces: a rash of wildcat strikes in response to a bosses’ offensive since 1968, seen through the revolt of young

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4 ibid.
6 Also the title of a 1970 survey of student worker and leftist movements since May, co-authored by future Actuel founders Bernard Kouchner, Michel-Antoine Burnier, Frédéric Bon and finally VLR sympathiser Jean-Paul Ribes.
7 Roland Castro, ‘Une nouvelle attitude politique’, Tout! no.1, p. 3.
workers in the ‘violent contestation of May’s aftermath’, such as the January 1971 Nantes-Batignolles strike and ransacking of admin offices. A long article in issue 6-7 asserted a new understanding of ‘La France Sauvage, née en Mai ‘68’ which built on the Maoists’ rejection of the traditional unions to contest all aspects of life under French capitalism.\(^8\) In a late article extolling the wildcat strikes of Renault-Cléon in May ‘71, a Tout! contributor reiterated that the unions had been rotten since May ‘68, ‘the soul of the bourgeoisie, for integration and all that crap’.\(^9\)

A third interpretation hailed May’s transformation of daily life, changer la vie. For Tout!, May threw into question all aspects of life under capitalism. Thus readings of May went beyond the political overthrow of the system, speaking of a cultural revolution, or ‘new culture’; May as a sensual, festive revolt, if not a festival itself. Further claim to this bequest of May ‘68 could be gleaned from Tout!’s critique of gauchistes’ re-integration into the ‘old culture’ post-‘68, that of Gaullist or Pompidolian France, while others asked questions of it. Here Tout! chose the new cultural, if not countercultural equation to May: a Stones concert was akin to a May ‘68 mass demo; the visiting Yippies assimilated May ‘68 to the ‘Woodstock Nation’; folk artist Colette Magny, who sang in the factories during the occupations, recorded her latest song, entitled Mai 68. In a contemporaneous interview on VLR with Politique Hebdo Castro and Yves Hardy underlined this festive aspect of May:

La révolution, c’est la fête, même si les fêtes, c’est pas la révolution. Ce sont de vieilles idées, de Marx, pas de VLR. C’est lié aussi à notre lecture de Mai. Un des aspects de l’organisation capitaliste prend la forme de l’ennui, d’étouffement complet de l’initiative. Il y a la fameuse phrase ‘métro, boulot, dodo’: à notre époque, la perte d’initiative est un phénomène de masse. C’est pourquoi il faut revivifier la fête.\(^10\)

Accordingly, Hocquenghem derided advocates of the ‘dignity of work’. Those who sought to exploit. May ‘68 taught some gauchistes, he explains, to reject labour, and value sloth, indeed to sabotage the machinery of work.\(^11\) Hocquenghem’s new, radical attitude differed from Castro’s in that he sought to direct the reader away from the Marxist preoccupation with the centrality of the workplace. Instead he saw in May a well of personal, pleasurable and cultural freedoms-including sexual- made possible by the revolt against hierarchy and oppression. Elsewhere,

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\(^8\) ‘Lutte de civilisations lutte de classes’ Tout! no.6-7, p. 5.
\(^9\) Spartacus, supplement a Tout! no. 13, p. 4.
Hocquenghem recalled the murals and posters, creative aspects of May in his call for a new, liberated reality: ‘De l’autre côté de la barrière’.\(^1\)

*Tout!* therefore sought to re-connect with May ‘68, to revive these inter-related themes of revolt in the context of 1970s Pompidolian France.\(^2\) This revolution in speech, action and culture, an ‘existential revolution’, was directed not only against the government, established political parties and trade unions, but also orthodox left models of social change, a rupture rooted in the tensions of the movement of May.

**Recollections and interpretations of May**

It is clear that current retrospectives of those who were active in and around *Tout!*, match the paper’s self-identification with May ‘68. The interviews conducted with a range of militants, writers and artists stress the role of the events in transforming lives, vindicating or trashing political positions, and setting up new trajectories. There is of course a diversity of viewpoints and nuances, even a number of oppositions among the respondents, including those who worked at *Tout!*, and it is in exploring these now that we can arrive at some of the complexity that made up the movement around the paper.

While most respondents were students of one kind or another, the core that went on to found VLR in 1969 were for the most part experienced UJC(ml) (often referred to as UJ) members in May, drawn from the Beaux-Arts and École Normale Supérieure. At the outset of events, the UJ leadership abstained from the Latin Quarter battles with the CRS, denouncing the student movement as petit-bourgeois.\(^3\) A number of middle and rank and file cadre, among them Roland Castro, Amy Dahan, Jacques Barda and Jean-Paul Ribes were nonetheless pulled into the student protests.\(^4\) Once the general strike got underway following 13 May, the UJ could live up to its workerist rhetoric and throw itself into the fray.\(^5\) With a small network of militants implanted in the factories and a new paper, *La Cause du Peuple*, the organisation focused its efforts on a number of key factories, notably Renault-Flins, in the first weeks of June. The death of high school militant Gilles Tautin and pitched battles with riot police around Flins, were

\(^{12}\) *‘Ici et maintenant’, Tout! no.2, p. 3.*

\(^{13}\) Pompidolian, meaning of Pompidou.

\(^{14}\) Bourseiller, op cit., p. 130.

\(^{15}\) J-P. Ribes, interview, 5 October 2007.

\(^{16}\) Workerism expresses an overweening orientation towards the working-class, often involving a glorification of stereotypically working-class values and culture.
respectively low and high points of UJ activity. Ultimately, the rolling back of the strikes, the clearing of the occupied faculties by the police and finally the crushing Gaullist victory at the elections end-June, set the scene for a re-appraisal - *auto-critique* - of UJ ideas and practice that was to result in the bitter split of the organisation in August-September, and the subsequent formation of Vive le Communisme (VLC), forerunner of VLR.

Meanwhile, another layer of future friends of VLR was at the time around the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR), slightly younger activists among whom Hocquenghem, Nadja Ringart and Françoise Picq, for whom May came to represent something altogether different from the Marxist schemas of the organisation’s Trotskyist leaders. Fully active on the barricades, in the demonstrations and *comités d’action* (CAs), this group, the soon-to-be Groupe de Base Censier, saw in the spontaneity and creativity of the movement the vision for the future, holding the leadership’s argument for the building of a vanguard party to be fallacious and backward-looking.

A later collaborator at *Tout!*, Jean-Jacques Lebel was active in and around Nanterre’s Mouvement du 22 mars during May-June. The 22 mars, often seen as the ‘detonator’ of the May events, was of a marked libertarian aspect, its key animators being anarchists Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Jean-Pierre Duteuil.\(^\text{17}\) Drawn from the student contestation, the movement also drew in JCR militants such as Daniel Bensaïd, union activists like Alain Geismar, and joined forces with the UJ in particular actions, notably around Flins. Its openness to the broader movement and emphasis on direct democracy shook up the ideological convictions of a number of UJ militants, notably Castro, who cited the 22 mars as: ‘Le lieu de la parole libérée’, in *Tout!* \(^\text{18}\) In turn, there was a late presence of anarchists working at the paper, extending to young anarchist sellers such as Marc Tomsin, who saw in *Tout!* an expression of the May’s legacy.\(^\text{19}\)

In the following series of VLR-*Tout!* interview comments on May ‘68, varying interpretations of May-June emerge, showing political ruptures and realignments, the impact of workers’ power and rationalisations of revolution, the events as festive, transversal and communicative and finally the urge to perpetuate the movement following de Gaulle’s election victory.


\(^{18}\) R. Castro, ‘De la parole à la lutte’, *Tout!* no.2, p. 5.

\(^{19}\) M. Tomsin, interview, 9 April 2008.
Castro’s memory of 1968 is one of engagement in the events, but more importantly his departure from the UJ.

J’étais dans le mouvement, les autres, les chefs étaient contre […] La rupture s’est faite en juin, avec Benny Lévy. Il m’a envoyé à Flins avec la mission de tuer des flics. J’ai bu le champagne quand il est mort […] J’ai été envoyé avec l’idée qu’une étincelle met le feu à toute la plaine, phrase maoïste connue. J’ai passé la nuit à calmer les mecs. Ils étaient tous intoxiqués sur la question. Quand j’ai vu ça, terminé avec l’UJC(ml). C’était à Flins le 15 ou 17 juin.20

As opposed to his identification of May with the festive seizure of speech at the time of Tout!, Castro is today eager to stress his rejection of authoritarianism and violence, emphasising instead his humourous, creative side. However, subsequent events and publications show that he struggled with these seemingly contradictory political values. His rejection of ‘hyper scientific’ Maoism also appears at odds with the texts he contributed to Vive le Communisme in the wake of 1968, heavily dogmatic in their content.21

Jean-Michel Gérassi broke from the JCR following the summer. He relates how his former comrades viewed May as an historic opportunity, from which it could build a Bolshevik-style party:

La JCR a été débordée […] Une fois ils avaient organisé à la Mutualité un meeting de soutien à la JCR […] J’ai dit arrêtez ne mettez pas JCR, le mouvement n’en a rien à foutre, personne ne nous connait […] ils ont fini par accepter ça, Krivine et les autres. Ça, c’était très dur pour eux, parce que pour eux c’était le drapeau. Il fallait absolument conserver une identité, celle de l’avant-garde. Et au risque de se dissoudre dans le mouvement, se liquider. Moi j’étais déjà là-dedans […] Le 13 mai j’étais à côté de Bensaïd. Je lui disais : ‘C’est 1905. C’est ahurissant.’ Il était d’accord […] mais c’est pas la JCR qui a déclenché ce mouvement […] ils tenaient à garder absolument leur identité, tout le temps.22

After May ’68, Gérassi helped found the Groupe de Base Censier, and with Hocquenghem and others started to pursue an alternative, communitarian lifestyle.

Future VLR stalwart Richard Deshayes describes the nature of May in political-poetic terms reminiscent of the youth-oriented prose he later penned for Tout!; he identifies a type of metaphysical drive divined by the situationists, surpassing the groupuscule Marxist discourse:

21 ibid. Castro uses the term ‘hyper-scientific’ in his interview to denote the heavy theoretical approach of the UJ leaders.
22 J-M. Gérassi, interview, 28 May 2008. Alain Krivine and Daniel Bensaïd were leading members of the JCR, the latter co-authoring the ex-JCR’s seminal text on May, Une répétition générale, in the summer of 1968.
On ne pouvait pas dire que mai 68 était produit par des groupuscules. C’était un mouvement spontané et mystérieux ce qui fait que pendant quelques années, il y a eu un changement d’ordre mental […] l’esprit de Mai c’est réellement un geste spirituel. Il y avait une spiritualité à mai 68 qui a complètement échappé aux gauchistes. Ils n’ont rien compris et même maintenant ils y comprennent rien […] l’essence de 68 était complètement contre-culturel […] il a bouleversé tous les schémas mentaux.23

Tiennot Grumbach was a co-founder of VLR, activist at the workers base (BO) of Renault-Flins and contributed, amongst others, strike reports to VLR and Tout! He tells of UJ inadequacy facing the mass revolt, on the other hand of the window to the workers’ struggles enabled by établissement:

L’orientation de l’UJC(ml) c’était la lutte dans les quartiers populaires, les entreprises, […] c’était pas celle du Quartier Latin. Donc, il est complètement juste de dire que l’UJ s’est opposé à l’extension du mouvement dans le Quartier Latin […] Mais par contre on a été dans des manifs puissantes ; je me rappelle d’une grande manif à St Denis, on est parti à quelques centaines, on a fait tout le tour et à la fin il y avait des milliers et des milliers de gens dans la rue, dans St Denis. Je me demandais si les gens ne voyaient pas la différence entre nous et le Parti Communiste […] les mecs chantent l’Internationale et ils ont le drapeau rouge […] quand on lit nos textes c’est illisible, même ceux du 22 mars, poussiéreux, sommaires, dogmatiques, effrayants, par l’opacité, on ne parle pas le langage du peuple on parle un langage ésotérique, d’une autre planète […] à l’époque on écrit comme des cocher. Par contre, la manière dont on parle aux gens, quand on écoute, faut dire que l’UJ est la première organisation qui va à l’écoute des gens, dans les usines, quartiers […] dans l’écoute et dans la restitution de la parole des gens, c’est ça les établiss ; on est écouté par les gens, parce que ça fait très longtemps qu’on ne les a pas écoutés.24

Despite his retrospective critique of dogmatic Marxism, Grumbach is careful to locate the political value in his past Maoist experience, centred on a simple and lasting communication with workers. Amy Dahan, also in the UJ, relates the fractious discussions on whether or not to join the street movement considered by the leadership as petty-bourgeois:

Il y avait d’autres qui disaient […] faut aller là, c’est là que ça se passe, et moi j’étais plutôt sur cette position-là […] C’était quand même trop extraordinaire d’y être […] c’était un monde où personne ne travaillait, les transports ne fonctionnaient pas, et donc il y avait beaucoup de communication dans la ville, les gens se parlaient […] on se tutoyait, on se rendait service on marchait ensemble, on mangeait toujours dehors. C’était une sorte de convivialité énorme, une énorme fête […] ça avait été rendu possible par l’arrêt ouvrier, mais les revendications salariales étaient assez éloignées du quotidien du mouvement.25

25 A. Dahan, interview, 26 February 2008. I use the French form for the familiar you, tutoyer, as there is no English equivalent.
UJ member Jacques Barda, then a Beaux-Arts student and later one of the designers of Tout!, was of those Maoists who were part of the movement from the outset. For him May ‘68 was about mass discussion and participation:

J’étais à Nanterre donc je voyais bien ce qui se passait. Je rentrais dans la fac, tous les deux jours il y avait une AG, tout le monde était au courant. Ça durait des heures parce que tout le monde avait le droit de parler, […] Il n’y avait aucune hiérarchie on ne pouvait empêcher personne de parler […] nous, on parlait de ce qu’on faisait dans les usines autour de Nanterre, la Papeterie, le Joint Français, Citroën.  

Ex-UJ testimony generally displays a recognition of the group’s failure to engage with the movement but retains a strong sensibility to the proletarian model framing the massive wave of strikes that broke following the 13 May. Deshayes continues:

La grande surprise c’était qu’il y avait concomitance d’une généralisation d’un mouvement étudiant et d’un mouvement ouvrier. J’étais dans la cour de la Sorbonne, ça s’affichait sur des panneaux, et des usines commençaient à se mettre en grève, un peu comme des voyants qui s’allumerait dans le noir. C’était le déclenchement d’une grève générale. C’est le grand rêve révolutionnaire ça.  Et voilà que les gens qui rêvaient de la grève générale comme en 1905-1917, se sont retrouvés nez à nez avec un mouvement de grève ouvrière généralisée dans laquelle les étudiants n’y étaient pour rien […] quelques maoïstes distribuaient des tracts dans les usines, mais c’est pas pour ça que ça a démarré. Et ni les étudiants, ni les gauchistes, ni les syndicalistes, ni l’état français ne s’y attendait […] Spontanément, c’est un mouvement d’occupations. 

Michel Wlassikoff, then a high school student and future VLR militant, is one of many respondents staggered by the enormity of events and power of the strikes:

L’évidence de mai c’est que c’était beaucoup plus fort qu’on ne réalisait. La réalité dépassait la fiction politique préalable, précédente : les masses qui défilent avec des petits livres rouges dans la main, organisés sous la pensée du guide suprême […] C’est quand même un vaste mouvement très libertaire […] il y avait des éléments, complètement inédits qui marqueront les gens de cette ère-là: l’arrêt complet d’une nation. C’est une grève pas réglementée parce qu’elle n’est pas déclarée générale par les syndicats, mais elle a un aspect généralisé comme elle n’a jamais eu. Puisqu’il n y a plus de circulation pratiquement. On pouvait traverser Paris sans voir une voiture vers le 20 mai. Il n y a plus d’essence. La vie normale est complètement interrompue. 

Future VLR activist Didier Sandman stresses that working-class action underpinned the street movement, but that it also fed his imagination in the party seizing power:

La France était entièrement paralysée. Il n y avait plus d’essence, plus de transports, on faisait du stop. On était sur des nuages, on vivait dans un monde irréel […] la vie normale s’arrêtait, les gens ne travaillaient plus […] pour nous, des gens qui avaient milité pendant des années, c’était entre parenthèses.

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26 J. Barda, interview, 4 February 2008.
28 M. Wlassikof, interview, 2 June 2008.
quelque chose d’un jeu, de la guerre, des militants. Vous avez vingt ans, vous faîtes la révolution […] on était des M-Ls sérieux, la révolution c’était l’arrivée au pouvoir du parti, on le vivait comme ça. C’était un discours léniniste, souvenirs d’octobre 17. La révolution c’était l’arrivée au pouvoir du groupe maoïste dans lequel on était. C’est ce dont on avait plus ou moins rêvé. C’était le parti; les ouvriers on sait pas qui c’est, le parti c’est des gens qui sont avec nous. Nos dirigeants Robert Linhart, premier ministre d’une France révolutionnaire. C’est ça le fantasme, et on en était quand même assez loin. C’était une espèce de fête quand même, une grève de fête. 29

On the other hand, May rewrote political goals and strategies for another Nanterre UJ, and future VLR member was Charles Masse:

On avait l’impression qu’on était dans une révolte, pas dans une révolution. Demander un changement de gouvernement pour nous n’avait pas de sens. On avait l’impression que nos dirigeants avaient pété les plombs. Ils étaient dans un coin et ça les avait exposés. Ils se prenaient pour Mao Tsé-toung. On aurait bien aimé faire partir de Gaulle, mais le remplacer par un gouvernement populaire c’était une rigolade […] On avait des lectures, on était un peu luxemburgiste, c’était le mouvement, l’action qui changeait la société […] on avait été à Charléty, ça n’avait strictement aucun sens. 30

Other political activists were reading different versions of revolution. Françoise Picq was among the first of the VLR groupe de femmes, but in May-June ’68 divided her activity between a Mantes lycée near Paris and the faculty of Censier Action Committee:

En mai 68 j’étais dans cette espèce de fête d’émERVEillement. J’allais dans la Sorbonne assez souvent, un jour je rentre et je vois l’annonce d’un débat s’intitulant réforme ou révolution. Je me marrais parce que c’était tellement évident que c’était la révolution qu’on était en train de faire […] décalage, entre l’avant, quand la révolution me paraissait un truc complètement dépassé, et le moment où on était dedans, en train d’inventer une chose de radicalement nouveau. En fait, ça devait être le moment ou de Gaulle est parti; là il avait disparu, on s’est dit, voilà le pouvoir qui part sans combattre, tout est à construire, c’est vraiment l’émERVEillement […] c’était un moment de liberté, une révolution sans prendre le pouvoir, une révolution qui n’était pas passé par la guerre, les morts etc. 31

Picq’s notion of revolution in May, albeit festive and violence-free, is at odds with the impressions of Annette Lévy-Willard, who in 1968 was a self-professed student ‘groupie’ to various movements issued from Nanterre. Again the accent is placed on the events as celebratory:

29 D. Sandman, interview, 9 March 2008. M-L, marxiste-léniniste. Robert Linhart was the leader of the UJ, shortly to have a breakdown over the enormity of the crisis and role of the UJ; Benny Lévy effectively took his place.
30 C. Masse, interview, 4 January 2009. The UNEF held a rally at the Charléty stadium on 27 May, at a moment when the president and government appeared to be on their knees, thereby raising notions of political change. Socialist leader Pierre Mendès-France was present but was heckled; the next day François Mitterrand declared that he was ready to stand against de Gaulle. Masse cites Luxemburgist ideas in a reference to 1910s German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, who contrasted the self-governing role of the workers movement with the Bolshevik vanguard model.
31 F. Picq, interview, 7 February 2008.
Mai c’était les nuits surtout, on marchait, c’était Paris la nuit. Je ne croyais pas faire la révolution, c’était une grande fête. […] Nous, on a été aux usines, j’ai été à l’usine Citroën de Nanterre, aussi dans les bidonvilles […] Mais j’ai jamais pensé qu’on allait renverser le pouvoir. 32

Deshayes also identifies a dislocation within the militant mindset, in the dissolving of more rigid Marxist frameworks:

A cette époque-là j’étais M-L dans la tête, et comme on était très jeune, dans la pratique réelle du mouvement même ceux qui étaient marxistes se comportaient de façon libertaire. La logique de ce qui se passait c’était une grosse éclate […] Ça bougeait partout ; t’étais jeune t’avais 17 ans tu rencontrais des tas de filles, c’était le bordel tout le temps, tu rentrais plus chez toi. J’ai un vieux copain trotskiste qui avait une belle phrase : mai, c’est pas un bond en avant, c’est un bond en l’air. C’est exactement ça […] Surréaliste. 33

The dual memory of May as social upheaval and festival is central, a point reiterated by future Tout! and Charlie Hebdo contributing artist Siné:

[‘68] c’était une explosion très radicale …boum!... je me souviens d’un bouleversement et inattendu aussi. La grève générale. Que ça aille aussi loin, aussi vite. On avait l’impression que la guerre allait se déclarer à un moment, quand on allait au Quartier Latin dans les jours ou ça pétaït, des voitures qui brûlaient […] j’étais content, les bistrots étaient ouverts il y avait vraiment une atmosphère à la fois de fête et de grande bagarre. 34

In these interviews we hear respondents describe the dynamics of May as a sudden clash between the festive, sensual May and the Marxist, party-and-class May. Tout!’s Marc Hatzfeld, in 1968 a politically independent student, was involved in a commission on education. He experienced May as a great leveller:

Mai-juin représentait une perspective de bouleversement de société très général qui était très excitant et en plus le plaisir très, très grand, d’une atmosphère beaucoup plus gaie, libre et inventive […] les souvenirs frappants sont de très vives discussions dans la commission, de discussions informelles dans la rue avec n’importe qui ; d’une pagaille très virulente et vigoureuse à l’Odéon […] je ne comprenais pas tout, parce que il y avait beaucoup de vocabulaire qui me manquait, vocabulaire codé du langage révolutionnaire […] je sentais qu’il y avait une générosité, les gens s’interellaient, c’était très mixte générationellement, bien que la jeunesse prenait l’initiative. Il y avait ce phénomène transversal de tutoiement, tout le monde se tutoyait. Tout le monde s’appelait camarade, les rapports entre les garçons et les filles étaient très directs. 35

32 A. Lévy-Willard interview, 31 January 2008. Beaujon was a large detention centre where police detained many student and other protestors during May-June.
34 Siné, interview, 24 January 08.
35 M. Hatzfeld, interview, 11 February 2008. May’s widespread practice of tutoiement- addressing others, including strangers, in familiar terms, discarding the polite and formal ‘vous’, is a feature of the interviews I conducted on the events.
Hatzfeld was repelled by the obscure language and the obsession with organisation that characterised the leftist groupuscules, who ‘reasoned on the past’ instead of ‘flirting with girls’.

This could include the Trotskyist Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR), though he perceived them as less sectarian; it was here he befriended Tout! founder Hocquenghem, in the more libertarian Tendance 3 of the group.

Hand-in-hand with the informality of tutoiement was the transversal flow of experience, re-emphasised by Tout! contributing artist Michel Quarez:

C’était à la fois formidable d’être avec tous les gens de mon âge, plus jeunes etc. qui pensaient que ce pouvoir pyramidale était en train de s’écrouler, qu’il y avait une transversalité des rhizomes, toutes les relations transversales étaient en train d’instaurer quelque chose qui était une société fraternelle, après l’âge du persévère et du paternalisme, paternalisme jusqu’à là ! Avec de Gaulle, ce type qui avait été peut-être très bien, mais qui était le représentant d’un pouvoir pyramidal. Il a peut-être tiré la bonne carte contre l’opposé qui était ce con de Pétain mais en même temps il n’y a aucune raison que cette société soit si schizophrène !

This ‘transversalism’ brought people together in more ways than one. Beaux-Arts student Pierre Gangnet, later VLR member and collaborator at Tout! speaks of erotic arousal:

Mai ‘68 c’était je pense franchement, un moment d’immense érotisation, d’immense libido je n’ai jamais couché avec autant de filles de ma vie. C’était un grand moment de bonheur, de plaisir. Mais la libido, ce n’était pas que des filles, c’est : on rencontre trois garçons, on cause on boit un coup, y avait une fusion. C’était extrêmement agréable, la sensualité, de parler, de boire ou de fumer et puis des moments incroyables de bonheur à part. Je me souviens avec un ami, on va à une manif, Boul’mich peut-être; on est fatigué, on va à la Coupole à Montparnasse. Ce n’est pas comme c’est aujourd’hui, c’était comme Giacometti l’avait connue, c’était le paradis sur terre.

Gilles Dinnematin, who worked on the production of Tout!, was a high school student during May ‘68 and future friend of the GdB Censier. He explains what was for him the mutation of feeling associated with sexuality:

J’ai vu à la Sorbonne [l’inscription] Jouir sans entraves; ça veut dire l’amour libre dans le respect de l’autre. Jouir veut dire jouir. Jouissance c’est le sexe bien sûr, […] J’étais ado, je n’avais pas… on flirtait beaucoup a cette époque-là […] J’étais dans la découverte. Mais d’un coup, c’est

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36 ibid.
37 M. Quarez, interview, 1 April 2009.
une espèce de basculement, c’est comme si la sexualité avait un côté social, révolutionnaire, au-delà de l’individu.  

Underground activist Jean-Jacques Lebel planned the occupation of the Odéon theatre with members of the 22 mars, Julian Beck’s Living Theatre and Laborde clinic radical psychiatrist Felix Guattari. Arriving with up to 2000 people during an evening dance performance, Lebel shouted ‘Liberté, créativité, spontanéité!’ in a reconfiguring of the Revolutionary triad, and a banner was unfurled proclaiming: ‘L’Odéon, ex-théâtre de France est ouvert’. Tearing down the tricolour on the roof, they replaced it with red and black flags. Lebel explains the function the Odéon came to play:

It became a forum, not a place for intellectuals, students or whatever, but for all to come speak their mind in total freedom, a place, a sound box […] The Sorbonne was for the political ones, the Guevarists against the Maoists etc. The Odéon was where everyone could speak. I saw a man who had been in a Stalinist workers union, crying like a child, taking the mike and saying ‘my life has been destroyed by bureaucracy’. I fell on the floor when I heard things like that. That’s why we did May ’68, not to conquer power but to allow everybody to have that human experience. And to that extent it was a success, they can’t take that away from us. It actually happened; it was the beginning of the end of the Communist Party, of all these belief systems and the bullshit of having leaders, slaves of Moscow. In that sense it was a brilliant experience.

Conclusions drawn by the respondents, as to how the events came to inform their perspectives for personal activity and social change, confirm the sentiments of the slogan ‘Ce n’est qu’un début, continuons le combat’, chanted during and after the events, and generally associated with the now considerably enlarged movement of *gauchisme*.

Philippe Bertrand, a high school student in May ’68, then caricaturist at *Tout!* and other new left papers, describes how relations shifted inside his college, setting up new political poles:

Tout s’était renversé, l’administration, les profs avaient peur ; les étudiants avaient pris le pouvoir dans leur lycée […] Il y avait eu une rupture épistémologique, de toute façon rien ne serait plus jamais comme avant. C’était clair. Les camps étaient très bien définis, ceux qui étaient pour la révolution et ceux qui étaient contre- c’était assez binaire- y avait forcément un choix à faire […]

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39 G. Dinnematin, interview, 22 May 2008.
42 I must add that many of the 22 mars rejected the term *gauchiste* as applied to them by media or politicians. For those more libertarian or anarchist it was a reference that belonged, however pejoratively, to the Marxist-Leninist camp. On the other hand, leading members like Cohn-Bendit then adopted the appellation as a refutation of Bolshevism, writing *Gauchisme, remède à la maladie sénile du communisme*. 

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même si après on a vu un retour à la normale, tout était différent. [...] c’était une vraie révolution culturelle, il y a eu un basculement.43

Maoist activists such as Jean-Paul Dollé also felt that despite the government’s banning of revolutionary groups on 12 June and the Gaullist election victory end-June, the movement would persist:

Je me souviens du jour du décret qui nous a tous mis hors-la-loi, on rigolait comme des fous. On disait, on dissout pas des idées! [...] on savait que dans les élections il y aurait un raz-de-marée de droite mais bizarrement je n’étais pas du tout abattu. On a fait la propagande, moi j’ai continué à militer jusqu’à fin-juillet! Comme si rien n’était, avec la reprise partout […] les ouvriers avaient le sentiment qu’ils avaient gagné quelque chose, malgré l’inflation. Ils avaient perdu politiquement mais ils avaient gagné un peu. Il n’y avait pas de dépression, de défaitisme.44

Nanterre student Yves Hardy was at the 22 mars and later VLC, the forerunner of VLR. His interviews reveal the inspiration and challenge May posed to militants:

On parlait révolution et pour moi il y avait aussi la dimension internationale, le Vietnam, l’Amérique Latine m’intéressaient […] on s’est bien barré, je vivais à 200km à l’heure. En même temps on voyait la manif des Champs Elysées avec Malraux, il y avait une déception, on savait que mai c’était fini mais pas dans notre militantisme. Quand on me demandait ce que je voulais faire je disais disais militant professionnel. Je vivais le slogan ‘Ce n’est qu’un début’. 45

Overall, the interviews testify to the heterogeneity of experience and memory among those who would come to produce Tout!, matching the paper’s diversity of references to May’s movement of strikes, marches and occupations. Actors emphasise the contestation of power that also led to ruptures from Marxist-Leninist forms and practices and instead engagement in a transversal movement that embraced free speech, creativity and indeed sexuality. It was an attitudinal shift reflected in the radical left press of May ‘68.

May ‘68 and the press of the far left

May’s great transversal flowering of speech spurred a new parallel, leftist press, posters and tracts to challenge traditional lines of media communication. The censorial grip of government on ORTF television and radio meant that people were starved of information on the true scale of events, during May in particular, and to a certain extent the big press took advantage. Bernard

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44 J-P. Dollé, interview, 22 December 2008
45 Y. Hardy, interview, 25 April 2008.
Ravenel, an activist in the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU) living at the Antony student residence to the south of Paris, recalls that Le Monde ‘sold like hot cakes’ at the front gates.46 The PSU’s paper Tribune Socialiste reported then that the widely respected liberal daily upped its print run to 800,000, and noted that the Resistance paper Combat had also gained a much wider audience.47 VLR’s Didier Sandman has kept his May ‘68 issues of France-Soir, with ‘great headlines... spectacular, enormous letters with photos of barricades’.48

Students and activists relied for street updates on the radio play of peripheral stations RTL and Europe no.1; transistors were, according to JCR leader Alain Krivine ‘glued to our ears’ throughout the weeks of demonstrations and barricades.49 However, this information, albeit freer, was also undirected, caught up in the excitement and confusion of events. All the different political and ‘groupuscule’ elements sought to influence the course of events through their leaflets and publications, mixing counter-information with propaganda. Simultaneously, a number of new activist publications emerged, notably Action, overlapping with the militant press but falling back on politically unaffiliated bodies and structures, the assemblées générales (AGs) and comités d’action (CAs) that grew exponentially in the week following the 3 May. Finally, the walls of faculties, workplaces, the Quartier Latin and surrounding districts witnessed a huge effusion of graffiti and posters, the spontaneous, creative juxtaposition of text and imagery that has come to define the movement of May in so many retrospectives.

There was therefore a tension between Marxist/organisational, and unitary/‘movementist’ outlooks reflected in the organisation and output of their respective publications. The UJ’s Maoist, indeed Stalinist Servir le Peuple, forebear of Vive le Communisme, ended its print run during May, effectively ceding its place to the first version of La Cause du Peuple. Roland Castro was Directeur de Publication of the new venture. His recollection effectively distances him from the paper:

J’étais le directeur de La Cause du Peuple, mais j’écrivais pas pour. Ils m’ont pris : ‘S’il est arrêté ça sera bon pour la circulation parce qu’il a une grande gueule’. En fait je ne m’occupais

46 B. Ravenel, interview, 3 April 2009. The PSU was a left parliamentary formation that grew as a response to the perceived bankruptcy of the rest of the parliamentary left in the 1950s.
47 Tribune Socialiste, no. 374 June 1968, p. 18
49 A. Krivine, interview, 2 June 2005.
The paper first appeared on the 1 May 1968, subtitled, ‘Journal du movement de soutien aux luttes du peuple’, to coincide with the annual Left and union demonstrations, adopting a very conventional look and tone, and calling on students to place themselves under the tutelage of the workers. Interestingly, the second issue did not appear until 23 May, several weeks into the events. Now the tag was ‘Journal de front populaire’ and the paper sported a Beaux-Arts illustrated clenched fist (fig.2.1). The revamped La Cause du Peuple, published almost daily till end-June, was a simple black-and-white propaganda sheet, consisting of large double and four-page workerist tracts, headlined with triumphalist slogans, often handwritten, and displaying the occasional photo with a Maoist quote. The Trotskyist JCR’s Avant Garde Jeunesse gave a sense of being the tool of a supple, mobile combat organisation that despite its small size attained a high degree of visibility during the events. L’Humanité Nouvelle, of the obediently ‘pro-Chinese’ Parti Communiste Marxiste-Léniniste de France (PCMLF), showed backing for the students, and spoke in glorious terms of ‘the victory of the revolutionary working class’. Other Trotskyist papers included Révoltes and Voix Ouvrière, the precursor of Lutte Ouvrière. All of the above espoused the idea of proletarian revolution, with the Marxist-Leninist party in the vanguard.

By contrast, the tracts and bulletins of the 22 mars eschewed doctrinaire communism, privileging instead discussions of tactics and direct action, elements of an activist literature that paralleled or prefigured papers like Action and Tout! Making an early call for the formation of Action Commitees (CARs), the 22 mars celebrated instances of ‘autogestion/self-management’, like the Nantes ‘Commune’ of students, workers and peasants. Language was more street-wise, with simple, often playful slogans and phrases such as: ‘presse + université + flics + patronat =

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50 R. Castro, interview, 18 March 2008. French papers are required by law to have a nominal Director of Publication, the first port of call for the State. The bureau politique was typically the central leadership of Marxist organizations.
51 ‘UJC(ML)- Notes sur la situation actuelle’, tract, 6 May 1968. This may be explained by the leadership’s ambivalent, if not hostile attitude towards the student movement and the Trotskyist JCR’s ‘terrible choice of terrain on which to engage the test of strength’. La CdP also criticised the Trotskyist ‘lambertist’ Front d’Etudiants Révolutionnaires (FER) for the same reasons.
52 ‘Plus de 17 millions de Chinois...’ L’Humanité Nouvelle, 1 June 1968, special issue, p. 3. The Demonstrations were organised in China, ostensibly in support of ‘the peoples of France, Europe and North America.’
répression’. Crucially, the bulletins criticised the vanguardism of the JCR and charitable workerism of the Maoist Servir Le Peuple, positing as alternatives ‘places of free speech’, and ‘liberated zones’. On 18 June a parody of de Gaulle’s wartime appeal was issued that simultaneously suggested the movement’s imminent dissolution.

Action was of an altogether different order to the left organisational press. Born of, and adjacent to the street-fighting and occupations, it quickly earned the tag ‘paper of the movement’, providing an agenda for activists, political arguments to counter state and media output, and the complement of graphic innovation. Crucially, it had at its core a judicious alliance of experienced journalists, caricaturists and painters who gave the paper the touch of journalistic professionalism absent from the rest of the leftist press. Furthermore, in the paper’s libertarian tone and visual form, a model for subsequent press ventures developed, including those of Hara-Kiri Hebdo, Tout! and Libération.

The brainchild of Clarté’s former editor Jean Schalit, Action was May’s spontaneous update on the paper he had been planning for college students prior to the events, Guérilla. The next day he went to a meeting of UNEF, JCR and UJCML leaders, and proposed the venture as the ‘paper of the movement’, saying he could put a writing team together. With Krivine dismissing the ‘Guevarist’ lycéen title, Schalit suggested the name Action, which was duly agreed on. He then put his press industry experience into overdrive:

Je réunis l’équipe et on a fait le journal quand on n’a pas un sou, mais je connaissais les imprimeurs avec qui j’avais travaillé pour Clarté; ils m’ont fait confiance parce qu’on n’avait pas d’argent pour les payer, ils ont accepté de nous faire crédit. Ils ont accepté de faire le journal pendant le weekend. Je connaissais bien Siné qui m’avait présenté aux journalistes d’Hara-Kiri, il y avait Wolinski. Il n’avait jamais fait de dessins politiques à l’époque, jamais […] c’est sorti le lundi, c’était incroyable personne ne s’y attendait c’était énorme…C’était vendu par les journalistes de l’équipe! Et des jeunes qui se présentaient et partaient dans les manifestations et là-dedans il y avait plein de gens sur le trottoir […] qui achetaient, qui donnaient des billets de 100 f pour soutenir le mouvement! On a payé l’imprimeur et on a commencé à préparer le numéro suivant […] personne n’avait jamais vu ça, c’est passé à une telle vitesse!

Compiling a chronology of his former militant press articles in 1974 Hocquenghem wrote the lead article in Action no.1 in which he warned: ‘LA PRESSE, LA RADIO VOUS MENTENT’.

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54 ibid. ‘Tract’, p. 6.
56 J. Schalit, interview, 10 February 2008.
Here he outlined the perceived context for the revolt: students’ refusal of the system, European and international student and anti-war movements and, significantly, the recent violent clashes between strikers and police in Redon and Caen. Commensurate with Hocquenghem’s first column, *Action* sought constantly to voice the movement’s self-awareness, first by riposting to the ‘lies’ of the media, reprising the demo slogans, *mots d’ordre*, and developing a sense of orientation within a clear left-wing framework. Schalit also speaks of their attempts to define a ‘structured thought’ for the movement, in posing the key questions of the day, eg. ‘Pourquoi Flins?’, ‘Qui sont les briseurs d’unité?’ and providing editorial analysis or comment by way of answer.

Once the paper became *a de facto* daily in June, *Action* had a clear, identifiable look and format. Sales averaged at around 40,000. The daily routine was to dispatch writers to the various demonstrators, occupations and committees, bring back the reports and complete the editorial meeting inside of an hour. In this way, *Action* learned very quickly to respond to the perceived needs of the student movement; as early as issue 2, 13 May, the paper called for the creation of *comités d’action* (CAs), part-modelled on the months-old *comités d’action lycéens* (CALs) (*fig.2.2*). Jean-Louis Péninou was a key figure in their Coordination.

The team then had a network of activist groups who could pick up and sell the paper, and it was this organic connection with the movement that allowed *Action* to survive, even months after the events. Anarchist Marc Tomsin started to sell *Action* in September 1968 when the paper reappeared after the summer break:

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57 In *L’Après-Mai des Faunes* (Paris: Grasset, 1974), Hocquenghem would describe his militant discourse in *Action* as ‘heavy with the cretinism of May’, disillusioned with what he saw as the dominance of orthodox revolutionary readings of May.


60 M. Tomsin, interview, 4 April 2008.
Action’s other major contribution was artistic. May’s paper contained a number of sketches by future Charlie Hebdo trio Siné, Wolinski and Reiser, all later contributors to Tout! By June Schalit had enlisted the services of established graphics artist Roman Cieslewicz, to provide covers for up to 20 issues: bold and provocative text- and photomontages that could be detached and stuck up as wall posters, much like those of the Beaux-Arts atelier. 1960s illustrators Topor and Cardon also provided impressive surreal caricatures, emphasising the retreat and bitter defiance of the movement in the face of Gaullist repression and ultimately, the sweeping election victory of the Union de Défense de la République (UDR) on 30 June.

L’Enragé, a sister journal to Action in terms of its origins and duration, was the movement’s highest expression of political caricature. Siné’s weekly, adopting the pejorative title conferred on the students by sections of the media, attracted a swathe of French and international artists. The journal was packed full of provocative, anarchistic attacks on de Gaulle, the police and the right, proving hugely popular from its first issue of end-May. A summer collection of May-June issues revealed its humble debut, turned best-seller:


Siné’s interviews re-emphasise the precarious existence of the journal subsidised by the editor, Pauvert, ‘writing cheques without guarantees’, and artists going unpaid. Despite the Nouvelles Messageries de la Presse Parisienne (NMPP) distribution, sales depended on colportage, street and demo hawking, Siné himself sold it on his Solex motorbike, ‘to strikers everywhere’. As with Action, he believes that many volunteer vendors simply took off with the cash.

L’Enragé was at the apex of the trend in May-June to decry government, the state and police as fascist, or in the throes of fascisation. Issue 5 was a root and branch transposition of 1930-40s Nazi posters and propaganda, with Hitler gracing the cover. The demo insult CRS-SS was reprised across the various issues, and more than once the Gaullist Croix de Lorraine twisted into

61 Including those who contributed to Action and others such as Malsen, Willem, Philippe, Flip, and Cabu.
63 Siné, interview, 11 October 2007.
a Swastika. Siné looks back at the instrumentalisation of the Nazi taboo as ‘provocative’, and a few interviewees express a certain regret at the use of such language.\(^6^4\) However when set in the context of the 1960s, it brought back memories of the torture and massacre of Algerians, Charonne and the far right OAS. Cabu recalls contemplating the rightist demonstration set off down the Champs Elysées following de Gaulle’s speech on 30 May: ‘Je les ai entendu crier “Cohn-Bendit au four!”’; his two-page caricature in issue eight reinforced this point (fig.2.3).\(^6^5\) Moreover, the movement’s casual conflation of fascist terminology with power, and authority in general, stretched well beyond ‘68 into the 1970s, as evidenced in the pages of La Cause du Peuple and Tout!

Siné also took it upon himself to provide editorial comment in L’Enragé, a strongly worded column mirroring his caustic sketches that would become a feature of his input at Tout!, Charlie Hebdo, and, much later, Siné Hebdo. One passage was revealing of the journal’s political tenor. In reply to collaborator Cardon’s wish to dissociate himself from the magazine’s anti-CGT ideas, Siné launched a bitter diatribe against the pro-Moscow Communists:

À quoi a-t-il servi ce glorieux parti depuis un mois sinon à étouffer une révolution naissante? […] ce plus grand de tous les partis en union soviétique, sinon à instaurer cette scandaleuse coexistence pacifique parfait symbole de démission et de collusion? […] Si Mao Tsé-toung n’avait pas, tout au long de sa vie, critiqué violemment au point de s’en virer plusieurs fois, le courageux PC chinois, le peuple de Chine serait encore esclave.\(^6^6\)

References to Mao, Fidel, Che and Latin American guerrilla movements demonstrate Siné’s fidelity to a revolutionary Third Worldism, and his admiration for the Cultural Revolution indicated the heightened influence of Maoism around May ’68. But there was a definite sense of betrayal by the PCF/CJT in such texts and indeed images scattered throughout L’Enragé, that marked May’s surge of anti-Stalinist feeling and the setting of new left configurations.

A third libertarian paper, Le Pavé, knew a momentary existence during May. A solitary four page issue was printed one night in the last week of May, kicking off with a logistical analysis of the street fighting. The paper then gave way to a welter of historical and contemporary references. One of a small number to compose Le Pavé, Lebel speaks colourfully of the figures name-checked in the sheet:

\(^6^5\) Cabu, interview, 19 June 2008.
\(^6^6\) L’Enragé, no.3, 17 June 1968, p. 7
There’s a text of Artaud in it, from 1926. This is Marcel Duchamp: LHOOQ. A play on words. A Dadaist slogan, a demolition of slogans in general. Brilliantly humoristic, destroying the dogma of slogans. This is Ronnie Laing the anti-psychiatrist. And black power, here, an American underground thing... the Statue of Liberty, a man masturbating with a missile, that’s going very far isn’t it? And what about that, an ass-shitting de Gaulle, he called us chienlit... it was a medieval word from Rabelais; rabblerousers shit in bed, they’re not clean. We said is that so? Well here, you want some shit, here it is: Brrrr!... See, the Catholic Church and French flag are being drowned.67

Le Pavé grouped these political, philosophical and artistic influences to stress the defiling of bourgeois values, the revolt against hierarchy. It juxtaposed Georges Bataille’s spur to transgression, with Rosa Luxemburg’s quote on the creative force of the workers’ movement, to denote May’s fusion of the political and cultural languages:

One of the great accomplishments of May ‘68 in my view, not only May ’68 but the whole movement internationally... was that this artistic dimension, language, was completely integrated into the political field. It was not only a question of saying different things but saying them in a different way. In other words we’re using different words, different techniques, different languages. Of which poetry is definitely part. No longer poetry here, and politics over there, it’s not a contradiction anymore.68

Lebel repeats the point with respect to some of the best known slogans of May:

[Jouir sans entraves] Situationist... poetic expression... at last we are playing, the ludic and political come together.’ [Sous les pavés la plage] An anonymous beautiful, poetic statement... there’s an upheaval in the sense of words too... beauty yes, but pleasure too, you’re out there in the sun... we were still out there [Paris] at night on the beach.69

In Lebel’s privileging of the creative and linguistic currents at play, useful parallels can be drawn between Le Pavé, and Tout!’s fusion of provocative political slogans and subversive, underground culture- titles such as ‘La Famille c’est la pollution’, or ‘Les Enragés de la vie n’ont pas fini de vivre’.

A final publication of May with which VLR could feel an affinity was Les Cahiers de Mai, founded by Daniel Anselme, a flamboyant ex-Resistant and opponent of the Algerian War, to give expression to the action of rank-and-file workers. Some of its writers were drawn from the

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68 ibid.
69 ibid.
experience of the CAs. Initially at *Action*, Jean-Marcel Bougereau swiftly agreed to move to *Les Cahiers*:

L’idée c’était de dire que le mouvement étudiant, du point de vue médiatique, avait pris le pas sur le mouvement ouvrier, qui était le plus grand mouvement ouvrier qu’il y ait eu en France. C’était beaucoup plus important.  

Joining Anselme and his young team towards the end of June, CAs convenor Jean-Louis Péninou believes that sales must have reached several tens of thousands. Retaining a revolutionary perspective, the *Cahiers* method involved the ‘systematic exploration’ of the May-June strikes, for which activists were trained to carry out *enquêtes*. Initial issues published individual texts; no.4 carried the first instalment of ‘Journal d’une ouvrière à Montpellier’, but the collective texts of workers became the cornerstone feature of *Les Cahiers* in the years to come and an inspiration to the likes of BO-Flins activist Grumbach.

**The posters of May**

Special mention must be made of the Beaux-Arts, Arts décoratifs and other ateliers of May-June, in their renewal of an agitprop, silkscreen technique to produce hundreds of thousands of posters for the movement. The rough-and-ready images operated as visual weaponry, retaliating against state and media attacks, and advocating solidarity between the various wings of the movement, particularly with the workers. Previous research has shown the posters’ almost daily chronology of events, such that they ‘mapped the contours of the social revolt’. They also performed a function of critical analyser, positing new modes of communication (*fig.2.4*). Underground press poet Léon Cobra asserts:

Pour moi le départ de la presse parallèle en France c’est les affiches de mai 68 […] il y a toute une paquette contre la presse pourrie. La presse à la botte du gouvernement, l’intox à domicile etc. Et toute une série d’affiches pour une nouvelle presse, pour une presse libre. C’est de ça, et d’*Action*, le premier journal vraiment, qu’est venue notre presse.

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70 J-M. Bougereau, interview, 3 November 2008.  
74 L. Cobra, interview, 8 October 2007.
The posters could be seen as the visual expression of the unitary structures and activities such as CAs, occupations, AGs, and demos. As with Le Pavé and the covers of Action there was a strong fusion of language, politics, and of course images. Moreover, the politics were not just libertarian, but eclectic. With L’Art au service du people and Flins à l’avant garde de la résistance prolétarienne, a Maoist influence is obvious, despite the vast majority of posters going unsigned out of respect for the Beaux-Arts assembly’s agreed ‘anti-star’ anonymity, a grassroots philosophy largely respected by Tout! Subversive caricatures of de Gaulle (La chienlit c’est lui) sat alongside clenched fists, red and black flags, the imagery of syndicalist revolt, and abstract or surreal blends of text and drawings. There were also publicity-style logographic forms (CRS-SS), and many text-only flyers.

Interviews with the artists confirm the diversity of political and artistic leanings- at the Arts décors atelier, initiated by 1960s new realist Martial Raysse, there were also Communist students at work. At the core of the Beaux-Arts atelier was the far left, Third Worldist Salon de la Jeune Peinture (SJP), including Gérard Fromanger, Eduardo Arroyo and others, proponents of the new figuration, BD-related modern art. And of course, the core of Beaux-Arts architects at Tout!, particularly Jean-Marie Léon and Jacques Barda, ensured the posters’ politico-graphic approach endured. One of the contributors to Tout! no.12 was the author of May poster Sois jeune et tais-toi, Bernard Kagan.75 Another Tout! participant, Michel Quarez, gives a flavour of the Beaux-Arts occupation and the making of his poster (fig.2.5):

Je suis arrivé avec cette idée en tête ; y avait ce comité, du papier, des pinceaux, de l’encre de Chine sur une table […] On venait d’entendre ça la veille, de Gaulle [voice of de Gaulle :] ‘Cette jeunesse que l’avenir inquiète trop souvent’ Quel con ! […] Il nous dit qu’on est inquiet ? Alors qu’on est la vitalité, la vie, parce que lui il est mort, et nous on est vivants. Donc c’était insupportable. Il y avait des statues à la Sorbonne, qui étaient enveloppées de bande Velpeau avec des épingles à nourrice […] c’était ça ma source.76

Opinions remain divided over how free and representative the atelier assemblies were, but there is no doubt that the posters displayed a huge wealth of styles and ideas, at least 800 examples emanating from the Beaux-Arts alone, the most popular at runs of 2-3,000.77 At first posters

75 E. Salvaresi, interview, 24 June 2008. Salvaresi was a friend of Kagan.
76 M. Quarez, interview, 1 April 2009. This poster is said by some to have inspired the safety-pin punk ethic of the Sex Pistols. Bande Velpeau is crêpe bandage.
77 G. Fromanger, interview, 8 August 2005. Figues also drawn from Mai 68, BDIC, op cit.p. 185. Despite the assembly votes over which posters to print, Quarez is convinced that they were privileged and chosen by a ‘middle bourgeoisie’. Gangnet, also a Beaux-Arts student, affirms a type of groupuscular manipulation in the AGs. Lebel is scathing over the eventual decision not to mass-print Bernard Rancillac’s Nous sommes tous des juifs-allemands, stating that ‘the votes and discussions were phoney’.
were heavily concentrated in the Quartier Latin. Nadja Ringart was at the heart of poster networking, distributing the posters to CAs all day every day at the Institut de Psychologie, rue de Serpente.\(^7^8\) The images spread quickly to the other arrondissements and suburbs and their high visibility prompted ateliers to start up in individual workplaces, and other towns such as Montpellier and Marseille. Collector Michel Dixmier postered with the remnants of a UJ-influenced CVB in the southern Gentilly suburb. His testimony uncovers the sheer effervescence of poster production in France subsequent to 1968 and inspired by the occupied ateliers:

C’était pas très organisé. J’allais chercher des affiches aux Beaux-Arts, j’en ramenais et on collait à deux ou trois […] Après, on les voyait dans beaucoup d’endroits […] Quand [l’atelier] Beaux-Arts a disparu, y a eu des centaines d’ateliers pendant plusieurs années, dix ans à peu près, une production d’affiches sériographiées étonnante; j’en ai découpé un certain nombre dans les rues, même en province quand je me promenais en vacances avec la famille et je voyais des affiches. Les gens s’étaient appropriés la technique et faisaient des affiches individuelles ou en petits groupes. C’est surtout la technique, ils avaient compris qu’on pouvait avoir une autonomie, faire un dessin, si on savait dessiner. Il y a eu une véritable création populaire française […] Je prenais la voiture une fois par semaine et je me promenais en province quand je me promenais en vacances avec la famille et je voyais des affiches. Les gens s’étaient appropriés la technique et faisaient des affiches individuelles ou en petits groupes. C’est surtout la technique, ils avaient compris qu’on pouvait avoir une autonomie, faire un dessin, si on savait dessiner. Il y a eu une véritable création populaire française […] Je prenais la voiture une fois par semaine et je me promenais dans Paris avec un cutter et je découpaïs, pour récupérer des choses que les gens avaient collées, avant que ça disparaisse […] j’en ai acheté dans des fêtes politiques aussi, j’en ai des milliers, pendant cette période très particulière, de ‘68 à ‘78.\(^7^9\)

The influence of the ‘68 atelier posters was evident in the far left press of May-June; later publications such as Toulouse’s Le Contre-Journal and the covers of L’Idiot International were obviously rooted in the May imagery. Serigraphy was deployed to powerful effect in a whole series of campaigns, one notable example being around the question of immigrant housing (fig.2.6). The pictography of Tout! also included a number of silkscreen flyers promoting youth festivals and Occitan rebellion, underlining the paper’s ongoing experiment in textual and graphic forms to supplement its project of subversive social change.

\(^7^8\) N. Ringart, interview, 24 April 2008.
\(^7^9\) M. Dixmier, interview, 29 April 2008.
Figure 2.1: *La Cause du Peuple* borrows from the Beaux-Arts in its opposition to legislative elections, June 1968.

Figure 2.2: The ‘movement’ call to organise, *Action*, 12 May 1968.

Figure 2.3: Cabu’s derision of the 14 July parade, an echo of the 31 May Gaullist demonstration, *L’Enragé*.

Figure 2.4: The posters that inspired a new, radical press, Atelier Populaire, ex-Beaux-Arts, May-June 1968.

Figure 2.5: Youth stifled and gagged by the ruling order. May posters by future *Tout!* contributors Bernard Kagan and Michel Quarez.

Figure 2.6: ‘Non au capitalisme assassin’. Gauchiste campaign against racism, 1969.
3. Prelude to Tout!: from VLC to VLR

Tout! as the organ of VLR, or at least the expression of movements associated with VLR, can be mapped from May ‘68 by examining its immediate precursors, Vive Le Communiste and Vive La Révolution, in their consecutive yearly phases: Vive Le Communiste Sept ‘68 – July ‘69 and VLR July ‘69 - July ‘70. The third and final phase of Tout! from July ‘70 -July ‘71, also roughly followed the French academic year. Indeed, as with all things French, the militants went on holiday in August, often taking a cultural or political trip, and prepared for la rentrée in more ways than one. It was at the end of summer 1968 that the UJC(ml) ‘exploded’ acrimoniously, over the ‘workerist’ line taken during the May events, and sharp divergences of perspective as to the future. Out of the fragments emerged the founders of VLR.

Nanterre and Vive le Communiste

In October 1968 Roland Castro, now 29 and having completed his studies at the Beaux-Arts, ‘established’ himself at the University of Nanterre, assembling a small group in Vive le Communiste (VLC). Over the following year a number of ex-UJC(ml) activists, among them Didier Sandman, Jacques Barda, Leslie Kaplan and Charles Masse warmed to Castro’s more libertarian outlook, and the group slowly snowballed to include students such as Annette Lévy-Willard, ex-Chaptal college activist Richard Deshayes, Anne Dollé, Yves Hardy, Michel Wlassikoff and a small number of young workers from nearby factories. The attraction of Nanterre lay in the presence of the iconic 1968 Mouvement du 22 mars and the promise of the type of unbridled student agitation that had led to the May events. VLC’s politics were conditioned not just by the 22 mars’ accent on spontaneity, but a more relaxed interpretation of UJ Maoism, meaning that they retained a focus on activity around the working-class and the oppressed, particularly immigrants. The university also stood surrounded by a large shanty town and lay close to a number of factories. Therefore the area represented a new terrain of possibilities in which the student-worker revolts could be brought together and revolutionary organisation could grow. For those such as Castro who had in May-June questioned their membership of a hardened groupuscule, it was an ideal location in which to prolong the revolt of May in the spirit of the militant slogan ‘Continuons le combat’, around clearly defined tropes: student agitation, solidarity with workers, and work with immigrants.
However it was not a strictly ideological group, regurgitating the thoughts of Chairman Mao or even ‘forming’ a political cadre, like the UJ. VLC meetings, which could be held at the university, or in the Maoist centre rue Geoffroy St Hilaire, consisted of discussing outlooks, practicalities. What seemed to unite them were bonds of friendship, the loose guidance of Castro and a quasi-anarchist notion of ‘foutre le bordel/creating havoc’ on campus. The accent was on the spontaneous, as Deshayes explains:

En gros le ‘feeling’ du 22 mars était le passage à l’action directe. Le prototype du mouvement c’était : on décide d’aller occuper tel endroit, la cinémathèque, la résidence universitaire des filles, et tout le monde sortait. Les flics avaient du mal à s’ajuster, ils étaient pas habitués à ça […] c’était bonnard, dans une AG on disait on va faire ça tout de suite, on sort et on y va […] et les gens faisaient ça tout le temps.¹

Moreover, VLC is remembered as having inherited the derisive, humorous legacy of the Nanterre events. For Kaplan, VLC helped alleviate the hangover of May’s defeat:

A la fac de Nanterre il y avait eu toutes ces inscriptions. La fac avait été fermée pendant l’été je crois qu’elle avait été nettoyée, on avait enlevé tous les graffitis. Et le lendemain de la rentrée en gros il y avait écrit sur les murs ‘TIENS - ON A REPEINT?’ Qui était génial! Évidemment quelque chose se passait. […] une des choses de VLC, ensuite VLR, par la nature des gens qui étaient là, il y avait carrément de l’humour, une tentative d’ouverture sur le monde.²

**Mao-spontex: the spontaneity and the sponge**

In a founding text for VLC, Castro elevated the role of students to a provisional and momentary revolutionary vanguard due to the paucity of coherent revolutionary workers organisation. He leant on the 1968 *mot d’ordre* of the 22 mars: ‘De la critique de l’université à la critique de la société’, to stress how the crisis for the ruling orders could spread quickly from student agitation. However, the working class was to remain central:

C’est une observation importante qui nous empêchera de prendre nos désirs pour la réalité dans la classe ouvrière […] l’avant garde momentanée de la révolution est toujours le mouvement étudiant […] les Marxistes-Léninistes […] visent la construction du prolétariat en mouvement révolutionnaire pour prendre le drapeau de lutte des mains fragiles des étudiants.³

¹ Richard Deshayes, phone interview, 15 April 2008  
² L. Kaplan, interview, 13 March 2008.  
Two ‘collective organisers’, a mass movement paper for political debate and exchanges, and a Marxist-Leninist (M-L) paper outlining communist principles and tactics were projected as necessary tools for ‘the unification of a M-L group around a faculty and several factories’.

*Vive Le Communisme*, their first paper, traded in a language and symbols very similar to those of its forerunner, the first edition of *La Cause du Peuple* in May ‘68. It subtitled with *Journal de communisme marxiste-léniniste* and sported a hammer-and-sickle logo. Castro maintains the group and the small publication were sustained by the subscriptions of members and sympathisers, some of them working architects. On the back page of the very basic December issue sat a handwritten statement of intent:

D’où vient l’argent? Selon les révisionnistes, il vient de Pékin et du ministre de l’intérieur. Quand le PCF était toujours communiste l’argent provenait de Moscou. NON! L’argent vient des cotisations de militants, aux portes des usines et des collectes à l’université.

Certainly it appears that at least the Maoist PCMLF partly sustained itself through Chinese financing, but the message from ex-VLC was that they were self-reliant. In one of his interviews, Castro reinforces the idea of his group’s independence with the account of a later visit to the Chinese Embassy to protest at China’s support for the dictatorship in Pakistan. Nevertheless, it’s clear that the paper and internal bulletins of the group in the year 1968-69 were imbued with the language and strategic outlook of Marxist-Leninism. Articles on the fight against the bourgeoisie and ‘revisionists’ were often accompanied by triumphalist headlines such as ‘Osons lutter’, and sub-scripted with Mao and Lenin quotes. Only Castro confirms to have written for the paper.

Certainly the poor production values, including the black-and-white format and hand-written titles of the first issues suggest a lack of funds, though also a rough-and-ready attitude to propagandistic journalism. Indeed, with no first issue of *Vive Le Communisme* to be found either in libraries or in personal archives, nor memory of such an issue among the ex-militants, it could have been too poorly or scantily produced to warrant keeping, or perhaps was more of a text that

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4 ibid. p. 30.
5 *Vive le Communisme*, 18 December 1968, p. 4. Anarchist Jean-Jacques Lebel contends that VLR was Chinese-backed, but also admits to it being hearsay.
was handed round the membership. In any case, the paper’s readership did not stretch far beyond Nanterre, leftist bookshops, and rarely sold at the gates of the neighbouring factories of Citroën-Nanterre, Hispano-Suiza, Papeterie de Nanterre, or Câbles de Lyon where students went to distribute leaflets. This regular factory work, two to three times a week, would allow them to befriend (mainly young) workers and pull them into the orbit of VLC. Ultimately, the group sought to federate a group of cells, variously dubbed comités de base, or bases ouvrières in the workplaces, faculties, and districts of Nanterre.

VLC’s strategy for the area was tempered by two overriding factors: a level of repression at the university, and the challenge of the CGT/P'C’F in local workplaces.\(^8\) Vive Le Communisme no.2 carried a photo showing one of the university’s main buildings, full of students and surrounded by police. The paper argued that the police presence was a sign of the Gaullist regime’s weakness, even going so far as to quote a UDR deputy who laid the blame for France’s monetary crisis on a post-May malaise centred on the university: ‘La solidité du franc passe par Nanterre’.\(^9\)

Thus the militants saw in Nanterre not only the possibility of joint student-worker struggle, but a weak link in the chain of Gaullist authority. Indeed ex-VLC militants speak of the prevailing atmosphere of contestation at the university, of widespread student absenteeism, open contestation of lecturers and course content, joint-smoking during classes. Hardy, once of the 22 mars, often disrupted his sciences-économie lectures. He explains that ‘the idea was to empty the amphis’, recalling the use of a contemporary Hara-Kiri Hebdo cartoon cover of two dogs copulating, for a leaflet with the caption ‘On ne veut pas être les chiens de garde du capitalisme’ (fig.3.1).\(^10\) There was a corresponding mushrooming of CAs across the faculties, which would sometimes pull in the younger teachers.

Throughout the year Nanterre witnessed an increasingly frequent police presence as the result of doyen Beaujeu’s inability to control the students. On 25 November 1968 up to 2000 police were drafted in to free two Dassault engineers who had been ‘séquestrés/kidnapped’ by a student demo during their visit, along with the doyen himself. The 500 or so students released their

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\(^8\) By autumn 1968, Maoist publications had taken to apostrophise the ‘C’ of PCF in protest at the ‘revisionist’ character of the party. Similarly Maoists would often denote the PCF as ‘révisos’ in open speech.

\(^9\) Vive Le Communisme, no.2 18 December 1968 p. 1.

\(^10\) Y. Hardy, interview, 10 June 2008.
captives upon hearing that some of their comrades of the CA Maubert in Paris had been freed from police custody, thus defusing a potential clash.\textsuperscript{11}

In mid-December, a student strike took off against ‘the oppression of the bourgeois state’, and demanding once again the release of a jailed militant. \textit{Vive Le Communisme} articulated a frustration the Maoists felt at being sandwiched between an ‘ultra-spontaneist’ current and the ‘corporatist’ UEC, resulting in ‘interminable, exhausting strike meetings’.\textsuperscript{12} Besides their hatred for the communists, VLC found themselves caught in a matrix of groupuscules, contending with the GP, Ligue Communiste, Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme (AJS), ex-22 mars, and anarchists, amongst others. Whereas the paper bemoaned the lack of unity, whilst insisting on the virtues of its own strategy, it seems that the VLC militants, most of whom profess not even to have read the paper, relied on the spontaneity of action as their ultimate guide- thus earning themselves the nickname \textit{mao-spontex}.

Often ascribed to the GP and VLR in analyses of the far left (notably A. Belden-Fields), the term \textit{mao-spontex} more accurately denoted the \textit{comités de base}, more politically cohesive types of CA, set up at the faculties of Vincennes, Censier and Nanterre in the wake of May, that formed a network of affinity groups of variously Maoist and libertarian hues able to work jointly on demonstrations and actions. The origin of this term has been variously ascribed to Trotskyists, in their disparaging post-May critique of the Gauche Prolétarienne (GP), ex-22 mars, VLC and other spontaneist currents.\textsuperscript{13} But within this milieu, an openness to, and absorption of (the \textit{Spontex} sponge effect) influences outside of the pro-Chinese mindset- notably anarchist and US movement- indicates a closer correlation to the \textit{basiste} university groups, particularly VLR, than with the more rigid and authoritarian GP.\textsuperscript{14} Tensions were exacerbated by the administration’s hiring of a university security force, \textit{appariteurs musclés}, armed with clubs and bars to patrol the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Michel-Antoine Burnier, and others, \textit{La France Sauvage} (Paris: 1970) p. 31.
\item \textsuperscript{12} \textit{Vive Le Communisme} no.2, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{13} J-M. Salmon, interview, 23 July 2009. Salmon describes being called \textit{mao-spontex} by Jacques Bleibtreu, an independent Trotskyist, first in a December 1968 meeting of CAs. M. Hatzfeld (interview, 19 January 2008) agrees \textit{spontex} could be applied to the Maoists but was also a type of reproach aimed by the Ligue’s Daniel Bensaid at the ex-JCR GdB Censier. The Ligue delivered a sharp critique of the GP and the diffuse currents around it: ‘Les mao-spontex manifestent à Belleville’ in \textit{Rouge}, no.18, 8 May 1969, p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{14} An analysis by ex-VLR member Michel Wlassikoff concurs with (email 8 November 2009). Furthermore the GP called its militants \textit{maos} or \textit{maoïstes}, whereas VLR were less concerned with appellations.
\end{itemize}
Following a series of skirmishes and arrests, a hunger strike in the sociology department finally forced the withdrawal of this campus police in February 1969.\footnote{La France Sauvage, op cit., p. 33.}

From January until June 1969, Vive Le Communisme managed only three issues, marginally more professional and carrying photographs. For the first time the paper denoted a Directeur de Publication, L. Pitoeff, and indicated its printshop: Nouvelles Presses Parisiennes (NPP), that of the dissident communist Simon Blumenthal. Militants could sustain low circulation publications via the print-shop over a period of years; the clients’ debts were placed to one side- and often forgotten. Stéphane Courtois, VLR’s soon-to-be bookstore manager, asserts that without the NPP, many gauchiste publications would never have made it, including the GP’s La Cause du Peuple.\footnote{Besides papers such as Vive Le Communisme and the pro-immigrant Le Paria, NPP produced innumerable gauchiste leaflets. Courtois recounts that on one visit to the printshop he came across a pornographic magazine on a table. A nearby worker told him that they printed gauchiste papers and brochures, Vive Le Communisme, La Cause de Peuple and so on, by day, and, in order to make ends meet, they ran off pornographic novels by night (interview, 5 June 2008).}

In March, the paper reported on CGT-called wage strikes, after the breakdown of the government-unions Tilsitt conference, noting that the 11 March day of action had been preceded by wildcats in Peugeot and Renault. This was closely followed by a number of articles on local Hispano and Câbles agitation in which VLC-friendly workers played a part. Masse provided a texte de défense explaining how he was arrested and tried for a fictional attack on the police during the ‘Nixon-la-pestè’- themed demo earlier in the month (fig.3.2). Vive Le Communisme defended the violence that did occur on the demo, counterposing it to the violence of American imperialism in Vietnam, and that Nixon’s visit to Paris merited no less. Sino-Soviet border clashes were denounced as the machinations of ‘Soviet revisionist social imperialism’, tracing its origins to Khushchev’s earlier attacks on China and its European ally Albania. The screaming headline ‘BAS LES PATTES DEVANT LA CHINE ROUGE’ showed that, officially at least, VLC continued to stand full square behind the People’s Republic for some time. As a small token of its support, the paper published a little rubric detailing the frequencies of Radio Peking and the Albanian Radio Tirana.\footnote{Vive Le Communisme, no.3 March-April 1969, p. 6. Barda and Lévy-Willard undertook a trip to Albania in the summer of 1969, where they were taken around ‘model factories and camps’ but they still managed to spot some apparatchiks’ villas (interview, 6 May 2008).}
In issues four and five of May and June 1969 articles eulogised the exploits of Chinese workers and peasants alongside further items on anti-imperialist movements in Guadeloupe and Vietnam; the emphasis on local student and worker struggles temporarily disappeared. Moreover, the paper’s chief concern was the presidential elections of mid-’69. Dismissing the idea of Poher as a liberal alternative to Pompidou, Vive Le Communisme buried the notion of voting for the P’C’F’s Jacques Duclos and even Michel Rocard of the PSU, before settling on a critical endorsement of Trotskyist candidate Alain Krivine. In an open letter, Krivine was congratulated on the idea of standing, that he was supported with reservations, but most importantly: ‘Nous avons tous un droit de regard sur ta candidature’, the inference being that Krivine needed to listen to the gauchistes.18 Krivine’s eventual 1% (200,000 votes) notwithstanding, this odd alliance demonstrated a renewed interest in electoral politics that muffled the continuing cries of ‘Elections, piège à cons!’ on the far left.

If the objective of VLC was to break free from the ghetto of jargonised gauchisme, Vive le Communisme could hardly be considered a success; a cursory read of any issue reveals the continued enunciation of Maoist dogma and bravura rhetoric, though softer edged than had been the UJ’s publications. There were no innovations on the graphic or journalistic side. Certainly the idea of a revolutionary journal de masse raised in the founding document seemed a distant prospect. However, individual militant itineraries and symbolic gauchiste coups in the following year would form the backdrop for a more open and pragmatic journalism. The vector of change towards a ‘mass’ paper would be VLR.

VLR takes over

VLR was the fruit of discussions that took place between VLC, the Base Ouvrière-Flins (BO) organised by Tiennot Grumbach, and several other student-worker cells and individuals in the spring of 1969. Some writings locate the origins of the new grouping at a meeting of Castro, Grumbach and Gilles Olive after the demonstration on 1 May 1969, then a general meeting (‘AG des 40’) in July.19 Another founding document was produced, this time in the form of a thicker, slicker brochure entitled Vive La Révolution. The aim, ‘to extract the valuable lessons, after a

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19 See Bourseiller, Les Maoïstes, op cit. p. 189. The AG des 40 was a rough title given to the central meeting for delegates from the various cells affiliated to VLR.
year of long march...’ showed that Maoist precepts still carried the day with the VLR.\footnote{\textit{Vive la Révolution}, supplement to \textit{Vive Le Communisme} no.5, July-August 1969, p. 2.} However, a number of the 20 or so articles concerned the militant work carried out at the Citroën-Javel factory, noted for its tyrannical, archaic regime. Here the style was relaxed and informative, a ‘résultats d’enquête’, the long-standing militant investigative practice in France. The influence of May’s posters told with a silkscreen bilingual \textit{base ouvrière/obrera} opposing Citroën boss Bercot’s yellow ‘independent’ union, seen as a tool of dividing workers along national lines (\textbf{fig.3.3}). There was also a healthy assessment of VLC’s interventions at Nanterre, criticising the group’s spontaneous activism at the expense of leading inquiries into student needs: ‘Nous croyions […] que le mouvement éudiant était devenu l’avant garde du mouvement révolutionnaire’.\footnote{ibid. p. 120.} In a reprise of the attack on the PCF, VLR pulled no punches, lambasting the Communist Party as opportunist, ‘degenerated communism’, linked to French imperialism, taken seriously by the French Right: ‘L’agent idéologique de la bourgeoisie au cœur du mouvement ouvrier’.\footnote{ibid. p. 128.} If the PCF and CGT were to call official strikes, it was only to allow workers to let off steam and to break local wildcats. Rejecting the ‘putschism’ of its Maoist rival \textit{La Cause du Peuple}, VLR nevertheless saw a need to break those ideas that held back the workers movement: pacifism, legalism, trade-unionism, nationalism, parliamentarism, and the republican order. Revolutionary violence was counterposed to state violence, with Peugeot-Sochaux in June 1968 serving as the model for a potential armed conflict.\footnote{Curiously, the text claimed that although two workers were killed by police in the battle on 11-12 June, which is well known, eleven CRS were killed in a counter-attack. Despite the well-documented violent confrontations, I have found no evidence of these police deaths elsewhere. J-P.LeGoff dismisses it as fantasy in \textit{Mai 68: L’Heritage Impossible}.}

Significantly, the new group began to speak of extending its activity beyond the paradigm of the student-worker front, referencing the claims of women, immigrant and young workers and lauding:

\begin{quote}
[…] les idées naturelles des travailleurs, l’idéologie d’oser lutter, oser vaincre, l’esprit radical de la révolte, allant vers la révolution; les luttes nouvelles dans, et en dehors des usines, servir le peuple, la contestation dans tous ses aspects de vie sociale, pour changer la société.\footnote{ibid. p. 138.}
\end{quote}

The brochure comprised a colourful Maoist jacket designed by a member of the Salon de la Jeune Peinture (SJP), the artist collective that was central to production of posters at the Beaux-Arts in May-June ‘68 (\textbf{fig.3.4}). The texts were also studded with photographs of striking workers...
and satirical cartoons. This summer brochure was nonetheless designed for internal consumption, and there was scant evidence of the new aesthetic in the first, November issue of the paper *Vive La Révolution*, whose masthead incorporated the hammer-and-sickle, and stated ‘Journal marxiste léniniste maoïste: nouvelle série de Vive Le Communisme.’ It was a black-and-white, rhetorically dense and thematically Maoist broadsheet and as such little different from its immediate predecessor. Several cartoons offered some light relief, notably an anti-colonialist détournement of the paternalist, if not racist Banania *Y’a bon!* publicity (fig.3.5).

*Vive La Révolution* no.1 did, however, provide an insight into shifting outlooks for the maos-spontex. The first was coverage of third world struggles, linked to corresponding activism in the ‘imperialist metropolis’ (France); notably the emblematic Palestinian/Middle-Eastern conflict and the Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad (FROLINAT) resistance to French-backed rulers in Chad. ‘Pompidou, c’est ton Vietnam [...] halte immédiate à l’intervention’, the article titles prefiguring VLR’s attack on the Chad embassy on 13 November. Secondly, articles advocated widening the struggle to work in the districts and bidonvilles of Paris, to tackle ‘bourgeois ideology’, high rents, poverty and isolation, which were seen as directly linked to capitalist exploitation in the factories. The PCF came under attack once again for using workers living in Communist-controlled municipalities for electoral purposes and abandoning young and immigrant non-voters.

The second issue, dated December 1969, introduced colour for the first time to a VLC/VLR broadsheet; indeed a rubric explained that it was a poster-reprint French militants had brought back from China:

Collée massivement dans les usines chinoises, elle représente la résistance prolétarienne à FLINS en MAI 68, l’union révolutionnaire des ouvriers et des étudiants en France.  

A huge article on Renault-Flins strikes, and the work of the *Base Ouvrière* (BO) followed inside, accompanied by Grumbach’s little cartoons that often adorned the group’s factory leaflets. The factory’s continuing emblematic role was partly explained by Grumbach as resulting from the lack of a strong union presence which could hold back the development of spontaneous strikes. Young workers who had made the trip from the provinces and immigrant workers formed the

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25 Banania is a French powdered hot chocolate drink, its brand image that of a grinning, fez-wearing African.
26 *Vive La Révolution*, no.1, 15 November 1969, p. 6.
backbone of such agitation. The prolonged work at the Flins-BO and the regularity of reports, confirmed the BO’s emergence as VLR’s principal workplace tendency, among 10-15 others in the Paris region.28

The Black Panther Party (BPP) occupied the centre pages of Vive la Révolution no.2, replete with photos of leader Huey Newton and BPP cadre striking defiant poses alongside the Panther logo and artist Emory Douglas’ cartoons. On the question of international causes, Castro singles this out as being the most important:

Black Panthers, on était très amis avec eux […] On était très proche d’eux, on a beaucoup mis en valeur leur travail […] Il y avait le côté Black Panthers qui faisaient des crèches. On a fait une crèche à Villeneuve-la-Garenne; on a construit un bâtiment en trois jours, pour les portugais. Le titre c’était ‘les casseurs construisent’, dans le journal. 29

Some ex-VLR members dispute the centrality of the Panthers to VLR’s outlook. Nonetheless, their attitudes, ideas and imagery were consistently referenced in the pages of Vive La Révolution and Tout!

Vive La Révolution proudly listed the different factory bulletins and leaflets put out by the various BOs around Paris, divulging a veritable treatise on the rank-and-file functions and makings of such propaganda (fig.3.6). Le Papier Rouge was the tract distributed at the Papeteries de la Seine, Jacques Barda explains:

 Ça s’appelait Le Papier Rouge et c’était imprimé sur du papier vert […] c’était vachement bien fait […] les ouvriers n’en revenaient pas. 30

Grumbach confirms that their approach was at first to listen to, then speak to the workers of their own experiences, to see past the jargon of the CGT/PCF or others:

Nos tracts de sortie d’usine étaient parfois de très beaux tracts, à Flins, ou à Citroën; la BO plus, parce qu’on était déjà plus dans le poétique. 31

In sifting through the BO-Flins leaflets at the Nanterre’s BDIC library today, it is clear that the group sought to connect with workers over both internal and external issues. They mixed

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30 J. Barda, interview, 4 February 2008.
straightforward language- and languages- with rough cartoons, designed to appeal to the most radical instincts, and addressed inequalities that the factory and union officials often ignored. This was most clearly visible in the series of leaflets that gradually exposed the scandal of immigrant worker trafficking at Renault-Flins, leading to VLR’s audacious coup at the Meulan town hall in February 1970 (fig.3.7). In tune with VLR’s gradual opening up to other ‘autonomous’ groups, the BO also introduced a short-lived women’s leaflet, femmes liberté. However, militants did not sell the revolutionary paper outside the factory gates; this remained fare for internal consumption or militant demonstrations.

The highpoint of VLR

1970 was to be the pivotal year for VLR. The group grew to over 100, with several branches sprouting in other parts of the country. Confrontations with the state gave rise to an investment in new forms of organisation and more importantly, a radically new approach to militant journalism. Vive La Révolution no.3-4 did not come out until March 1970, after the group’s participation in three widely-publicised events: the occupation of the Centre National Patronat Français (CNPF) headquarters, the ‘raid’ on Meulan town hall and the student agitation at Nanterre.

The CNPF building was selected as a target by militants following the death of five African workers in a foyer d’immigrés in the northern Paris suburb of Aubervilliers on 1 January. The severe cold in the building had led them to set fire to some bags to keep warm, and they were subsequently asphyxiated by the fumes. While the event registered concern in the media, the leftists’ argument was that the deaths were caused by the exploitation and neglect of immigrants in hostels unfit for human habitation, and that not only the patrons d’hôtels, but the employers at Renault and Citroën, and ultimately the government were to blame. VLR and militants from various comités d’action put out a leaflet calling for a protest at the funeral of the deceased on 10

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32 See the leaflets in BDIC fonds VLR F Delta rés 612/2-4, Michel Chemin.
33 ibid. 612/2
34 The membership figures for VLR do not exist; there was no ‘official’ belonging to the group, party cards etc. Political affinity, friendship and joint activity appeared to be the key criteria of adherence. Beyond the aforementioned early kernel of 40, estimates, from ex-members and observers range from 150 to 500, mostly Paris-based. Grenoble VLR comprised around 30 members.
January, and on the day staged a daring occupation of the HQ of the bosses association. It was also fixed so that Maoist supporter Jean-Paul Ribes, then working as a TV news reporter, would scoop the event. On his arrival at the CNPF, Ribes questioned police as they evacuated the building, then on live television read out the protestors leaflet denouncing the ‘bosses’ assassination of workers’ (before getting fired back at the ORTF).

The event has subsequently been recorded as a Maoist coup, heavily mediatised thanks to the participation of a number of high-profile intellectuals, including Maurice Clavel, Marguerite Duras, and Jean Genet. In the historical accounts of Générations, Christophe Bourseiller and even Simone de Beauvoir, Castro emerges as a key figure of the protest. He was variously harangued passers-by from the balcony, later escaped from the police van, was retrieved and beaten-up by the police, then put on a type of show trial at which Sartre testified on his behalf. However, Marc Tomsin, an anarchist from the CA-Place des Fêtes who was involved, disputes this focus, pointing to the several hundred people who took part in a CA coordination, including only some VLR. Nadia Ringart, who worked with the BO-Flins, but was not in VLR, states that very few of their members were involved. One who did take part was Pierre Gangnet, describing how he sprayed-painted ‘Salauds’ under a carpet in an office, one of a number of graffiti protests at the CNPF that day.

If VLR played only a small part in the CNPF action, they were unquestionably central to the organisation and execution of the ‘raid’ on the Meulan Town Hall in February 1970. It was here that VLR/BO activists had located the proof of hidden traffic behind the hiring of immigrant workers at Renault-Flins. In a quasi-military operation they penetrated the town hall, ransacked the offices and once again spray-painted radical slogans on the outside walls, notably ‘Travailleurs français-immigrés tous unis’, a prominent slogan of the May ‘68 Atelier Populaire posters. BO supporter Marc Hatzfeld was just scrawling the M of ‘À bas le traffic de embauche’ when, fearing the arrival of the police, he decided he should make good his escape, doing so by

35 ‘Ce n’est pas un fait divers, c’est un assassinat’ signed ‘Militants des Comités d’Action et Vive la Révolution.’ Gilles Olive personal archive. The leaflet calls for protests on the day of the five Africans’ funerals.
38 Marc Tomsin interview, 9 April 2008. Tomsin explains that the operation was planned in secret due to the severe police repression at the time. In the subsequent police interrogations of the occupiers, Tomsin recalls that a priest sympathiser was asked: ‘What are you doing with the Maoists?’ which suggests that the police had a prejudiced view of such actions as purely Maoist-run, thereby adding to the VLR legend.
running across a field the other side of the building. While hitch-hiking back in to Paris he was picked up by a France-Soir reporter, and as thanks for the lift, spilled the beans on the Maoist coup. Thus it was that France-Soir, normally seen as a right-wing sensation sheet, blew the story the next day, in effect exposing the trafficking scandal. Hatzfeld explains:

*France-Soir a été plus réactif et plus intelligent que Le Monde sur cette question-là. A cette époque c’était dirigé par Pierre Lazareff […] qui voulait fonder un journal populaire, donc il était attentif à la vie populaire. Il était beaucoup plus libre sur le plan journalistique que Le Monde, qui est un journal assez honnête, bien pensante, mais très, très contraint.*

In fact *Vive La Révolution* no.3-4 swiped the cartoon-strip on Meulan from France-Soir and set it opposite the headline ‘Raid Maoïste à la Mairie de Meulan’ (*fig.3.8*). Editorial articles worked the Meulan coup into a panorama of ‘actions sauvages’, from immigrant occupations of other foyers, to campaigns against high Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP) fares and literacy classes linked to immigrant and community support groups. The tone of factory-community work was reflected in a long article lifted and translated from *Lotta Continua*, the paper of the eponymous Italian spontaneist group, who had succeeded in creating a meaningful student-worker alliance around the Fiat factories of Turin.

No. 3-4 gave its centre pages over to ‘La Bataille de Nanterre’, signed ‘Gauche Révolutionnaire’ (GR), detailing the clashes between leftist and non-aligned students on the one hand, and police, gardes mobiles and far right students from Assas on the other. The roots of the violence, according to the GR lay in the administration’s incapacity to deal with exam boycotts, in addition to the presence of a crèche sauvage and university restaurant that were opened to the public and the nearby shanty town:

> Grâce à ces initiatives, les travailleurs français, immigrés et les marginaux, pénétraient dans le campus de Nanterre et imposaient, par leur attitude, un climat insupportable aux profs et aux étudiants réactionnaires.  

Drawing in young people from the nearby Cités and several hundred students, the leftists in the CA-Droit Nanterre fought pitched battles, charging and stoning the police in and around the law faculty, over 2-3 March. VLR members were central to all of the above initiatives, underlining the organisation’s enthusiasm for the convergence of struggles that seemed to epitomise their militant outlook at the time. Unsurprisingly, the paper’s cover carried a large photo of truncheon

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41 ‘La Bataille de Nanterre’, *Vive La Révolution*, no.3-4, p. 8.
and shield-wielding police fleeing students perched above, on the parapet of the law faculty
(fig.3.9). Underneath, in bold letters: ‘NANTERRE, CA SENT BON LE PRINTEMPS!’42 VLR
was moving towards a more open and provocative type of journalism, part-fuelled by the
group’s successes on the ground. Despite the long analyses of strike movements and community
campaigns, abstract Maoist formulae were being replaced with outlaw slogans and calls to
action.

The covers of issues five to seven were of a similar order: poster-size images of revolt with
keynote slogans: the 1970 mao spontex versions of a 1968 Beaux-Arts poster or Action cover
page. ‘Pour changer la vie cassons le vieux monde!’ exclaimed Vive la Révolution no.5
alongside an image of a worker with spanner in clenched fist.43 This picture was lifted from a
BO-Flins leaflet, and drawn by Hatzfeld who, with other members of the Groupe de Base
Censier had joined up with Grumbach and VLR to work around the emblematic car factory. The
ex-Trotskyists brought with them another political sensibility, against the vanguard role of the
party, and for the cultural revolution. Hocquenghem in particular articulated this new spirit in a
contemporary article entitled Changer la vie, which was not simply Rimbaud-inspired but a
reprise of the concept of transformation of daily life advocated by Henri Lefebvre and the
situationists. In a critique of the factory-centred, prole-puritan and self-repressed gauchistes that
was to become a mainstay of VLR thought, Hocquenghem set the tone for a ‘synthesis of
revolts’, to break not just the tyranny of the workplace, but the hold of bourgeois morals.44

In the paper assessments of the harsh life in the factories dovetailed with revolutionary, extra-
syndicalist perspectives. The vitriolic critique of the CGT/PCF as the servants of capital, using
the workers or breaking strikes continued in the vein: ‘syndicats=flics=patrons’, in a number of
articles covering industrial hotspots from Le Joint Français in Bezons to the massive Usinor
factory in Dunkerque. A quasi-vanguardist notion of a subversive, class conscious workforce
was at play in a worker’s perspective:

Les plus avancés il faut les organiser dans un mouvement révolutionnaire. Ce serait en quelque
sorte une élite révolutionnaire, mais il faut être sur la chaîne, subir tous les problèmes qui sont les
nôtres. Il faut […] rendre les gars conscient qu’ils sont prolétaires, au bas de l’échelle, les aider à

42 ibid. p. 1.
44 Guy Hocquenghem, ‘Changer la vie’ in Faire la Revolution no.2, April 1970, reprinted in L’Apres-Mai
Il faut arriver à donner conscience aux gars qu’ils fassent la production comme bon leur semble.  

Outside of the work process, outside of the law, outside of institutions and authority, indeed against all of these staples of life under capitalism, such was the thrust of Vive La Révolution’s message. Contrasting legal and revolutionary leftism, the paper proclaimed: ‘Changer la vie, brisez tous les obstacles!’ A call was issued in the paper for the convention of a ‘Gauche Révolutionnaire’ to discuss practical unification around the themes of struggle. As if to underline the scale of VLR’s ambition, it indicated that a mass paper and theoretical review would also be necessary to any common movement.

The Black Panthers returned to the pages of Vive La Révolution no.5 with a special 4-page pullout entitled ‘À l’assa du ciel!’ Presented as a heroic struggle at the domestic end of the fight against American imperialism, the Panthers served as an example of how to organise their community through their free breakfast and school programmes. Instances of VLR community work, such as Nanterre’s crèche sauvage and open canteen, were again evoked as if inspired by the Panthers. Vive La Révolution no.6 reported on the building of a Maison du Peuple in April: VLR, Beaux-Arts students and activists linked to the pro-immigrant paper Le Paria collaborated on the construction of a community centre for the residents of Villeneuve-la-Garenne, a project which drew in a number of Portugese masons from the adjacent bidonville. It signed off ‘1,2,3... 100 Villeneuve-la-Garenne,…’, in an echo of Che Guevara’s Vietnam statement.

Vive La Révolution represented a clear improvement on Vive Le Communisme in terms of its presentation and information. Moreover, the 1970 issues were full of images signalling a renewed symbolism of the 1968 revolt. The final issues in particular carried photographs of confrontations with the riot police, Third World armed struggles, and reproductions of student-worker silkscreen posters. VLR’s humorous side was on show with notably a pro-séquestration cartoon ‘nicked’ from Hara-Kiri Hebdo (fig. 3.10). At the same time there was a clear recourse to revolutionary rhetoric, seeking to graft fresh libertarian concepts onto their usual Maoist discourse.

46 ibid., pp. 12-13. At this point, VLR was engaged in merger discussions with the small Censier group, but also attempted a rapprochement with the GP and even the clandestine Trotskyist group Lutte Ouvrière.
47 Che called for ‘1,2, 3, many Vietnams’ in the fight against imperialism.
The group issued two supplements to *Vive La Révolution* no.6, in June-July 1970, in which *Changer la vie* became the headline slogan. A 64-page pamphlet reprised this title, alongside *Briser tous les obstacles, faire fusionner les révoltes, préparer de façon prolongée l’insurrection armée*.\(^{48}\) The author condensed the worldwide struggles of 1968 into the single concept of *Mai*, seeing in the movements issued thereof, the ‘primary tendency towards revolution’.\(^{49}\) The reader, presumably a member or supporter of VLR, was invited to understand that the student movement was still at the cutting-edge of the tactical struggle, the university being the weak link of French capitalism. In a France that itself was the weak link in world capitalism, the young ‘wildcat’ workers movement was set against reformist and revisionist conventions. The second supplement, a double-sided single sheet, cited the *Maison du Peuple* and the riots surrounding the trials of *La Cause du Peuple*’s Le Dantec and Le Bris as more than just concrete ‘actions’; they were ‘making the revolution’.\(^{50}\)

One of VLR’s principal motivations was to distinguish itself from the more prominent GP depicted as playing the ‘nouveaux partisans’ in a bourgeois-occupied France with the PCF as the ‘révisos-collabos’, their point being that the GP was deliriously divorced from the masses.\(^{51}\) There was a strong competitive element to VLR’s criticism of their Maoist rivals, resentment of the media notoriety gained around the GP’s Fauchon store looting, the RATP campaign and the association with Sartre and other intellectuals. Indeed, the Meulan coup was perceived by a number of VLR activists as a piece of one-upmanship over the GP. The difference lay, as Tiennot Grumbach explains: ‘Nous étions capables d’assumer les actions que nous avons faites’.\(^{52}\) Indeed, the *loi anti-casseurs* was brought in partly as a result of the raid, confirmed by contemporary news reports.\(^{53}\)

Furthermore, ex-VLR members tell that GP action often failed to live up to the rhetoric. At the Dantec-LeBris protests for instance, *Tout!* distribution specialist Dominique Labbé recalls

\(^{48}\) *Vive la révolution, changer la vie, briser tous les obstacles*, document politique no.1, undated, probably June 1970, pp. 5-6. Stéphane Courtois, who supervised the printing of the pamphlet, maintains that Castro wrote it.

\(^{49}\) Another of Mao Tse Tung’s precepts.

\(^{50}\) *Ce que veulent les gauchistes…*, supplement to *Vive La Révolution*, no.6, undated. Jean-Pierre Le Dantec and Michel Le Bris were successive directors of *La Cause du Peuple*, tried and jailed in May 1970 under the anti-vandal law.


\(^{52}\) T. Grumbach, interview, 26 January 2008.

finding to his surprise that VLR activists and supporters, there in solidarity, outnumbered those of the GP.\textsuperscript{54} ‘Qui a peur de qui?’, the headline of \textit{Vive La Révolution} no.6, was set amid photos of rioting youth and suggested VLR’s intent on underlining its claim to be a serious combat organisation. Again, VLR counterposed the GP’s lack of a follow-up to its stirring the masses around the mythical 27 May, an occasion which its paper claimed the bourgeois press had inflated into an insurrectional confrontation. Instead \textit{Vive la Révolution} advocated a set of street-fighting tactics born of the experience of the recent confrontations, using the universities as bases:

Depuis quelques semaines, nous savions que pour réclamer le droit de parler dans la rue nous devions faire l’usage des bases provisoires de soutien que sont les facultés, pour faire des sorties, harceler les flics, replier sur les facs, en ressortir etc. […] le 27 cette tactique s’est avérée la seule bonne et pratique, pour ne pas dépourvoir les masses de leur violence, de laisser les maoïstes se battre à leur place.\textsuperscript{55}

It was added that the Beaux-Arts, Jussieu and Censier fights were stirred up and led by Maoists with relatively clear political slogans including ‘Le droit à la parole dans la rue’, an echo of the May \textquotesingle68 \textit{mot d’ordre}.\textsuperscript{56} These Maoists were VLR. Courtois explains that, in the context of the student-police battle at Jussieu in May 1970:

Nanterre était considérée comme la force d’action. Vu nos exploits là, tout le monde venait nous chercher. On a fait une descente à Assas une fois. On est arrivé, on a tout nettoyé, plus de fascistes etc. […] on pouvait aller à trente ou une quarantaine, du CA, là-dedans il y avait deux ou trois de VLR, c’est tout.\textsuperscript{57}

Elsewhere in France, VLR militants adopted similar perspectives, aided by their paper. For instance, a sizeable VLR group existed in Grenoble.\textsuperscript{58} Questions of outlook, activity and structure were essential in determining which group to join in the aftermath of May \textquotesingle68. Thus for Serge Toubiana:

Autant la GP justifiait ses pratiques violentes (avec le fantasme que cette violence aurait une sorte d’exemplarité aux yeux des masses, dans la dénonciation du monde capitaliste), autant VLR voulait mettre en pratique une ‘ligne de masse’ où les idées contestataires ou révolutionnaires s’exprimaient à travers des slogans imaginatifs, etc. Le type d’organisation aussi était à l’opposé. Très hiérarchisé à la GP, voire quasi militaire (du fait même de leur conception de la violence qui imposait un système organisationnel à base de clandestinité), autant l’organisation au sein de

\textsuperscript{54} Dominique Labbé, email interview, 16 February 2008.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Vive La Révolution}, op cit., p. 2.
\textsuperscript{56} ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} S. Courtois, interview, 5 June 2008.
\textsuperscript{58} Numbering 30 to begin with, the Grenoble group split from another Maoist tendency Ligne rouge.
Whereas most other participants’ memories of VLR’s paper, let alone its sales, are at best vague, Toubiana’s assertion of its role tends to indicate that it sold well, at least in left circles; a police report set the print run at 3,000. VLR, no.7 claimed that 150 papers were sold to Lutte Ouvrière militants, at a ‘sombre, serious, religious’ meeting in Paris, when assembled militants heard VLR speakers deliver upbeat prospects for the revolution. However, VLR, its supporters, and its paper were still to break out of the leftist ghetto.

The shift to Tout!

VLR had mooted the idea of a ‘mass paper’ since 1969; it was understood to be part of a press system that started with an interventionist paper of debate directed at the ‘spontaneous workers movement’. Indeed, some of the leading activists looked to Les Cahiers de Mai as an expression of workers combativity and autonomy, while maintaining VLR’s ideological independence. But besides the need for an agit-prop paper for the factories and street agitation, essentially Vive La Révolution, internal bulletins continued to raise the question of a mass paper. In the context of mid-1970 debates on unification of the Gauche Révolutionnaire, VLR took the lead, proposing an editorial team and an outlook that would distinguish them from their Maoist rivals:

Quelle ligne générale devrait prendre le journal? Nous rejetons l’idée d’un journal qui donne une image falsifiée (en lisant La Cause du Peuple on pourrait croire que la France est à feu et à sang);

S.Toubiana, email interview, 3 March 2008.
APPP, GaBr20, La presse révolutionnaire, 4 March 1970.
Vive La Révolution no.7, July 1970, p. 7. VLR, especially those around the BO, considered that LO had achieved some fine, consistent work in the working class (indeed LO had workers as members). The VLR approach was part of several attempts to engage in formal alliances with the revolutionary left beyond the united front of the Secours Rouge or other campaigns. Lutte Ouvrière (no.96, 30 June-6 July 1970, p. 9) covered the VLR intervention, reporting delegates’ amusement at VLR member Serge Marteau’s call for the audience to cast off their ‘dusty Trotskyism’. Little came of the visit.

Members were encouraged to sell Les Cahiers de Mai and even contribute to the journal.
nous rejetons aussi l’idée qu’il soit uniquement un journal d’opinion. Ce journal doit aider les travailleurs à manier les questions politiques.  

Discussion reflected VLR’s interest in Italy and the political debate emanating from the radical left’s intervention in the widespread factory strikes and stoppages; the style of militant paper *Lotta Continua* and the theoretical import of reviews *Quaderni Rossi* and *Quaderni Piacentini* cited as examples.

The first Hatzfeld heard of the launch of a new paper, the supposed *journal de masse*, was shortly before he went to jail in June 1970 for his part in the Meulan coup. Castro had invited him to a morning meeting to discuss the project along with Jacques Barda, a meeting Hatzfeld missed because he slept in. Castro and Barda have no memory of the meeting. However Gilles Dinnematin, a friend of the Censier group, recalls an inaugural gathering. He went at Hocquenghem’s invitation, adding that Castro, Barda and two or three VLR were in attendance. Dinnematin was interested in Castro’s concept of a *France-Soir rouge*. Similarly for Hatzfeld, it was to move beyond the ‘overly intellectual’ *Vive La Révolution* and other such *gauchiste* papers.

However, the notion of a catchy, open broadsheet went somewhat against the grain of established *gauchiste* attitudes. Dinnematin recounts that when someone reported back on the merger moves by different Marseille leftist groups, he picked up on this idea and suggested that the new paper should promote the unity of revolutionaries to make the revolution. For this, he says, he was treated as an idiot by the assembled VLR, an ‘infra-révolutionnaire’ by Castro. Leftists’ ideological differences were still too important to be ignored, it seemed. Dinnematin left under a cloud and was not to return to *Tout!* until the end of 1970, on the occasion of Hatzfeld’s trial.

Over the summer of 1970, VLR members staged a *14 juillet sauvage* with rock and refreshments; the party was broken up by the police. Elsewhere, a number of VLR took part as

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65 ibid.
67 G. Dinnematin, interview, 5 May 2008.
68 M. Hatzfeld, op cit. Castro was to denote the future ‘mass’ paper of VLR *France-soir rouge*.
69 G. Dinnematin, op cit. This could be translated as ‘sub-revolutionary’.
extras in a mock-up of a 14 July ball in Louis Malle’s film *Le Souffle au Coeur*. In Provence, the first French rock festivals got underway, modelled on Woodstock but contested by a fringe of anarcho-radicals. They offered a foretaste of the new French counterculture, and an occasion for relaxation (including drugs consumption) for groups of VLR and friends. In late August, a VLR delegation departed for Jordan to visit the Palestinian camps, returning at the moment of Black September. The summer of new cultural and political outlooks was the backdrop to the realisation of *Tout!* With the writing and production underway, Castro and Deshayes went to see Jean-Paul Sartre to ask for his name as director. The visit underscored the divergence of *gauchiste* perspectives at the time:

Sartre nous a reçus à l’époque et il a accepté de nous protéger. Castro a essayé de faire passer la ligne politique de VLR, notamment concernant la classe ouvrière; mais Sartre avait l’argumentation ‘prolétarienne’ de la GP, c’est-à-dire qu’on était des petits bourgeois, qu’on allait s’éclater et qu’on n’était pas ancré dans un projet révolutionnaire prolétarien. Alors que nous disions le contraire, plus on s’éclate alors plus les ouvriers s’éclatent aussi, c’était plus compliqué que ça […] mais il nous a fait comprendre, sans le dire clairement, qu’il était branché sur la GP.

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70 D. Sandman, interview, 15 February 2008. Interestingly, the film dealt light-heartedly with the issue of incest, a taboo, considering the general morality of the time, but indicative that sexual questions were starting to come out into the open.


72 R. Deshayes, interview, 21 April 2008. Deshayes contends that Sartre was one of many left intellectuals seduced by *gauchisme* after May, but that Sartre doubly desired to ‘become a worker’, because he had missed the ‘heroic workers struggle before and during the war’.
Figure 3.1: One response to Chaban’s assertion of a ‘malaise’ in French society. Crude VLR adaptation of a Hara-Kiri cover, 1970.

Figure 3.2: VLR poster (by Jacques Barda) welcoming President Nixon to Paris, 1969.

Figure 3.3: Base Ouvrière silkscreen protesting Citroën boss Bercot and the ‘independent’ union, 1969.

Figure 3.4: Heroic Maoist cover for Vive la Révolution by an artist of the Salon de la Jeune Peinture, 1969.

Figure 3.5: Simple détournement of the Banania advertisement, 1969.

Figure 3.6: Factory bulletins listed in Vive la Révolution, 1969.
Figure 3.7: Evidence of the immigrant trafficking at Renault exposed in a BO-Flins leaflet, late 1969.

Figure 3.8: France-Soir blows the story of VLR’s ‘raid’ on the Meulan town hall, February 1970.

Figure 3.9: Students confront CRS at Nanterre, March 1970, Vive la Révolution.

Figure 3.10: VLR pinch a pro-séquestration cartoon from Harakiri, and a slogan from the Yippies, 1970.
4. *Tout!, the leftist France-Soir?*

*Tout!* stemmed from the desire to open a new chapter in militant journalism, leaving behind the stereotypical black-and-white, doctrinaire model paper still coveted by the bulk of *gauchisme*. The preparatory work was carried out following the merger of VLR and the Groupe de Base Censier, and more broadly the discussions on the unification of the Revolutionary Left. For some, such as Nanterre militants Charles Masse and Stéphane Courtois, this period marked the end of their ‘groupuscular’ militancy, the organisational framework provided by VLR ‘exploded’, to pave the way for youth movements, communal projects and the ‘mass paper’. However, *Tout!* proved able to distil the *mao-spontex* essence of VLR, adopt the ‘cultural revolution’ of Censier and import the imagery of the US underground to quickly establish itself as a standard bearer of alternative left journalism. What followed in its remarkably brief, ten month existence, were three, quarterly phases mapping consecutively the innovatory launch of the new paper, the dissembling of Maoist and ‘movementist’ currents, and finally use of the paper as the platform for new liberation movements. In all, *Tout!* would experience a shift from hard left politics to the nascent counter-culture, with the new movements as vectors of disruption and change.

**Enter the France-Soir rouge**

*Tout!* burst onto the left political scene in late September 1970. Its full title *Tout! ce que nous voulons: tout*, hand-designed by Jacques Barda, was taken from the slogan of Lotta Continua (LC), an Italian revolutionary group that had made its mark in 1969’s hot autumn of workers struggles around the Fiat factories of Turin. The first page of the first issue was a riot of text, image and colour. ‘Alors c’est reparti pour 11 mois?’ blazed the headline, bemoaning the post-summer return to work. ‘En tous cas, à Flins ça m’étonnerait’, came the reply, demonstrating at once the ironic-defiant tone that was to define the paper in its short existence (fig.4.1).

Against a salmon-pink background, a snapshot of Palestinian children focused the attention, denouncing US imperialism and its ‘puppet’ Hussein. Various caricatures derided arbitrary

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1 C. Masse, interview, 4 January 2009.
authority and judicial corruption. Meanwhile, the Vendôme column collapsed, in a historic throwback to the 1871 Commune that also called time on Pompidou’s France. A small editorial inset commented on the May ‘68 ‘rip’ inspiring Tout!, prefaced by a little cartoon girl gleefully shouting: ‘Qu’est-ce qu’ils sont gentils les gauchistes cette année!’— also the subject of a kiosk poster (fig.4.2).

Métro boulot dodo loisirs télé bagnole – un immense mouvement contre la misère morale dans un pays où l’économie doit permettre l’évidence la satisfaction des besoins de chacun. Ce journal veut alimenter ce courant – de deux façons : d’abord, il veut que les gens y reprennent la parole, ceux qui luttent et ceux qui doutez […] Pourquoi ? Pour que s’y manifestent la révolte et le mépris des classes dominantes […] pour que s’y manifeste l’apparition d’un peuple vainqueur […] dans cette époque où le rêve d’un poète Rimbaud, devient une lutte sociale – changer la vie: le communisme. 

Tout!’s leader column outlined the political project: to give expression to all the ‘luttes sauvages/unofficial struggles’ in France, at work, in education and in the family, against the stultifying routine of métro, boulot, dodo. Accordingly, the first issue’s feature article condemned a world where even the summer vacation was circumscribed by profit-hungry operators, and a poverty of true culture. In this way, Tout! sought to open onto new social vistas, beyond the traditional leftist preoccupations of industrial disputes and street protest.

Participants at VLR/Tout! recall the motivations behind the project, as the sudden projection of radical ideas onto a wider social plain. Philosopher and VLR fellow-traveller Jean-Paul Dollé speaks of the division of political sensibilities:

Il y avait le parti pris d’être pour la révolution de la vie quotidienne […] Tout le monde était d’accord là-dessus […] VLR c’était un peu plus pour le noyau des militants, et Tout ! c’était un journal pour le maximum de gens […] et pour finir, c’est Tout ! qui a tout remporté. 

Indeed, Castro’s pithy denotation of Tout! as the France-Soir rouge gave some indication of the populist format for Tout! the group had in mind. For Gilles Dinnematin:

J’étais très content de l’idée France-Soir rouge. C’était rendre compte d’une manière lisible ce qui se passait au public le plus large […] de faire en sorte de convaincre les gens, de faire autre chose que de parler à un public de convaincus, ce qui était fondamentalement la littérature de l’extrême gauche de l’époque.

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4 G.Dinnematin, interview, 23 September 2008.
VLR’s Amy Dahan also stresses in her interview the break from dogmatism, and the use of the paper as a platform for people’s opinions through the far left practice of enquêtes. Marc Hatzfeld points to the constituencies of ‘youth’ and ‘young workers’ that Tout! sought to address and incorporate. Other interviews spell out the visual and linguistic distinctiveness of the paper. Core organiser Jacques Barda states:

C’était la reconnaissance de l’importance d’une plus grande ouverture, de ne pas faire des journaux en noir et blanc, dans un jargon que les gens ne comprenaient pas.  

Similarly, Tiennot Grumbach describes the ‘quinzomadaire de masse/mass fortnightly’ as more easily readable, especially for workers, referencing again Daniel Cohn-Bendit’s critique of the ‘archaic language’ of militant texts. ‘Tout! c’était différent. VLR activist and one-time Tout! contributor Anne Dollé re-iterates:

Honnêtement ça représentait une vraie rupture, au niveau formel et dans le contenu, comparé à ce qu’on a fait avant. C’est-à-dire que on a basculé d’un discours très politique et dogmatique dans le culturel, y compris de manière formelle, sans évidemment en abandonnant le gauchisme mais abandonnant l’idéologie politique.

Buffon high school student Pierre Haski remembers going excitedly to pick up the papers at VLR’s Gît-le-Cœur – then re-named La Commune- bookshop:

J’ai un souvenir de la naissance de Tout! comme un moment important, parce que pour un mouvement d’avoir un vrai journal, pas seulement des tracts et des brochures, on savait que c’était quelque chose de spécial, qui ne ressemblait pas à la langue de bois des journaux gauchistes de l’époque.

Regular cartoonist Bertrand explains his attraction to the innovative venture:

C’était un journal d’information, aussi un moyen d’agir ; entre tract et journal d’information. Ce qui me frappait c’était la forme, ça avait une inventivité, à l’époque un journal avec des encre de couleur ça n’existait pas. Donc c’était la rupture totale avec ce qu’était la presse normale. Après, tout le reste apparaissait fade, idiot, et triste. Je pense que c’était l’envie de faire un journal différent jusqu’au bout, dans la forme comme dans le fond.

5 J. Barda, interview, 5 February 2008.  
7 A. Dollé, interview, 8 February 2008.  
8 P. Haski, interview, 3 December 2008. Langue de bois in this instance means hackneyed Marxist discourse.  
Indeed, Tout! was a break from the traditional gauchiste press, giving it that extra subversive edge. Haski expands on this point:

Il suffisait de comparer La Cause du Peuple, Rouge et Tout! et on avait trois cultures différentes; deux d’une culture révolutionnaire classique, contradictoires; le troisième qui était un mélange de la pop culture américaine, du spontanéisme italien et d’autres choses. 10

The qualities of originality, openness and innovation at Tout! were reflected internally by a quasi-libertarian working ethic and horizontal structure. There was no editor-in-chief, its editorial team was not just made up of VLR members, and it refused to follow a fixed political line. Stéphane Gatti was an établi in a machine parts factory outside Rouen, but he still returned to Paris in order to pick up papers for sale in his workplace:

Le journal Tout! c’était un peu le journal qui représentait ce que nous étions. Qui était la synthèse de cet éclatement, qui revendiquait son affinité avec Lotta Continua, un journal qui est perméable à tout ce qui se passe dans le mouvement quelque soient les tendances. Ce que tout le monde attendait en fait ; enfin, tous les gens qui n’avaient pas envie de rentrer à la GP ni à Rouge ni au PCMLF, ni à Lutte Ouvrière, ces trucs-là qui reproduisaient un discours ranci. 11

The articles were for the most part unsigned, the team respecting May’s egalitarian collective idyll. And while Tout! required a core of organisers- among them VLR’s Castro, Hocquenghem, Barda, and Pierre Gangnet, it attracted a wide range of contributors over its short existence, far less interested in the group’s Maoist past than in the creative possibilities the paper offered. Thus, explains Marc Hatzfeld:

Tout! n’est pas le prolongement de VLR. C’était un journal qui était déclenché par Roland Castro en grande partie et donc VLR […] mais ce n’est pas lui qui l’a fait […] c’était des gens qui étaient marginaux à VLR, une équipe assez restreinte composée des personnes suivantes : la personne la plus importante était sans doute Guy Hocquenghem […] qui était toujours marginal dans VLR, toujours différent […] Puis Jean-Marie Léon, un ami de Castro, qui n’a jamais été à VLR. Et puis un autre personnage important qui était à VLR, Jacques Barda, qui portait beaucoup de dimension esthétique au journal. Les deux premiers, qui sont morts, étaient la puissance imaginative et créative de Tout! 12

Anarchist Jean-Jacques Lebel gives further credence to the heterogeneity of thought and feeling at Tout! by emphasising the destabilising pressures of social movements on VLR’s politics and membership, and the group’s concomitant welcome to outsiders:

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10 P. Haski op cit.
11 S. Gatti, interview, 10 December 2008.
The subjective element [...] it brought them to give up their rigid dogmatism and open up, and that’s what Tout! was, a result of that openness, in which a whole bunch of [...] anarchists, libertarians, situationists, we arrived there and we mixed with them, and the result was for two years an extremely brilliant newspaper.\footnote{J-J. Lebel, interview, 28 February 2008. Lebel is mistaken on the timespan of the paper.}

A further key element of this project was to invite readers to send in articles and in time set up their own regional supplements. Tout! also called for assemblies (AGs) at which people could come and debate the content and direction of the paper. Normally held in the Beaux-Arts school, Gilles Dinnematin recalls that hundreds attended. How effective these gatherings were is, however, open to question; Francois Petitjean, a lycéen visiting from Le Havre, remembers one of the open Paris Tout! assemblies as utterly confusing, with people speaking over each other.\footnote{F. Petitjean, interview, 19 October 2008.}

Nonetheless, teams were sent from Paris to meetings of readers in other cities to explain the project, including Dinnematin, who relates that the assemblies in Rennes and Toulouse each numbered around 150 people, showing a real provincial penetration. Thus the Tout! collective hoped for the burgeoning of a national, grassroots political press network.

The workings of Tout!

Jean-Marie Léon set out the process of production in issue 10 of the paper in a bid to encourage local groups to start kindred publications. We also get an idea of the precarious financing. Léon explained that despite the receipt of certain unconditional contributions - up to 7-8 million old French francs - the paper was in constant need of finance, and signed off with an appeal: ‘ENVOYEZ-NOUS DU FRIC (beaucoup si vous en avez beaucoup).’\footnote{‘Faisez votre journal’ in Tout! no.10, 29 March 1971, p. 7. 70 million old FF equalled 70,000 new FF, then coming to around £6,000, or £40,000 in today’s money.} In fact, a majority of those interviewed state that the money for the paper came from Sylvina Boissonas, an heiress of the wealthy Schlumberger oil family, who had financed independent, underground films in the late 1960s and was pulled into the orbit of VLR in 1970. Gangnet explains today that Director of Publication Jean-Paul Sartre and some intellectuals also donated, and Castro mentions contributions from friends in architecture, these alleged contributors’ connections tending to confirm the paper’s additional financial resources.
The article went on to explain the production process, based on 1960s and ‘70s techniques. At the small Agrofilm printers in the 10th arr. articles were linotyped; lead characters were lined up and assembled with the images in Tout!’s unconventional layout: la maquette. Lead lines were arranged accordingly, with images reduced to fit, before a cellophane copy was printed for Offsetting - here editors could, and did add handwritten comments. The resulting photosensitive plaques were then transported to Fontainebleau for the print-run off a giant rotary press (fig.4.3). Colours were added and often blended, thanks to a clever inking technique inspired by Barda’s wonder and enquiry at a Paris printer’s tricolour flag posters. Denoted elsewhere as the ‘split fontaine’, notably at Tout!’s counter-cultural contemporary Actuel, the method consisted of regulating the flow of different colours from the ink wells to the press rolls; colours would then fade or blend across double pages as the bobines turned. Correspondingly, titles were also often bold and coloured, sensational in the France-Soir mould.

The innovatory graphics were a deliberate snub to the black, white and occasionally red ‘certainties’ of the rest of the leftist press, indeed Barda contends that the first, pink-hued issue was immediately reviled as ‘queer’ by militants of the GP. The design-colour aesthetic told of the Beaux-Arts pedigree of Léon, Barda, Castro and others. Furthermore, the psychedelic colours and hectic arrangements in Tout! reflected the growing counter-culture in France. Tout! bore the look, indeed, outlook, of an American underground paper, resembling a mix of The Seed’s graphics, and the Liberated Guardian’s politics, both of which were made available to militants hand-to-hand by Groupe 76, a small Paris distribution network of US underground press titles. Additional texts and interviews testify to the American travels of Hocquenghem, Lévy, Barda and ultimately Lebel’s transatlantic credentials, in the awareness of underground press tropes at Tout!

Complementing the Beaux-Arts and underground aesthetics were a range of caricatures, including several by Philippe Bertrand, Siné, Wolinski, and significantly, American cartoonist Robert Crumb, whose work had just started to appear in France (fig.4.4). They were hallmarks of Tout!’s humour and derision, companion pieces to the provocative slogans, and in their attacks on police, politicians and the media, both harked back to the posters of May ‘68, and hailed the satirical weekly Hara-Kiri Hebdo. Indeed, when the latter was banned following a sarcastic attack on de Gaulle at his death in November 1970, Tout! would rally to its defence. Another figure regularly lampooned in Tout! was Docteur Muldworf, the resident clinical and

16 J. Barda, interview, 4 February 2008.
psychiatric spokesperson for the PCF, whose pronouncements on the question of the family, sex and abortion were representative of a traditional left social conservatism that "Tout!" despised (fig.4.5). Gangnet indicates that the Charlie Hebdo’s Delfeil de Ton saw Muldworf’s joke rubric as a ‘flattering copy’ of his own sardonic columns.  

The open-door editorial policy and experimental approach brought a host of production problems. Friends and sympathisers of the various currents around VLR could drop in and help out, provide articles or argue for the inclusion or omission of other articles which meant that the quinzomadaire, according to Barda a term conceived by the editorial team and now a standard in French journalism, came out rather less regularly than was intended. Indeed, a cursory calculation of the time lag between issues shows that the paper was more of a three-weekly. At one point the team decided to fuse two issues, 6 and 7, into one, thereby re-calibrating with the original schedule, but it quickly reverted to type. VLR’s Dominique Labbé was in charge of accounts and distribution at "Tout!"

Voilà le problème. La règle était: on discute tous en comité de rédaction et les articles ne sont pas signés. Du coup, c’était un peu n’importe quoi. Dans les premiers mois, Barda, Gangnet et Hocquenghem écrivaient beaucoup et contrôlaient à peu près. Ils réalisaient aussi et discutaient gentiment avec les auteurs. En cours de route, un certain nombre se sont ajoutés dont j’ai oublié les noms. Sauf Deshayes (mouvement des lycéens) et JJ Lebel, anarchiste, une personnalité et un type positif, sympa et bon organisateur […] On avait des comités de rédaction ouverts à tous au moins une fois par semaine. Ils décidaient théoriquement du contenu. Au début, cela fonctionnait à peu près, mais à partir du printemps 1971, ce fut le chaos. En fait, il y avait toujours quelqu’un qui passait au marbre et qui fichait en l’air un article ou en introduisait un en plus. En plus le journal était toujours en retard, ce qui posait d’énormes problèmes avec l’imprimeur et les Messageries de la presse parisienne.  

As with most titles, distribution was managed by the NMPP, to kiosks and newsagents around the capital and the country. According to Labbé, much of the print run was sent to ‘backwaters’ and the parcels often came back unopened. Financial problems were compounded by the NMPP’s ‘obscure accountancy’, whereby the network group fixed the sales revenue to the costs of handling and expedition. Such problems eventually led Labbé himself to take care that kiosks in Paris properly advertised and sold the paper. Police archives show that "Tout!" had contacts in another 23 departments, while volunteers ensured its distribution- to bookshops, individuals and

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18 J. Barda op cit.
19 D. Labbé, interview, 16 February 2008.
20 ibid.
so on—in around 10 national departments, from the northern Pas-de-Calais region to Avignon in the south. The paper held a concentration of correspondents in the Paris region, confirming its status as a primarily Parisian militant enterprise. Indeed, the editorial think-tank and organising centre was at 73 rue Buffon, opposite the Jardin des Plantes in the 5th arrondissement of Paris. The rooms at rue Buffon had also served as an organising centre for the group Défense Active, set up to resist judicial repression and provide a contact point for activist fugitives. Just around the corner on rue Geoffroy St Hilaire, VLR held La Commune bookshop, now stocking all manner of left-wing publications and whose back room served as meeting-place for the various VLR members and their friends. Only a stones-throw away lay the political hotbeds of Censier and Jussieu universities, completing a familiar Parisian geo-political environment for the paper and associated activists.

As to the paper’s subscribers, Labbé remembers the paper as having attracted just over 500; these were drawn from 42 regions. However, the record is unreliable as Gangnet states that subs requests were often ignored or forgotten, due to the ‘atmosphère bordélique’ of the editorial meetings. Nonetheless, by all spoken and written accounts, the readership was composed primarily of other leftists, students and ex-students, confirmed by the organising of large readers’ meetings in big university towns as far apart as Rennes and Toulouse. Flins worker, and VLR member Dominique Bonnard, not a big fan of Tout!, was nonetheless impressed with the reach of the publication:

Ce qui m’intéressait c’était le mouvement qu’il y avait autour. C’était le catalyseur ce journal, notamment au niveau de la jeunesse ça a été important, et les échos qu’on a pu recueillir, même au niveau national, au sein de toutes les grandes villes le retour qui nous en a été apporté, ça c’était fructueux, c’était riche.

According to the accounts analysis in no.10, the paper would achieve average sales of 22,500–25,000 from a print run of 45,000 in early 1971, the team estimating that a rough readership of 100,000 (four readers to a copy) existed. Print runs and sales respectively, rarely deviated from this norm, though no.10’s ‘make your own paper’ feature relates that 53,000 were printed for no.9, the special issue calling for the dissolution of the Brigades Spéciales following the assault on VLR militant Richard Deshayes. The paper seems to have sold over half of the NMPP-

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21 The file on Tout! at the Archives de la Prefecture de Police de Paris (APPP) remains confidential, and I was only able to obtain this information on special request, with Commissaire Gicquel reading out the departments to me, but none of the listed subscribers’ names.
managed 26,000 distribution outside of Paris, thus helping to account for its provincial popularity, contradicting a police source that estimates no more than a quarter of NMPP stocks were sold. On the other hand, some recall entirely different figures, Gangnet for instance stating that only 5,000 were sold. Labbé asserts that the print run only exceeded 50,000 for the sexual liberation issue, no.12. Other political surveys mention sales of 80,000 for no.9.\(^{24}\) However, a contemporary police report on revolutionary papers indicates a production of 40,000 for the first issue, thus tending to confirm Léon’s accounts in no.10.\(^{25}\)

**New attitudes, new directions**

Castro and Hocquenghem jostled for the editorial mantle in no.1, over the question of a ‘new attitude’. In an evocation of May ‘68, Castro privileged the autonomous action of the working class, youth and immigrants as the model for social change, thus recalling his recent writing in the pamphlet *Vive La Révolution*. By contrast Hocquenghem advocated the anti-work ethics of ‘sabotage and sloth’, breaking down the barriers of assigned social roles, for a revolution of personal lives:

> On sera poètes, militant, musiciens, érotiques, assoiffés de savoir ce qu’est le monde pour le transformer, destructeurs de l’ancien pour promouvoir le nouveau […] Quelque chose qui ne ressemble ni à l’embrigadement compensatoire par un mouvement de la jeunesse comme celui qu’avait construit le P’C’F, ni à l’emprise directe (limitée) de groupes gauchistes organisés.\(^{26}\)

While appealing to youth in general, Hocquenghem extended, indeed displaced, the terrain of political action from the factory and work to other, more personal rebellions, in particular against ‘family life’ and ‘family schemas’. When asked what the *Tout!* team would have done had workers failed to respond to their liberation project, Hocquenghem’s close friend Hatzfeld, replies: ‘S’ils veulent pas, on le fait avec ceux qui veulent’.\(^{27}\) The political project of *Tout!* therefore harboured a certain ideological tension, between political and counter-cultural leftisms, that set the principal coordinates through which the paper’s ideas would alternately merge and clash, providing a passionate though contradictory hybrid.

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\(^{24}\) Chollet and Samuelson both cite this figure.


\(^{26}\) G.H. ‘C’est personnel: tout le monde en discute’, *Tout!* no.1 op cit. p. 7.

\(^{27}\) M. Hatzfeld, interview, 19 January 2008.
Amid these editorial incongruities, the rest of the first issue announced the template—an eclectic mix of articles and images reporting and denouncing the world’s injustices, then calling for the solidarity and political action needed to address them. International reports on Italy and Belgium stressed the spontaneous, subversive strikes of workers, drawing an equivalence of attitude and action between the nebulous Tout!-VLR milieu and its respective transnational ‘counterparts’, Lotta Continua and Force des Mineurs. The paper went further in referencing international tendencies, for instance introducing Black Panther Huey Newton’s recent declaration of support for women and gay liberation movements. Here, a detailed small print spelt out the existence of the US Gay Liberation Front, prefiguring Tout!’s role in bringing homosexual politics to the fore (fig. 4.6).

On the judiciary, police and prisons, at this time central gauchiste concerns, VLR prisoner Hatzfeld, writing from prison, decried the conditions at La Santé and declared a hunger strike in solidarity with other political prisoners; the paper widened the scope of its attack to include incarceration of all prisoners, common law and political. Hatzfeld and other jailed VLR activists drew on their jail time to list the iniquities of the French penal system, fully exposed in the pages of the paper. For example, Yves Hardy’s ‘Derrière les barreaux, le soleil’, and Nadia Ringart’s ‘Prison des Femmes’ were lyrical evocations of daily life under the heel of the prison guard. The jailing of ex-GP leader Alain Geismar came in for deconstruction at the hands of Hocquenghem, in no.2’s ‘Geismar c’est Geismar’. The writers first rubbished the media’s depiction of the GP’s avatar as a wasted intellectual, then La Cause du Peuple’s elevation of him to heroic status. In so doing, Tout! sought to level hierarchies, including those within leftism, often around the ‘cult of the personality’. By contrast, the paper signalled its solidarity for outcasts and misfits, les marginaux, in identifying and interviewing two working-class prisoners, Raton and Munch, locked up for alleged involvement in the violence that led to the death of a police chief in Lyon during May ‘68.

With the Meulan trial in November 1970, when Marc Hatzfeld and Nadja Ringart were brought before the Cour de Sûreté de l’État, the paper exhibited a convergence of themes. Antiracism was manifest in VLR-Tout!’s support for immigrants, a focus on the working-class maintained

29 ‘Geismar, c’est Geismar’ Tout! no.3, 29 October 1970, p. 4
31 The form of trial was significant in that this special court, presided by magistrates and military officers, was set up in the wake of the Algerian War, ostensibly to deal with OAS militants. Now turned against the far left, those brought before it were thus portrayed not simply as casseurs, but eventually, terrorists.
over the question of halting the *trafic d'embauche* around major factories, and of course *Tout!* sought to perpetuate the traditional *gauchiste* denunciation of bourgeois justice. Dinnematin relates that he returned to *Tout!* to help around the trial:

> Je me suis battu pour que le journal sorte au moment du procès, [...] je suis revenu de Fontainebleau et je suis rentré dans le Palais de Justice avec le paquet de journaux, puis dans la cour pour les donner à Roland Castro qui faisait un témoignage de moralité [...] il a commencé en disant : ‘C’est un scandale qu’il n’y a qu’un journal de la presse française qui parle de cette histoire’; c’était tous des militaires au tribunal, ils ont dit : ‘Faites voir’ [...] donc Roland a distribué à la cour *Tout!* et moi j’avais devant les yeux tous les juges de la cour qui lisaient *Tout!* 32

To these ends, issues four and five gave over their centre pages. The former was produced in the form of a four-page supplement entitled *Spartacus- ou la révolte des esclaves*, a detailed examination of the Meulan affair and its attendant issues: racism, poverty, and the press. ‘Qui condamne qui?’ was the headline of the double-page spread in no.5. Hatzfeld and Ringart received suspended sentences of three years and six months respectively. VLR-*Tout!* hailed the case as a moral and political victory, especially when during the trial Hatzfeld read a lengthy condemnation of the employers, officials and the judiciary. His conflation of national liberation struggles with immigrant resistance in France was indicative of the evolving politics of VLR in 1970-71, branching out from the native proletariat as the central agent of change, and privileging, amongst others, the autonomy of immigrant movements.

In fact, worker’s struggles constituted a consistent theme throughout the sixteen issues of the paper, about 13% of all articles, though it must be stressed that *Tout!*’s coverage was of a different nature to that of other far left papers. The paper regularly provided space for the Flins Base Ouvrière (BO), Grumbach taking articles to the editorial team. These were lucid, detailed accounts of agitation in the factory, giving assessments of the Maoists’ influence and penetration. More typically, the report of an industrial dispute involved giving a voice to those workers perceived as most open to radical ideas: often young workers unattached to the traditional unions, such as women workers in tertiary industry such as wholesalers, or computer technicians in the newspaper industry. *Tout!* extolled the virtues of unofficial action: a sit-in at a Caterpillar factory, miners occupying their pit in Merlebach, bosses ‘séquestrés’ in the Férodo plant near Caen, the destruction of offices by angry strikers in Nantes-Batignolles. And in

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32 G. Dinnematin, interview, 22.05.08
virtually every dispute, the dead hand, or perceived treachery of the union delegates and officials, usually CGT, was denounced in vitriolic terms.

_Tout!, ‘autonomous’ movements and the crisis of VLR_

Over the space of a few issues, Maoist-proletarian and ‘cultural revolution’ or ‘new culture’ discourses become distinct and divergent. Keynote articles included Black Panther Huey Newton’s summer 1970 message backing women’s and gay liberation. In this, _Tout!_ was helped by the connections some of the journalists had established with American militants and the Liberation News Service network of articles and images. In the next few issues the team called for the readership to ‘do it’ like the Yippies of the American counterculture, and in no.3 were excited to announce that Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman had equated May ‘68 to the ‘Woodstock Nation’ on his visit to Paris in October 1970.

Whereas almost every issue of _Tout!_ addressed the situation of workers, women, immigrants, prisoners, high school students, the Palestinians, the paper’s emphasis was more on the diversity of independent movements, than on the traditional Marxist referral of each movement’s relation to the organised working-class. Worker’s struggles could be seen as one part but not necessarily the determining feature of what they termed _La France Sauvage_. Correspondingly, _Tout!_ lashed out at the rest of the far left who prioritised objectives of party-building over campaigns against oppression. In no.4 the back page issued the clarion called to change life: _Changer la Vie_, and to ‘chase the fascist cop from your mind’ aimed at other leftists.

With the re-positioning of the militant axis along ‘movementist’ lines, _Tout!_ opened a process of ideological questioning, a type of self-critique that took the paper out of the Marxist sphere of preoccupations. Already no.1’s ‘new attitude’ articles pointed towards new problematics; no.3 debated: ‘Combler le fossé entre le gauchisme et _La France sauvage_’. In a survey of the French political and social landscapes, the writer complained of Chaban-Delmas and the PCF taking on May’s ideas: the question of democracy, women’s rights, or poverty, and combining to deceive the people. These ‘enemies’ were attempting to occupy the ground that should rightfully have been the leftists’. The GP was singled out for criticism, as if representative of the whole of _gauchisme_, due to its deluded mediatic, violent, vanguardist, approach. _Tout!_ instead strived to

33 ‘Combler le fossé entre le gauchisme et la _France Sauvage_’, _Tout!,_ no.3, 29 October 1970, p. 5.
extend speech in the streets and the revolutionary movement, ‘to take up the understanding of May, and a society that people want to build, knock down the old one’.  

In its lengthy article ‘Il va bien falloir se débarasser du gauchisme’, Tout! no.6 of January 1971 deepened and extended this critique, inaugurating a second phase in which the paper gave voice to the new movements and ultimately presided over the disintegration of VLR. Revolutionaries were seen to have achieved nothing durable since May, their periodic successes eaten up by the press—e.g. France-Soir and Meulan, Le Nouvel Observateur and the American revolution, and misappropriated by the bourgeoisie. Once again the GP was mocked, by means of a caricature of Mao and a sarcastic reproduction of the Maoists’ latest leaflet (fig.4.7). Gauchistes were depicted as a ‘bunch of intellectuals relying on popular revolts’, tired, pretentious, inward-looking, and crucially, isolated from the mass of French. To bridge the gap, the author argued to build on the new ‘cultural’ approach spearheaded by VLR, around initiatives like La Maison du Peuple, and referenced Italian left intellectual texts and the American counter-culture to construct an alternative vision of revolutionary change. In one passage Tout! moved from a watered-down Maoism towards an anarchistic counter-culturalism:

Il en va de même pour les interventions dans les usines ou dans les facs : le mieux qu’on ait fait jusqu’à présent c’est de parler de dominer la machine à l’occasion d’une grève, de parler de libération des travailleurs (‘all power to the people’) et de construire la Maison de Villeneuve-la-Garenne, à peu de chose près, dans le sens de montrer ce que nous voulons-tout de préfigurer les rapports sociaux ou les rapports de production de demain pour développer, comme disent les camarades italiens du Manifesto, la ‘force de conviction nécessaire’ pour que le peuple prenne les moyens de chasser une civilisation pour une autre.

Les seules choses qui puissent être considérées comme un peu acquises à la compréhension (à l’éducation) de la masse de peuple – dans le sens de nouveaux rapports entre les hommes – c’est l’impatience ou mieux, l’immédiateté traduite par l’attitude de violence (vivre tout de suite et prendre ce qu’on nous bloque par toutes sortes de moyens) et d’une autre façon, l’attitude hippy ou ‘anti-productiviste’ de refus du travail aliéné, de l’esclavage techniciste ‘pour l’amour du prochain’.  

Even this would have proved insufficient for the worker worried about his/her monthly paycheck. Gauchistes therefore needed to become more complex in thought and deed, in ways of reaching out to the masses. For this they had to break with ‘blocked gauchisme’, to move from class struggle to the broader field of ‘civilisational struggle’.  

34 ibid.
35 ‘Pour faire la révolution il va bien falloir se débarasser du gauchisme’ Tout! no.6, 10 January 1971, p. 5.
36 ibid.
For the reader ‘civilisation’ appeared as an ill-defined but re-assuringly broad concept that tapped into the discourse of *changer la vie*: the critique of daily life and celebration of a new culture. But in practice it meant shifting the ideological and practical focus from workplace struggles onto the range of ‘autonomous’ revolts, that had the same issue later divulge articles on students, women, and young ‘lumpen’ struggles. *Tout!* finally presented itself as a, if not the, conduit for this ongoing debate:

Des dizaines de groupes y travaillent ou travailleront. Vive la Révolution (VLR) dira ce qu’il a à dire dans une revue, TOUT publiera des articles sur la société bloquée, l’impérialisme-de-nos-jours, la France Sauvage etc. Et on discutera dans les AG de TOUT. Le journal peut servir de relai pour les groupes (ou les militants ou autres) qui annoncent vouloir ou avoir discuté sur tel ou tel sujet ou expérience.  

Issue eight followed up with a rambling, disjointed corollary to the above article, now taking on a situationist-style critique where the individual— not just a worker-producer, but also consumer—‘is rendered the spectator of their own stupidity and impotence’, prey to the bourgeoisie’s ideological systems.  

Gauchisme had been reduced to the status of ‘indispensable barometer of a sleepy and sterile bourgeoisie’; the *Maison du peuple* and MLF criticised as limited, reformist ventures or petit-bourgeois in nature. If the Maoist slogan: ‘the main tendency is towards revolution’ was to be made reality, it had to be made a daily reality, going beyond the mere placing of demands that contested aspects of capitalism, to a global contestation of the system. With this, *Tout!* broke ideologically from organisational Marxism, a contradiction that was reflected at the militant base.

This succession of probing, indefinite philosophical articles accompanied the gradual emergence of identity movements from the far left milieu, three of which crystallised in *Tout!* during the early months of 1971. The most prominent was the women’s liberation movement, itself containing a number of VLR members. Not long after, the gay rights struggle would draw inspiration both from the MLF and the intellectual leadership of Hocquenghem. Finally, VLR’s wild youth group, the Front de Libération de la Jeunesse (FLJ), largely based on the lycée Buffon in Paris, whose brief was to: ‘foutre le bordel’, in response to the harassment and shackling of youth by the authorities. By acting as a platform for these ‘autonomous’ movements

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37 ibid.

38 ‘Passer de la contestation a la révolution c’est insérer toute lutte dans l’ensemble de la crise actuelle de la bourgeoisie impérialiste, élargir la lutte de classe à une lutte de civilisations.’ *Tout!* no.8, p. 4.
while continuing to express a Maoist-proletarian viewpoint, Tout! catalysed a process of contradictions that would result in the physical dissolution of VLR in April 1971, and eventually in its own demise. Indeed, in his interviews, Castro outlines three reasons for the disbandment: the rupture of women from the VLR-Tout! milieu, ‘the FHAR affair’, and the fear of VLR elements lurching into terrorism. Each of these needs to be considered in its own right, especially as they had a bearing on the development of the paper, before a more precise judgement can be made as to the reason for the disaggregation.

**Tout!-VLR surpassed by the women’s liberation movement**

Historiographically, the principal motives for the dissolution of VLR can be read variously as the departure of female members from the group, intimately related to a confrontation with the male personnel of Tout! in April-May 1971, and the storming of the political stage by the new gay liberation movement, events for which the April issue of Tout! - no.12 - was pivotal. Both motives bear validity, indeed were bound up in the way that ideas of gender and sexual liberation permeated and eventually prevailed over other more traditional *gauchiste* preoccupations in Tout!

* Tout! fronted the thoughts and activities of the new Mouvement de Libération des Femmes (MLF), in articles going back to no.3 on women’s prisons. However no.6-7’s ‘DÉCHAÎNÉES’, brought by the recently formed *groupe femmes VLR* was no mere discussion of developing feminist thought, extending as it did to a contestation of male domination in *gauchiste* groups, implicitly VLR. The signing ‘V’ (*Vaginale*) and ‘C’ (*Clitoridienne*), was an early indication of the satirical provocation that would become characteristic of the MLF. Similarly, no.8’s report on the clash between the MLF and anti-abortion Professeur Lejeune showed the confidence of women to act collectively and independently, and the support for a women’s strike at the Troyes *bonneterie* introduced a discordant feminist dimension to the habitual discourse of class struggle. Furthermore, the paper also provided the backstage scene for a personal-political gender clash that shook the milieu to its core. In April, around the publication of no.12, several women members of VLR and the MLF, penned a thinly-veiled and derisive attack on their partners, all men working at Tout!, entitled: ‘Vie et moeurs de la peupladé “Tuot” ou que vos os pourrissent
sous la lune’. This short fable of prose-poetry likened the Tout! scene to a hut village with its, ‘grands initiés’ male leaders and their subordination of the women to sexual rituals - a metaphor for the social and sexual exploitation of women. Each woman spoke of her suffering at the hands of the ‘Tuotiens’, her use and abuse by the powerful men, discarded or relegated to the ‘harem’. Here, the women were emphasising that the personal-is-political by denouncing the sexism of their would-be male partners (Tout!- Tuot, was the stone upon which the thought of the men was engraved). The verse ended with the demand: ‘Ce que nous voulons? – pas ça... Ça, mais pas tout... ni ça, ni tout!’ sarcastically misappropriating the perceived false optimism of the paper’s subtitle.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the piece was rejected by the predominantly male editorial team, on the basis that it lacked political credence. Whereupon the women retreated to an appartment in Les Halles, threw the doors open to other women and set about composing their riposte. An extended follow-up emerged from their brainstorming: ‘Votre libération sexuelle n’est pas la nôtre’, a feminist politico-theoretical text damning the men’s erroneous representation of sexual revolution- one in which men continued to hold sway, whether political, economic or sexual, over women in a ‘patriarchal civilisation’, and calling for the deconstruction of power at all levels. Once completed, the same women, this time accompanied by another 30-40 MLF members descended on the local in rue Buffon and confronted the men with the new text.

Elisabeth Salvaresi recounts that ex-VLR member Françoise Picq read out the second text, prompting a debate during which the male editors retorted violently, insulting the women as ‘fascists’. Picq herself claims that men had ‘nothing much left to say’, on the basis that the balance of forces lay with the women. Dinnematin recalls a moment of ‘extreme tension, almost violence’, a condemnation of men’s treatment of women, who then announced that they were leaving VLR and Tout! to make their own paper. Pierre Gangnet of the editorial team recalls a similar encounter, at the printshop but instead with 6-7 women, arriving with their articles and declaring that they were going to ‘take power’. All in all, states Elisabeth

39‘Vie et moeurs de la peuplade “Tuot” ou que vos os pourrissent sous la lune’, Tout! no.15, 30 June 1971, p. 3.
40 F. Picq, 7 February 2008.
41 E. Salvaresi, interview, 24 June 2008.
43 F. Picq, op cit.
44 G. Dinnematin, interview, 22 May 2008.
45 P. Gangnet, op cit.
Salvaresi: ‘C’était un affrontement extrêmement violent; c’était un divorce, à la fois politique et personnel’.  

As to the date of this confrontation, opinions vary between mid-April and early-May. But the likelihood is that it was written in the aftermath of no.12’s publication, for in the first article, the authors speak of the ‘Tuotiens’ having ‘carved on their no.12 stone’, clearly a reference to the paper’s bombastic twelfth issue. The clash took place before the appearance of the first issue of the MLF’s Le Torchon Brûle in May. Despite the temporal imprecisions, it would have occurred after VLR’s dissolution, as the groupe femmes had discussed leaving the organisation, just prior to Roland Castro’s disbandment on 17 April. With these articles the women, who then represented a certain overlap of VLR and MLF members, broke decisively from the notion of a women’s movement as part of a federation organised by VLR, or any other organisational core. More to the point, Tout!, which had publicised and promoted the growing women’s movement, was now challenged, found to be wanting, and finally rejected as a propaganda vehicle for the MLF; the scene was now set for the appearance of Le Torchon Brûle.

However, MLF articles did not completely disappear from Tout! Both of the contentious ‘Tuotiens’ articles finally appeared in no.15 of end-June, due to the initial reluctance of the editorial team to print. This may be because some of the leading men at Tout! including Roland Castro and Jacques Barda, stung by the personal and political tensions, had by then taken their leave of the paper. In Générations, Castro rationalises the departure of women and collapse of VLR in psycho-sexual terms:

Il y avait plein de femmes […] à VLR. Elles sont parties […] c’était un collectif de femmes, pas politique, au sens de ‘travail égal, salaire égal’. Et puis il y avait autre chose: l’invention du clitoris. Ça a bouleversé les relations personnelles et politiques […] Mon harem fout le camp […] un chef sans harem ça n’a pas de sens.

In so doing Castro panders to the feminist critique, an apparent retrospective acceptance of women’s autonomy from VLR that also stresses his former leadership credentials, and tends to undermine the idea of VLR as a horizontal organisation. Tensions remained at the paper over the issue. In no. 15, an adjacent note from the editorial team stated:

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46 E. Salvaresi, op cit.
48 R. Castro, in Generations (Kuiv Productions, 1988), video cassette, BDIC KV 1109(2).
Les femmes, nos sœurs, sont opprimées dans cette société patriarcale pourrie, c’est un fait qui se vérifie tous les jours et dans tous les domaines de la vie, y compris au comité de rédaction de TOUT ou, malgré les efforts faits pour résoudre révolutionnairement les problèmes, les relations entre ‘mecs’ et ‘nanas’ ont été jusqu'à maintenant atroces. C’est pourquoi nous publions le texte ci-dessus écrit par un groupe de copines du MLF, bien qu’il soit un mélange de situations réellement vécues et de calomnies fantasmatiques. 49

_Tout!, the paper of the FHAR?_

It was the production of the sexuality/FHAR issue, no.12 of _Tout!_ that most closely approximated Castro’s closure of VLR. He mentions in other retrospectives: ‘On a donné le no.12 au FHAR’.$^{50}$ However, pre-publicised in no.11 as ‘a special apolitical issue’, the intention had been to populate no.12 with overtly non-militant themes, entertaining issues like ‘noise’, ‘old people’, or ‘food’ in a radical plan to address the problems of daily life.$^{51}$ Instead, its front page opened with a challenge:

Et puis, ce qui a déferlé, et ce dont ce numéro est le témoin, c’est ce qu'on appelle de façon méprisante, honteuse ou médicale les questions sexuelles, Mais ces questions-là, qui sont celles que notre corps pose quotidiennement, ne sont-elles pas au centre de la vie?$^{52}$

The issue was a multicoloured statement for gender and sexua liberté, from women’s and gay rights to transvestites and teenagers. A banner headline ‘Notre corps nous appartient!’ demanding free abortion and contraception, for homosexual and lesbian rights, promoted nudity, masturbation, sexual experimentation and the right of minors to love and sexual fulfilment. It was the first open call in France for lesbians and gays to come out - one of the headlines blasting: ‘Arrêtons de raser les murs… nous prenons ici la parole’.$^{53}$

Not content to simply claim sexual freedom, _Tout!_ set out to provoke. The cover of no.12 showed a Lebel collage juxtaposing photos of Pompidou and Chaban with publicity for religion and sex as merchandise, contrasted with naked bodies symbolising the liberation of the body and sexualités. No.12 directly imported situationist _détournement_, humorous re-writings of comic strips and copies of established artistic styles to bust social and sexual taboos. Gay cartoonist

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49 ‘Une note de quelque copains du CR’ _Tout!_ no.15, p. 3.
50 Among which his interview, 31 January 2008.
51 ‘no.12’ _Tout!_ no.11, p. 7.
52 _Tout!_ no.12, 23 April 1971, p. 1.
53 _Tout!_ no.12, p.7. Literally ‘Let’s stop slinking along the walls’, this has been translated by Frederic Martel as ‘Let’s stop cowering in the corner’, in _The Pink and the Black_.

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Bernard Kagan unfurled an outrageous comic-strip of fantasy sex scenes in the style of Wolinski, in which the male will to power, domination and violence expressed an unconscious homosexual urge to bugger, finally to be discarded for lesbian love (fig.4.8).

One long article, ‘Les pédés et la révolution’, claimed a revolutionary role for gays, lambasted the bourgeois family, and concluded that:

Si faire la révolution veut réellement dire changer la vie (et d’abord SA vie) et non pas seulement prendre le pouvoir pour remplacer à son tour le maitre – sous le prétexte de servir le peuple et d’abattre le dictature de la bourgeoisie actuelle – ces messieurs les gauchistes seront bien, eux aussi obligés tôt ou tard de déserrer les fesses. [signed] MOUVEMENT COMMUNARD ‘NOUS SOMMES TOUS DES ANORMAUX’.  

Following protests by one of the custodians of French morality, mayor of Tours Jean Royer, and a complaint by a deputy of the conservative UDR party over the content of no.12, the paper was shortly banned and seized in kiosks and newsagents by the police. Accounts place the numbers seized at 10,000, though evidence of this is lacking. Courtois, VLR’s bookshop manager, tells of the police arrival at La Commune to seize a packet of fifty copies. The charge for outrage aux bonnes moeurs, was levelled against Sartre as Director of Publication, and denounced in subsequent issues of Tout! but he did not stand trial, benefiting once again from his Voltaire-like status.

Significantly, no.12 was also poorly received in certain left-wing bookshops and even inside VLR, when its workerist current refused to sell the issue outside factory gates, claiming that it went too far for the average worker. The debate over workers’ reactions to the paper was vexed. Labbé relates that at the final VLR conference in the Villa Montsouris, the proofs of no.12 were displayed on the surrounding walls, such that members would have been aware of its contents and significance. He recalls that Grumbach of the Flins BO spoke against promotion of the contentious issue; the antagonism appears confirmed by Hocqenghem in the short film FHAR filmed around early May 1971 at Vincennes, in which he mused on former comrades’ attitude towards his opening homosexuality:

54 ibid., p. 9.
55 S. Courtois, interview, 7 June 2008. 10,000 parcelled copies were normally held at La Commune but not always in the shop, often stored in a lock-up across the road, some packets in the rue Buffon local.
56 In the end the charges were dropped when in July the Constitution Council upheld Tout!’s freedom of expression. See Rapport contre la Normalité (Paris: Champ Libre, 1971)
J’étais à VLR depuis longtemps, et y a un truc assez frappant, j’ai aucun gêne à le raconter maintenant, c’était qu’il y a un an, à VLR il était question que j’aillle militer dans une des unités de VLR parce que c’était une organisation, et quand les camarades de Flins ont appris que je devais militer à Flins, ils ont dit : ‘Un pédé il n’en est pas question’, moitié d’entre eux disant : ‘Bon c’est pas qu’on soit contre mais ça choquera les ouvriers’, c’est-à-dire jouant le rôle d’écran entre les ouvriers et les pédés, comme si j’avais jamais couché avec des ouvriers, et puis l’autre moitié disant que c’était un vice dû à la dégénérescence bourgeoise, et qu’il était pas question de l’admettre.

J’ai une copine qui a dit quelque chose qui m’a vachement étonné, surtout de sa part : ‘Un ouvrier est entré dans ma chambre ou j’avais des copies de Tout!, beh je l’ai caché, parce que j’ai pensé que s’il voyait ça, eh ben vraiment il serait choqué’ […] alors c’est vraiment la protection des irresponsables, des mineurs divers, la classe ouvrière etc.57

Indeed, the BO was split on the question of selling no.12.58 Still, it generated substantial sales, and thanks to the small ad it gave to the FHAR, the gay liberation meetings in the Beaux-Arts grew tenfold in the space of several weeks, people travelling from as far away as Nice and Marseille to attend.59 Feminist Christine Delphy outlines the significance of no.12:

Sa publication a eu un effet salutaire et débloquant - enlevant les blocages en particulier vis à vis de l’homosexualité - et j’imagine que sa saisie a multiplié l’effet de sa publication. C’était un scandale à l’époque, évidemment aujourd’hui cela paraît bien "tame", mais s’il n’y avait pas eu cela, il n’y aurait rien aujourd’hui. 60

But while Tout! propelled the FHAR into the political spotlight, it simultaneously drove a fissure through VLR and the gauchiste milieu, no.12 resembling something of a coup by cultural liberationists over Marxist proletarians. Henceforth the paper, having lost its organisational anchor, would fail to present a coherent political alternative and instead become the discussion board of increasingly divergent ‘autonomous’ movements.

57 FHAR, Carole Roussopoulos, 1971. Hatzfeld and Bonnard were also members of the BO-Flins at this time and confirm the rejection of Hocquenghem by some of the worker militants, Bonnard adding that Hocquenghem was ‘deeply affected’ by the incident (interview, 9 April 2008).
58 Eventually some of them did, and one worker managed to sell the issue in his atelier.
60 C. Delphy, email interview, 18 June 2007.
A terrorist dérive?

On 8 February 1971 VLR and FLJ leader Richard Deshayes was shot in the face at point blank range with a grenade by riot police, during a Secours Rouge (SR) demonstration in Place Clichy. Leftist photographer Gerard Aimé was summoned to the scene to record the terrible injury, in which Deshayes would lose an eye and be permanently disfigured. Later that night he received a call from Sylvina Boissonnas asking him to bring the photo to the printers, where a poster bearing Deshayes’ bloodied face and titled ‘Ils veulent tuer’ was run off in its thousands. Subsequent protest demonstrations shofwed the proliferation of the poster and the anger it generated. The image then re-appeared on the back cover of Tout! no.9, the front bearing Deshayes’ radiant pre-injury smile, calling for the disbandment of the Special Brigades (fig.4.9). More than 50,000 issues were run off, plus 30,000 FLJ manifestoes whose Deshayes-penned text was ‘interrupted by a grenade’. Castro appeared at a press conference on 23 February to condemn the attack, call for the formation of district self-defence groups and finally to warn: ‘Nous jugeron les assassins de Richard’.

Within VLR, the incident had a profound impact. Anne Dollé describes it as a real shock, and remembers meetings where ‘people were scared’. Castro also admits to ‘hang-dog guilt’ for what happened to Deshayes. This appears confirmed by Deshayes’ later reproach:

Roland était surement très culpabilisé. Mais je n’ai jamais reproché à Castro ma cécité. Je lui ai reproché peut-être ne pas avoir pris de risques ou de ne pas avoir mesuré les risques qu’il y avait. Mais je lui ai dit par la suite qu’il n’était pas responsable que j’aie pris une grenade dans la gueule. Beaucoup de gens autour de moi l’ont pensé […] mais je crois que ça a joué dans son déséquilibre à un moment donné, peut-être que ça a joué dans sa dissolution de VLR d’ailleurs […] puis il est allé voir le psychanalyste.

Castro states in his interviews that he wound up VLR partly in order to short-circuit a slide towards illegal, violent or armed action by VLR against the police in retaliation for the attack on Deshayes. At that time the term employed might have been ‘armed struggle’ commensurate with

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62 ibid.
63 R. Deshayes, Vivre c’est pas survivre, supplement to no.9 of Tout! February 1971.
65 A. Dollé, interview, 8 February 2008.
the title of the VLR texts such as ‘prolonged preparation of the armed struggle’, and the common parlance in the nebulous leftist movement. Later retrospectives, including Castro’s own, re-brand it as terrorism, with the added proviso that the actions of Maoist leaders and associated intellectuals prevented the turn in France to an Italian or German-style ‘red’ terrorism. Speaking of his thoughts in the build-up to the 17 April conference, Castro reveals his anxiety over the Deshayes incident:

C’est l’époque où on commençait… on avait imaginé un enlèvement de flic du chef des CRS qui avait tiré sur Richard et de le mettre dans une maison où il y avait personne, que de la bouffe puis jouer le jeu du ‘chaud-froid’[…] moi j’ai commencé à m’angoisser beaucoup sur la dérive. Il y avait ce côté ‘notre copain, vengeance’. 68

Certainly there were heated scenes of young people bearing the poster of Deshayes’ bloodied face on angry demonstrations called in the aftermath of the assault, and the simultaneous arrest of lycéen Gilles Guiot. Graffiti appeared echoing Castro’s ‘judgement’ warning in the press.

Less clear was VLR’s actual involvement in armed struggle. Nanterre militant Charles Masse recalls being approached by the leadership in the autumn of 1970 and asked his opinion of the GP’s armed wing the Nouvelle Résistance Populaire (NRP). Furthermore, he was asked to consider the formation of a VLR equivalent, but refused. 69 According to far-left biographer Christophe Bourseiller, a small kernel of the group had already put together an arsenal with the help of an ex-parachutist. In his book Les Maoïstes, he lists a number of VLR men who were ready to engage in forms of armed action, including Castro and other prominent members. 70 Of those named, some divulged to me their, and VLR’s militaristic orientation, others refused to speak of it. One among them, Yves Hardy, denies Bourseiller’s allegation outright, though he does recall once seeing a trunk of arms and this appears to tally with an earlier (interview) statement that ‘VLR came close to the use of guns’. 71

Notions of armed action were at play in the militant psyche in of the early 70s. Other ex-members, preferring to remain anonymous, give examples of the temptation to armed action. One recalls a meeting between himself, another VLR and two GP members in mid-1970 to discuss a ‘military’ corollary to the March events at Nanterre, which might have involved a Black Panther-style armed walk-on to the campus, a type

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68 R. Castro, op cit.
69 C. Masse, interview, 4 January 2009.
70 C. Bourseiller, p. 262. It seems Bourseiller has based his writing on a select number of sources, as he has not received confirmation of armed involvement from some of those named. Some doubt must be applied in a reading of his work, especially with regard to dates.
71 Y. Hardy, interview, 25 April 2008.
of grandstanding.\textsuperscript{72} These discussions apparently came to nothing. However, another ex-VLR interviewee recounts that he was entrusted with a gun by the leadership around this time, and adds that explosive devices targeting the police were also planted, but either failed to detonate or cause bodily harm.\textsuperscript{73}

Bourseiller times the creation of the armed VLR group at autumn 1970. His principal witness Courtois is the most candid on the inner workings of VLR and others on the far left, including on sensitive issues such as armed struggle.\textsuperscript{74} Courtois’ testimony suggests that this affair might have hastened the group’s demise; he states that the police discovered the cache of VLR arms around the time of the seizure of \textit{Tout!} no.12 by police at the bookshop, and subsequently pursued one of Bourseiller’s named militants. The main inference of this oral evidence is that the leadership would have taken fright and disbanded the group to help cover its tracks. How else could such a radical ‘dissolution de combat’, as Castro then called it, be explained?\textsuperscript{75} After all, the April conference was originally intended to consolidate VLR and conjoin with other leftist groups. However, the police intervention would have occurred in late April-early May 1971, some time after the final VLR conference, so the theory is undermined by a faulty recollection of the chronology.\textsuperscript{76} Castro’s referral to a terrorist-style spin-off as contributing to the end would bear some credence- though not solely over the assault on Deshayes; any wider plan VLR might have had to engage in armed action had been thwarted by the law. Ultimately, the reality of VLR’s temptation to armed struggle was obscured by the necessary secrecy that would have accompanied such preparations, and subsequent discomfort by alleged participants in relating their involvement. On the other hand the option of armed struggle was raised in post-dissolution discussions among those of VLR who wished to go on.\textsuperscript{77}

\textit{Tout!} loses its organisational anchor

\textsuperscript{72} Anon. interview.

\textsuperscript{73} Anon. interview.

\textsuperscript{74} It must be added that Courtois is the author of \textit{Le Livre Noir du Communisme}, as its title suggests, an anti-Communist work that indicates a change of political perspective on his part over the decades. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a number of ex-members, and those beyond VLR interviewed for my thesis, carry a low opinion of him.

\textsuperscript{75} R. Castro, ‘\textit{Autour de Vive la Révolution}', \textit{Que Faire ?} no.7, June 1971, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{76} Courtois also situates the date of VLR’s dissolution at June 1971, an error repeated by Bourseiller.

\textsuperscript{77} M. Chemin, interview, 15 July 2010.
Le projet politique de Tout! c’était dans mon esprit de lancer des thématiques de société, ce qui a préfiguré un peu le discours qui a été tenu au moment de la dissolution, l’émergence de fronts autour des questions de société, donc la sexualité, la question des femmes, les jeunes le FLJ, le FHAR, cette stratégie-là […] j’ai plus le souvenir d’innovation sur les thématiques de société que des grèves, des luttes ouvrières etc. 78

The ‘swamping’ of Tout! by the new movements was one major factor in the crisis of VLR. Internal documents reveal a malaise at the heart of the organisation itself, in particular amongst older, factory-based militants, at the direction the group and paper were moving in. As early as January 1971, the disaggregation was underway. Student activist Yves Hardy circulated a letter among forty or so members entitled ‘La fin d’un gauchiste’, articulating his disillusionment with militant life and yearning for fulfilment in alternative political journalism. Subsequent internal texts reveal a spiral of discontent and distrust inside VLR; one piece by Deshayes set out to ‘get it all off my chest’. He appeared bitter at the ‘lack of theoretical and organisational rigour’ afflicting VLR, and called for ‘Stalinist’ discipline to clear out the petty-bourgeois intellectual ‘liquidators and layabouts’ cluttering up the organisation. As regards the paper, Deshayes was insistent on the need for change; Tout! was seen as ‘extremely legalist’, far too dependent on the NMPP, and easy prey for Marcellin. Moreover:

Tout ne repose pour sa parution et sa diffusion sur aucune structure militante souterraine. Les réseaux d’information autonome de l’organisation des mass-médias sous le contrôle du pouvoir, c’est aussi ça l’autonomie prolétarienne. Le dosage conséquent du légal et de l’illégal sur tous les fronts y compris en matière d’information, c’est quand même un gros problème pour l’édification de la GR, non ? […] L’édification de la GR, ce n’est pas celle d’une force de types marginaux s’organisant pour se mettre en prise sur les gens de façon externe. Nous ne ferions que mettre notre misère en commun. 79

This gave a strong sense of the Tout! project escaping VLR; not easily controllable and reflective of the militant’s preoccupations, thus not utilisable as an organisational tool. A third, unsigned document spelling out the crisis at the heart of VLR, engaged in a similar critique of Tout!:

Ce journal était destiné à unifier la GR en lui permettant de se lier aux masses à l’aide de cet instrument. Or, il apparaît aujourd’hui que ce journal se caractérise par une certaine aptitude par rapport à la réalité, à toutes les réalités ; ce qui signifie que certaines des réalités abordées ne concernent absolument pas les masses que nous cherchons à toucher, mais des groupes marginaux. 80

78 P. Haski, interview, 3 December 2008.
79 R. Deshayes, ‘Ce qui rend fou…’ VLR internal document, Didier Sandman personal archive.
Tout!’s drifting from the militant base was again linked to a three-month old absence of coherent political analysis which the author attributed to the leadership’s ‘bureaucratism’, divorced from the masses and still obsessed with the group’s place in the gauchiste panorama.

The malaise could also be detected in the ‘official’ internal documents of the group. In February 1971 the bureau politique produced a membership bulletin, numbered 8/9 of Vive la Révolution, in a way the follow-up to the old paper, which attempted to provide some political orientation for the group and continued to speak of the preparation of an États Généraux de la Gauche Révolutionnaire. Bulletin 10 announced a national conference of VLR, planned for the 15-17 April to ‘build a centre of political initiative’, with a lead article suggesting the possibility of unity between VLR, the PSU left and the ex-Ligue Communiste group Révolution, entitled: ‘Unir la théorie, la politique et la vie.’ The author picked up on the Tout! theme of a ‘new political attitude’ rationalising that VLR consciously allowed itself to be overtaken by the early-70s mass youth movements, shouldering their creative initiatives. These new movements of revolt, encompassing women, wildcat strikers, free transport campaigns, and so on, reflected a deep-set ideological revolution at work, the refusal of the ‘old morality’ and ‘family virtues’.

From now on the revolution had to take account of this new dimension, and abolish the division between politics and the ‘lived experience’. T. denoted the women’s and youth liberation, workers’ ‘bossnapping’ as creative, cultural practices, new subversive forms that ought to be valorised alongside traditional left demonstrations and parades.81

Common to all of these internal articles was the continued desire for VLR to be a ‘link of fusion’, to federate the movements, some emphasising the centrality of the working-class. Thus, a new, VLR-propelled revolutionary left centred on the workplaces would serve as a political, unitary front:

Notre tâche est bien de pousser au bout de leur radicalité chacun de ces mouvements, et dans une tension vers le global, de fonder réellement leur caractère de mouvement politique de masse […] qui permettent d’implanter au sein de la multitude d’aspirations indépendantes l’idée de leur convergence fondamentale dans un projet révolutionnaire unifié. 82

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81 T. (possibly Tiennot), ‘Contribution à la discussion politique générale: unir la théorie, la politique, la vie, Vive la Révolution no.10, 2 April 1971, p.3
In the same bulletin however, a Flins militant laid bare the reality of VLR’s practice, criticising the group for ‘fully developing the theory of autonomous movements’, in which rebellion was glorified in itself; each figure, student, woman, immigrant etc. left to their own revolt, the ‘revolution, which is revolt plus a strategy’ had been forgotten. Furthermore, the paper was seen as central to this ideological confusion:

_ Tout est le reflet de cette ligne politique. C’est la description de la révolte, de trucs très baths. Le mec qui est chez lui dans sa chambre, marginal, cela lui donne confiance de voir qu’il y en a d’autres comme lui ; qu’il y a la révolte partout. Une fois qu’on l’a lu on est un peu regonflé mais qu’est-ce qu’il en reste pour la lutte ? Tout ne fait que renforcer la tendance de ses lecteurs à regarder le spectacle._

The Flins militant railed against a distant (Parisian) leadership, and the pretensions of VLR factory activists to be ‘Lotta Continua from two years ago’; without a political organisation, a coherent _vue d’ensemble_, ultimately their efforts were wasted, their work ‘blocked’ by the lack of the support structure. By way of remedy he suggested, much as did Deshayes, clearing out ‘the obstacles of those who talk but do nothing in practice’.

Written only a few weeks before the dissolution of VLR, the texts serve to remind us that officially at least, the group led a precarious type of existence, one that attempted to engage, and grow through the events of the previous year, especially since the appearance of _Tout!_ However, VLR lacked the size, and more importantly the structural integrity, to anchor the new liberation movements, wildcat strikes, and subversive campaigns it either initiated or looked to. While the group had moved from the traditional proletarian vanguard style, it had not learned to get past being the ‘most advanced movement of the urban petty-bourgeoisie’, interpreted as students, women, and so on. It could act as a temporary organisational fusion of these autonomous movements, but it couldn’t impulse their unity with ‘the workers and the people’.

Clearly some militants felt that _Tout!_, their political organ, their means of communication with wide layers of people, failed to answer the exigencies of grassroots political work, having accommodated instead to a subversive, youth-centred marginalisation in French society. One of the worker-militants at Flins, Dominique Bonnard, echoes this today:

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83 ibid. ‘Critique de la politique de VLR par un camarade de l’unité de Flins’, p. 4.
84 ibid.
J’ai jamais bien accroché à Tout! Le journal VLR, la revue qu’on faisait, il y avait une rigueur, des enquêtes, on prenait en compte mon travail d’usine. J’appréciais cette rigueur, cette organisation. Et davantage, Tout! c’était un peu le bazar, ça partait dans tous les sens, je m’y retrouvais pas là-dedans, aussi bien dans la forme du graphisme que dans le contenu même des articles, ça me paraissait confus. 85

Endgame: the disaggregation, drift and demise of Tout!

VLR was finished, its constituents off to ‘make the revolution’ in their own patch, as Castro intoned in his conference disbandment speech, though Tout! would continue for several months, proving its relative independence from its organisational forebear. The impact of no.12 was to further transform the paper over its last few issues. Divested of its earlier Maoist ideological trappings, Tout! became a vehicle for the aforementioned new movements and youth subcultures. The personnel changed too; Castro withdrew following no.13, Barda after no.14, leaving Léon, Hocquenghem and Lebel as the chief protagonists. Accordingly, subversion of bourgeois legalism, customs and sexual mores became the norm.

The paper published a series of letters mostly praising, some panning the breakthrough gay liberation number. Tout! extended its advocacy of sexual plurality with articles such as ‘Résolument bisexuel’. However, the paper would pause for only one issue before another, controversial gauchiste-splitting text was published. The core message of ‘Lettre de Mohammed’ was that white women’s refusal to sleep with Arabs was racist; the author qualified this attack, citing his own rejection by a female gauchiste in a radical household just before she bedded a newly-arrived white radical. The full-page letter stung the leftist, particularly feminist milieu, though it was a product of Tout!’s laissez-faire logic of giving voice to all of the oppressed, including opposite, awkward and even reactionary viewpoints. Dinnematin today rationalises that the article raised issues of both sexuality and racism:

On pouvait se faire passer de sexisme pour avoir publié ce truc-là […] il n’a jamais été question de faire n’importe quoi […] Soutenir les prisonniers voulait pas dire qu’on soutenait ce qu’ils faisaient. Mais je pense que c’est bien ce qu’on voulait faire émerger. Ça ne pas manque de provoquer, cette question. 86

The letter generated further inter-gauchiste tension, predictably from some women who retorted in subsequent issues; however, the issue was far from settled. With headlines such as ‘Tout!

85 D. Bonnard, interview, 9 April 2008.
86 G. Dinnematin, interview, 19 June 2008.
casse les bonnes moeurs’, the paper appeared not just intent on the destruction of bourgeois norms, but sought to push the provocation as far to the left, including leftist-borne, autonomous movements, as possible. Around the same time, Tout! launched a trenchant attack on the institution of the family; ‘the family is pollution’, ‘the family is porn’, in a generalised demolition of Mother’s Day, inviting collaborators and readers to comment on their alienated childhood. Lebel cites Wilhelm Reich’s concept of the family as a nucleus of capitalist society while describing the imagery of the article (fig.4.10):

These are quotations with chain: travail, famille patrie... during Pétain the franc didn’t say liberté égalité, fraternité, but ‘travail, famille, patrie’, so this hits at the very core of the ideology of the family. So this has nothing to do with Maoism, it has to do with a revolt that comes from very far back - from Dada - this is a Dadaist image, the little girl shooting at her parents, in a revolt against the family. So it has nothing to do with Maoism, but they accepted it, and not only that put it in the centre pages of their paper.

However, the paper could no longer be called Maoist. In fact it answered Maoist and other leftists’ dismissal of sexual and cultural questions with the article ‘Qui est petit bourgeois?’, an attempt to grapple with the persistent gauchiste accusation that non-working-class centred politics was a distraction, worse still, a deviation. As to the treatment of the workers movement in its final phase, the paper displayed further contradictory approaches. Renault-sauvage, the paper’s supplement on the ouvriers spécialisés (OS) strikes of May 1971, contained both an upbeat narrative on the conflict at Flins, a construal of the cultural revolution among young and immigrant workers, and an introspective, sectarian view of the strike at Cléon, the latter a source of contention among BO members.87 Another, special report on conditions in the SNCF, centred on the alienation of the individual worker rather than on the militant analysis of a particular dispute, or critique of the unions. Terminal evidence of its removal from the ideological Maoist sphere could be found in no.16’s article criticising China’s diplomatic manoeuvres and its companion caricature of Chairman Mao (fig.4.11).

Where Tout! continued to promote leftist-style agitation, whether demonstrations, meeting interventions and physical actions, it did so primarily around youth and new alternative movements. Thus the June-July 1971 FLJ occupations, the ex-VLR/FHAR disruption of Les Halles building site, Larzac Occitan, anti-militarist and Bugey anti-nuclear marches all received considerable coverage. Indeed these were also manifestations of a shift towards counter-cultural

87 S. Gatti, interview, 10 December 2008.
preoccupations, the Bugey assembly in particular at different points assuming the forms of musical festival and nudist sunbathing.

The final issue of Tout! came out at the end of July 1971, only ten months after its founding, almost completely ‘communitarian’, and ensconced in the growing counterculture. Its cover, even more vibrantly colourful than the previous issues, gave vent to the predominant sensibility (fig.4.12):

Nous tentons ici de repartir des désirs vécus pour eux-mêmes, du désir d’autonomie pour briser le spectacle politique. Midi libre, les jeunes veulent vivre et non survivre, femmes, homosexuels pour de nouveaux rapports de l’amour, ceux qui se révoltent sur leurs lieux de travail, ne s’y expriment que très peu ; provisoires, parce que nous ne pouvons pas dire grand-chose sur la transformation de cet immense désir de vivre en force agissante. Mais c’est tout de même une certaine idée de la France. La nôtre. 88

Alongside freak-style Robert Crumb cartoons, the articles focused on liberated houses and urban spaces (squats) and called on militants to occupy and use them as ‘revolutionary bases’. Debate on the evolution of both MLF and FHAR movements was eclipsed by the texts and icons of the FLJ, appealing to its supporters and readers to come together for a festival of fun during the summer in Montpellier. The photo of Geronimo, armed, served to emphasise the confrontational message of the FLJ, raging against the repression of the reactionary world of adults and police. For all the youthful bluster, the issue ended on a pacific note, ‘Cultivez votre jardin’ that proposed the transfer of restless militant energies to future projects, counter-institutions in the mould of the US underground’s free clinics and food distribution points. ‘Il faut commencer à envisager le fonctionnement de l’utopie, et après la réaliser. Seul le succès est romantique’. 89

July’s no.16 was a unique, 16-page, multicoloured broadsheet, the general tone of which was one of optimism; odd, for what was to be the last number. Labbé asserts that when the ten or so participants still at the ‘dwindling’ team met up in September, ‘no-one wanted to continue with the cirque of the previous year’, by which he means partly the administrative difficulties for which he was generally responsible, but also fatigue and the deflation of the enterprise due to the numerous political divergences. 90 Furthermore the paper was heavily in debt. One-time backer Sylvina Boissonas is understood to have relocated her funds to the MLF well before the summer,

88 ‘Ce que nous voulons: vivre!’ Tout! no.29, July 1971, p. 16. Hocquenghem the author.
89 ibid, p. 16.
90 D. Labbé, interview, 5 May 2008.
meaning that alternative money sources had to be found for the last few issues. Dinnematin relates that eventually, outstanding debts were paid by director Sartre, following the printers’ demands for payment.

But more importantly, Tout! ran out of steam. For Lebel, the end of Tout! could be explained by ‘a lack of energy and desire’. Gangnet echoes Castro’s assertion that once VLR went, Tout! had to follow: ‘Si on ne peut pas fédérer, on n’est rien’. The trouble was that the new movements had pulled ahead of VLR, spearheaded by Tout!, while the group leaders retained a certain vanguardist perspective of proletarian revolution. Tout! had exposed the contradictions at VLR, but lost its anchor when the group dissolved. In turn, the paper lost its own cohesive role as the new movements went on to create their own, distinctive political cultures, whether FHAR assemblies at the Beaux-Arts, or the publication of papers such as the feminist Le Torchon Brûle. The FLJ even scuttled its own very limited Parisian AG structure, in favour of ‘small revolutionary communes’ prior to the scattering of its members through the summer of ‘71.

Looking back on the experience in the context of the role of radical press, Hocquenghem gave an insight into the reasons for Tout!’s disappearance:

Tout vivait sur une idée simple, voire simpliste : le journal était un agitateur au sens maoïste : ‘on prend les idées justes chez les gens on les concentre et on les leur renvoie pour qu’ils y voient plus clair’. Lorsqu’on l’a fait, ça s’arrête de soi-même. La liquidation de Tout correspond à l’auto-dissolution du groupe VLR, laissant la place au MLF, au FHAR, aux écologistes.

This was a final, connected reason for Tout!’s disappearance, a quasi-situationist idea that the paper had run its natural course, having performed the dialectical function of bringing new movements into being, dissolving the old Maoist frameworks. In reply to the question of closure, Dinnematin confirms the notion:

On n’avait plus rien à dire je pense. C’était sur l’énergie de 68, les gens étaient tous plus ou moins en train de rentrer dans des choses plus concrètes. La relève n’était pas là.

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91 In particular going on to fund the Editions des Femmes publishing house.
92 G. Dinnematin, interview, 22 May 2008.
97 G. Dinnematin, interview, 19 June 2008.
Figure 4.1: Tout! no.1, the new France-Soir rouge. September 1970.

Figure 4.2: Firmly on the revolutionary left. Cheeky kiosk poster for no.1.

Figure 4.3: Jacques Barda (left) and friends at the printworks.

Figure 4.4: Early signs of US underground artist Robert Crumb in Tout! publicity.

Figure 4.5: Parody of Dr. Muldworth, PCF doctor, Tout! January 1971.
Figure 4.6: Declaration of solidarity by the iconic Black Panther leader Huey Newton for women and gay movements, *Tout!* September 1970.

Figure 4.7: Satire of Mao and the Gauche Prolétarienne in *Tout!* January 1971.

Figure 4.8: Bernard Kagan’s ‘La puissance ou la jouissance?’ Psycho-sexual derision, *Tout!* no.12.

Figure 4.9: Poster rushed out in protest at the police grenade disfigurement of VLR member Richard Deshayes, Feb 1971.
Figure 4.10: Demolition of Mothers Day centred on the Petainist ‘Travail, Famille, Patrie’, *Tout!* May 1971.

Figure 4.11: Further caricature of Mao, in the context of imperialist wargames. *Tout!* July 1971 (original caricature by US artist David Levine)

Figure 4.12: *Tout!* goes out in a blaze of underground colour, July 1971.
5. *Tout! in the France of Pompidou*

In this chapter I situate *Tout!* within the panorama of French politics following 1968. This was a world dominated by the conservative, Gaullist regimes of the 1960s and early 70s, temporarily turned upside down by the mass student-worker movement of May-June. President de Gaulle’s resounding victory in the 1968 legislative elections was followed by a programme of *participation*, billed as a third way between capitalism and socialism.¹ However, a failed referendum on regionalisation brought the General’s reign to a close in 1969. His successor Georges Pompidou sought continuity in a strong, modern presidential state, accelerating economic growth through the concentration of capital, technological *grands projets* (including the aerospace Concorde, Ariane and Airbus), and the proliferation of nuclear power, given a liberal sheen by new prime minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas, author of the ‘new society’.² Borrowing from sociologist Michel Crozier’s concept of a ‘blocked society’ - the kind of society that had provoked the explosion of May - Chaban pushed for more openness in the ORTF, decentralisation and dialogue in the different social sectors, particularly in industrial relations, where *mensualisation* for many workers, and the SMIG minimum wage were introduced.³

Pompidou’s France would provide the terrain for an invigorated, though limited far left challenge to bourgeois power and its institutions. Following 1968, the *gauchistes* regrouped, rebranding themselves and their publications; contestation in the universities, workplace militancy street demonstrations against the Vietnam War endured. By mid-1970 *Le Monde* had instituted a column dedicated to the far left, dubbed ‘Agitations’, and exposed a proliferation of press titles contained within the ‘Panorama de l’extrême gauche révolutionnaire’.⁴ Later that year, a new type of press appeared in the kiosks, synthesising alternative culture with a left-wing critique, of which *Tout!*, *Actuel* and *Politique Hebdo*. This evolving leftist press, whose sales figures are presented in Appendix 3, is examined in more detail to give a sense of the environment in which *Tout!* operated, the affinities and oppositions it held with other *gauchistes*, and its movement away from Marxist orthodoxy.

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³ ibid. p. 55. **Mensualisation** was the creation of monthly wages.
Crucially, this militant press can only properly be understood in a context of its fractious relationship with the State following May ‘68, necessitating a narrative that sheds light on the conflict; how the brûlots responded to the twists and turns of political power and ideology in Pompidou’s France, culminating in de Gaulle’s death in November 1970. Conversely, the government would impose a strong repression of the far left, in particular the Maoist *La Cause du Peuple*. This set the scene for a press contestation of State power to which *Tout!* also a target of police attentions, fully subscribed. Central to the period was the continued dominance on the left of the Parti Communiste Français (PCF); *Tout!* persisted with the far left critique of the Party’s authoritarian, Stalinist practices, and the ‘collaborationist’ grip of the Confédération Général de Travail (CGT) in the workplaces. But more so than any other leftist publication, *Tout!* extended its attacks to the innate moral conservatism of the PCF, engaging in hateful derision of the Party’s historical record. At the same time, those at the paper seemed oblivious to the regrouping of the mainstream parliamentary Left, the progress of the Parti Socialiste (PS) prefiguring a new common programme for power.

How successful then was this militant press in penetrating the world of the French working-class, the thrust of Marxist revolutionaries given urgent impetus by the general strike of May-June? I examine *Tout!’s* relationship to the workers movement, contrasting its messages of unfettered proletarian revolt with the Marxist mission of building vanguard parties and bases. As the far left after May sought to build on the fragile student-worker alliance forged during the events, so the faculties and workplaces remained favoured grounds of militancy. I seek to gauge the relation of *Tout!*, a paper that emerged from the milieu of higher education, to an evolving student movement, and its role in the burgeoning high school agitation, among *lycéens*.

**Tout! and the break from far left traditions**

‘*Action*: on avait reproduit la maquette avec *Tout!*’

The ties were manifold: Guy Hocquenghem and Jean-Paul Dollé had both written for the weekly, Siné, Wolinski and Michel Quarez sketched for both papers, while some VLR members were once sellers of *Action*. Hocquenghem later described *Tout!* as a type of ‘follow-up’ to *Action*. Others were impressed by its graphic qualities and humorous touch, the mental images produced by headlines

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5 A. Lévy-Willard, interview, 6 May 2008.
6 G. Hocquenghem, l’Aprés-Mai, op cit.p. 75.
such as ‘Chassez le flic de votre tête’. But there was also indifference to *Action*’s unitary role. Didier Sandman spells out the post-UJ mindset:

> On regardait ça [*Action*] de loin. Nous, on était vraiment une petite église sûrs de nous-mêmes. On regardait comme ça, mais on pensait que la révolution n’allait pas venir de là.  

It appears that Jean Schalit, faithful to the notion of May’s heterogeneous movement, felt the same way about the organised far left, despite having given them a platform in his paper:

> Après 1968-69, j’ai complètement rompu avec tout le mouvement gauchiste parce que je voyais une partie des groupuscules qui dérivaient […] soit vers le sectarisme trotskyste soit plus grave, au sectarisme prochinois; ça c’était totalement givré pour moi, j’étais très opposé à ça. Et puis je voyais arriver des choses comme la fraction armée rouge ou les brigades rouges en Italie; j’ai pas voulu cautionner ça donc j’ai fermé le journal alors que je pouvais continuer. C’est idiot, j’aurais du continuer, mais je me sentais pas bien.

In spite of the paper’s tendency to carry heavy Marxist analyses, Schalit retrospectively considers *Action*’s role as a ‘simple mirror’ of social and political struggles. This confirms a libertarian criticism at *Tout!* elaborated by Jean-Jacques Lebel:

> *Action* was made by professional journalists. So already it was trying to translate the movement into mass media terms. The important thing is that in *Le Pavé* and *Tout!* there were no professional journalists […] We had to reinvent the act of people talking about self-management, *autogestion*.

But *Tout!* shared in Schalit’s distaste for *La Cause du Peuple*. In November 1968 the founders of the Gauche Prolétarienne (GP) linked up with Serge July, co-author of *Vers la Guerre Civile*, to produce the new Maoist paper. For writer Gilles Susong, a Chinese influence told in the visual mode:

> Nous nous soucions peu de la maquette et des illustrations, et reproduisions celles des tracts et des feuilles locales, avec un vague style ‘Révolution Culturelle’.

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7 R. Deshayes, interview, 26 June 2009.
8 D. Sandman, interview, 9 March 2008.
9 J. Schalit, interview, 3 April 2009.
10 ibid.
11 J-J. Lebel, interview, 28 February 2008. For Lebel, *Tout!* was a late echo of the Mouvement du 22 mars.
While Tout! professed admiration for the Cultural Revolution it insisted on its own adaptation of thoroughgoing change in France. For La Cause du Peuple, the chief concern was to appeal to workers; their writings were published in the paper, which responded with a style of proletarian language. Director Jean-Pierre le Dantec today speaks of a ‘surenchère de l’expression’ whereby the classically-educated writers invoked a dual phraseology inspired by old Revolutionary papers and Maoist precepts.

La Cause du Peuple was ‘vile, abject’ states Castro today. Certainly, Tout! part-rationalised its own existence as the rejection of its more violent Maoist cousin:

> Prenez l’envie de faire un canard qui débarrasse le mouvement de la dictature ouvrièriste-militariste de la Cause du peuple et de la glu des autres.

Appearing on an irregular, near-monthly basis throughout 1969, La Cause du Peuple exuded increasingly provocative headlines such as ‘On a raison de séquestrer les patrons’, and ‘Nous sommes les nouveaux partisans’, in line with the GP imaginary of a French fascist state, collaborationist PCF and resistant workers. By 1970, each issue of the paper simultaneously condemned state repression and exalted the heroic combat of GP militants. Advocates of Tout!’s radically different approach viewed the self-styled mao as the epitome of a failed gauchisme whereby the GP’s armed strategy, the ‘fetish of violence’, had alienated the masses: ‘Si tu hurles, plus personne ne t’écoute’.

Despite ex-VLR members’ forcefully negative view of relations between the two groups, former elements of La Cause du Peuple’s paper team are condescendingly benign towards their counterparts. For Susong, ‘VLR faisait un peu trop passer la fête et le cannabis avant la révolution!’ Correspondingly GP photographer Christophe Schimmel plays down VLR’s significance:

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14 ‘Tout: une nouvelle attitude politique’, Tout!, no.1, 23 September 1970, p. 3. ‘… on veut la révolution de transition vers le communisme dans un pays impérialiste très développé’. Although unsigned, this article pointed to Castro’s authorship. In fact Cultural Revolution would be the cipher for a very different, immediate and daily life-change at VLR-Tout!
16 R. Castro, interview, 8 March 2008.
18 ‘Commencer à combler le fossé entre gauchistes et La France Sauvage’, Tout!, no., 29 October 1970, p.5.
19 G. Susong, interview, 12 October 2009.

As much as it rejected the 

(prochinois, Tout! demarcated from the Trotskyist design to ‘re-make October’. Criticism of the Ligue Communiste’s Rouge as a paper was indirect. Rather, jibes were levelled at Ligue militants for their ‘noyautage/infiltration’ of CAs or political campaigns, and the commensurate gauchisme légal, a tendency to avoid confrontation with the authorities, often around police interventions on campus. At the same time, Rouge editor Henri Weber situated VLR in a process of Maoist ‘depoliticisation’:

[Les] positions mao-situationnistes, comme celles du groupe VLR, par certains côtés, s’apparente davantage à un mouvement hippie qu’à une organisation politique, et dont le problème essentiel, tel qu’il s’exprime dans Tout, c’est de ‘changer la vie’, à commencer par la leur.

However, he reserves praise for Tout! today:


Historian Benjamon Stora, once a member of the ‘Lambertist’ Trotskyist Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme, also admits to a liking for VLR and its paper Tout! during his time as a Nanterre student in the early 1970s, which he associates with the ‘many hairy vendors of Berber jewels, Indian scarves and oriental perfumes’. Conversely, Stéphane Courtois a leading activist in the CA-Droit, recalls only the ‘violent imbeciles’ of the AJS, who would ‘bash you first then talk after’. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is no reference to the AJS or its paper Jeune Révolutionnaire in Tout! Courtois further recalls that third Trotskyist organisation Lutte
Ouvrière (LO) only appeared on campus in order to siphon students off to be indoctrinated. Relations were such that LO’s eponymous paper regularly advertised VLR, then Tout!, in its open column for the revolutionary press, but this rapport was sullied following Lutte Ouvrière’s vilification of Tout! and the FHAR in May 1971.

Millionaire heiress Sylvina Boissonnas set a precedent in late 1969 in her funding of L’Idiot International, the project of upper-class intellectual Jean-Edern Hallier. Initially, Hallier tried to buy up Action, a move rejected by the writing team, suspicious of his politics and motives. However, several were eventually drawn in, VLR sympathiser Jean-Paul Dollé taking up the editorial reins. Indeed, links with VLR and Tout! would be numerous: Charles Masse recalls attending ‘no.0’ meetings of L’Idiot with others from VLC. The paper was to eschew hardcore ideological debate. Dollé explains the thrust of it:

C’était d’être un Paris Match gauchiste, l’idée qu’avait Hallier, … avec des photos, analyses, comme un magazine […] Il se devait être l’expression du mouvement et porter quelque chose au mouvement […] Et il fallait faire revivre certaines traditions libertaires, faire passer tout ce qui se passait aux Etats-Unis, la contre-culture qui était presque inexistantes en France. Dans les journaux militants y avait pas ça, pour eux c’était le respect de la ligne […] donc ça a eu un certain écho, en plus ça permettait à des gens qui se reconnaissaient dans cet esprit de mai 68 de se sentir représentés.

Nevertheless, there was a Maoist influence from the start, with VLR members and André Glucksmann of the GP providing texts. Considerable tension resulted from the GP’s unsuccessful attempt to infiltrate and take over L’Idiot in the summer of 1970. Bloated Marxist-Leninist fare was discarded in favour of a discreet Maoism, and a turn to the critique of daily life. Furthermore, contributors signed their articles, Dollé explaining:

Avant on ne signait pas. C’était à la fois le parano des flics, on ne voulait pas être repéré, et aussi, pas de subjectivité, c’est un collectif. Et là, mes premiers trucs signés c’est dans l’Idiot […] il

27 S. Courtois, interview, 9 June 2008.
28 ‘Tout! ou rien?’, Latte Ouvrière, no.140, 4-10 May 1971, p. 13. Latte Ouvrière delivered a puritanical message on the subject of the FHAR, criticising the ‘petit bourgeois individualism’ of Tout! for mixing homosexuality with politics.
29 Frédéric Hallier and D. Gombert, L’Idiot International: une anthologie (Paris: Albin Michel 2005) p. 26. The first issue of L’Idiot was printed at close to 100,000 copies. L’Idiot was also sustained by the money of Hallier’s Italian wife Anna, another industrial heiress.
30 J-P. Dollé, interview, 22 December 2008. Hallier had been known to flirt with the far right in the 1960s.
32 G. Susong, interview, 19 January 2010. Susong reports that ‘it came to blows’ with Hallier in the offices of L’Idiot, and that anyway soon most of the writers were to leave for the maos, in particular their new paper J’Accuse.
fallait casser l’idée du collectif ou l’individu n’existe pas, d’être responsable de ce qu’on pensait.  

Fraternal relations meant that *L’Idiot* gave considerable publicity to *Tout!* at its launch, with a manifesto-like text signed: ‘Étudiants et ouvriers des Groupes de Base et VLR’ (fig.5.1). Conversely, *Tout!* flagged up its solidarity for *L’Idiot* when it faced trial, and included Hallier’s paper in its call for a sharing of ‘revolutionary press’ articles and ideas.  

However, most VLR-*Tout!* members continued to keep a wary distance from Hallier. Today he is recalled, variously, as ‘totally mad’, ‘bizarre’, ‘uncontrollable’ and ‘horrible’, his *modus operandi* at *L’Idiot* perceived as arrogant and manipulative.  

It was the disappearance of Siné’s seditious *L’Enragé* that prompted *Hara-Kiri* guru Francois Cavanna to set in motion *Hara-Kiri Hedbo* in February 1969. Although strictly speaking a means of cultural expression, the new paper tacked left, indeed far left, witnessed in the multiple caricatures of corrupt politicians, baton-wielding police and *français moyens* (fig.5.2). But true to its satirical roots, the left was not exempt. Newcomer Pierre Fournier in particular excoriated the internecine warfare of students who might typically have been VLR supporters (fig.5.3). Courtois states that *Charlie Hebdo* was the bestseller at La Commune bookshop, underlining both the diversification of content in the VLR holdings, and the general popularity of Cavanna’s stable. Delfeil de Ton reciprocated with a posthumous tribute to VLR in May 1971, hoping that its dissolution would not spell the end for *Tout!*

*Tout*, c’est le seul canard gauchiste lisible. Pour en revenir à VLR, ils pourront dire qu’ils ont fait du beau travail […] il paraît qu’ils le savaient, et qu’ils étaient contents d’eux, et c’est pour ça qu’ils se seraient dissous, pour éviter de s’installer et de devenir puants.  

Another bedfellow from the late 1970 group of far left press novelties was *Politique Hebdo*, the creation of a group of dissident Communists who had founded the review *Politique Aujourd’hui* in 1968. Chief editor Paul Noirot envisaged an alternative paper open to diverse left tendencies including communists, Marxist socialists, and revolutionary Christians, the intention:

33 ibid.
34 ‘Presse révolutionnaire’, *Tout!* no.5, 10 December 1970, p. 3. The other papers were the libertarian *Le Cri du peuple* and *Vivre*, and countercultural *Actuel* and *Le Pop*.
Entreprendre une critique radicale des pratiques politiques, des genres de vie, des modèles de civilisation, de la vie quotidienne elle-même […]38

Indeed, the team was comprised of a Paris bureau, provincial and international correspondents. There was a professional edge. Tout! artist Philippe Bertrand provided cartoons from mid-'71 and speaks of a proper newspaper set-up.39 Recognising the place of VLR and Tout! in the ‘new press’ firmament, Politique Hebdo devoted a sympathetic double page spread to the ‘more than Maoist, but not pro-Chinese’ organisation, in the form of an interview with Castro and Hardy. Moreover, it shared with Tout! the impulse to convey militant, movement news that the mainstream press ignored.

Connections with an anarchist, libertarian press, could be discerned in Tout!’s appeal for a new revolutionary network, and in the presence of figures like Dada-anarchist Lebel.40 Two new, independent papers emerged in November 1970, of a similar size, but completely different hue to the established anarchist weekly Le Monde Libertaire. The monthly Le Cri du Peuple played on the historical reference to the Commune. Adjacent, forward outlooks led Tout! to talk of sharing material with Le Cri, whose writer Denis Guedj was reciprocally enthusiastic in his assessment of Tout!:

C’était très bien, un journal complètement nouveau, que n’était pas Le Cri du Peuple [...] Tout!, c’était incroyable cette espèce de grande page avec des couleurs mélangées et d’ailleurs très lisible. J’ai gardé des exemplaires. Et puis le contenu, ils étaient en train de se détacher de leur père nourricier alors ça y est, ils commençaient à être bien. [...] la distance que je pouvais avoir avec ce milieu tombait.41

The second title was Vivre, subtitled Sans temps mort, jouir sans entraves, a short-lived pro-situationist brûlot of the Groupes Autonomes Libertaires.42 Situationist ideas, for radical change

38 ‘Déclaration d’intention’, Politique Hebdo, no.1, p. ii.
39 P. Bertrand, interview, 23 September 2008. Initially, Politique Hebdo combined newspaper and feature magazine, covering a wide range of political and cultural themes, open to new movements and artistic innovation. The writing style was open, the articles legible by modern standards, and a strong visual aesthetic could be appreciated. The paper incorporated counter-cultural material, for example Gébé’s utopian L’An 01 comic strip. Emphasising the instability of alternative press experimentation, Politique Hebdo ran into financial difficulties after six months, going out of print while raising the necessary funds through its network of readers and supporters to re-launch in the autumn of 1971 as a single, integrated publication.
40 Lebel also worked with the anarchist Noir et Rouge and Informations Correspondances Ouvrières (ICO) a libertarian network arguing for the autonomy of workers action and self-management.
41 D. Guedj, interview, 26 June 2009. Le Cri refused to be categorised in the libertarian-anarchist fold, its desire being simply to ‘change life’, the writing reflecting a disdain for the langue de bois of the militant milieu.
42 APPP, GaBr20, La presse révolutionnaire, Jan 1971. One translation might be ‘live without dead time, with unbridled joy’.
in all aspects of life and culture, made themselves felt across a range of publications. Among the most telling inclusions in Tout! were ‘Vivre sans temps mort’, ‘vivre c’est pas survivre’ and a headline in the final issue ‘Les enragés de la vie n’ont pas fini de vivre’: changer la vie refashioned in situationist terms. Imitations of the subverted photos and cartoons appeared from no.12, as Tout! turned to an all-out assault on bourgeois moeurs. Headlines acquired more abusive tones characteristic of situationist slogans: ‘Bourgeois, bureaucrates, flics, notre vie c’est votre mort’. By the final issue the paper would list Raoul Vaneigem and Guy Debord in its recommended reading, alongside Mao and Abbie Hoffmann.44

Actors speak of contradictory lines of thought at VLR, exacerbated by militants’ impressions of situationism after 1968. Some of the more experienced at VLR recognized the destabilizing pressure of the situationist breakthrough, bureau politique member Gilles Olive’s notes testifying to his adoption of their conceptual language.45 Jean-Paul Dollé explains that changer la vie meant ‘changing daily life’, the implementation of Henri Lefebvre’s critique, though maintains that one side of VLR stayed ‘Marxist-Leninist’.46 Moreover, the effect was most pronounced among the younger members. Foremost among the pro-situs was Richard Deshayes:

J’ai lu Vaneigem après ‘68, en ‘69, et les cahiers de l’IS qui avaient été republiés. Je me suis dit ‘Putain ils ont tout compris les mecs-là’. Mai ‘68 était ‘situationniste’ […] j’ai commencé à lire la pensée du Président Mao qui était après tout complètement stalinien […] et de l’autre côté j’avais les situationnistes ; alors, j’avais le cul entre deux chaises.47

Tout! thus absorbed situationist language and attitudes into its columns, much as it reworked ideas of cultural revolution from earlier Maoist precepts. Mixed in was the derision and provocation characteristic of Hara-Kiri Hebdo, the anarchic, post-Mai heir of L’Enragé. Movement-oriented papers such as Action and L’Idiot acted as stepping stones to Tout! for leftist writers like Hocquenghem, Castro, and Hardy, while organizational titles such as Rouge and La Cause du Peuple provided ‘vanguard’ models of how not to produce a militant paper.

43 ‘Bourgeois bureaucrates flics notre vie c’est votre mort’, Tout! no.16, p.11.
44 ‘À lire’, Tout! no.16, p. 15. In the early ‘70s, the Champ Libre editions disseminated a number of pro-situationist works, a corollary to their re-publication of Guy Debord’s La Société du Spectacle and Raoul Vaneigem’s Traité de Savoir Vivre, which enjoyed substantially wider readership than in their release year 1967, even though the I.S. would dissolve in 1972.
46 J-P. Dollé, op cit.
Pompidou’s France

Participation was de Gaulle’s buzzword for reform in industry, the regions and most urgently, education. Edgar Faure was the architect of a substantial change in the universities, winning the National Assembly to his reform, dubbed the loi d’orientation. Decision-making was to be devolved from the mandarins to university councils, with election of teacher and student delegates, and the creation of “pluridisciplinary” universities, such as Vincennes. However, the old order would re-assert itself in other, more traditional ways. Crucially, Raymond Marcellin remained in position as Minister of the Interior, maintaining a hard line towards the trublions of May-June. Thus Action, posing as the barometer of radical student, leftist and CA sentiment, viewed the state’s approach as ‘carrot and stick’, designed to stabilise Gaullist order and smother the memory of May’s mass revolt:

La fameuse participation peut encore faire illusion à certains, comme c’est un mot vide, il a pu faire rêver chaque petit bourgeois tout à son aise. Couve, lui ne rêve pas […] le patron continue à diriger et à accumuler ses profits, et le travailleur… travaille. […] les travailleurs et les étudiants ne seront pas calmés par des phrases creuses. Contre eux, le gouvernement sort sa seconde arme: la répression. La nomination de Couve est marquée par un accroissement de l’activité policière, les arrestations se multiplient, elles visent d’abord les groupes étudiants et ouvriers. ⁴⁸

An early cover of Rouge blasted: ‘Participation Non! Contrôle ouvrier Oui!’ in the ex-JCR’s refusal of university and factory co-management, the collaboration of employers and trade unions. ⁴⁹ Participation was no more than the ‘association of capital and labour’- more specifically the collaboration of employers and CGT- whereas the reality for workers was that inflation was eating up wages- the very increases workers had won in May-June. ⁵⁰ For Rouge, the university reform was primarily aimed at co-opting a layer of teachers and students into an illusory administration, while subordinating higher education to the interests of capital. To this new political order, the ex-JCR counterposed the ‘red university’ to the political order, autonomy of the revolutionary movement to the ‘false autonomy’ of the faculties. ⁵¹ In December the paper would rejoice at the regime’s political crisis when splits in the parliamentary majority opened up over la loi Faure.

⁴⁸ ‘La carotte et le bâton’, Action no. 22, 18 July 1968, p. 2. De Gaulle replaced Pompidou with Maurice Couve de Murville as PM shortly after the events, seeing in the former a competitor within the UDR.
⁴⁹ Rouge, no.3, 16 October 1968, p. 2.
La Cause du Peuple interpreted the Gaullist regime’s moves as an exercise in stabilising bourgeois control, and concentrated fire instead on the ‘PCGT’ whom it saw as muzzling the ‘revolutionary masses’. In the parliamentary left PSU Tribune Socialiste, Michel Rocard slammed participation, in its constraint of union action in the workplaces and student representation in the faculties, writing off de Gaulle’s regime as:

[…] un bonapartisme classique? Est-il une étrange conjonction du recours au grand nom et du maintien en vie d’une République impotente?

The following year, an unenthusied French public and divided rightist majority conspired to defeat the president’s project for regional and Senate reform. Having staked his authority on an endorsement, de Gaulle resigned, clearing the path for the return of May’s ‘fixer’ Pompidou, who in turn triumphed in the subsequent presidential elections.

The leftist press reaction to de Gaulle’s defeat was unequivocal: May ended his reign. For Tribune Socialiste, the real crisis was opened up by the May movement:

La véritable crise ayant été ouverte par le mouvement de mai, que le gaullisme n’a su prévoir, ni freiner […] il fallait un autre type de pouvoir pour consolider leur domination ébranlée.

The GP trumpeted in its brûlot: ‘La révolte de Mai a foudroyé ce régime’. However, leftist currents diverged on the question of the presidential elections, when the newly-formed Ligue Communiste announced the candidacy of its leader Alain Krivine, then undergoing military service. As opposed to its mao-spontex relative Vive Le Communisme, whose view that there was value in a far left representative, the resolutely extra-parliamentary La Cause du Peuple dismissed Krivine’s candidacy as: ‘l’opportunisme petit-bourgeois […] rien à voir avec Mai ‘68’. Elsewhere, the Ligue leader was viewed with amusement, Hara-Kiri Hebdo (HKH) playing on his status as a bidasse, understood by Krivine today as ‘ironic sympathy’.

Ultimately, both the left-centrist PSU, and the Trotskyist Ligue stood candidates for the hard left, the seasoned Michel Rocard and Krivine obtaining respectively 3.6% and 1%; not much,

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52 ‘La bataille du boycott actif’, La CdP no.7, 17 May 1969, p. 5. ‘PCGT’ was the conflation of PCF and CGT.
54 Pompidou was the fixer in the sense that he had, in de Gaulle’s absence, presided the Grenelle accords, credited by the establishment for bringing a return to order.
55 M. Rocard. ‘Les enjeux de la succession’, TS no.409 1 May 1969, p. 3.
56 ‘Les masses révoltent les politicards faufilent’, La CdP, no.7 p. 2
57 ibid.
58 A. Krivine, interview, 10 October 2007.
and paltry compared to the 21% of the PCF’s Jacques Duclos, yet together they garnered more than a million votes to match the mainstream Socialist Gaston Defferre.

The *gauchistes* were typically contemptuous of new Prime Minister Chaban’s ‘new society’: *Rouge* denounced the ‘ crumbs and bosses’ favours’, and called for index-linked wages beyond the *salaire minimum* (SMIG). For *Tribune Socialiste*, Chaban’s ‘flights of fancy’ were so much window-dressing for a French capitalism in crisis. *L’Idiot International*, a new radical monthly, scoffed that the ‘blocked society’ was no more than the bourgeois class system, fearful of violent destruction by the masses. Now in the logic of a militant workers’ offensive in the factories, *La Cause du Peuple* simply equated the ‘new society’ to the bosses’ insatiable drive for profit.

1970 witnessed a revival of social agitation in the universities, among *petits commerçants* in the streets, and in particular militant Maoists. Present at virtually all the hotspots was the GP, locked into an imaginary Resistance to a (Gaullist) fascist state and its (Communist) collaborators. Both GP and VLR militants were central to the confrontations on the campuses of Nanterre and Grenoble in March and May, the culmination of student protests against elections, exams, and far right activists. These were notched up as victories in *Vive La Révolution* and *La Cause du Peuple* respectively. *L’Idiot* declared in mock emulation of Che Guevara: ‘1,2,3…Nanterre’. The GP would use its paper to set the scene for daring, Robin Hood raids such as on the Fauchon luxury foodstore, lightning demonstrations leading to riots on 27-28 May and various worker’s acts of sabotage, subsequently delivering triumphal accounts of their actions.

However, Marcellin quickly turned the screw on the organisation and its paper. In April, the *loi anti-casseurs* was introduced; in May the courts used the paper to incriminate, try and imprison successive editors Jean-Pierre Le Dantec and Michel Le Bris. Subsequently, *La Cause du Peuple* was forced into semi-secrecy to guard against police seizures and harassment, maintained openly through the prestigious patronage of philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and a number of leading artists and intellectuals. In June the intellectuals went walkabout on the Paris boulvevards hawking the paper, on one occasion prompting their detention by police and ensuing rapid release. No militant paper had ever enjoyed such widespread notoriety; other,

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60 J. Malterre, ‘Vaches maigres et veau d’or’, *TS*, no.421, 18 September 1969, p. 3.
rival militant papers rallied round, denouncing the government and taking up solidarity sales. Boosted by the media attention, and buoyed by the construction of a new left front against repression, the Secours Rouge, La Cause du Peuple declared in an autumn issue ‘Alain Geismar nous montre le chemin de l’honneur’, due to the arrest and upcoming trial of the GP leader (fig.5.5).

However, the same period saw the press of the far left diversify from the staple gauchiste preoccupations of street protest and factory strikes, towards youth, sexual and countercultural concerns. Between September and November several new, more colourful medium-circulation titles were launched, among them Tout!, Politique Hebdo, Actuel and Le Parapluié. It was militancy allied with provocation; now the leftist papers’ accent shifted to more open, subversive ways of undermining authority, extending into hitherto uncontested fields of French conservative society, such as women’s rights, sexuality, psychiatry, urbanism and the regions.

With the death of de Gaulle in November 1970, the establishment and political class were plunged into mourning; not so the leftist, alternative press, at the zenith of its creativity. ‘La France est veuve’ declared Pompidou, to which Tout! responded gleefully with a cover cartoon: ‘La veuve joyeuse’, and an eerie de Gaulle in May ‘68 chienlit pose over a coffin (fig.5.6); inside, he was likened to a ‘colonial butcher’ for the Sétif and Charonne massacres over which he presided. One ex-VLR member hints at a generational divide among senior members, in that older, Algerian War era members felt less inclined to denigrate his memory. Tribune Socialiste conflated his physical and political deaths: ‘1890-Mai’. The headline, which attempted to analyse the general’s legacy, looked beyond the general’s social conservatism to his complex, symbolic resistance to fascism. The paper struck an almost admiring stance in concluding:

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64 For instance Robi Morder, normally a vendor of Rouge, interview, 10 December 2008.
65 The Secours Rouge, bringing together organisations like the PSU, Ligue, GP, and individual socialists and anarchists, was part-modelled on the wartime association of the same name, indeed was co-founded by Charles Tillon, one-time leader of the FTP. See Bernard Brillant, ‘Intellectuels et extrême gauche: le cas du Secours Rouge’, in IHTP, Les Années 68: Événements, Cultures Politiques et Modes de Vie, Lettre d’Information no.32, July 1998.
66 By medium circulation I mean with a print run of 10 to 50,000.
67 “Ni fleurs, ni couronnes”, Tout! no.4, 16 November 1970, p. 3. In May 1945, the French army and pied noir settlers carried out bombings and killings of thousands of Algerian Muslims in and around the northern Algerian town of Sétif, in retaliation for the killing of 103 pieds noirs by Algerians, following the gendarmes’ suppression of anti-colonial banners on VE day demonstrations. Tout! quotes the Radio Cairo figure of 45,000 Algerian deaths.
68 S. Courtois, interview, 16 October 2008.
C’est parce qu’il fut tout à la fois l’un des hommes de la Résistance et le serviteur du capitalisme français que de Gaulle avec ses ambiguïtés est devenu à sa mort un ennemi respectable. 69

*Rouge* knew no such affection, recalling a litany of dictatorial and repressive measures. Moreover, the Trotskyists delivered a stinging attack on the PCF for its ‘grovelling’ homage, even pointing to Chairman Mao’s praise of de Gaulle, a jab at their Maoist rivals. 70 Also disparaging of the general was *Politique Hebdo*, damning of his historical record, critical of his self-regard. It was to lose the new weekly subscribers. One of the Christian revolutionaries, Paul Blanquart, sees then chief editor Paul Noirot getting ahead of himself: ‘La première formule s’est sabotée elle-même, par un truc trop ambitieux, certains délires de pouvoir de la part de Noirot.’ 71 Blanquart’s retrospective disapproval likens *Politique Hebdo*’s faux-pas to that of *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, which responded to de Gaulle’s death with the iconoclastic headline ‘Bal tragique à Colombey: un mort’, sarcastically contrasting the media’s coverage with that of a dance hall disaster that killed 144 people only weeks earlier. This earned Cavanna’s journal a ban, on Marcellin’s pretext of ‘pornography’, neatly sidestepped by the *Hara-Kiri* team who published its replacement within a week: *Charlie Hebdo*. Claude-Marie Vadrot, then a journalist at *L’Aurore*, was behind the defence campaign:

Ça tombait normalement sous le coup de la loi. On n’a pas le droit quand on est interdit de reparaître sous un autre titre dans la même formule. Et là le pouvoir, face aux réactions de la presse, les journalistes, a reculé, et *Charlie Hebdo* a continué à paraître. 72

Buoyed by this victory, *Charlie Hebdo* would turn increasingly critical of the establishment and the complacent, reactionary average French man, or *beauf*, in the years to come, while maintaining its provocative verve. The mixed taunts of insult and insolence were also part of *Tout!*’s iconoclastic repertoire, as can be witnessed in the paper’s angrily sarcastic response to Pompidou’s keynote address to L’Union Nationale des Associations Familiales on the solidity of the family, in December 1970: ‘Pompidou nous ne serons pas tes familles!’ 73 Indeed, this was the opening salvo in the libidinal war *Tout!* would wage on the ideology of the family that anticipated its championing of women’s and gay liberation.

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69 ‘Ce qui s’est passé à Colombey’, *TS*, no.473, 19 November 1970, p. 7.
71 P. Blanquart, interview, 29 December 2008.
72 C.-M. Vadrot, interview, 26 March 2009.
In 1971 it appeared to some in the leftist press that Pompidou was ‘a quiet president in a quiet country’, underpinned by ‘the silent majority’ of French; but Tribune Socialiste considered that his policies merely hid deep, underlying social contradictions.\textsuperscript{74} Tout! went further in imagining Pompidou’s money-driven, urbanist France swamped by a vengeful social tide (fig.5.7). However, three years after May ‘68, it was Pompidou’s regime that would keep a tight lid on gauchiste agitation.

‘Surveillez la police!’ Repression of the press in the aftermath of May

May ‘68 was understood by the police from the outset as a movement led by an \textit{état-major} of far left groups, who would structure the spontaneous explosions of student and street protest.\textsuperscript{75} A police report cited extensively from student and far left publications during May-June, its opening statement painting revolutionary groups as public enemies seeking the violent seizure of power:

\begin{quote}
Ils ne veulent pas des réformes, mais utiliser les étudiants et ouvriers pour réaliser leurs plans politiques. Rien ne peut nous aider plus dans la compréhension de leurs objectifs et méthodes que la lecture de leurs tracts et journaux.\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

Notable among the passages cited for their call to arms were the Maoist \textit{La Cause du Peuple}: ‘for the formation of popular militias’, and \textit{L’Humanité Nouvelle}: ‘proletarian violence versus police violence’.\textsuperscript{77} Moreover, the reconnaissance zoomed in on Trotskyist dismissals of parliamentarism, and highlighted accusations directed at police, such as \textit{Voix Ouvrière}’s: ‘L’état matraqueur s’attaque aux ouvriers toujours en grève avec des grenades à fusil’.\textsuperscript{78} UNEF and PSU leaflets were also cited to emphasise the advance of revolutionary intentions onto otherwise ‘legalist’ terrain. A separate police examination of the many action and occupation committee leaflets foreshadowed September’s more rigorous analysis of the role of the ongoing CAs: ‘Une réflexion révolutionnaire tournée vers la volonté à l’action subversive’.\textsuperscript{79} It was this rationale of the threat posed by the far left that led to the state’s ban of its organisations on 11 June, followed

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\textsuperscript{74} ‘La France tranquille de Pompidou’, Tribune Socialiste, no.482, 28 January 1971, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{76} APPP, GaBr9, Objectifs et Méthodes des Mouvements Révolutionnaires d’après leurs Tracts et Journaux, p.1 (undated, but 1968).
\textsuperscript{77} ibid, \textit{CdP} p.1, \textit{HN} p. 4.
\textsuperscript{78} ibid, p.15.
\end{flushright}
by the jailing a number of its leaders, including the JCR’s Alain Krivine. The CAs’ relative independence of the groupuscules took them out of the legal ban but they were viewed, correctly, as islands of opposition to the state. Some groups, such as the Marxist-Leninist PCMLF, resolved to go underground in response to the government crackdown. Most of the far left regrouped and rebranded their organisations and papers, laying low during the summer before a hoped-for action reprise at the rentrée.

In the summer Nouvel Observateur, Combat, Action, Les Temps Modernes, and Les Cahiers de Mai tentatively called for a united front against repression. The post-May clampdown extended into the factories, with many employers reluctant to implement the Grenelle accords, viewing the return to work as an opportunity to sack union militants. From the end of the events the militant press also suffered police and judicial harassment, despite nominal press freedom. In line with Interior Minister Raymond Marcellin’s theory of an international conspiracy to subvert the French state, the Third Worldist review Tricontinentale, published by Francois Maspero, was rendered inoperative by government decree later that year. Action became the object of police attention for the rest of 1968, its sellers harried on numerous occasions, and its papers seized on the pretext of aiding in the reconstitution of the banned JCR (fig. 5.8). At one point the paper’s offices were broken into and ransacked, while the police, normally keeping watch on the local, did not intervene. L’Enragé too, was forced to change printers five times due to police and judicial harassment. Dependent for survival on its sales alone, Action forged on unbowed, appearing to escape the attentions of the police in 1969.

Paper sellers were regularly the object of police swoops, arrests and indeed attacks. Marcellin would occasionally cite an archaic law of 1881, which forbade the hawking of papers or leaflets on the public highway. While Paris police chief Maurice Grimaud distanced himself from Marcellin’s talk of a conspiracy, he appeared to back the clampdown on sellers. One PSU communiqué states that in December 1969 in at least two Paris arrondissements there were

86 ibid. p. 138.
‘veritable police round-ups... arresting all the far left paper sellers and brutalising them’.\(^87\) Interpellations of paper and leaflet hawkers in Paris more than doubled from 400 in 1969 to 890 in 1970, the highpoint of State intervention against the press.\(^88\) A succession of Maoist coups including sabotage and fire-bombings, meant that *La Cause du Peuple*, with its hyperbole on fascism and the new resistance, its validation of militant, working-class violence, and occasional military-style communiqués, was specially targeted by the authorities. While the paper was never officially banned, Marcellin did not hesitate to prevent its diffusion, by all means necessary. Successive directors were jailed in March-April 1970 and the government dissolved the GP in April. Entire print runs of the paper were seized, and sellers were arrested arbitrarily in a crackdown that intensified as the year wore on.\(^89\)

The dramatic intervention of Jean-Paul Sartre to take the director’s role provided a buffer of sorts for the ex-GP. Writer Gilles Susong views the appeal to the philosopher as a positive turning point in the development of the Maoist movement, not only in the protection he afforded the paper but in the ‘fellow travellers’ eventual role in dissuading the ex-GP from terrorism.\(^90\) His sponsorship extended that autumn to *Tout!* and yet another Maoist sheet, *La Parole au Peuple.* By the same token his partner Simone de Beauvoir took up the directorship of *L’Idiot International* in the summer. The famous couple joined with other intellectuals including writer Michel Leiris and filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard in forming ‘Les Amis de *La Cause du Peuple*’. However, grassroots militants endured considerable difficulties. Jean-Marc Salmon was responsible for the ‘clandestine’ distribution of his paper:

> Le journal devient illégal, donc il faut distribuer clandestinement le journal, monter des réseaux clandestins. Sî on signe les tracts ‘Gauche Proletarienne’ il faut les imprimer, et des lieux pour les cacher, tout devient illégal. Il faut un système étanche […] cacher *la Cause du Peuple*, la sortir juste au moment où ça se vend sur les marchés […]\(^91\)

Intellectuals and the far left came together in June 1970, to found a united front against repression, the Secours Rouge (SR). Its organising committee was eclectic, composed of leftists, including VLR members, professionals, writers and trade-unionists who were variously ex-Communists, had been in the Resistance, or protested the Algerian war. However, the message

\(^{87}\) ibid.
\(^{88}\) ibid. p. 140
\(^{89}\) ibid. See also S. de Beauvoir, *Tout Compte Fait*, op cit. p. 480.
\(^{90}\) G. Susong, interview, 12 October 2009.
\(^{91}\) J-M. Salmon, interview, 27 July 2009. Formally, the paper was not illegal.
from today’s ex-GP interviewees is that the SR was a ‘screen’ for the GP. Christophe Schimmel used to sit in on the Maoist leadership meetings, and is insistent on their tutelage of the united front:

C’était notre but ; à cause de la répression sur les militants de la GP, on a ouvert le SR qui était associatif, pas un parti politique, c’était des structures de soutien. Donc on a maîtrisé d’un bout à l’autre cette structure mais notre but était effectivement d’ouvrir à tous.

When the authorities did not openly intervene to stymie the militant press, they could rely on a network of undercover informants, whether infiltrators or members of the Renseignements Généraux (RG) - police intelligence - to monitor the activities of the revolutionaries. Documents in the Paris Police Prefecture itemize the various papers’ print runs, addresses and principal associates, suggesting the presence of police agent(s) throughout the radical press industry. Assessments of a paper’s popularity, or potential threat, could be made by approximating sales figures garnered from this evidence. However, more often than not, the charges brought against directors and vendors were for insult, or slander towards the police, requiring nothing more for the authorities than to read these papers. With reference to Marcellin’s campaign against the gauchistes, Roland Castro jokes today that: ‘On a jamais eu un flic dans la direction, on a jamais été infiltré’. But the prefecture’s possession of a list of subscribers to Tout! suggests an undercover presence in the milieu. Furthermore, police synopses of Trotskyist and Maoist histories complete with the splits and subdivisions of each group and tendency show a sophisticated police understanding of the far left.

Other than the incarceration of several militants accused of involvement in the Meulan coup, Castro’s organisation did not come under the cosh like the GP. This was despite VLR’s involvement in a range of ‘violent’ actions, including the CNPF, Meulan, Nanterre, and the riots of 26-27 May. However, Vive La Révolution director Jean-Pierre Lecardonnel was pursued in the courts for just under a year, eventually fined 500 francs for the paper’s ‘insults to the police’ (in fact the paper’s reproduction of insults hurled by a crowd on the 27 May), the subject of a campaign poster adorned with a Reiser caricature (fig.5.9).

By spring 1970, VLR confidently extolled the virtues of illegalism and a summer pamphlet intimating at armed insurrection; in

92 G. Susong, op cit.
96 Le Monde, 5 May 1971, p. 42.
fact the holiday months saw militant impulses shift from street fighting to press production. The acquisition of a small weapons arsenal, confirming the brochure’s militaristic posture, appears to have made little difference to the group’s repertoire of actions over the months till its dissolution.

*Tout!* carried over its predecessor’s denunciations of the police and government but readings of the new paper show these defensive reactions to repression superseded by the celebration of youth and workers’ resistance and *gauchiste* provocations of authority. Now, the accent was on the unbridled daily act of subversion rather than militaristic coups more typical of the GP. The paper was employed as a tribune with which to turn the tables on the police and judiciary. This much was evident from the *Spartacus* supplement on the Meulan trial, even more so in March with the issue on Richard Deshayes and the Brigades Spéciales. Born of the horror and anger at Deshayes’ terrible injury, *Tout!* exhorted its readers to ‘watch the police’, and mounted a fleeting campaign against the Brigades which would involve a probe of the police training sessions.\(^97\) No.12 provoked the arrival of the Brigade des Moeurs at La Commune bookshop to impound copies of the contentious issue, backed up by the *gardes mobiles*.\(^98\) But this proved to be inconsequential; following the charge of *outrage* made against director Sartre, the case was dropped by the Constitutional Court. Dominique Labbé brushes off suggestions of repression:

> A part le numéro 12, nous n’avons pas eu d’ennui sérieux. Nous avions une boîte postale. Une ou deux fois, des policiers nous attendaient mais cela n’avait aucune importance. Toutefois, je suis sûr que le contenu de la boîte était visité et qu’il y avait un ou plusieurs indics en permanence sur nous. Cela nous faisait rire.\(^99\)

Nonetheless, Marcellin’s November 1970 ban on *Hara-Kiri* for its satire on de Gaulle’s death prompted a campaign of press solidarity, backed by *Tout!* and a whole range of mainstream and underground media. Left-wing journalist Claude-Marie Vadrot initiated the Comité de la Défense de la Presse et des Journalistes, which led to the creation in summer 1971 of the non-mainstream Agence de Presse Libération (APL), in turn the forerunner of flagship leftist daily *Libération*. The birth of APL was linked to another bout of police violence, the working-over of a journalist, Alain Jaubert, after he attempted to intervene to help an injured demonstrator on a Paris sidewalk. Hundreds of journalists of both mainstream and militant press struck in protest, marching to demand an explanation at the Ministry of Information, where they packed into a hall

\(^{97}\) ‘Surveillez la police’, *Tout!* no.10, 12 March 1971, p. 7.
\(^{98}\) S. Courtois, interview, 7 June 2008. Courtois feels that the seizure of papers might have provoked a violent reaction at the shop, which also served as a meeting place for VLR members and friends.
to hear Minister Léo Hamon speak at a table before which protestors had mounted a placard inscribed with the words ‘Liberté de la presse’ and signed by, amongst others, Claude Angeli (of *Politique Hebdo*), Hallier (of *L’Idiot*), and Tout! (fig. 5.10). Subsequently, writer and broadcaster Maurice Clavel, Sartre and a dedicated team that included Vadrot and the ex-GP’s Jean-Claude Vernier, set to work on the new ‘counter-informational’ press agency:

> On a exercé avec ça une pression pour libérer l’information. On l’a rendu plus vaste, et ça on l’a vraiment réussi. On sortait du champ de *Charlie Hebdo* […] on portait des informations différentes qui sortaient dans des médias qui avaient tendance à oublier l’information différente.\(^{101}\)

Chistophe Schimmel, a photographer for both *La Cause du Peuple* and APL, explains that the routine of the agency was to dispatch daily written bulletins and once a week a set of photographs.\(^{102}\) The agency came to the fore in December 1971 when Clavel stormed off the live ORTF television set exclaiming ‘Messieurs les censeurs, bonsoir!’, after a crucial excerpt from his introductory film had been removed.\(^{103}\) And it was the APL’s Vernier who circulated the photos, taken by the ex-GP’s Christophe Schimmel, of the shooting of Maoist Pierre Overney by a security guard at Renault Billancourt in February 1972, causing a national sensation that would fuel the giant solidarity demonstration at his funeral a week later.

Thus we can see how the alternative press, in particular its militant wing, was circumscribed by the harsh attentions of police, judicial and governmental authorities, in the years following May ‘68. Recognising their ineffectiveness, bans and seizures fell away after 1971, the State and courts instead exacting retribution for subversive or defamatory comments by fining newspaper directors and journalists. *L’Idiot*, for example, would eventually succumb to fine-induced hardship following de Beauvoir’s resignation as director in April 1971.\(^{104}\) Another occasional victim of prohibitive charges was *Klapperstei 68*, a successful Alsatian underground monthly prosecuted for attacks on the army and police.\(^{105}\) In March 1973, 217 Directors of Publication united to produce the one-off *L’Insaisissable*, which combined condemnation of repression and censorship with a call for alternative information, in effect a free press. A final measure of the

\(^{100}\) ‘Surveillez la police’, *Tout!* no.14, 7 June 1971, p. 4.

\(^{101}\) C.-M. Vadrot, interview, 26 March 2009.

\(^{102}\) C. Schimmel, op cit.


State’s paranoia over the ‘threat’ posed by the non-establishment, satirical press came in 1974 when agents of the Directorate of Territorial Security were caught attempting to install a bug in the offices of *Le Canard Enchaîné* - a scandal that forced Marcellin to step down as Interior Minister.106

**Parti Communiste Français: ‘L’ennemi officiel’**107

Like the rest of the far left, VLR expressed a profound hostility towards the PCF. In the year or two following May, the nature of this antipathy derived from their memory and interpretation of the Communists’ role during the events: Georges Marchais’ pernicious attack on Daniel Cohn-Bendit in *L’Humanité*,108 the Grenelle accords that ‘stitched up’ the workers movement, and the CGT’s determined push for a return to work in their own electoral interests. The PCF-CGT had betrayed the working-class, abandoned the class struggle itself, as Dominique Labbé explains in his explanation of VLR’s character in 1969:

Étant donné l’attitude du PC et de la CGT en mai 68, cette révolte (supposée) parlait à beaucoup de gens. Se dire ‘maoïste’, c’était dénoncer la trahison du PC et de la CGT et proclamer la nécessité de libérer le mouvement révolutionnaire des ‘illusions’ entretenues par le PC. 109

General Secretary Waldeck Rochet set the tone for the Party’s relationship with the far left in the post-May period with *Les enseignements de mai-juin 1968*.110 This virulently anti-gauchiste pamphlet exacerbated the decades-old Leninist critique of ultra-leftism, arguing that the Maoists, Trotskyists and anarchists were ‘blindly violent’, tantamount to *agents provocateurs*, objective allies of government. Oblivious to the participatory role of the far left in the student movement and the government’s ban of these organizations in June, Rochet continued:

Ces groupes soi-disant révolutionnaires –bien souvent manipulés par les hommes du pouvoir – ont ainsi rendu service immense au pouvoir gaulliste en donnant quelque crédit au chantage à la guerre civile de la propagande gaulliste.111

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106 For the full story see *Le Nouvel Observateur* online: [www.nouvelobs.com](http://www.nouvelobs.com), [http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/actualite/culture/20031219.OBS1544/la-chute-de-marcellin.html](http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/actualite/culture/20031219.OBS1544/la-chute-de-marcellin.html) (viewed 2 February 2010)
108 Marchais called Cohn-Bendit a ‘German anarchist’, in an issue of the paper in early May 1968. The jibe was widely interpreted as anti-Semitic, given Cohn-Bendit’s ethnicity. It could certainly be understood as chauvinist.
111 ibid. p. 47.
The tract ended with a call to ‘struggle against gauchisme’, revealing a fear that Communist hegemony on the left had been breached.

The antipathy was reciprocal. Indeed, Anne Dollé recalls that: ‘On était anti-PC à fond, et on était presque plus anti-PC que anti-droite.’ This is echoed by Castro who states:

Il y avait beaucoup de tentatives d’implantation dans la classe ouvrière; une tentative grotesque une fois très, très drôle. On a été au Joint Français, préparer une énorme manif, on avait un établi dans l’usine… et on a attaqué les Communistes, les révisionnistes. On avait oublié le capitalisme. On s’est fait ramasser par les ouvriers. Génial.

Jacques Barda explains that it was usually the other way round at the factory gates, with VLR members not the only gauchistes facing beatings or being chased by the CGT. Some felt, nonetheless, that the balance of forces since May had tipped in their favour. Lecardonnel, nominal director of Vive La Révolution, had been at the UJ before 1968:

Après mai 68 c’était devenu plus calme ; notamment pour une raison, ces militants communistes arrivaient dans des endroits où ils étaient minoritaires, soit eux-mêmes pris à parti. Donc ça a changé à partir de ce moment-là. […] mai 68 ça n’a pas été formidable pour le PC, pour son influence ; après on devait se sentir plus forts et eux plus faibles, j’imagine.

At the university of Nanterre, the wellspring of May ‘68’s activism, Communist students in the faculty, in a minority on the Left, were viewed with contempt by the rest. Moreover they lived with the reputation of the PCF having sold out in 1968:

Sûrement ils avaient à défendre les positions du PC tout le temps, et ils étaient attaqués tout le temps ; ils étaient pas convoqués dans les AGs, ils osaient pas parler dans les AGs parce qu’ils étaient vraiment rejetés.

In November 1970, following the ‘apogee’ of Maoism, L’Humanité struck an alternate chord in its assessment of the gauchistes. Added to the charge of police manipulation, they were now depicted as bourgeois decadents, recruiting from the criminal underclasses: ‘À nous les declassés et les asociaux, proclament ceux qui s’intitulent si bruyamment des “révolutionnaires”’.  

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112 A. Dollé, interview, 8 February 2008. Réviso shorthand for révisionnisme, the Maoist critique of the USSR and PCF’s repudiation of Stalin and policy of peaceful coexistence with the West.
114 J. Barda, interview, 4 February 2008.
116 J. Barda, op cit.
117 ‘Quelques aspects singuliers du gauchisme’ L’Humanité, 17 November 1970, p. 2
Painting *gauchisme* as anti-working class, petit bourgeois extremism, *L'Humanité* echoed the ages-old Stalinist accusation of the far left opposition as degenerate and *fascisant*.

It was in this continued context of PCF-*gauchiste* conflict that *Tout!* took on the Communist apparatus. But while slamming the collaboration of the CGT in the workplaces, it moved on from the standard Maoist charges of treachery and ‘revisionism’, focusing instead on the Communists’ conservatism as a mirror of bourgeois morality. The PCF, allied to Chaban, were akin to ‘teachers’ ‘journalists’ and ‘priests’ lording it over the masses;118 *Tout!* jeered at the Party’s shallow concern for women in its attendance of the *Etats Généraux d'Elle*.119 Moreover, these taunts were directed at other *gauchistes*, particularly the Ligue and PCMLF, in their legalist, responsible attitudes that were seen to ape rather than combat the PCF. The ‘Dr. Muldworf’ rubric further underlined *Tout!’*s sharpening, satirical approach to the question of mores. With Muldworf’s ‘Plus je baise, plus je suis malheureux’, the paper cleverly inverted May’s ‘Plus je fais l'amour plus j'ai envie de faire la révolution’, explaining the Party’s reactionary side in its advocacy of sexual restraint.120 In a parody of the hysteria surrounding drugs, the paper joked that the traditional café beverage Ricard contributed to ‘bailing out the PCF’.121 Readers’ letters were printed to show ordinary dislike of Communist- and *gauchiste*-conservatism: a gay slamming the bureaucratic ‘terrorism’ of the Leninists, an immigrant dismissing the Party as alien to anti-racist action.

But the critique emanating from rue Buffon was merely the prelude to outright provocation of the PCF. Early signs of *Tout!’*s deconstruction of PCF morality were clear in the paper’s front page admonition of Pompidou, for his keynote speech on the family as bedrock of society.122 *L’Humanité*’s take on the speech, that ‘families need good food not nice words’ was used in *Tout!* to depict the Party as even more traditional than Pompidou:

> Ils sont sans doute même plus sincères. Pompidou, l’homme des boîtes de nuit et des partouzes, se pose en défenseur de la famille.123

*Tout!* reinforced its point with a caricature of Marchais intoning: ‘Travail Famille Parti’ in a *détournement* of the Petainist wartime triad *Travail, Famille, Patrie*. With the sensational issue

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118 ‘Une nouvelle attitude politique’. *Tout!* no.1, 23 September 1970, p. 3.
119 ‘Combler le fossé entre les gauchistes et la France Sauvage’, *Tout!* no.3.
120 ‘Docteur Muldworf: plus je baise, plus je suis malheureux’ *Tout!* no.2, p. 3.
121 ‘Stupéfiant!’ *Tout!* no.8 1 February 1971, p. 3.
122 ‘Pompidou nous ne serons pas tes familles!’, *Tout!* no.5 10 December 1970, p. 1.
123 ibid.
twin on homosexuality and the celebration of ‘deviant’ mores, Tout! reprised the wartime
metaphors, again driving its provocation to the outer borders of gauchisme. CGT complaints at
subway graffiti were seen as ‘Plus pétainiste than Pétain’, and PC luminaries Séguy and
Muldorf conflated with Chaban in a new union sacrée that stretched from Pompidou through
Servan-Schreiber to Duclos.124 Over a Dadaist sexual collage demanding ‘Qui encule qui?’, the
paper further rationalised:

Mais la reproduction de ces idéologies sous des formes plus subtiles à l’intérieur du gauchisme –
notamment à l’égard de la déviance, de l’anormal, de la délinquance, de la folie, ou de le
perversion – pose de terrible problèmes. 125

Riding on the furore over no.12, the paper’s next issue delivered a stinging rebuke to the PCF,
press and indeed far left, over the ‘desecration’ of the tombs of Communist icons Maurice
Thorez and Marcel Cachin on Mayday.126 Tout! was initially eager to restate the red-painted
slogans on the Mur des Fédérés at the Père Lachaise cemetery in its disgust for official left
‘exploitation of the Commune dead’:

VIVE LES OS DU MANS
VIVE LES ÉMEUTIERS POLONAIS
VIVE LA COMMUNE
TROP DE MASSACREURS FLEURISSENT CE MUR 127

Furthermore, the tomb desecrators not only scrawled ‘traître, putain, collabo’ on the tombs,
‘they SHAT’ on the tomb of Maurice Thorez. Jacques Barda describes it as ‘a type of anarchist
provocation against the bureaucrats of the PC’.128 Jean-Jacques Lebel, close to the writers of the
piece, gives a familiar spin: ‘A Dadaist action in the middle of a Marxist scenario’:

It was a symbolic act of extreme importance. To get rid of Stalinism in people’s minds as a
counter-revolutionary force, to get rid of the PCF... it worked, they’re non-existent today. You
had to attack the most reactionary contents of the PCF. This guy went to the Kommandatur to get
L’Humanité printed during the occupation. So that was a really important act, to say ‘we refuse
this, its not communism’ […] the rest of the left said it was disgusting […] that’s actually what
happened.129

124 ‘Plus Pétainiste que Pétain’ Tout! no.12, 23 April 1971, p. 2. L’union sacrée represented the Left’s
agreement with the government at the outbreak of the First World War not to oppose nor disrupt the
country’s war effort. It nullified the Socialist’s prior anti-war stance.
125 ‘Qui encule qui?’, op cit. p. 9.
127 ibid.
129 J-J. Lebel, interview, 22 May 2008. Indeed, the Trotskyist papers condemned it as a stupid stunt.
A litany of the Communist figureheads’ political sins followed, underlining the paper’s hatred of the PCF’s historical legacy, a pretend conversation between the dead men in the ‘Père Lachaise cell’. Tout! twisted the knife with a caricature depicting Marchais in a fascist salute, turning the tables on the Party with its own fascisant allusion. It was a détournement of Marchais’ recent radio commentary that the PCF was ‘no longer the party of the clenched fist, but of the outstretched hand’ (fig.5.11). Blaming gauchistes in general for the tombstone blemishes, the Party responded to the scatological stunt with a protest demonstration at the cemetery, said to number 10,000, and conducted in a ‘dignified and orderly manner’- the subject of yet more Tout! mockery. Lebel further excoriated the Communists in his symbolic exposé of Mothers Day, pinning to his Petainist medallion a Muldorff quote attributing the theme of sexual liberty to the bourgeoisie’s ‘ideological arsenal’, and a PCF electoral tract reading:

Les mères feront largement confiance au candidat du parti communiste français en qui elles reconnaissent le meilleur défenseur de la famille […] Avec tous les travailleurs, tous les démocrates, les mamans voteront Jacques Duclos.

At the time the PCF was engaged in preliminary discussions with the newly re-formed Parti Socialiste (PS), soon to be led by François Mitterrand, in a project to propel a new ‘Union de la Gauche’ to government. Thus the Communist ‘hand’ was understood by the far left to be ‘stretched out’ towards the right, in behind-the-scenes negotiations. Accordingly, there was barely a mention of the PS in the pages of Tout!, none at all of Mitterand. This was the domain of the parliamentary left. ‘On était en dehors de tout ça’, states Barda today. Labbé, then a politics student, reiterates the point:

Le PS c’était des politiciens, des corrompus et les parachutistes dans Alger. Ces gens nous faisaient vomir. Nous n’avions pas tort non plus. Quant à la politique parlementaire, à Science Po, on étudiait tout cela avec beaucoup de distance. À VLR, nous n’y croyions pas. Nous pensions que les ‘masses’ ne se laisseraient pas duper.

Ex-VLR look back in different ways at the 1970s political remue-ménage that saw Mitterrand and his PS supplant the PCF in the Left pecking order, finally taking presidential office a decade after their dissolution. Yet only a year after VLR’s disbandment, the programme commun was

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131 ‘La main tendue vers la droite… et le poing sur la gauche’, Lutte Ouvrière no.141 11-17 May 1971, p. 7.
132 Tout! op cit. See also Lutte Ouvrière, op cit. for photo of the PCF demo.
135 D. Labbé, email 16 February 2008.
signed by PCF, PS and Radicaux de Gauche, and Mitterrand had appropriated the Rimbaud-VLR epithet *changer la vie.*\textsuperscript{136} For Richard Deshayes, it was a political chameleon at work:

> Le génie de Mitterrand, il a surfi la vague, justement de VLR; c’est pas un hasard s’ils ont pris ‘changer la vie’ […] ils ont compris sociologiquement qu’il y avait une redistribution complète des rôles, le féminisme et la place des jeunes dans la société. Ils allaient profiter de ça pour revenir au pouvoir. Alors que la social-démocratie en France était une vieille pute!\textsuperscript{137}

In a similar vein of disgust, Gilles Dinnematin saw the rise of the PS as the burial of May’s mass democratic legacy:

> C’est le cheval de bataille de la gauche contre ce qu’ils appellent les gauchistes. Le programme commun. […] D’ailleurs l’arrivée de Mitterrand et les 14 ans au pouvoir m’a donné raison. Ça a éteint l’incendie.\textsuperscript{138}

Others, now uprooted from the leftist political world, were more resigned, seeing no alternative but to back the forward advance of Mitterrand to oust the Right. Michel Wlassikoff explains that he was totally disenchanted’, but voted for him in the second round of presidential elections in 1974.\textsuperscript{139} Anarchist cartoonist Siné returned to a scatological theme (fig.5.12):

> J’avais fait un dessin dans *Charlie Hebdo* en ‘74, ‘Votez Mitterrand- on n’a pas le choix’ ; une main qui sortait des chiottes avec ‘votez Mitterrand’. Mais je voulais montrer que c’était de la merde. En ’81 j’ai revoté Mitterrand, malgré le fait que j’étais bien contre.\textsuperscript{140}

**The workers movement**

For the revolutionary left the May events marked a defining moment in French history; a mass movement of workers’ strikes and occupations detonated by a student revolt that at one point threatened to overthrow the established order, only for this movement to be reined in, betrayed even by the PCF/CGT. Post-May, the *groupuscules* re-focused on the workplaces, guided by their assorted Marxist readings of May’s general strike. Accordingly, their press dedicated increased space to the multitude of strikes, stoppages and acts of subversion in the factories that followed 1968, combining analysis with the *mots d’ordre* of intervention they hoped could re-orient the struggle in revolutionary directions.


\textsuperscript{137} R. Deshayes, interview, 21 April 2008.

\textsuperscript{138} G. Dinnematin, 22 May 2008.

\textsuperscript{139} M. Wlassikoff, interview, 2 June 2008.

\textsuperscript{140} Siné, interview, 24 January 2008.
As with its predecessor, *Tout!* viewed workers’ autonomy as the way forward, an early editorial blazing the Marxist maxim: ‘L’émancipation des travailleurs sera l’œuvre des travailleurs eux-mêmes.’ Its view of the unions - particularly the CGT - rested on a VLR-inspired schema wherein they were depicted as the objective allies of the employers, integrated into a complex, technologically advanced French capitalism. Each dispute obeyed a triangular motif, in which workers contended not only with the management and its foremen, but also the trade unions and their traditional left allies. VLR-*Tout!* set out to privilege independence of workers’ action, to rely on their own instincts and methods and extend decision-making across the shopfloor. For instance, on ‘the lessons’ of the Grenoble Caterpillar occupation of autumn 1970:

Les Assemblées générales des ouvriers, les syndicats n’aiment pas ça. L’initiative n’est plus contrôlée et programmée à l’avance ; ‘ceux qui ne savent pas’, la masse, peut prendre de court des délégués, les spécialistes de lutte des classes. On ne veut plus être représentatif de quelqu’un, on préfère que ce quelqu’un se présente lui-même. C’est ce que nous ferons à Caterpillar.

The arguments cut with layers of workers, particularly the young and semi-skilled, traditionally less well-organised and less likely to be swayed by the moderation of union leaders. Furthermore, the aftermath of May 1968 was marked by a persistence of workers action, and a more diverse, subversive repertoire that included bottleneck strikes, destruction of property and even sabotage. ‘Alors qu’est-ce qu’on fait si les ouvriers cassent aussi?’ was the headline of a February 1971 issue of *Tout!* The cover photo displayed the admin offices of Nantes-Batignolles ransacked by workers in a rebellion over low, piecework wages in January. Within a week, hundreds of Batignolles metalworkers were locked out and on indefinite strike. Simultaneously, the paper commented on the recent spate of industrial *séquestrations* crowned by the occupation at Férodo, Condé-sur-Noireau in January. In this ironic reference to the *loi anti-casseurs*, which was being used to punish leftists, *Tout!* both celebrated the offensive violence of the working class and challenged public opinion to consider such actions legitimate.

However, almost uniquely among the far left papers, *Tout!* was caught between classic workerist leanings and sentiments of indolence or deviance. Indeed, an early issue trumpeted ‘Travailler pour les autres, moi, ça me tue…’; Wolinski’s anti-capitalist caricature was simultaneously used

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141 ‘Une nouvelle attitude politique’, *Tout!* no.1, 23 September 1970, p. 3.
142 ‘Caterpillar’, *Tout!* no.2, 8 Sept 70, p. 5
144 There is no easy translation for *séquestration*, ‘confinement’ and ‘kidnapping’ fail to convey the peculiarity of this French working-class practice.
as the cover for VLR’s re-publication of Paul Lafargue’s nineteenth century text *Le Droit à la Paresse* (fig.5.13). Moreover, as the new movements gained ground over 1970-71, so the paper started to privilege expressions of identity within the workers movement, women in the Troyes *bonnerie* strike, immigrants as Renault O.S., the young and even the ‘lumpenproletariat’ all gaining favourable attention. While maintaining the concept of workers unity – *à la base* – the concept of autonomy was transposed to these distinct groups, leading to a more fragmented view of the movement.

Refusing to glorify workers, the paper did not shirk from exposing instances of proletarian prejudice. A visit to the Férodo occupation by Caen VLR students showed up fracture lines between traditional worker militants and the *gauchistes*. An older CGT representative denounced *Tout!* as ‘Sartre’s rag, provocateurs’, prompting the militant reporter to remark: ‘La France sauvage c’est très chouette... mais ça n’est pas la France révolutionnaire!’, a more sobre assessment of the worker’s movement than their Maoist cousins at *La Cause du Peuple*.

During the OS occupation at Renault Billancourt in May 1971, union representatives who argued that women should remain at home during the nightshifts were given short shrift in the paper.

By May, *Tout!’s* political and cultural contradictions had matured. Its *Renault-sauvage* supplement celebrated the Renault OS strikes, mixing Maoist propaganda with rundowns of the differentials system and a dash of feminism. The lead text poetically related the ‘cultural revolution’ growing at Flins through the partial, minority struggles of young, immigrant and women workers- and even combative trade unionists:

Une force qui veut tout est née au printemps 71, cent ans après la Commune de Paris. Dans les usines, entrer, occuper, sortir, dedans, se battre, dehors se battre, tout remettre en cause, se remettre en cause soi-même.

However, the Flins-BO propaganda was thrown off-kilter by the text of a group from Renault-Cléon rejecting the unions once again, bemoaning the difficulties of far left struggle in a proclamation of individual *gauchiste* desires: ‘C’est seulement vivre la révolution et vivre et pas

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146 By lumpen is meant unemployed, underemployed, marginal to the workers’ movement.
147 ‘Condé sur Noireau, l’encadrement des cadres!’*, *Tout!* no.6-7, 10 January 1971, p. 8.
148 ‘Ces putains de femmes veulent lutter’, *Tout!* no.13, 17 May 1971, p. 5. OS were the *ouvriers spécialisés*, actually semi-skilled workers.
149 *Renault-Sauvage*, supplement to *Tout!* no. 13, 17 May 1971, p. 1
‘Ce que disent, ce que font, les sauvages de Cléon…’, Tout ! no.13, p. 8.
151 S. Gatti, interview, 10 December 2008.
152 ‘SNCF’, Tout! no.15, 30 June 1971, pp. 4-5.
154 The BO was built over a period of 4-5 years from 1969.
[VLR] a dissout mais je pense que c’était déjà dissout [...] parce que c’était dissout à partir du moment que Richard Deshayes s’est pris une grenade… je crois que la GP a cessé d’exister à partir du meurtre d’Overney. A partir du moment où il y a confrontation à la mort, ou à la violence, à l’hyper-violence, quand on voit un copain qui a la gueule éclaté, ou qui meurt, c’est fini. Si on n’est pas prêt à répliquer dans la violence, et à tuer l’autre, c’est fini. C’était déjà fini à ce moment-là.156

Elsewhere, Trotskyists maintained a perennial, more low-key presence, working with and against the union hierarchy according to the perceived balance of forces.

The base ouvrière survived the dissolution of VLR and Tout! by several years. Deprived of a back-up organisation and broadsheet it nonetheless continued with its regular leafleting at Flins-‘travail de porte’- intervening where it could in a succession of disputes.157 In a retrospective commentary, Grumbach underlines the difficulties such a small basiste group could encounter even when it managed to connect with a substantial audience of workers:

[Le travail de porte] marchait si bien qu’un jour on a eu l’idée de faire un appel à la grève, sans la CGT, sans la CFDT. Et, contre toute attente, 1,500 personnes sont sorties des chaînes. L’usine a été bloquée. Lors de ce débrayage, les ouvriers sont sortis et nous ont vus. On était là tous les jours, ils nous connaissaient. On vivait avec eux. On connaissait les jeunes militants par leur nom. […] à la sortie de l’usine les grévistes nous ont interpellé: qu’est-ce qu’on fait maintenant? Nous qui n’arrêtions pas de dénoncer l’inefficacité de la bureaucratie syndicale, nous n’avons pas eu de réponse […] on était passé du ‘Nous sommes tous des délégués’ à ‘Vous êtes nos responsables désormais’. Ils disaient la BO c’est le troisième syndicat. Finalement c’est le responsable CFDT, un vieux militant chrétien Paul Rousselin, qui nous a sauvé la mise. C’est lui qui a dit: ‘On fait un cahier de revendications et on va le poser à la direction’ […] à partir de là, on s’est retrouvés inconséquents. On a continué pendant un temps à faire des tracts mais ce n’étaient plus les mêmes […] on cherchait à parler de la vie quotidienne. Mais on sentait que ça ne marchait pas […] nos copains ouvriers ont estimé plus utile de rejoindre la CFDT. Ils ont eu raison.158

Echoes of the VLR and Tout! watchwords could be heard during the autogestionnaire Lip strike of 1973, which became the crucible for the new forms of workers self-organisation and action that had crystallised in May ‘68 and since. AGs and CAs central to shop-floor democracy, séquestrations, the ‘theft’ of watches demonstrating illegality, and the bypassing of traditional union practices.159 Commissions were put in place to explore ways in which the workforce could be kept abreast of developments, and their voices heard. Information commission rep. Michel

156 P. Lorrain, interview, 26 June 2008.
Janin-Gros erected a 145m-long *journal mural* including press cut-outs, reports and photos on Lip, including those in the range of leftist and satirical papers.\(^{160}\)

A fundamental, alternative press influence at Lip was *Les Cahiers de Mai*, in the team’s initiation, facilitation and co-production of the daily bulletin *Lip-Unité*, plus the use of their network of experienced activists to propagate news from Lip to myriad union sections and support groups up and down the country. ‘Ils étaient sur notre ligne, la *base*, parlant d’autogestion’, asserts CFDT organiser Charles Piaget today, adding that the *Cahiers* introduced innovative ways to keep the strikers informed and involved, of which the use of film, and cassette recordings of AGs replayed at the factory gates.\(^{161}\)

Separately, *Libération* writers took on the writing of *Lip: Il Etait une Fois la Révolution*, which uncovered a distinct shift from the new daily’s GP Maoism to alternative culture. Packed with the photomontages, caricatures, poems, interviews and texts of the Lip struggle, the themes also extended to women’s liberation, immigrants, communes, adoption of the utopian socialist ideas of Charles Fourier. The publication concluded by calling for the spread of ‘subversive communities’ modelled on the ‘Lip-space’.\(^{162}\) This new, ex-GP, countercultural stance, now nestling at *Libération*, clearly replicated the themes promoted by *Tout!* three years earlier. Indeed, VLR’s Michel Chemin, as a Flins-CFDT envoy to the Lip occupation, recognised the more open, libertarian turn that *Libération* was taking, and accepted an invitation to join the new daily at this point, foreshadowing the arrival of a number of former VLR-*Tout!* activists, among whom Hocquenghem, Lévy-Willard and Thierry Haupais.\(^{163}\)

**Students and lycéens: the rupture from institutional education**

*Tout!* can be appreciated as the product of a university-based reflection, the synthesis of political, artistic and intellectual currents to emerge from Nanterre, Vincennes, Censier and the Beaux-Arts. Post-May, the university AGs and committees were activist terrains for spontaneist action, revamped notions of cultural revolution and experimental propagandistic forms that

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\(^{160}\) There was an outburst of workers creative initiative, witnessed in the profusion of drawings texts and poems seen to adorn the walls of the factory, and appreciation of cultural forms of support– the music of Colette Magny and Jacques Higelin, theatre performances during the occupation, and in nearby Besancon.

\(^{161}\) C. Piaget, interview, 18 February 2010.


\(^{163}\) M. Chemin, interview, 14 July 2010.
would culminate in the paper expression of new, autonomous movements, *Tout!* However, this effervescence in the faculties did not spell a return to the corporate student movement, the UNEF of the late 1960s.\(^1\) Instead, the urge at VLR-*Tout!* would be to break from the university as institution, to question the specificity of student identity. Moreover, the focal point of ‘mass’ student struggle in the early 1970s shifted to the ‘lycées/high schools’, the simmering youth discontent transposed to the pages of *Tout!*

Nanterre continued to provide a battleground for VLR, following the 1969-70 disturbances. Thrown open to local people during May ‘68, then recently fenced-up by the administration, the university restaurant became a scene of prolonged conflict in October, when VLR members burned down its wooden barriers, later earning several a jail sentence.\(^2\) Photographer and VLR sympathiser Michael Memmi came as a photographer to record the events, but was ‘kidnapped’ by campus security, prompting student protests and police intervention. The incident provided a scoop of sorts for *Tout!*, part of a poster campaign denouncing the *appariteurs-flics*.\(^3\) Campus activists then initiated a campaign against law professor Jean Foyer, ‘a perfect incarnation of reaction’.\(^4\)

However, the paper also emphasised a turn away from the faculty-based activity, from ‘Nanterre la folie’ to ‘Nanterre la crasse, la misère, l’ennui’. In its assessment of poverty and alienation in the local community, protesting the death of a child in a shanty town fire and the police repression of youth in the Cité des Marguerites, the paper called for real links with the outside: ‘Combler le fossé entre gauchistes et Nanterre sauvage’.\(^5\) This was an echo of a new type of thinking at the GdB Censier and faculty of Vincennes, for students to ‘come out’ of the institutional university in order to integrate the struggles of ordinary people- as well as transform their own lives. For Gilles Dinnematin, the GdB Censier indicated the need to leave the

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\(^2\)‘20 octobre: nous sommes tous des hors-la-loi’, *Tout!* no.3, 29 October 1970, p. 4.

\(^3\)‘Kidnapping’, *Tout!* no.4, 16 November 1970, p. 3. Also M. Memmi, interview, 3 August 2009. Memmi was taken by the security and locked away in the canteen freezer. He states that the police smashed his camera but that charges were not brought against him as other photographs had been taken and released showing his forced abduction.

\(^4\)ibid. Foyer was coincidentally the founder in 1963 of the Cour de Sûreté de l’État.

\(^5\)ibid.
university, ‘to make the revolution in the head, in the street and in life’, an attitude correlative to the establishment of communes in Ivry and Colombes. One account of VLR member Thierry Haupais’ disruption of Censier classes during 1970-71 aptly demonstrates the active refusal of university life:

Je me souviens que Thierry avait inventé le jeu du ‘qu'est-ce que je fais là ?’ : il s'insinuait dans un TD de la Fac, s'asseyait au dernier rang, et au bout d'un quart d'heure de cours, il se levait brusquement et criait ‘mais qu'est-ce que je fous là ? C'est ça la vie ? Mais ce qu'on écoute ici n'a rien à voir avec ce que je veux vivre, je m'ennuie, je veux vivre ! Partons d'ici!’ Il n'était pas rare qu'il emmène avec lui une partie du cours; puis il recommençait dans un autre TD. Evidemment il était comme nous, complètement en-dehors des études, et il passait là entre les manifs, le militantisme à Flins, la base ouvrière de VLR, la communauté où il vivait. Drôle d'époque.

Vincennes urges to exit the university took an alternative slant. From its opening in December 1969, the secluded, experimental faculty had been marked by a strong, gauchiste-driven agitation, directed at both administration and the strong Communist teaching body. Then a first year student, Stéphane Gatti laughingly remembers that on the first day he turned up, registered and went into occupation. Roland Castro recalls Vincennes as a kind of trap:

Le gouvernement a créé Vincennes pour mettre les étudiants les plus radicaux dans un bocal à eux, une espèce de répartition politique de l’université pour que tout rentre dans l’ordre; il y a eu des points de fixation créés. Notamment Vincennes.

On the other hand, Vincennes maths teacher Denis Guedj saw the potential for subversion of governmental intentions:

Supposons que cette théorie soit vrai… c'est génial! […] tout le contraire s'est passé. Ils n’avaient pas compris que… ça a formé une masse critique. Il y avait une masse critique de gauchistes qui a fait que ça a pété, partout en France et dans le monde !

Subsequently, a large Comité de Base (CdB) grew, its elements drawn partly from the May movement, of various far left shades, and new, non-affiliated students. There was, however, a smaller activist core, its figurehead ex-UJ stalwart Jean-Marc Salmon, direct action its stock in

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169 G. Dinnematin, interview, 22 May 2008.
170 Unnamed ex-Révolution member, 18 April 2007 at loeildeschats.blogspot.com (viewed 1 October 2009) TD stands for travaux dirigés, tutorial or practical classes.
172 S. Gatti, interview, 4 December 2009. Childcare facilities were immediately taken over by student and teacher parents and a crèche sauvage established.
174 D. Guedj, interview, 26 June 2009. Vincennes was open to the unqualified, non-bacheliers for several years, and became an international pole of attraction, attracting radicals often fleeing persecution in their home countries. Guedj remembers in particular the arrival of Greeks, Africans and Chileans.
The CdB mobilised hundreds of activists, both inside and out of Vincennes, against the university council structures to be set up in accordance with the *loi Faure* - seen as a means of co-opting and neutralising radicalism - and trashed the registration process when the administration attempted to stem the flow of *non-bachelier* admissions at the start of the 1969-70 academic year. Adopting the situationist title ‘Abolition du salariat et destruction de l’université’, the Salmon current ultimately sought to break students from the faculty, to ‘go to the masses’. However, failure to win large numbers of students to such an anti-university platform, coupled with a desire to invest their energies in the working-class movement, would lead the CdB to split towards the end of the academic year, with some joining the GP and others deciding on a course of *établissement*- obtaining work at Renault Cléon and the industrial region around Rouen.

Situationist influences could also be detected in the imagery of *Révolution Culturelle*, a one-issue intellectual publication of the CdB published in spring-summer 1969. Besides its trenchant critique of the PCF, the publication rejected the ‘groupuscule’ structures in favour of an anti-hierarchical reading of May ‘68, attempting to articulate a position for ‘anarcho-maoism’. The review was a strong indicator of *basiste* affinity, seen in its October 1969 supplemental sequel *Faire la Révolution*, signed by both VLC and the Vincennes CdB, whose second issue the following April contained the signal text ‘Changer la vie’ by Hocquenghem, attacking puritanical *gauchisme*. Around the same time women members from the CdB helped stage the first women-only feminist meeting, precursor of the MLF, for which the resident anarchist posters atelier produced symbolic T-shirts (*fig.6.1*).

Vincennes thus became a preliminary setting for nascent gender and sexual movements. Hocquenghem’s dual role as Censier activist and Vincennes teacher would lead to a degree of cross-fertilisation on issues of sexuality, dovetailing the classes of resident philosopher Gilles

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175 Including experienced Maoists such as Jean-Marc Salmon, André Glucksmann, and Jean Paul Dollé, and younger members such as Yolande Robveille, Philippe Lorrain and Gatti. One action involved the humiliation of a far right student, stripped naked and daubed with ketchup, which led Vincennes teacher André Gisselbrecht to attack his assailants as *gauchistes-fascistes* in *l’Humanité*. The remark prompted a retaliatory but largely symbolic *interdit de séjour* to the PCF at a subsequent Vincennes student AG.  
176 Robveille, op cit.  
177 *Gauchistes* at Vincennes, including Dollé, counterposed the student AGs and links with the ‘popular masses’ to the ‘puppet [university] council’ on matters of university funding. See the INA clip: [http://www.ina.fr/video/CAF97033119/situation-faculte-de-vincennes.fr.html](http://www.ina.fr/video/CAF97033119/situation-faculte-de-vincennes.fr.html) (viewed 16 December 2009)  
Deleuze, co-author of the ground-breaking treatise on desire *L’Anti-Oedipe*.\(^{179}\) The hothouse atmosphere at the faculty was captured by Carole Roussopoulou in her short 1971 film *FHAR*, wherein Hocquenghem berates *gauchisme*, notably sections of VLR, at sociologist Georges Lapassade’s expanded seminar on homosexuality. The film cuts to Vincennes students distributing and reading no.12 of *Tout!* Indeed, maths teacher Denis Guedj speaks of meetings of hundreds at the university to discuss its sensational contents.\(^{180}\) By then the paper, informed by a loose US press underground network also run by Vincennes students, had become fully identified with new, youth and countercultural movements that largely bypassed the *groupuscules*.

The hothouse atmosphere at the faculty was captured by Carole Roussopoulou in her short 1971 film *FHAR*, wherein Hocquenghem berates *gauchisme*, notably sections of VLR, at sociologist Georges Lapassade’s expanded seminar on homosexuality. The film cuts to Vincennes students distributing and reading no.12 of *Tout!* Indeed, maths teacher Denis Guedj speaks of meetings of hundreds at the university to discuss its sensational contents.\(^{180}\) By then the paper, informed by a loose US press underground network also run by Vincennes students, had become fully identified with new, youth and countercultural movements that largely bypassed the *groupuscules*.

The final piece in the higher education composition of *Tout!* was the Beaux-Arts school, emerging reformed from the late ‘60s turmoil as a series of *unités pedagogiques*, or UPAs. Of these, the UP6 was considered, like Vincennes, to be a system where the *gauchistes* could be better circumscribed, but as in the other faculties a strong CA persevered, a *crèche sauvage* was maintained and there were moments of student protest, including a symbolic *séquestration* of the school’s deputy director that made the paper.\(^{181}\) The atmosphere was festive and creative, Castro describing his group as ‘funny’, but which Marc Hatzfeld, a student of the ‘serious’ Sciences-Po nearby, interprets thus:

> C’était une attitude dérisive par rapport à l’existence sociale, tourner à dérision la norme sociale plutôt que de la critiquer avec un vocabulaire […].\(^{182}\)

This could be seen in the continuing output of silk-screen posters (*fig.5.15*), and a critique of functionalist-capitalist urbanism, both features of *Tout!* with its kernel of UP6 architects that included Castro, Gangnet, Léon and Barda.

The atmosphere in the *lycées* also changed following 1968. Michel Wlassikoff moved in the autumn to the *lycée* Chaptal (8\(^{\text{th}}\) arr.), where a powerful *comité d’action lycéen* (CAL) wielded an ‘absolute counter-power’, in a climate of permanent agitation.\(^{183}\) Totems of discipline and

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180 D. Guedj, op cit.
181 ‘De la séquestration considérée comme un des Beaux-Arts’, *Tout!* no.9, 18 February 1971, p. 9. The taking of the deputy director resulted from the sacking of Maoist teacher Jean-Claude Vernier (one of the founders of *Libération* in 1973) over his investigations into poor conditions on the city’s building sites.
182 M. Hatzfeld, interview, 14 April 2008.
183 M. Wlassikoff, op cit. Part of the Chaptal agitation was over the police intervention at Chaptal to stop the projection of a film on May. Militants would circulate such films (prime examples were *La Reprise du
authority began to disappear. Male students began to wear their hair long, female students began to wear trousers. Future VLR member Annick Coupé, from a small town near Caen, remembers her return to class in September 1968 to find the desks re-arranged from their previous straight line formation into a circle. She went on to become a class delegate to a school council.  

For VLC-VLR, the centre of lycée strength was the all-boys Buffon (15th arr.), once a hunting-ground of Deshayes. The Buffon activists were also at the heart of the Groupe Révolutionnaire 15ème, a type of united front that combined political and cultural activity, including leafleting at Citroën-Javel, the teaching of French to local immigrants and the establishment of a second Maison du Peuple in nearby rue Mademoiselle. A bi-weekly Buffon paper, L’Assaut XVe, covered the Nanterre events, immigrant struggles, and government repression. This prime example of the period’s amateur, ephemeral local militant publication was trumped in June by the more sulphurous VLR inter-lycée bulletin La Pavasse, its language increasingly anti-authoritarian, rejecting classes and exams in street utterances such as ‘Y’en a plus que marre’ and ‘Le bac: quelle merde’.

It was this sneering abuse of institutional authority that characterised Tout!’s approach to education. Over the 1970-71 academic year Tout! reported increasingly on ferment in the lycées, the highpoint being the national protests around the arrest of secondary student Gilles Guiot in February 1971. Paris demonstrations provided the occasion for VLR activists to propagandise over the simultaneous attack on Deshayes, painting a scenario of vicious police repression of youth. The renewed agitation prompted Tout! to dedicate a centre page spread to the lycées, ‘Parole aux lycéens’, where again the paper gave voice to young people’s discontent in colloquial language. Noting Pompidou’s call for the restoration of discipline in the schools following the recent strikes, the paper portrayed young people as trapped inside the infernal triangle of family, education and work. A Buffon student could muster little enthusiasm for his educational institution, teachers lived in the past and stifled debate and even a student strike was considered boring; nor did the groupuscules and their ‘pex imbittables/wanky speeches’ offer...
any relief. Part-solutions could be found in escapism: leaving your family, flirting with the girls from nearby Camille-Sée on strike days, skipping class for a ‘fag’. 188

*Tout!* printed texts by other pupils, celebrating revolt and denouncing the regime inside their institutions, particularly those from the CET and CES technical colleges. 189 For all of these contributors, revolt didn’t just equate to political protest; as one student put it: ‘Ma vie elle est ailleurs, elle commence au moment où je sors de l’école’. 190 One young woman went further in describing a daily battle against the oppression girls suffer, the imposition of degrading publicity in the metro alongside routine sexual advances: ‘Quand une fille se révolte contre sa famille, elle se révolte AUSSI contre tout ce qui se passe’. 191

While *Tout!* reported excitedly on the high school revolt in primarily Parisian institutions, VLR supporters in Le Havre’s Porte Océane were busy producing their own lycéen journal, *Guili-Guili*, cheekily tagged as a supplement to *Tout!*, with Sartre as its Director. 192 The ticklish *Guili* was a delirious *mélange* of scatter-brained poems and daft, subversive *Charlie Hebdo* and Robert Crumb skits. Defiant monologues on sex and insubordination took the place of the traditional political rhetoric, and parodies of right and left wing icons abounded. One parody of *Paris Match* declared:


Other, positive influences included *Actuel*, showing distinctive libertarian, counter-cultural leanings, while scorn was reserved for *Rouge* and *La Cause du Peuple*. This referencing of ‘major’ titles tends to indicate that debates in the *gauchiste* milieu were understood through the

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188 ibid.
189 Collège d’Enseignement Technique (CET) and Collège d’Enseignement Secondaire (CES) were the work-oriented training colleges, whose teaching staff were often ex-industry foremen and which retained the pre-68 disciplinary approach.
190 ‘Parole aux lycéens’ op cit.
191 ibid. Confirmation of her complaint came in the neighbouring report of a lycée occupation in Grenoble where the writer bemoaned the lack of female participants, in the sexist terms of ‘Le repos du guerrier ça compte aussi’. In recognition of the offence, space was allotted to an irritated single line retort from a *Nana*: ‘Repos du guerrier une autre fois…’
192 *Tickle-lickle* might be the most apt translation. Despite its parochialism the short-lived *Guili-Guili* rated a mention in *Le Monde*’s survey of the alternative press on 22-23 April 1971, and was even listed in the weighty *Histoire Générale de la Presse Française* in 1975. Putting Sartre as DdP (without his permission) was due to the fear of prosecution after the group learned of the prosecution of a Bordeaux group who had undertaken a similar initiative.
193 ‘Réactions de la Presse’ in *Guili-Guili* no.2, 8 June 1971, p. 3.
prism of the national alternative press, at least on a provincial level where the concentration of militants was weaker. *Guili Guili* had a rival, the Ligue Communiste’s *Spartakus*, a typical militant student bulletin of analysis and *mots d’ordre*; one of the *Guili* sellers Francois Petitjean claims that they always outsold the Trotskyists in local *lycées*, though the print run never exceeded 100. Both bulletins were *ronéo*-printed, ephemeral affairs. However, the vivacity of *Guili Guili* in particular testified to a burgeoning, albeit erratic underground press in France in 1971.

In its derisive approach to education, *Tout!* unlocked yet another potentially explosive issue. Perceiving the role of *instituteurs* and *professeurs* as controlling and repressive, writers raised the questions of children’s creativity and sexual desire by publishing extracts of Jules Celma’s *Journal d’un Éducatreur*. Celma had, as a peripatetic teacher, used *non-directivité*, deliberately shedding the teacher’s professional role, to allow children to express themselves freely through poems, stories and drawings, the latter manifesting a strong sexual and scatological content: ‘J’aimerais embrasser une fille sur le cul’, the utterance of nine-year old Jean-Pierre, and headline of *Tout!* Celma’s subsequent dismissal, then trial following the publication of his attacks on institutional education in a Toulouse *lycée* paper *La Mèche*, provoked an angry response in *Tout!* Indeed, ‘a small group of mates in the FLJ’ wrote in to the paper to relate their commando attack on the Académie et Direction de l’Enseignement, where an official’s Louis XVI office was turned upside down in protest:

> ÉDUCATEURS, INSTITS, NE SOYEZ PLUS LES FLICS DE L’ENFANCE SI VOUS NE VOULEZ PAS ETRE TRAITÉS COMME TELS! LES GOSSES NOUS ONT MONTRÉS COMMENT JOUIR SANS ENTRAVES DE SON CORPS ET DE SON ESPRIT: NOUS N’OUBLIERONS PAS LA LEÇON! [signed] –FLJ.

Dovetailing as it did the thematics of women, youth and gay liberation, it was not unusual for *Tout!* to feature a taboo subject like child sexuality; this emerged in the more general atmosphere of sexual liberalism in which the paper bathed, and which was beginning to pervade mainstream

194 F. Petitjean, interview, 19 October 2007.
195 Other *lycée* underground publications included *Crève Salope* and *La Mèche* from Toulouse, Orléans *Le Jeune Idiot*.
196 *Tout!* no.8, p. 9. Celma produced a film to accompany his writings, strongly exhibiting anarcho-situationism calling on children to do what they liked, and on teachers to commit suicide, leaders, and attacking politicians of all kinds from Hitler through Georges Marchais, to Alain Krivine. It is visible at [www.ecologielibidinale.org](http://www.ecologielibidinale.org/fr/biblio/Celma-film-lecoleestfinie.htm) (viewed 7 July 2010).
197 ‘J’aimerais embrasser une fille sur le cul’, *Tout!* no.9, p. 7. Celma was tried for *outrage aux bonnes mœurs*. 
society. Moreover, paedophilia was discussed openly as a positive sexual interaction in forthcoming writings of sexual radicals. However, with the question having since effectively been buried, given the numerous high-profile cases of child abuse, attitudes have shifted. Castro’s reaction to the article today indicates the chasm carved out by time: ‘C’est dangereux ça… il y a un article qui est carrément paedophile’.

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198 Notably, in the counter-institutional review *Recherches*, and its 1973 special ‘Trois milliards de pervers’, among whose contributors featured Hocquenghem, Lebel and a number of others from *Tout!*

199 R. Castro, interview, 24 April 2008. If not the articles concerning Celma, Castro’s allusion to paedophilia in *Tout!* might refer to a brief comment to be found in ‘Les pédés et la révolution’, no.12, p. 9, advocating the abolition of the incest taboo between parent and child, brother and sister. But there is no espousal of a child-abusing paedophilia.
Figure 5.1: *L’Idiot* gives generous page space for the launch of *Tout!*, 1970.

Figure 5.2: Mockery of de Gaulle and the rest of the political class became standard practice in *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, 1969.

Figure 5.3: Fournier’s derisive take on the ‘malaise’ at the faculty of Nanterre, *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, 1970.

Figure 5.4: Private Alain Krivine stands for president, *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, 1969.

Figure 5.5: *La Cause du Peuple* glorifies its persecuted leader Alain Geismar, 1970.
Figure 5.6: Tout! displays a double iconoclastic caricature at the death of Charles de Gaulle, 1970.

Figure 5.7: Tout! brings in the new year with a vengeful urbanist tide, 1971.

Figure 5.8: One-sheet no. of Action following a State clampdown, July 1968.

Figure 5.9: Humorous poster solidarity for VLR director Lecardonnel, Charlie Hebdo style, 1971.

Figure 5.10: Tout! joins other papers in condemning the police attack on journalist Alain Jaubert, 1971.
Figure 5.11: Caustic caricature of PCF leader Georges Marchais: ‘Nous sommes le parti non du poing levé mais de la main tendue’, Tout! 1971.

Figure 5.12: Siné reluctantly votes Mitterand, Charlie Hebdo 1974.

Figure 5.13: Tout! borrows Wolinski for a satire on work, 1970.

Figure 5.14: Tout! sees young workers’ rejection of the unions, 1971.

Figure 5.15: A Beaux-Arts poster from 1969 condemns the system’s neglect of workers’ housing needs.
6. *Tout!* and the press of the early ‘70s ‘new movements’

On va avoir une situation où les garçons partent de leur trip, les filles de leur trip, les immigrés aussi… on essayera de discuter ensemble ; ça va être dur. Mais à mon avis ça sera moins dur que les discussions dans les groupuscules.¹

This was Hocquenghem’s take on the developing autonomous movements in May 1971. The attempt by VLR to federate had failed, unsurprisingly for Michel Chemin of the BO: ‘C’était un peu ridicule parce que les mouvements autonomes, c’est autonome, quoi’.² *Tout!* had played its part, according to Castro:

*Tout* était devenu une auberge espagnole ou chacun apportait son manger sans qu’on puisse réellement le diriger, ou même pouvoir oser le diriger.³

But if *Tout!* was the expression of the contradictions in the post-May ‘Movement’ and consequent gravedigger for one brand of Maoism, it also served as a model of sorts for the press of the new movements of the early 70s. The practical, organic links established with the MLF contributed to the publication of feminist paper *Le Torchon Brûle.* Subsequent provocative gay publications *Le Fléau Social* and *L’Antinorm* owed something to the wild heterogeneity of *Tout!* The work of earlier pro-immigrant projects such as *Le Paria,* supported by VLR, was sustained by *Tout!* and fed into the growth of small, independent immigrant workers publications. Including the ‘youth’ category represented by the FLJ and *lycéens,* the paper would dedicate 19% of its content to these emerging ‘identity’ groups, with a major swing in the second half of its brief life towards sexual questions.⁴

Furthermore, *Tout!*’s sensitivity to environmental, urbanist and anti-nuclear issues, framed in an anti-capitalist critique, dovetailed the beginnings of a political ecology movement, prefiguring the launch of pioneering eco-journal *La Gueule Ouverte.* Not unrelated was the emerging anti-militarist sentiment among *gauchistes* and attempts to address insubordination in the lower army ranks. The theme of incarceration being central to VLR and *gauchiste* preoccupations, considerable attention was devoted to (anti-)prison campaigns and the detention of psychiatric patients. With these ‘new social movements’, political, but not centred on Marxisant

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¹ G. Hocquenghem, speaking in the film *FHAR,* op cit.
² M. Chemin, interview, 15 July 2010.
⁴ See appendix 2.
organisation, came a press of campaigning counter-information and ideological debate of which *Tout!* was a precursor and stimulant.

**From L'Idiot to Le Torchon Brûle: Tout! as a vector of feminist change**

The first journalistic markers of a new women’s liberation movement in France were not seen until May 1970 when feminist Monique Wittig penned a four-page article in *L’Idiot International* entitled ‘Combat pour la libération de la femme’, signed also by her sister Gille and American Margaret Stephenson.5 Wittig had in 1969 published her second novel, on a war between the sexes, *Les Guerillères*, but in *L’Idiot* her angle was political and theoretical, sourcing Friedrich Engels’ work on class society and the family, and elaborating a materialist conception of women’s oppression: the sexualised division of labour historically entrenched in the family unit. The term ‘sexism’ was introduced with reference to the US women’s liberation movement, and Wittig also name-checked Black Panther Bobby Seale, following his call for women to be armed against their oppression. She reserved antipathy for *gauchiste* arguments that disparaged women’s oppression as a ‘secondary contradiction’ that would have to wait until the main division between labour and capital had been overcome.6

It was in effect a manifesto, concluding with a call on *gauchiste* women to cast off their self-perception as revolutionaries only, and come together with other women in a fight that ‘concerns us all’.7 The article highlighted several significant characteristics in the birth of a new, French women’s movement: the model of a contemporaneous American movement, the emergence of leading feminists from a ‘Marxisant’ or *gauchiste* milieu, and crucially, the development of feminist-Marxist oppositions within this milieu. Vincennes was the scene of such tensions in the same month, when the Wittig text was distributed prior to a small women’s meeting by Wittig and friends wearing tee-shirts sporting the new ‘women’s power’ symbol (fig.6.1).

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5 Feminists subsequently attacked *Idiot* editor Jean-Edern Hallier for his editorially imposed formulation *...de la femme*, rejecting its use of the term ‘woman’ as a cipher for all women, the ‘other’ in need of liberation, and instead stressing the nomenclature of the collective *...des femmes*, liberation by and for women themselves.


7 ibid.
discussion when we were shouted down, a tall black activist stood up and said he supported our attempts to meet among ourselves, and when he walked out most of the men followed. But a handful of white male leftists refused to leave, insisting on giving unsolicited advice about our liberation as we were trying to meet with the small number of women present.8

One of those women, ex-JCR, GP and later VLR sympathiser Juliette Kahane, asserts that the women were confronted by violence, both physical and verbal, on the part of the male leftists.9 Such hostility was a manifestation of the conservatism of many men on the left, one of a number of instances of male hostility that was to stimulate and further reinforce feminist demands for non-mixité.

Kahane and Nadja Ringart were among contributors to a special summer-autumn 1970 issue of the far left journal *Partisans*, entitled, tellingly, *Libération des femmes année zéro.*10 Its introduction reiterated the perceived need for women-only writings, discussions, and ultimately action, stressing the continuing critique of mixed assemblies and political groups where women were marginalised and the theme of women’s oppression ignored. Indeed, Kahane’s essay ‘Les militantes’, on the roles of women in far left organisations, critiqued women’s roles during May ‘68, consigned to the menial administrative tasks of, amongst others, typewriting and printing leaflets. Alternatively, women were obliged to become ‘virile’ and self-sacrificing in order to gain recognition in such macho milieux.11 The *Partisans* collection built on Wittig’s first text, setting out a range of founding ideas that could form the ‘Year Zero’ platform for a new movement to fight ‘the slavery of the family’ and for ‘voluntary motherhood’.12 It further warned other ‘revolutionary parties’ that the condition of their participation in the women’s struggle would have to be their support for the ‘destruction of patriarchy’.13 It was in the context of this nascent feminist consciousness, given expression in a few keynote publications, that a

8 M. Stephenson, now Namascar Shaktini, ‘Introduction to “For a women’s liberation movement”’ in *On Monique Wittig: theoretical political and literary essays*, pp. 15-20. (p. 16)
9 J. Kahane, interview, 6 February 2008.
10 Retrospectively seen by some as a mistake for wiping away, albeit unwittingly, the legacy of former feminist movements. Writer Martine Storti argues that young French women in the 70s were largely unaware of this past: [http://www.martine-storti.fr/ecrits/feminisme_..._ces_dix_annees_qui_ebranlerent_le_patriarcat.html](http://www.martine-storti.fr/ecrits/feminisme_..._ces_dix_annees_qui_ebranlerent_le_patriarcat.html), (viewed 7 Sept 2009).
movement started to take shape from the late summer and autumn, with the holding of women’s assemblies at the Beaux-Arts school in Paris.\textsuperscript{14}

Indeed, summer 1970 was the exact gestation period for Tout! The new press venture’s ensuing political affinity with the \textit{mouvement de libération des femmes} (MLF) resulted from this temporal juncture, as well as the myriad personal ties that VLR and other activists retained with the first groups of women activists. The decision to include Huey Newton’s emblematic call to show solidarity with women in struggle in the first issue was, despite the BPP leader’s problematic argumentation, of a par with Bobby Seale’s previous call-to-arms in \textit{L’Idiot}.\textsuperscript{15} VLR women also formed a \textit{groupe femmes VLR} and began to contribute articles specifically on women’s oppression. \textit{Établie} and one time VLC member Leslie Kaplan wrote a more theoretical text on women’s oppression, at first discussed among the young women of VLR, and ending up unsigned in \textit{L’Idiot Liberté}, a topical side-publication of the Hallier press group.\textsuperscript{16} Kaplan’s personal orientation on the working class led her to reject ‘petit-bourgeois’ feminist demands for self-advancement and instead link indelibly the struggle of women to that of proletarian revolution. This, and her advocacy of \textit{enquêtes}, historical materialist analysis and citation of Mao and Huey Newton signalled the continued influence of Marxist-Leninist ideas in the emerging feminist discourse.

Ringart’s piece on women’s prison was another example of new, personalised feminist writing, simultaneously making the pages of Tout! and \textit{Partisans}. Based on her experience of incarceration in La Roquette jail, Ringart explored the divisive, alienating atmosphere affecting women prisoners that replicated the isolation and anxiety facing women on the outside. The article helped fuel a demonstration coinciding with, and as an alternative to, a Secours Rouge (SR) rally for the ex-GP’s Alain Geismar in October, at La Roquette, where feminist activists chained themselves to the gates in protest at the conditions inside. Tout!’s report on the action was a straight MLF text declaring solidarity with all women in jail, reflecting the way that the paper sought to identify with not only political, but common law prisoners.

\textsuperscript{14} A strong CA and crèche had been established at the Beaux-Arts from May 1968. Furthermore, the Beaux-Arts had been the stomping-ground for the group of architects at the heart of the production team of Tout!

\textsuperscript{15} Newton urged men in the movement to reject sexist behaviour, by at first empathising with it: ‘Our first desire is to hit a woman, to shut her up’, then advocating instead solidarity with women as a section of the oppressed.

Devant la Roquette nous nous sommes enchainées pour déclarer que nous sommes solidaires de toutes ces femmes, prostituées, voleuses, avortées, filles-mères, révolutionnaires. VOLER UN CAMEMBERT = SIX MOIS DE PRISON. GABRIELLE RUSSIER, ANGELA DAVIS, GEISMAR = JUSTICE POURRIE. NOUS SOMMES TOUTES DES PRISONNIERES, NOUS BRISERONS NOS CHAINES !

Feminist contestation gathered pace, movement activists disrupting the *Etats Généraux de la Femme*, a three-day conference in Versailles on ‘woman’s condition’ staged by *Elle* magazine in November. They objected to the parade of dignitaries and politicians, throwing leaflets, pressing the CGT on its position on abortion and even taking the tribune for a few minutes— all the subject of an ironic Cabu exposé in *Charlie Hebdo*. From January 1971 *Tout!*’s feminist authors began to project a far more militant message. ‘Déchaînées’ was a direct attack on the sexism and ignorance of male revolutionaries, including by implication those of VLR. It cited various leftists’ condescending remarks towards their female comrades’ new political initiative. The ‘personal is political’ critique followed partly from men’s sexual objectification and mistreatment of women, *mal baisées* having become a commonplace term of abuse. Even *Tout!* was the object of feminist ire; the lack of women’s letters and perceived detachment of its content from women’s real interests. The article represented a derision of masculine *gauchiste* attitudes and their concomitant tropes of leadership, hierarchy, and intellectual, physical, and sexual prowess. As such the paper had become a vehicle for gender antagonisms that was to culminate in the MLF’s clash with the dominant male contingent of *Tout!* in April-May of that year.

The *groupe femmes VLR* ensured the report in *Tout!* of a *bonneterie* strike in Troyes in March, focusing on the ways in which women workers broke from the alienation of factory work to discover themselves and others. The MLF divulged its pleasure at being able to bond with the women, without the preconceptions they might have brought as *gauchistes*. Accordingly a *La Cause du Peuple* journalist was dismissed for hitching a ride on the MLF’s back, apparently interested only in her ‘paper and organisation’ rather than in the real interests of the workers. The strike, also the subject of a film and subsequent nationwide solidarity tour in which VLR’s Annette Lévy-Willard played an organising role, was significant in that it allowed the MLF to

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17 ‘Les femmes aussi’, *Tout!* no.3. p. 4. Gabrielle Russier (32) was a highschool teacher ostracised for having had an affair with a pupil (17) in the wake of the events of May ‘68. She was charged with *détournement de mineur* and in July 1969 sentenced to a year in jail, but took her own life shortly after.

18 An event the magazine boasts of today, stating that it ‘took up the social subjects of the day, and advocated feminism. http://ipjblog.com/lapressemagazine/elle/ (viewed 9 September 2009).

19 Several of the women interviewees confirm this.

20 ‘Au MLF on est comme on est…’, *Tout!* no.10 12 March 1971, p. 4.
argue that its campaign could extend to all women regardless of class, and so refuse to be demoted to the rank of ‘secondary contradiction’ by the far left. Furthermore, the Troyes strike article formed a bridge between Tout! and the coming feminist paper Le Torchon Brûle.

April, a tumultuous month for the MLF, was crowned by the Nouvel Observateur’s ‘Manifeste des 343’, in which the women in question, some of them celebrities, stated they had had an abortion, then illegal in France, and called for access to contraception and abortion. An adjacent piece by the MLF, who networked extensively to provide the list of names, insisted on the free, informed choice of women to decide what they did with their bodies, and showed the increasing space given by the movement to humour and satire: ‘Les dix commandements de l’État bourgeois’, including: ‘Foetus tu préserveras, car plus intéressant de les tuer à 18 ans, l’âge de conscription’. Demands were prefaced with je, foregrounding a growing personal confidence among women activists, and stressing their active self-engagement versus the dry, detached analysis more commonly associated with the intellectual left. Indeed the movement persisted with derisive, provocative actions such as the disruption of a lecture by anti-abortionist Professeur Lejeune, where VLR’s Annette Lévy-Willard theatrically threw a calf’s liver at his table, exclaiming ‘Je viens d’avorter, professeur!’

Women even contested the Observateur’s follow-up ‘Manifeste’ conference by occupying the tribune to denounce the magazine’s ‘financial exploitation’ of the abortion issue.

Tout! picked up on the protest, allowing the MLF to set out their reasons for the challenge to the Observateur, namely that the magazine had also hosted opponents of abortion and ‘speech specialists’, and that the audience was excluded from the debate. The paper took advantage of

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21 ‘Un appel de 343 femmes’, Nouvel Observateur no. 334, 5-11 April 1971, p. 5. A footnote to the manifesto states: ‘among the signatories, militants of the ‘women’s liberation movement’ demand open and FREE abortion. The Manifesto of the 343 followed a line of left-political declarations signed by prominent personalities, stretching back to the ‘Manifeste des 121’ of 1960. At first it was not titled the Manifesto of the 343, ... indeed it acquired the title ‘Manifeste des 343 salopes’ following a provocative satirical cover of Charlie Hebdo: ‘Qui a engrossé les 343 salopes?’, still contested today by a number of feminists.
22 Nouvel Observateur, op cit, p. 6
this piece to advertise Le Torchon Brûlé, including a witty Crumb cartoon dog muttering: ‘En plus elles vont avoir un organe’ (fig.6.2). By April, the political character of the new MLF had become evident: libertarian, personal, poetic and satirical, these the vital ingredients of the movement’s forthcoming publication. The stage was set for a new, women’s paper.

Ce mouvement de libération des femmes, dont tout le monde pense aujourd’hui qu’il était l’acquis principal de mai 68, ne s’intéressait strictement personne dans la grande presse. Mise à part l’initiative de Jean Moreau dans le Nouvel Observateur, il n’y avait rien. Rien dans Le Monde, rien dans Le Figaro, […] strictement personne ne s’y intéressait […] C’est dans ce contexte qu’on s’est dit: il nous faut un journal. Puisque personne ne s’intéresse à nous, puisque dans le journal Tout! c’est portion congrue et beaucoup de bagarres, on va faire notre propre journal.26

Ringart speaks of around forty women discussing the project of a movement paper, though the idea had been in the offing from late 1970.27 Finally, only twelve were to work on the first issue in May 1971, at the same small Agrofilm printshop where Tout! was typed and assembled. In fact the production of both the final issues of Tout! and the first Le Torchon Brûlé would run concurrently, allowing for a degree of cross-fertilisation. Ringart continues:

Mais comme on était très malignes, on a continué à aller à Tout! et on s’est formées. On traînait à l’imprimerie, on apprenait, sans jamais considérer qu’il s’agissait là d’un métier ou qu’il fallait respecter je ne sais quelle hiérarchie. Et c’est tout naturellement qu’on s’est dit: on saura faire un journal.28

Indeed, MLF members also continued to write for Tout!, from the break-up of VLR until the last issue of end-July, debating the latest questions to arise in its pages following the VLR diaspora. May’s Le Torchon Brûlé no.1 and Tout! no.14 carried frontal assaults on Mother’s Day, vilified as the creation of a Nazi-patronised Vichy regime under the slogan Travail-Famille-Patrie. The paper picked up on the Troyes strike where Tout! left off, devoting an entire, handwritten page to the argument that ‘Les ouvrières sont des femmes: leur conscience de classe sera féministe ou ne sera pas’, singling out the ex-GP’s J’Accuse for attack.29

Le Torchon Brûlé also bore the bright look and artistry familiar in Tout!, with alternately straight and swirling headlines, while its texts reflected Tout!’s lettering, often handwritten, and the

27 N. Ringart, interview, 5 November 2008
29 ‘Troyes’ Le Torchon Brûlé, no.1, May 1971, p. 11. The issue also reprints an article from Tout! no.13 on the sexism of CGT reps at Renault Billancourt during the May ‘71 strikes.
paper’s blend of personal testimony, political opinion, poetry and calls to action. Except more so: it veered away from the hard-edged ‘struggles’ of Tout! towards the political-cultural output of a plurality of women in self-discovery. Ex-VLR, and historian of the MLF, Françoise Picq asserts that there was no editorial team to ‘select, cut, or determine the paper’s content’ and that the first issue reflected the diversity of the movement. The title was an expression bearing more than one possible meaning but for the women’s purposes expressed a *double-entendre* of ‘domestic quarrel’, and ‘flaming paper’, thus laying down a statement of intent. An add-on tag of *Menstruel* demonstrated a similarly playful satire. Everything about the paper bore the new, countercultural feminist imprint. The cover of the first issue resembled a psychedelic poster, multicoloured waves melding with snail-shell patterned fractals, surmounting flowing green locks and an anguished woman’s scream. Signposts indicated society’s states of womanhood: the whore, the mother, the bitch. Yet a word bubble exclaimed: ‘Et puis merde! J’aime les femmes’.

*Le Torchon* was anything but a monthly, its second issue appearing around the *rentrée* of 1971, its third in December. Irregularity was due to its loose production process, the formation of different editorial collectives for each issue, and the constant search for funds, which included appeals in the paper. Ringart states that in the production of the first issue, the collective proved unwilling to tap *Tout!* funder Sylvina Boissonnas for the money, even though she had departed VLR for the MLF. The returns on the paper were meagre, despite its print run of 35,000. Around half were diffused militantly, hand-to-hand and in certain book shops (from where the sales money was often left uncollected), the rest put out by the NMPP to kiosks and newsagents. Picq explains that the appeals and collections helped finance the production of each issue, but that this necessitated the formation of a small group to oversee the administration of the paper. Not surprisingly, *Le Torchon Brûle* led a somewhat fluid, unstructured existence paralleling the development of the movement; it finally expired in the summer of 1974, following issue 6.

31 *Torchon* can mean a kitchen cloth, or the pejorative ‘rag’, slang for newspaper.
32 There is no dating in *Le Torchon Brûle*, therefore the historian is reliant on the placing of certain event-related articles.
33 It is not clear that Boissonnas was ever in VLR, but she was certainly sympathetic and witnesses explain that she made a significant financial contribution (although she would not agree to an interview and thus confirm this) to the group and to *Tout!* In any case, as explained elsewhere, VLR did not have a formal ‘membership’, rather it contained a core of several dozen permanent activists, and a wider periphery of sympathisers. Additionally, the chronology suggests that she was part of the MLF before the dissolution of VLR (17 April 1971)
35 ibid.
Whereas the tone of the first issue was celebratory, that of the second was pugnacious, reverting to a critique of the MLF’s detractors, and an assault on various *gauchiste* groups; ‘organisation’ was a dirty word. A spoof *groupuscule* letter acerbically derided the stereotypical *gauchiste* jargon, and political ‘lines’ that sought to regiment the movement, substituting for the MLF ‘Parti de libération de LAFAM’. This prefaced an open letter, following the intervention of far left militant women at a Mother’s Day protest on 6 June, to ‘the sisters of mainly Trotskyite and Maoist organisations’ that called on them to drop their Marxist formulations, adopt the expressive *Je* of the movement, and abandon the ‘revolution which will always and forever be Stalinist’. Even the abbreviation MLF was challenged, this time by journalist Christiane Rochefort; the issue of the movement’s nomenclature was disputed then, and remains a longstanding subject of controversy.

**Gay liberation and the new press**

Press-wise, it was *Tout!* that first threw open its pages to gay liberation, printing the Black Panther’s endorsement of the American women’s and gay movements at its launch in September 1970. BPP leader Huey Newton sidestepped fears of a gay ‘threat to our manhood’ to assert that ‘maybe a homosexual could be the most revolutionary of revolutionaries’ and to condemn talk in the movement of ‘dirty queers’ and ‘wimps’. Now the ball bounced back across the Atlantic: alongside Newton’s statement *Tout!* provided the first description of Stonewall, the New York Christopher Street riots of June 1969 that marked the birth of the Gay Liberation Front. The full article was almost certainly introduced by Hocquenghem, now at the helm of *Tout!* and author of

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37 The MLF acronym appeared as yet another *gauchiste*-style label to many of the women involved, and this, along with the use of ‘woman’ instead of ‘women’ was continually questioned throughout this period. However it came to represent the women’s movement in the public eye, until the acronym was legally appropriated by feminist psychoanalyst Antoinette Fouque and her friends in 1979, viewed by other feminists as a usurpation, or confiscation of the movement’s memory.
38 ‘Déclaration de camarade H.P. Newton…’, *Tout!* no.1, 23 September 1970, p. 7. The statement was prompted by (gay) French playwright Jean Genet’s objections to Panther members’ casual use of the terms ‘faggots’ and ‘punks’, to describe their political enemies. Genet was in the US at the time and strongly fraternised with the BPP, but did not consider himself a fighter for gay liberation. Nonetheless his solidarity, coupled with an unashamed homosexual identity, left its mark on BPP attitudes. See Edmund White, *Genet* (London: Vintage, 1993) pp. 607-610.
‘C’est personnel, tout le monde en discute’, a signal statement on the new type of life-change politics the paper promulgated.39

Two follow-up issues allowed gay voices to be heard. In ‘Homosexuels’, a reader’s letter, the US black movement was again elevated as a model, and ‘official society’ castigated for marginalising women and gays; but the reader posited alternative movements for these groups, to the ‘purists of the abstract society’-most likely the groupuscules that would rather take power than change daily life.40 ‘Ho-ho-homosexuels’, the mocking adaptation of a pro-Ho Chi Minh demo chant, prefaced another attack on the PCF and ‘ultra-Leninists’ for reproducing society’s ‘terrorism’ and regarding gay militants with contempt. As such Tout!’s gay articles initially followed a similar pattern of critique to that of the MLF, impatient with a broad left ‘establishment’ that proved unwilling or unable to meet the demands of a burgeoning sexual liberation movement.

Curiously, homosexuality vanished as a theme in the paper until Tout! no.12, when it would reappear in spectacular fashion. Moreover, this April 1971, revolutionary manifestation of gay liberation was the corollary of a week-old radical feminist activity: MLF members, among them Françoise d’Eaubonne, Anne-Marie Fauret, and Christine Delphy disrupted the popular RTL radio show of agony aunt Ménie Grégoire, themed the ‘painful problem’ of homosexuality, where podium commentary had been given over to a priest, a psychoanalyst and notably, Arcadie’s André Baudry. Following several critical interventions from the floor, listeners at home were surprised to hear shouts of ‘Liberté!’ and ‘Battez-vous!’, the invasion of audience members, before the microphones were cut and the programme music kicked in.41 The event is often viewed in retrospect as the first action of the gay liberation movement in France, of which the Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR), a title redolent of the new movement’s radical intentions, was the direct consequence.42

39 Tout! no.1 op cit. p. 7.
40 ‘Courrier Critiques Diffusion’, Tout! no.2 p. 2
41 ‘Homosexualité, ce douloureux problème’, Revue h, no.1, summer 1996, pp. 52-59. When Baudry was invited to speak, there were laughs from the activists in the studio audience. He nonetheless proceeded to speak, claiming that over 20 years Arcadie had contacted half a million homophiles in France alone.
42 Elisabeth Salvaresi recalls sitting with Hocquenghem in a café opposite the Beaux-Arts, discussing the name FHAR. Marie-Jo Bonnet signals the FHAR’s alternative homophonic meaning of ‘headlight’, lighting the way.
The movement was then to make its baptism of fire with issue 12 of Tout!, all the more shocking for its disruption of the paper’s hitherto essentially gauchiste schedule. As with the unfolding women’s movement, the accent was on the provocative and derisive: the fold-over back page bore the image of a woman’s buttocks, the caption cheekily exclaiming: ‘Y’en a plein le cul!’ In emulation of the Observateur’s publication of the abortion manifesto, another entry proclaimed: ‘Nous sommes plus de 343 salopes. Nous nous sommes faits enculer par des arabes’, daring the liberal weekly to publish this statement, and citing writer Jean Genet’s empathy with the FLN through sleeping with Algerians. Indeed, this was also an allusion to the trips some Parisian gays made to Algiers for sex with local boys, who could exact revenge on the ‘colonial West’ by taking it in turns to penetrate the tourists. The article justified the interracial sexual encounters in the context of a rapport of solidarity with Arabs, and a counter to non-gay leftists’ reproach of racism. An addendum stating: ‘Nous en sommes fiers et nous recommencerons’, echoed yet again the defiant US gay and black ‘pride’ attitude.

Tout! took homosexuality into new political territory, channelled by a renewal of revolutionary left language and concepts. To the gauchiste repertoire of expressions, the paper added a range of new and radical FHAR-MLF terms, some an intellectual reaction to oppression, such as hétéro-flic and phallocrate, whose principal target was the domineering straight male. Others provocatively reclaimed low-life pejoratives like ‘travelos/trannies’, ‘tante/auntie’, besides the now-standard homophobic insults pédé and gouine as double-edged terms for homosexual and lesbian identity. Tout! even spoke of ‘our ghetto’, in another echo of Afro-American oppression. The impact of no.12 was widespread, provoking establishment outrage and equally, the rapturous welcome of many gays across the country. Besides Royer, complaints came from Michel Caldaguès, a deputy of the conservative UDR, and 15th arrondissement Gaullist deputy Nicole de Hautecloque, who put a question to the Assembly demanding that Marcellin end the ‘debauchery’ at the high school gates. While the vice squad staged a well-coordinated raid on VLR’s La Commune bookshop in the hunt for no.12, police cleared vendors from outside a number of lycées, confiscating their papers. But the special issue still represented a huge step forward for many individual and often isolated gays. The founder of later journal Gai Pied, Jean Le Bitoux, was a student activist in Nice at the time.

44 J-J. Lebel interview, 28 February 2008. Lebel met some whilst on holiday in Algiers and witnessed this activity.
45 P. Haski, interview, 3 December 2008.
J’achète la presse alternative, Actuel, Tout!, Le Front Libertoire... je tombe sur le numéro 12 de Tout ! chez le kioskiste en bas de chez moi. Et puis je lis sur la double page verte: ‘Homosexuels de tous pays libérez vous’ [...] J’étais totalement foudroyé, c’est-à-dire que je ne savais pas que mon horrible bizarre sexualité pouvait avoir un discours politique. C’était un coup de foudre. Je vous jure que je ne me suis pas encore remis. Ça va résoudre 2 choses : ça peut donner une grande fierté aux homosexuels de ce pays et je vais moi me payer sur la tête, je vais travailler sur la révolution homosexuelle, et ça m’arrange aussi, pour ma propre image. Parce que je n’avais pas l’intention du tout de devenir un pédé bourgeois. Je me serais suicidé.46

Le Bitoux would shortly help set up the Nice FHAR, one of a number of provincial groups created in the wake of no.12. Indeed, the hastily-convened Tours chapter of the FHAR was able to mobilise several busloads of protestors to a local protest against Royer.47 Thanks to the publicity Tout! gave to the FHAR in no.12, the group’s meetings in the Paris Beaux-Arts grew tenfold, from 40 to 400 in the space of a week, people travelling from as far away as Marseille to attend.48 Tout! exalted this effervescence of gay activity, reporting on the sizeable, noisy, contingent of the FHAR on the Mayday demonstration, and the hundreds of people spilling out of the Beaux-Arts meeting on 6 May into the rue Bonaparte in celebration of their new-found movement.49

Subsequent issues covered a debate on the far left over the eruption of the FHAR in its pages. Lutte Ouvrière (LO), the Trotskyist organisation and its eponymous paper, came in for bitter attack, as their immediate reaction was to dismiss the possibility of gay liberation, by reducing the question of sexual freedom under capitalism to the ‘alienated’ level of pornography and prostitution.50 Furthermore, in referencing Tout!’s explicit article on Arabs, Lutte Ouvrière sarcastically traced back to an orthodox Trotskyist critique of Maoism:

“‘Faire la révolution’ veut réellement dire changer la vie (et d’abord sa vie)” écrit Tout (et c’est lui qui souligne), voila comment l’individualisme petit bourgeois en arrive, après s’être réclamé du stalinisme, et du socialisme dans un seul pays, à se faire le chantre du ‘socialisme’ dans un seul lit.51

48 Michael,Sibalis, ‘Gay Liberation Comes to France’, in French History and Civilisation. Papers from the George Rudé Seminar, vol 1, 2005, pp. 265-276, p. 271. In the final issue of Tout!, a gay writer maintains that numbers jumped from from 20 pre-no.12 to 700 after the 1 May demo, i.e. within a fortnight.
49 ‘Les pédés ça s’écrase!’ in Tout! no.13, 17 May 1971, p. 2. Unfortunately, this joyous manifestation of homosexuality was interrupted by a motorist who ran into the crowd, injuring three people.
51 ‘Tout! ou rien?’, Lutte Ouvrière, no.140, 4-10 May 1971, p. 13. The Trotskyist line was that Maoism was another variant of Stalinism, in other words that Maoists looked uncritically to the doctrine of top-down bureaucratic states, the model being China, failing to see in them the distortion of revolutionary Marxism and the continuation of oppressive class society.
It appears that the Hocquenghem-led critique of a puritanical *gauchisme* was grounded in fact, at least as far as LO was concerned. One ex-member of LO, Yvan Lemaitre, speaks of the leadership’s dismissal of the FHAR, citing internal talk of gays as deviants, and a basic anti-gay prejudice.\(^{52}\) Indeed, the Trotskyist organisation has persisted in its refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of gay rights until just recently. Le Bitoux is unequivocal on the persistent antagonism:

> En tant qu’homophobes il n’y avait pas mieux [LO]. Horrible ! Comme on était homosexuel on était que des petits bourgeois. On ne peut pas travailler avec les homosexuels qui veulent une société petite bourgeoise tranquille pour vivre leurs amours pervers tranquilles. Le discours de Mme Arlette Laguiller c’est une merveille. Tous ces groupuscules d’extrême gauche invitaient le FHAR et le MLF dans leur grand meeting annuel à Paris, sauf Lutte Ouvrière.\(^{53}\)

Le Bitoux’s contempt for LO does not extend to other Trotskyist groups such as the Ligue Communiste who sent militants into the developing gay movements of the 70s; he sees their attitude as more ambiguous given their recognition of, yet detachment from those movements. Regarding the Maoists’ reaction to *Tout!*, there had also been homophobic snipes by individual GP militants over the first ‘pink’ issue of the paper, and another Maoist bookshop on the Boulevard St.Michel, Norman Béthune, refused to stock and sell no.12.\(^{54}\) The dominant far left charge of ‘petit-bourgeois’ politics when denoting the questions of gender and sexual liberation prompted *Tout!* to devote a full page article to the question. The paper sought to turn the tables on the ‘revolutionary catechists’ by pointing to conservative habits inside the worker’s and left movements, those that reflected the ‘stinking moral values of the bourgeoisie’: respect for the discipline of work and home, commensurate with a sexual repression of youth, who would sooner or later, ‘deviate from the paths of marriage and the family’.\(^{55}\)

The eruption of gay liberation onto the political scene prompted the publication in June of *Rapport contre la normalité*, fulfilling a similar, consolidating role for the FHAR as *Partisans* had done for the MLF the previous October. A manifesto of sorts, the *Rapport* expanded on the

\(^{52}\) Y. Lemaitre, interview, 26 November 2008.

\(^{53}\) J. Le Bitoux, interview, 17 November 2008.

\(^{54}\) Norman Bethune was a Scottish-born Canadian doctor who joined the Chinese Communists and served as a field surgeon in 1938. He died from an injury the following year and was posthumously honoured by Mao. The bookstore acted as a hub for a variety of Maoist groups, in particular ‘orthodox’ Maoists such as the PCMLF.

\(^{55}\) ‘Qui est petit-bourgeois?’ *Tout!* no.14, 7 June 1971, p. 8. Significantly, in the context of sexual liberation, *Tout!* viewed the trade unions not only as allies of capital - they were also seen as part-and-parcel of a bourgeois moral order, and stood as an impediment to the ‘total liberation’ of the proletariat.
articles in *Tout!*, reprinting whole texts from no.12, and provided a chronology of the paper’s brush with the law: “Tout! et les bonnes moeurs”.\(^{56}\) Indeed, in spite of its widespread diffusion, the *Rapport* was also the subject of police seizures.\(^{57}\) These new publications were the expression of the spontaneity and daring of a new movement being born. However, the FHAR was far from homogeneous in thought and deed. Very quickly, a line of demarcation was drawn between male and female participants. As a woman in the FHAR, Marie-Jo Bonnet contends that *Tout!* unwittingly tipped the balance in the movement towards men:

Il affluaient au FHAR tandis que le nombre de femmes restait sensiblement le même. Nous nous sentions dépossédées du FHAR, de la parole, de notre visibilité et peut-être encore de notre libération sexuelle.\(^{58}\)

Consequently Bonnet and her lesbian friends were to set up the *Gouines Rouges*/Red Dykes, the title derived from a passing insult heard on a FHAR demo. They came to see themselves as a MLF rather than FHAR grouping.\(^{59}\) Another of the *Gouines*’ criticisms was directed against the Gazolines, or *folles*, a loose grouping of transvestite men who revelled in the provocation of flamboyant female dress and the language of subversion. For Bonnet they paraded degrading feminine stereotypes.\(^{60}\) Others in the FHAR disagreed; for Alain Huet of *L’Antinorm*, the Gazolines represented the ‘guarantee of the FHAR’s independence’.\(^{61}\) Indeed, Huet saw the FHAR in general as ‘irrécupérable’ by virtue of its total incompatibility with the moral order, but also because of the movement’s autonomy from prowling factions.

The movement harboured varying political sensibilities, often nestled in the Parisian *groupes de quartiers*. One product of these groups was *Le Fléau Social*, calling itself the journal of ‘Groupe 5’ of the FHAR. In fact the publication, a *trimestriel* that reached five issues over two years, was principally the work of Alain Fleig, who was the FHAR’s initial correspondence secretary.\(^{62}\) Symbolically, the title appropriated Mirguet’s 1960 denigration of homosexuality, in a similar ironic vein to the FHAR’s ‘claiming’ of homophobic insults. Fleig brought a strong situationist

\(^{56}\) FHAR, *Rapport contre la normalité* (Paris: Champ Libre, 1971) p. 19. Champ Libre was also the publisher of left-cultural and situationist texts. Despite the *Rapport*’s fuller treatment of FHAR ideas, Girard maintains that the essential politics of the movement were contained in the ‘spontaneous expression’ of *Tout!* no.12.


\(^{59}\) In A. Avellis and G. Ferluga’s *La Révolution du Désir* (France 2007) M-J. Bonnet speaks of the Gouines Rouges as a liaison group between MLF and FHAR.

\(^{60}\) M-J. Bonnet, op cit.

\(^{61}\) A. Huet, interview, 26 November 2009.

\(^{62}\) J. Le Bitoux, interview, 17 November 2008.
sensibility to the journal, with virulent attacks on the family, traditional values and the commercialisation of sexuality. No.1 displayed its filiation to the May events three years previously: ‘Heureusement, depuis ’68 [...] tout cela bouge’. Early collaborators included Françoise d’Eaubonne, organiser of the Internationale Homosexuel Révolutionnaire (IHR), a pan-European gay network that the authors helped set up and propagate.

Fleig’s situationism led Le Fléau Social to oppose all rigid forms of thought: ‘Toute pensée dès qu’on la fixe devient débile et forcément dépassé’, and indeed, rejected the specificity of homosexuality. Instead, politics was seen as key. There was also an aesthetic quality, each cover a different colour, and delivered a satirical, surreal, often sexually-charged image, from no.1’s drooling Crumb head to the final issue’s erect penis-as-rejection of democracy (fig.6.3). The first issue simply lifted Tout!’s cheeky Bertrand cartoons, occasionally re-writing the word bubbles. The long, polemical and theoretical articles were accompanied by trademark situationist cartoons, sketches and logographic artwork. Subsequent issues adopted the familiar détournement of lo-brow comic strips, using Charles Schulz’s Charlie Brown kids and Snoopy to deliver the journal’s radical critiques of family values. As such Le Fléau Social was satirical, with an acerbic take on all conservative, traditional aspects of French society, reflecting in this Tout!’s provocative, hyper-critical style. By the final issue in 1974, it spoke violently, scatologically even, of breaking from the ‘Marxist scum’, taking a swipe at the other FHAR publication L’Antinorm:

Ces zigotos sont devenus effectivement les appendices du trotskysme [...] le bras homosexuel du gauchisme [...] poujadistes de la quéquette.

L’Antinorm is often paired with Le Fléau Social in the historiography of the FHAR, because they both grew out of similar circumstances - the groupes de quartiers- and it led a short, two year existence, from 1972 to 1974. But foremost is the impression that both journals’ development, and opposing sensibilities demonstrated the growing fractiousness of the homosexual née buluse in the first half of the 70s. Propelled by Guy Maës and Tout!’ contributor Anne-Marie Fauret, L’Antinorm’s ideas were a fusion of Marxism and the sexual theories of Wilhelm Reich. The journal made space for various identities within the FHAR; besides gay

63 ‘Cours camarade le vieux monde est derrière toi’, LFS, no.1 June 1972, p. 2
64 ibid.
65 ‘Antinorm dans la norme’, Le Fléau Social no.5-6, 1 July 1974, p. 5. Poujadiste means politically inward-looking, reactionary, coming from the xenophobic, petit bourgeois union movement headed by Pierre Poujade in the 1950s.
men, lesbians, bisexuals and transvestites contributed regularly. One typical entry demonstrated a celebration of the movements’ new-found, derisive language and attitude:

Qu’est-ce qu’une folle masculine? Ah ! mes doux et très chers psycho-flico-hétéro-chéries, quel paradoxe. Quel problème pour votre code classificateur, pas de case prévue encore pour moi. Il faudra y remédier au plus vite ou je vais être vexée mes très chères petites filles ‘modèles’…  

However, L’Antinorm’s general orientation was towards a more serious revolutionary left. In issue 3, Maës attempted to articulate a strategy for the FHAR, seeing in May ‘68 an ‘actual, practical dimension’ to the struggle against sexual repression.  

L’Antinorm criticised the ambivalence of leftist attitudes towards the FHAR, but was more particular in its choice of political targets than Le Fléau. Taking the homophobia of ‘normal’ society for granted, L’Antinorm contributors mounted a scathing attack on the PCF, and Communist leaders Jacques Duclos and Pierre Juquin in particular, for their condemnation of homosexuality. The Maoists of Front Rouge and La Cause du Peuple were successively derided by Fauret for their apparent dismissal of the FHAR, and more opprobrium was heaped on LO for its overt hostility towards gay politics. By contrast, L’Antinorm progressively opened up to the Ligue Communiste, who, despite a trenchant critique of the folles in a May 1972 issue of Rouge, appeared to warm to the revolutionary standpoint of Maës and his friends. The best evidence of this rapprochement was the back cover of the June 1973 issue of the journal declaring its solidarity with the recently-banned Ligue. Whereas Le Fléau promoted the IHR, L’Antinorm listed the addresses of their Western European and North American counterparts, and could reproduce cartoons from the US gay press. The journal was less noted for its artistic output, relying on rough hand-drawn sketches of sexual scenes, some of sexual provocation, others of simple satire. L’Antinorm could however put together some ‘detourned’ situationist-style photo-stories, demonstrating its sellers’ active participation in events such as a protest.

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67 ‘Sexpol ou la révolution sexuelle’, L’Antinorm, no.3 p. 8. Drawing heavily from Reich’s Combat Sexuel de la Jeunesse, Maës called for the overthrow of both capitalism and the bourgeois moral order. In spite of Reich’s ejection of homosexuality, L’Antinorm happily assimilated the title of the theorist’s ‘Sexpol’ movement to the journal’s name. This would become one of the leitmotivs of the journal, so much so that when L’Antinorm folded due to financial problems in 1973-74, it gave way to a revamped version of itself, Sexpol, in 1975.
68 ‘Vous ne nous normaliserez pas’, L’Antinorm no.1, December 1972, pp. 12-13. FHAR had intervened alongside MLF members at a public meeting of the PCF at the Mutualité in January of that year, only for Duclos to tell them to ‘go get cured, the PCF is not unhealthy’.
69 Interior Minister Raymond Marcellin outlawed the Ligue and the fascist Ordre Nouveau on 21 June following the clashes with police at an Ordre Nouveau meeting outside the Mutualité.
against nuclear weapons, the Larzac camp extension, and the journal’s overall identification with
the *gauchiste* movements (fig.6.4).

With *Tout!* having expired, and the FHAR disintegrating, Hocquenghem was to carry the
provocative, subversive message of homosexuality into the journal *Recherches*, run by (anti-)
psychiatrist Felix Guattari and the CERFI, in late 1972.\(^{70}\) One of the journal writers, ex-UNEF
and 22 mars activist Anne Querrien, describes the arrival of Hocquenghem at *Recherches* with a
copy of Deleuze and Guattari’s *L’Anti-Oedipe* under his arm: ‘C’est mon livre’.\(^{71}\) Showing the
influence of the philosophers’ concept of ‘desiring machines’, the team around Hocquenghem
put together a series of articles addressing the multi-faceted nature of homosexuality, ‘deviant’
though with its potential inherent in all, hence the full title *Trois Milliards de Pervers: Grande
Encyclopédie des Homosexualités*. The journal discussed taboo themes of masturbation,
paedophilia, and Arab love, in a celebration of ‘strange’, hidden, or forbidden sexual practices,
accompanied by the subversive imagery of Jean-Jacques Lebel, the gay iconography of Tom of
Finland, and the detourned boy scout cartoons. In its handling of such themes, *Recherches*
directly reprised *Tout!*’s Dadaesque manifesto of sexual liberties, with, besides Hocquenghem
and Lebel, *Tout!* participants Christian Maurel and Georges Marbeck contributing to its texts.
The special issue also featured input from prominent writers Sartre, Foucault and Genet, though
their presence was not sufficient in preventing the government from banning the sale of *Trois
Milliards* and dragging its editorial team to court.\(^{72}\)

The drift and eventual disbandment of the FHAR in 1973 led to a re-assessment by a number of
activists on the nature of gay political organisation, leading the following year to the
construction of the Groupes de Libération Homosexuelle (GLH).\(^{73}\) One component of these, the
GLH-PQ (Politique et Quotidienne) was fronted by Le Bitoux, whose ongoing commitment to a
revolutionary manifestation of homosexuality saw him contribute to *Libération*, and eventually
found *Gai Pied*

\(^{70}\) CERFI being Centre d’Études, de Recherches et de Formation Institutionnelles.
\(^{71}\) A. Querrien, interview, 5 January 2009.
\(^{72}\) Querrien states that several thousand copies of the book were sold before the ban was enforced. Despite
its prominent witnesses, the defence failed to stop the journal from incurring a fine and the ban on certain
passages, notably that on paedophilia. The revised version is viewable online at:
http://www.criticalsecret.com/n8/quer/4per/
\(^{73}\) The FHAR was forcibly ejected from the Beaux Arts by the police in December 1973, at the request of
the school authorities.
Tout!, the FLJ and the question of youth

Youth became a special category for Tout! perhaps because of the co-existence of the Front de Libération des Jeunes (FLJ), a small, loose offshoot of VLR composed of friends from the lycées, teenagers from the Cités, and occasionally loubards, that coalesced in the autumn of 1970. For a political party to possess a youth front was in itself banal. Unlike the MLF and FHAR, the FLJ lived quite comfortably with VLR. 20 year-old musician Michael Memmi recalls: ‘Castro was dazzled by what we were able to do’. Indeed, the VLR founder’s rationalization was that with VLR-Tout!, ‘On était sensible à tout ce qui ce passait dans la jeunesse’, indicating the inadequacy of the old Maoist apparatus. Echoing Deshayes’ analysis of spontaneous actions at Nanterre, Memmi asserts that although a small minority, the FLJ had real pulling power; in actions such as at the January 1971 audience occupation of the Palais des Sports, or in protest at the police assault on Richard Deshayes, where ‘you could say that there were thousands in VLR’.

What is more, the FLJ developed its own philosophy and action repertoire, imbued with situationist language, and ultimately outlived its parent structure. As such it was closer to the marginal, ‘autonomous’ sensibilities of Tout! than the ideological militancy of VLR, indeed the younger members were avid sellers of the paper. Richard Deshayes, then figurehead of the youth group, today posits a studied assessment of 1970s youth concepts to explain the mindset of the movement:

L’idée principale du FLJ c’était de dire que leur civilisation bourgeoise était pour nous décadent, en train de pourrir et de mourir, tandis que la nôtre ne faisait qu’émouvoir. On sentait que c’était quelque chose qui n’était pas politique mais civilisationnelle, anthropologique.

Deshayes’ mission was to continue the agitation of ‘68, to ‘prolong the event’ as he puts it, enabling new social relations, situations, even ‘happenings’ – house occupations, demonstrations, concert invasions.

74 Amongst others could be cited the PCF’s Jeunesses Communistes (JC), the LC’s Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR), the lambertist-Trotskyist AJS, not forgetting the Jeunesse Etudiante Chrétienne (JEC)
75 M. Memmi, interview, 3 August 2009.
77 M. Memmi, op cit. In this Memmi echoes Deshayes’ characterization of VLR at Nanterre, in its ability to pull large numbers with only a small, vociferous group of activists.
79 ibid.
It must also be stressed that the FLJ was driven by the urge to fight the police and authorities, in a climate of state repression directed against the perceived heirs of May ‘68. Tout! and other radical papers unavoidably privileged articles denouncing this ‘anti-youth racism’, as it appeared endemic to the experience of being a leftist, and simply of being young. Gilles Dinnematin, one of the younger participants at the paper, gives an insight into judicial approaches of the time:

C’était en 1971-72, j’étais bien habillé, avec des grands cheveux. Je marchais sur le trottoir et j’ai vu un car de police. Puis ils sont descendus, ils m’ont sauté dessus m’accusant d’avoir volé une voiture. Une 404. C’était bien monté parce qu’on pouvait démarrer les 404s sans clé à cette époque. Je m’en suis sorti parce que j’étais bien habillé. Mais entretemps j’ai vu plein de jeunes trainés devant le tribunal ; ils chopaien 3 à 6 mois de taule […] un flic était là, il racontait à chaque fois la même histoire […] ça existe toujours. 80

A number of other interviewees at Tout!, linked to the alternative press in general, relate instances of disproportionate harassment, physical aggression or incarceration endured at the hands of the police and the courts, on account of their youthful appearance, youthful exuberance or participation in youth-linked protest. 81

The extension of youth activism to contest festivals de fric, to reclaim rock; the interviewee references to the movies Easy Rider, Ice, Punishment Park, and Joe, all highlight the pervasive influence of American counterculture at this point. Furthermore, the nébuleuse of young men and women around VLR was a hive of liberal sexual habits. Of the older students and ex-students in the organisation it is claimed, in exaggerated fashion, that ‘We all slept with each other’. 82 It appears that the friends of the FLJ were more promiscuous in their sexual habits, including in written form:

ON NOUS BRIME LE SEXE! Mais ça ne va pas durer – BAISONS! est aussi un bon mot d’ordre – y a beaucoup de choses a dire là-dessus. 83

Memmi talks of it as ‘waking up with your best friend’s girlfriend the next day’, or sleeping with two girls at once. 84 However, the sexual politics of the youth group were clearly open to challenge. Straight males were directly challenged on their sexual habits in Tout! with the MLF

80 G. Dinnematin, interview, 22 May 2008.
81 Notably Léon Cobra, Yves Hardy, Michael Memmi and Florence Cestac.
84 M. Memmi, op cit.
text ‘Votre libération sexuelle n’est pas la nôtre’.\textsuperscript{85} In a final FLJ article alluding to the constraints on youth sexuality, the likely male author attempted to articulate a young woman’s sexual oppression as part of an overall subjugation of youth, though primarily in terms of her inability to reach orgasm, and as a riposte to the reactionary disgust of \textit{français moyens} at her short skirt.\textsuperscript{86} Questions of sexuality stayed problematic, particularly with regards to the objectification of women. That said, images of the FLJ in its latter stages showed a core presence of female members (\textbf{fig.6.5}).

Other activists looked to Deshayes as a natural leader, especially the male \textit{lycéens} and students. A militant of the \textit{lycée} Chaptal CA in 1968-69, he demonstrated an early capacity for subversion, helping to organise a blockade of his institution over the question of screening disallowed films on May ‘68, and then physically repelling the headteacher.\textsuperscript{87} This earned him an expulsion, to which VLC answered with a text poster, reproduced in \textit{Action}, in which he denounced the government’s suppression of the right to political information and expression.\textsuperscript{88} Buffon \textit{lycéen} Pierre Haski points to Deshayes’ eristwhile street-fighting ability: ‘On l’estimait, il était à la tête des manifs, il revenait pour aider les autres’.\textsuperscript{89} There was also a physical allure to the FLJ leader, (VLR) feminist Françoise Picq stating: ‘Il était comme un archange, habillé tout en blanc’.\textsuperscript{90} For Memmi his ‘courage and motivation’ were allied to an education: ‘He had two sides, the fighter and the dialectic’.\textsuperscript{91} Memmi’s depiction underlines Deshayes’ speaking role in a number of interventions, notably during the illegal incursion of the Rolling Stones concert in September 1971, when he took to the stage mic to condemn the ‘\textit{récupération} of rock’.\textsuperscript{92} His speaking style was ‘revolutionary, heroic’, intimating sacrifice and martyrdom, states Stéphane Courtois, when describing the speech Deshayes made to Nanterre militants prior to a \textit{lycée commando} raid.\textsuperscript{93}

A number of passages in \textit{Tout!} reveal Deshayes’ ‘poet-warrior’ prose, most tellingly in the FLJ manifesto of February 1971, in which he advocated a polemical break with the institutional

\textsuperscript{85} ‘Votre libération sexuelle n’est pas la nôtre’, \textit{Tout!} no.15, p. 3
\textsuperscript{86} ‘Créons des lieux de vie dans cette société de mort’, \textit{Tout!} no.16, 29 July 1971, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{87} M. Wlassikoff, interview, 2 June 2008.
\textsuperscript{89} P. Haski, interview, 28 July 2008.
\textsuperscript{90} F. Picq, interview, 7 February 2008.
\textsuperscript{91} Memmi, op cit.
\textsuperscript{93} S. Courtois, interview, 5 June 2008.
forms of the family, school, and work and their associated values, punctuating the text with May ‘68 situationist slogans, notably ‘Vivre sans temps mort, jouir sans entraves’. The very title of the piece exuded this spirit: ‘Vivre, c’est pas survivre’, further underlining the assimilation of situationist verbiage into the thought processes, of particularly younger VLR members. What does survive in the memory of ex-VLR respondents is the text’s poetic motto: ‘Nous ne sommes pas contre les vieux, mais contre ce qui les a fait vieillir’, made more poignant by the finality of the text: ‘Interrompu par une grenade’. The VLR-Tout! milieu was central to the propagation of this text after the grievous injury inflicted on Deshayes, in particular printing tens of thousands of papers, posters and flyers, headlined ‘Ils veulent tuer’. Anarchist Marc Tomsin, then selling Tout! at the Place des Fêtes, explains the reaction:

L’impact de sa blessure était important […] le fait qu’un jeune homme prenne une grenade en pleine figure, à bout portant, avec l’intention de tuer, c’est très fort. Il y a une correspondance avant c’est avec la mort de Gilles Tautin, le lycéen qui va se noyer en tentant d’échapper aux CRS à Flins en 68 et qui a déclenché une émotion très forte. On retrouve une émotion, pas aussi forte que ça, mais ce que arrive à Richard Deshayes c’est très fort. En revanche les grands médias n’en font pas un cas important, d’où le fait que la presse qui est en train de naître issue de ‘68, à travers l’histoire de Richard Deshayes, prend toute son importance et toute sa place. D’ailleurs pour bien voir le sens et l’écho, il faut lire cette presse-là ; c’est pas à travers Le Monde qu’on va trouver quelque chose […] Le mot qu’on utilisait c’était la contre-information.

Indeed, the photo of Deshayes’ bloodied face would be reproduced in numerous left or underground papers, including Rouge, Jeune Rebelle, La Cause du Peuple and Actuel. Significantly, Le Nouvel Observateur affixed the image to its article on VLR’s break-up, and Politique Hebdo followed up with a journalist’s eye witness account of the incident.

The tremendous reaction to Deshayes’ injury and the simultaneous jailing of young lycéen Gilles Guiot served to push questions of youth welfare to the fore, certainly as far as Tout! was concerned. The paper increasingly focused on violence against young people, erupting again at the killing of a 17 year-old, Jean-Pierre Huet, in the desolate northern Paris suburb of La Courneuve, by a gun-wielding bar owner. Subsequently the photographer Henri Cartier-

94 M. Wlassikoff, M.Memmi, R.Deshayes, G.Olive, J-J. Lebel all testify to the penetration of situationism into the VLR milieu.
95 ibid.
97 N. Monier, ‘L’affaire Richard Dehayes: un témoignage’ Politique Hebdo, no.20, 18 February 1971, p. II. Monier explains that while following the police he witnessed them kick the injured Deshayes when he was down, and later saw them clear bystanders, making comments such as ‘the bastard got what he deserved’.
98 Huet, frustrated at his failure to find work, had smashed a glass and thrown a pitcher of water at some shelving.
Bresson captured the spontaneous solidarity of 2000 suburban youth at Huet’s funeral, and passed his shots on to the paper (fig.6.6). As a paper of action, Tout! gave priority to youth’s capacity for resistance, citing a youngster on the ‘gangs’ functioning, not dissimilar to the FLJ:

‘C’est parce qu’on s’aime tous’. Un autre ‘c’est parce que si on est seul dans son coin on se fait baisser. Nous on est forts parce qu’on est ensemble. Il y a quatre chefs. S’il y en a un qui parle, il y a trois cents jeunes qui le suivent’. 99

When another young man, Jean-Pierre Guéri, was shot dead by a baker in the southern Parisian suburb of Sceaux-les-Blagis, the paper published a discussion between fifteen friends on how they would respond, alongside pictures of protests and the occupation of the local mini-club.100 Shopkeepers threatened to arm themselves against rampaging youth, prompting Tout! to cry ironically: ‘Faites des enfants mais occupez-les samedi soir!’ in the context of its anti-family diatribe.101 The cyclical themes of youth pillage, trader reprisal shootings and protest persisted until the final issues. However, while celebrating the plunder of shops in the Quartier Latin in June, Tout! warned against capitalism’s structural manipulation of needs, for which looting, itself representing the acquisition of goods, stayed within ‘market values’, and was no liberation. Distribution-consumption was ‘the biggest cop in our head’.102

With no.16, and a special section handed to the FLJ, these ‘live or die’, confrontational slogans abounded: ‘S’ils tuent alors nous tuerons aussi!’, one line in a series of feisty texts that outlined the ‘realities’ of juvenile existence in modern 1970s France:

Le vieux monde pourri n’est capable de comprendre la jeunesse qu’à travers son ‘indiscipline naturelle’ qui nécessite son eduKaSSion c’est logique. En première analyse, tout le monde se trouve uni, du père de famille au gouvernant, pour EduKer la jeunesse : le Communiste et le Capitaliste se retrouvent d’accord dans une grande coalition contre nous.103

The writer proposed a strategy for taking over empty buildings, schools, workplaces, even entire country villages, but in an offensive against the world of ‘vieux cons’, rather than a flight from youth oppression. In this showcasing of the FLJ, reinforced by the sketch of a lad firebombing the hotspots of Europe, Tout! stayed true to a revolutionary political project, eschewing the pure

100 ‘Joe, c’est aussi Sceaux-les-Blagis’, Tout! no.14, 7 June 1971, p. 3.
101 ibid. p. 1
102 ibid. p. 7.
103 ‘Créons des lieux de vie dans cette société de mort’, op cit. The use of ‘K’ in detourned words referenced Black Power’s angry denotation of the US as Amerikka, symbolic of white supremacy. ‘SS’ reprised the ‘CRS-SS’ equation of authority with fascism.
‘drop-out’ attitude of a peaceful, alternative lifestyle. At the same time, the FLJ advertised a summer of music and camping sauvage in Montpellier, eventually settling near the seaside town of Palavas-les-Flots. However, the festivities were cut short when clashes erupted between police and campers,\textsuperscript{104} many were arrested, and the FLJ dispersed inland, some finding solace in the hill communes of the nearby Cévennes.\textsuperscript{105}

Issue 16, the swansong of Tout!, also marked the termination of the FLJ as a formal entity. This was hinted at in the decision to dissolve its Paris AG, in favour of small ‘revolutionary communes’, but Palavas, and the general lassitude of the post-VLR-Tout! milieu, put paid to any coherent political project. Elsewhere, La Cause du Peuple-J’Accuse cited FLJ sympathisers during the fall out of Palavas, adopting Tout!’s discussion forum technique. This was not, however, the reflection of a GP-led youth organisation. The Maoist publication was quick to report on the capture of the Palais des Sports, covered the suburban youth killings, and was also at the forefront of the campaign protesting the racist murder of young Djellali Ben Ali in November 1971. Nonetheless the outlook at the paper remained steadfastly workerist. Indeed, when young GP member Pierre Overney was gunned down by a Renault security guard in February 1972, it was his class background that was referenced, whereas with the assault on Deshayes a year before, ‘the aspect that emerged was his youth’.\textsuperscript{106} On the counter-cultural wing of the alternative press, standard-bearer Actuel published the FLJ manifesto, and while rarely laying claim, in practical terms became the cultural paper of university-age youth, its expanding small ads columns attesting to an extensive networking in the country.

**New immigrant movements**

VLR’s prioritisation of anti-racism and the development of immigrant struggles in its papers was rooted in the recognition of immigrant workers’ involvement in 1968’s general strike. In the 1970 film On vous parle de Flins covering the trial of VLR activists over the Meulan raid, Algerian writer Kateb Yacine explains:

\textsuperscript{105} P. Bachelet, interview, 1 June 2008.
\textsuperscript{106} M. Tomsin, interview, 18 April 2008.
Les travailleurs immigrés étaient au devant des manifestations en mai 68. Ils agissaient de manière spontanée parce qu’ils étaient les plus exploités, et s’intéressaient le plus à l’explosion sociale. Mais aucun moyen de les organiser. Ils n’avaient pas leur propre organisation dans le mouvement ouvrier français.  

Furthermore, immigrants lacked a voice in the press. Not until 1970 with the scandals of Aubervilliers and Meulan did the dailies begin to seriously address the issue; noteworthy in that post-Aubervilliers, Chaban committed himself to erase the bidonvilles. On the other hand the far left sought to build on the traditional left perception of how racism divided French and foreign workers and benefited the employers, and the particular realisation that their field of action could include the largely non-unionised, ‘overexploited’, yet growing immigrant workforce; by 1970 it was estimated at three million strong, with 650,000 believed to be living in the sprawling bidonvilles/shanty towns.

The first, gauchiste paper to emerge to exclusively address these questions was Le Paria. Named after the 1922 Communist publication of Ho Chi Minh then an immigrant in Paris, Le Paria sought to promote discussion, exchange experiences, and ‘analyse the concrete forms imperialism takes in France’. VLR sympathiser and Le Paria contributor Jean-Paul Ribes explains:

Ce qui s’est passé avec la création du Paria, c’est un mélange de l’héritage de la solidarité de l’internationalisme que nous avions manifesté dans les années 60s en organisant les réseaux de soutien pendant la guerre d’Algérie. Tiers mondisme; solidarité avec les peuples qui veulent se libérer. Et un côté mai 68 qui était: on ne laisse plus passer le phénomène d’exploitation, on se révolte […] C’est pas un hasard que ce groupe s’est constitué à l’occasion de la commémoration de la manif du 17 octobre et avait choisi comme titre celui qui avait été donné par Ho Chi Minh quand il était à Paris.

In referencing the 17 October 1961 Paris police massacre of Algerian demonstrators as a contribution to the development of Algerian independence, Le Paria dwelt on the heroic aspect of mass Algerian protests in defiance of the French authorities, rather than the scandalous tragedy and cover-up the event ought to represent. A Maoist-influenced approach is further

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evidenced in *Le Paria*’s conduct of *enquêtes* in the run-down *foyers* and *bidonvilles*, and the paper’s habitual denunciation of the PCF. However, Ribes indicates that the spirit of *Le Paria* was to go beyond an UJ-style theorisation of the role of immigrant workers, to get closer to real immigrants’ lives. A libertarian link could be deduced from prominent anarchist Daniel Guérin’s directorship of the paper, and its affinity with *Défense Active*, a post-22 mars anti-repression group and bulletin that also sought to help struggling immigrants.

Despite its low profile and small circulation of 500 to 1000, *Le Paria* ran off 150,000 supplements in January 1970 in response to the Aubervilliers deaths and the resulting CNPF occupation. Here, the paper made copious use of the protestors’ banner and graffiti slogans, *À bas les nouveaux négriers, Patrons assassins* in French, Spanish and Arabic to drive home its approval of the direct action. A February issue focused on the exploitation of immigrants in housing and related a successful campaign of African workers against the extortions and deprivations of the Ivry ‘foyer’, citing one of the Malian organisers. Issue three, adopting the famous May ‘68 poster, insisted on *Le Paria*’s mission: ‘Exposer l’ennemi de classe commun à tous ouvriers français et immigrés: la bourgeoisie impérialiste’.

Much of the discussion was taken up with how to overcome specific workplace divisions between French and foreign workers, denouncing the mechanisms by which the police and employers controlled the situation and movements of immigrants. A bow to situationist farce was made in the *photo roman* of Chaban’s police destroying a *bidonville* (fig.6.7)

*Le Paria*’s advice to ‘action groups’ demonstrated the paper’s *basiste*, non-syndical ethos, seen again in ‘La Base Ouvrière– lettre d’un ouvrier immigré’, revealing a similar activist approach to VLR. Indeed, a first hand account of the Meulan action listing other insalubrious *foyers-hôtels* in the Flins region, points to further VLR involvement with the paper. *Vive Le Communisme* and *Vive La Révolution* both exhibited strong support for immigrant struggles throughout 1969 and 1970, believing that unity with French workers, and therefore political action, was best achieved around questions of living conditions. Nanterre students sought to apply this by opening a

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113 Additionally, *Le Paria* was produced at Simon Blumenthal’s NPP, the print shop of numerous Maoist publications.
114 J.-P. Ribes op cit.
116 ‘À bas la gangrène des SAT!’, op cit. p. 6. Two examples are given: the Fonds d’Action Sociale (FAS) and the Service d’Assistance Technique (SAT), both created in the 1950s, to regulate Algerian workers and in the case of the SAT round up FLN supporters among them. See J. House and N. McMaster *Paris 1961*, (Paris: Editions Tallandier, 2006)
crèche sauvage and the university restaurant to inhabitants of the nearby shanty town, while Beaux-Arts architecture students and VLR activists erected La Maison du Peuple with Portugese masons in Villeneuve-la-Garenne in the spring of 1970 (fig.6.8). La Cause du Peuple’s reaction to racism instead highlighted the physical interventions of GP militants around the Argentueil bidonville clearances, and the Ivry campaign, and called for revenge over Aubervilliers, further emphasising their overall militarist perspective of ‘popular war’.

With Tout! the mao-spontex style shifted again in a libertarian, even humanist direction. In a derision of the media (‘our newsgivers’), one of the front page headlines, ‘Mort pour un patron: un frère africain assassiné’, recounted the tragic death of Hamara Sumare, of tuberculosis, having worked ten years for Grandin-Montreuil sweeping a draughty basement.118 With this, Tout! shared in the grief felt by his co-workers, ending on the poignant: ‘La mort de Hamara est insupportable’. The approach was unique; as Hocquenghem stated in the launch issue: ‘C’est personnel’. A further sense of injustice mixed with frustration at the vulnerability of immigrants and native French inaction, fuelled the provocation of no. 3: ‘Français- êtes-vous racistes?’ However, it was also the prelude to VLR’s plan to turn the tables on French justice in the Meulan trial and show up state collusion in the exploitation of immigrants.

To these ends, issues 4 and 5 gave over their centre pages. The former was produced in the form of a four-page supplement entitled Spartacus- ou la révolte des esclaves, a detailed examination of the Meulan affair and its attendant issues: racism, poverty, and the press. ‘Qui condamne qui?’ the headline of the double-page spread in no.5. Hatzfeld and Ringart received suspended sentences of three years and six months respectively. VLR-Tout! hailed the case as a moral and political victory, especially as during the trial Hatzfeld read a lengthy condemnation of the employers, officials and the judiciary. Extracts re-printed in the paper spelt out his disgust with the system:

Je suis inculpé de violence volontaire avec préméditation. Nous vous accusons de la formidable violence quotidienne et volontaire que contient la traite des nègres […] Les travailleurs immigrés en France, c’est l’exploitation coloniale dans les rues et dans les usines. Cette présence est celle d’une oppression, c’est aussi celle d’une lutte. La classe ouvrière immigrée c’est la lutte des peuples du tiers-monde présente dans le cœur même des grandes cités industrielles. C’est la Palestine à Barbès. C’est Harlem partout.119

Again, VLR equated French imperialism to racism in the metropolis, re-affirming the integration of immigrants into the gauchistes’ wider vision of change. Militant street theatre re-enacting the traffic scandal ensued at Renault-Billancourt, accompanied by distribution of the Spartacus supplement among the large crowds of immigrant onlookers. Yacine was fulsome in his praise for the ‘Meulan’ militants:

Tous les algériens que je connais s’inspiraient de ça parce que c’était enfin des français qui faisaient quelque chose et c’était concret, un acte de lutte. 120

Input on immigrants in Tout! was not to return until May 1971. Unusually for a far left publication, an Arabophobic letter was printed, but only for it to be juxtaposed with the details of racist crimes; Tout! could retort ironically: ‘Non, la France n’est pas raciste’. 121 The question of race was also at the centre of an internal controversy at Tout!: the refusal of white women to sleep with Arabs. ‘Lettre de Mohammed’, accusing feminist radicals of racism, did not go unchallenged but exposed the contradictions of Tout!’s libertarian, laissez-faire approach. While the paper could carry articles linking Arabs with gay liberation, showing the paper’s far-reaching sexual radicalism, the lack of a more structured, holistic discourse on oppression in general led to unresolved debate and tensions. The strategy of opening the paper to all points of view was problematic, not least on the question of racism.

Although the dissolution of VLR and energy-drain of the Tout! project appeared as the logical outcome of divergent identity movements, still the mao-spontex model of loose, popular, action-based movements was to endure in the immigrant world. The 1970-71 Comités Palestine, were an important catalyst for immigrant organisation. 122 As one of the organisers, Tunisian Saïd Bouziri felt an affinity for the VLR drive to autonomy:

Avec VLR et Tout! c’était l’idée de l’autonomie et des mouvements. C’était clair dans le journal. La direction devait sortir de ces mouvements, que ça soit pour les jeunes avec le FLJ, c’est assez évident, pour le front homosexuel la même chose. Ça nous a permis, sans être avec eux, de dissoudre les comités de soutien à la révolution palestinienne entre étudiants français et quelques ouvriers immigrés, pour aller vers les masses. 123

Bouziri, one of a number of immigrant GP Maoist sympathisers, co-founded the Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes (MTA) in 1973 which brought together Arab immigrants in various anti-

120 K. Yacine, On vous parle de Flins, op cit.
121 Tout! no.15, 30 June 1971, p. 2.
racist campaigns. Moreover, the MTA dovetailed the growing involvement of immigrant workers in industrial action; OS strikes across Renault in May 1971 showed a strong presence, particularly at Flins and Billancourt (fig. 6.9). 1972 saw a wave of foreign workers’ strikes, foremost of which were at the Penarroya lead works near Lyon and Girosteel in Le Bourget. *Les Cahiers de Mai* were instrumental in bringing the Penarroya strike to the fore, both in the collaboration with the workers of articulating their demands, and linking up and informing other Penarroya factories. Of the organisational press, the anti-CGT *La Cause du Peuple* in particular hailed these strikes as breakthroughs. Trotskyist papers, though supportive, were more circumspect in the attention shown. Given their critical adherence to the unions, these were slower to respond to the unorganised, immigrant workplace action.

Outside of the workplaces, campaign themes diversified over housing, immigrant rights and anti-racism. Racist attacks and killings were common; a December 1973 *Nouvel Observateur* report counted 47 deaths for that year alone.124 *La Cause du Peuple* fomented campaigns with the support of prominent intellectuals over the racist murders of 15 year-old Djellali Ben Ali in the immigrant quarter of La Goutte d’Or in Paris in November 1971 and Mohammed Diab a year later (fig. 6.10). Hunger strikes against expulsions multiplied at the introduction in autumn 1972 of the *Circulaire Fontanet* that would make the regularisation of immigrants extremely difficult.

Appearing for the first time in 1973, the Arabic-French language paper of the MTA, *La Voix des Travailleurs Arabes*, a.k.a. Al Assifa, called for the establishment of ‘popular writing committees’ to provide the news it needed. An October issue highlighted the convergence of immigrant themes following a spate of vicious racist attacks that occurred in Marseille:

> Le journal arrive aux ouvriers à un moment important, quand les ouvriers arabes se lèvent en masse, par des grèves, les manifestations, pour assurer leur défense. Au moment où les racistes et les milieux fascistes veulent leur enlever le droit à l’expression sur leurs problèmes, sur les espoirs. C’est pourquoi il est si important pour les travailleurs arabes de se donner un journal. 125

Bouziri speaks of the ‘very spontaneous’ movement in Paris that arose in segue with the Marseille strike. The MTA acted as an informational network, then organising forum to pull out immigrant workers in construction sites and ‘hundreds of factories’ including the bastion of

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Citroën, in the capital. La Voix was unequivocal on the independence of immigrant action: ‘On a su mener notre propre movement, sans berger’.127

Other immigrant papers incorporated resistance to immigrant oppression into their native oppositional polemics. These included the Tunisian El Amel Tounsi, Al-Jaliya of Moroccan nationalists, the Portugese anti-colonial Camarada, and Grenoble’s O Alarme, all of varying print quality and often mimeographed and stapled. The paucity of immigrant means spelt a temporary existence for most of these bulletins, and therefore a need for bilingual leaflets and posters to rapidly generate support for particular campaigns.

The first stirrings of political ecology

‘Chacun a sa propre lecture de mai ‘68, mais pour moi c’était le début de l’écologie; la critique de la société de consommation’, states Charlie Hebdo’s Cabu today.128 While the gauchiste press in the immediate aftermath of May did not explicitly deal with the issue of ecology, the typical Marxist ideological framework sometimes incorporated consumerism as a theme. At the rentrée in 1968, Action questioned the logic that workers had benefited from Grenelle, in that the agreed wage rises were soon to be wiped out by inflation.129 Its statement ‘Consommez plus vous vivrez moins’ was also a nod to the situationist critique of the ‘spectacular society’, whereby the individual’s subordination to commodities was a central condition of their alienation.

It was above all in Hara-Hiri Hebdo that a political, environmental awareness grew through 1969-70, in the drawings of Cabu, Reiser, Gébé and especially political ecologist Pierre Fournier. While at first the Hara-Kiri Hebdo team produced humorous, satirical sketches on hypermarket madness, overpopulation and the arms race, Fournier soon came to make more serious political statements:

Pendant qu’on s’amuse avec des guerres et des révolutions qui s’engendrent les uns les autres en repentant toujours la même chose, l’homme est en train, à force d’exploitation technologique incontrôlée de rendre la terre inhabitable, non seulement pour lui mais pour toutes les formes de vie supérieures qui s’étaient jusqu’alors accommodées de sa présence. Le paradis

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127 La Voix des Travailleurs Arabes, op cit.
129 ‘Consommez plus vous vivrez moins’, Action, no.24, 4 September 1968, p. 2.
concentrationnaire qui s’esquise et que nous promettent les cons de technocrates ne verra jamais le jour parce que leur ignorance et leur mépris des contingences biologiques le tuent dans l’œuf. La seule vraie question qui se pose n’est pas de savoir s’il sera supportable une fois ne mais si, oui ou non, son avortement provoquera notre mort.\textsuperscript{130}

Fournier saw May as the possible dawn of a new type of intelligence, only for the Revolution to ‘fall back in the rut’ of the old slogans: ‘l’Évangile selon St.Mao’.\textsuperscript{131} His bold black and white cartoon strips rejected groupuscules and political violence as much as they berated the ecological bêtes noires of untrammelled industrialisation, nuclear power and pollution (\textit{fig.6.11}). Communists also came in for a satirical beating, Fournier exposing \textit{L’Humanité}’s hypocrisy in condemning Hiroshima while backing the ‘peaceful’ nuclear industry, essential to arms production.\textsuperscript{132} Indeed, in Fournier’s work an undercurrent of apocalypse could be gleaned from the perpetual references to nuclear holocaust. Elsewhere in the paper the theme of urban degeneration was considered, for instance in the dystopian fantasies of Willem (\textit{fig.6.12}).

The new crop of titles to emerge in autumn 1970, including Tout! accounted for minimal politickering and an openness to a diversity of political and cultural issues, including those of pollution and \textit{aménagement du territoire}. Most importantly, \textit{Politique Hebdo} provided a platform for Gébé to debut his utopian cartoon strip \textit{L’An 01}, on the advent of a new cooperative, nature-loving society, a rubric further developed in \textit{Charlie Mensuel}, and finally adapted to film with the collaboration of Jacques Doillon in 1973.\textsuperscript{133} Perhaps the most trenchant eco-urban critique came from Tout!, particularly Michel Quarez’s ‘Bonne Année’ cover of no.6-7: Pompidou’s consumerist, money-beholden France swamped by an apocalyptic tide; and his vision of state-sponsored urban development crushing nature in Grenoble (\textit{fig.6.13}). Newcomer to Tout! Lebel observed a Lefebvrian-situationist influence in the urbanist critique at the paper, led by those ex-Beaux Arts students:

\begin{quote}
[Urbanism] was fundamental, most of these guys were architects, Barda, Castro, Jean-Marie Léon. Urbanism is the real discourse of oppression. This is a situationist viewpoint first expressed by Marxist theoretician [Henri] Lefebvre… a perfect example of the process that went into Tout!\textsuperscript{134}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{131} ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} The site allocine.com states that the film was shown exclusively in Paris over a period of 18 weeks in 1973, bringing in 120,000 viewers.  \texttt{http://www.allocine.fr/film/anecdote_gen_cfilm=1302.html} (viewed 27 February 2010).
\textsuperscript{134} J-J. Lebel, interview, 22 May 2008.
Tout! slated the Pompidou’s Environment Minister Robert Poujade in its anti-pollution article ‘Un Ministère de merde!’ While clearly sympathetic to the ecological argument, the paper elucidated its points in socialist terms, placing the blame firmly at the door of the bourgeoisie:

Pour nous la socialisation de la vie a pour but fondamental l’accord de l’homme et de la nature, et ne peut résulter d’un décret ou du gout du Président de la République pour les hortensias et les petits oiseaux […] Allez donc parler d’air pur aux camarades des bidonvilles et laissez aux technocrates inquiets la question angoissante de savoir si l’on pourra sauver la planète ou non. La lutte pour des conditions de vie saines et décentes commence là ou celle-ci est la plus menacée. La civilisation industrielle capitaliste a magistralement concentré ses déchets matériels et humains. 135

Tout! and Charlie Hebdo concerns overlapped at the destruction in June-July 1971 of the ancient Les Halles in the centre of Paris- the Baltard pavilions- in order to build a new shopping and commercial complex. For Tout! the key was reclaiming public space, particularly for pop concerts and festivals, reporting that ex-VLR, FHAR and other activists staged raids on the construction site and rallied local people, while Charlie Hebdo would defend Les Halles pacifically, on aesthetic, conservation grounds: ‘Occupons Les Halles, sauvons ces chefs d’œuvre de l’architecture populaire’. 136 These different approaches prefigured an antagonism between the two papers at the Bugey nuclear power station in the South-East during the summer.

Bugey became the cause celebre for Charlie Hebdo in July 1970, a Fournier-led campaign that would culminate in the 15,000-strong march through the fields to the plant, with a rally and entertainment to follow. However, tensions grew between organisers and protesters following attempts to enter the nuclear site, clashes with the mobiles and the arrival of an antagonistic Professeur Choron. 137 The next day people went skinny-dipping in a nearby river, prompting interventions by the police. FLJ reports in Tout! saw the occasion as a type of love gathering akin to Woodstock, then attacked Fournier for his commercialisation of the event, in the sale of T-shirts and fast food, and further rebutted Hara-kiri founder Cavanna for his ‘anarcho-pacifist’ criticisms of alleged youth violence at Bugey in Charlie Hebdo. 138 Fournier wrapped up the episode in an August article, scoffing at the FLJ, including their camping fiasco at Palavas early that month. Furthermore, he taunted Tout! for having misunderstood and misapplied the

135 ‘Un ministère de la merde’ Tout! no.8, 1 February 1971, p. 5.
137 Léon Cobra confirms Tout!’s account of an inebriated Choron taunting young people in the crowd (interview, 8 October 2007). LGO collaborator Jean-Pierre Andrevon asserts that Choron ‘didn’t give two hoots about ecology’, despite agreeing to fund the La Gueule Ouverte (interview, 12 December 2008).
American ‘mode of revolution’ in France. But it was a sign that countercultural discourses were present and alive in the new ecological mindset.¹³⁹

Indeed, underground Actuel, each issue covering a special theme imported from the US counterculture, dedicated its no.12 of October 1971 to ecology, highlighting the central problems of land destruction, water pollution, carbon gases, radiation poisoning, overpopulation and deforestation. One-time VLR and Tout! sympathiser Jean-Paul Ribes, a regular columnist in Actuel, took a particular interest in environmental concerns, inspired by the ideas of the psychosociologist Serge Moscovici for a human communion with nature. Ribes collaborated on one of the first political ecology manifestos with others from Les Amis de la Terre, and contributed to the Nouvel Observateur’s eco-journal Le Sauvage, founded in 1973. However, it was Fournier’s La Gueule Ouverte, launched in 1972 and inspired by the Bugey protests, that would be the alternative press expression of the political ecology movement, a mixture of gauchisme, satire and an enquiring new eco-journalism.

Anti-psychiatry, anti-prison and anti-military impulses in Tout!

Certain articles in Tout! angrily denounced conventional psychiatric methods, the classification and detention of the ‘mentally ill’, administration of drugs and shock treatment to patients. This was certainly unprecedented for a gauchiste paper, and spoke of the growing influence in the milieu of new anti-psychiatry of the 1960s. Some were international, notably the ideas of English radical psychiatrists Ronald Laing and David Cooper. In France, an analogous discourse grew through the ‘schizoanalysis’ and group therapy of Félix Guattari, and the reflections on madness by historian Michel Foucault. Hocquenghem had an acquaintance with the French philosophers, partly through his teaching at the University of Vincennes; Lebel was also a friend of Deleuze and knew Guattari via their earlier involvement in the 22mars.¹⁴⁰ However, there was no explicit reference to these thinkers in the paper, instead the method consisted of giving a platform to opponents of hospitals and asylums, mostly nurses or patients from within these institutions. At one point Tout! even advertised the alternative psychiatric journal Les Cahiers pour la Folie. More than one internee was quoted turning on the doctors: ‘Les vrais fous ce sont

¹³⁹ Charlie Hebdo no.38, 9 August 1971, pp. 11-12.
Elsewhere, the psychiatric hospital was described as a ‘factory that creates complexes’. Furthermore, the neuroses and depressions afflicting patients were seen to be the product of family, school and workplace oppression and alienation; in other words, true ‘madness’ was fashioned by society and its repressive institutions.

Anti-psychiatry represented a point of intersection and interaction between various anti-authoritarian impulses at Tout! Firstly, to free the mind from bourgeois ideology and ossified gauchiste thinking: ‘Chassez le flic/bourgeoisie de sa tête’. Another urge was to liberate repressed sexuality. With the article: ‘Psychiatres je vous emmerde’, Tout! provided the account of a young man in and out of therapy since childhood, his sexual ‘blockage’ due to the intervention of his Protestant parents, his sedative treatment and analysis at a Montpellier clinic. May ‘68 would be for him a catalyst for social and sexual liberation:

Le mouvement n’a pas élevé seulement le niveau politique des travailleurs, il a aussi fait sauter les blocages de la parole et les blocages sexuels. Mai a fait plus que 1000 séances officielles.

Tout! happily incorporated the PCF into this attack on traditional psychiatric thought and practices, lampooning the party’s spokesman on family and sexual matters, Docteur Muldworf: ‘Coincé dans les chiottes par ses propres fous’, following his article in L’Humanité on the need for ‘a moderate, happy medium in sexual matters’. More disconcertingly for the far left, Tout! implicated Marxist-Leninist groups in its generalised critique, via the Montpellier patient’s one-time membership and condemnation of the JCR and Ligue, whose answer to his complaint of psychiatric mistreatment would be to advise on further institutional care.

The third contested element of psychiatry was the regime of physical incarceration, signified by the barbed wire sketch surrounding the article ‘Psychiatres…’, and statements like ‘hôpital psychiatre = prison politique’. As such psychiatric detention was viewed as an extension of the broader penal system in France. The anti-psychiatry articles were companion pieces to Tout!’s condemnation of prison, stretching beyond the quest for political prisoner status. From passages extending back to no.3’s ‘La Taule’, Tout! deplored society’s tendency to imprison

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141 Tout! no.4, 16 November 1970, p. 5.
142 ‘Psychiatres je vous emmerde!’, Tout! no.10, 12 March 1971, p. 11.
143 See ‘Passer de la contestation à la révolution’ no.6-7, 10 January 1971, p. 5.
144 Psychiatres’, op cit.
145 ‘Coincé dans ses chiottes’ Tout! no.9, 18 February 1971, p. 9.
146 Psychiatres’, op cit.
147 ‘Les vrais fous ce sont eux,’ op cit.
delinquents, the marginal and unwanted of society. A parallel psychiatric movement further labelled the casualties of society as mentally ill or dangerous, thus justifying their detention. Bertrand supplied a cartoon to emphasise the symbiosis of penal and psychiatric repression (fig.6.14).

On the wider theme of prison and the judicial system, the paper promoted campaigns to alternately free prisoners and to improve prison conditions. A link to grassroots, gauchiste-impelled support groups was discernible in Tout!’s late plug for the Groupe d’Information sur les Prisons (GIP), with its damning enquiry into the ‘model’, nonetheless ‘intolerable’ prison of Fleury-Mérogis. The GIP was a by-product of the agitation over the demand for political prisoner status and subsequent Maoist hunger strikes in the Chapelle St Bernard, its principal figure Michel Foucault. The intellectual-led GIP rested on a libertarian mode of campaign, opposing leftist ‘manipulations’ and promoting horizontal networks. Like Tout! and Les Cahiers de Mai, the GIP published the results of enquêtes in its bulletins and booklets, giving a stage to the target ‘oppressed’ group. In addition the prison news group would serve as a model for alternative ‘service’ groups such as the medical Groupe Information Santé (GIS) with whom the ex-VLR bookshop La Commune would collaborate on an abortion handbook in 1973. Others following the schema were the Groupe d’Information et Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés (GISTI) and the Groupe Informations Asile (GIA).

Not unrelated was the gauchistes’ antipathy towards the French army and its casernes, the latter seen as places of constriction and indoctrination. Thus Tout! was pleased to announce the formation of soldiers’ collectives in Paris that could, again, allow the disgruntled lower ranks to speak out and organise their own protests. One of the subversions involved soldiers pinning up comic, scatological Hara-Kiri covers in their quarters in defiance of their officers. Tout!’s display of a jokey Wolinski caricature underlined the affection for Hara-Kiri output which extended to some of Reiser’s military sketches being included in a special brochure on the army:

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148 Tout! no.15, p. 2. Fleury-Mérogis was then a specially designed, hi-tech, sanitised environment at which the Justice Minister René Pleven would stage official visits. Prisoners revolted at the lack of internal freedom in May 1970; the prison could also claim the highest youth suicide rate of French prisons. The GIP conducted a number of such investigations and published them as a series in the radical editions of Champ Libre under the theme Intolérable.

149 This activity prefigured, and informed Foucault’s major work Surveiller et Punir, published in 1975.


‘Le Bidasse en Colère’, published by VLR/La Commune. The group sought to disseminate the pamphlet by sending its bookstore manager Stéphane Courtois around French towns in February 1971. He relates that the car was stopped outside Montpellier by the police, who confiscated the pamphlets and jailed him and his companion for several days, a measure of how seriously the authorities viewed such seditious material.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{153} S. Courtois, interview, 16 October 2008.
Figure 6.1: Early MLF demo at La Roquette women’s prison, *Tout!* October 1970.

Figure 6.2: Crumb image used in *Tout!* this time to promote the first *Le Torchon Brûle*, May 1970.

Figure 6.3: Phallic, contemptuous cover of FHAR journal *Le Fléau Social*, 1973.

Figure 6.4: FHAR activists sell *L’Antinorm* during the Larzac mobilisations in 1973.

Figure 6.6: Shot of the funeral-demonstration of Jean-Pierre Huet in La Courneuve, 1971. Photographer Henri Cartier Bresson.

Figure 6.5: Youth v. police. Members of the Front de Libération des Jeunes, 1971 (far right Pierre Haski)
Figure 6.7: A situationist-style cartoon critique of Chaban’s bidonville policy in *Le Paria*, 1970.

Figure 6.8: VLR, Beaux-Arts students and Portugese workers participate in the construction of the Maison du Peuple in Villeneuve-la-Garenne, 1970.

Figure 6.9: Immigrant workers and police face off during the OS strike, Renault-Flins May 1971.

Figure 6.10: *La Cause du Peuple-J’Accuse* condemns the death in custody of Mohammed Diab, 1972.
Figure 6.11: A Fournier pastiche of modern industrial society in *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, 1969.

Figure 6.12: The dystopian cartoon adventures of Willem, *Hara-Kiri Hebdo*, 1969.

Figure 6.13: *Tout!* critique of untrammelled urban development in Grenoble, 1971.

Figure 6.14: The incarceration culture of prisons and psychiatric hospitals, as seen by Bertrand in *Tout!* 1970.


7. International and transnational ties

‘Une ambassade graciée’ quipped a Tout! caricature following the Burgos trial demonstrations of December 1970. Indeed, foreign embassies were regular targets for gauchiste attacks, in the main led independently by leftist, radical groups. Ex-VLR members, unprompted, recall their action against the Chad embassy of December 1969. The Ligue led a demonstration on the South Vietnamese embassy shortly before this, echoing the February 1968 CVB protest.¹ Anarchist Marc Tomsin speaks of ‘exemplary actions’ against embassies and lesser targets, one example being Russia’s Aeroflot offices in Paris.² All of which agitation underlines the centrality of internationalism to the nebulous gauchiste movement of 1968 and after. No survey of the alternative press would be complete without a consideration of the worldwide influences in underground, political subcultures of the early 1970s.

Tout! itself illustrated perfectly the absorption of foreign influences; thematically, international events and movements took up almost a fifth of its page space (see appendix 2.), the paper’s single most extensive coverage. With their stress on the autonomy and confrontational reflexes of youth and working class movements, the VLR-associated papers developed particular affinity for Italian and American models of struggle, notably the ‘spontaneist’ Lotta Continua current centred on the factories of Turin, and the Black Panther Party and Yippies as figureheads of a broader US ‘Movement’. In Tout!’s coverage of third world liberation movements, there were echoes of VLR’s Maoist past, but its ongoing support for strategies of armed struggle included a rejection of Chinese-sponsored regimes. This international solidarity accompanied an active transnational exchange between militants and their publications that saw the writers at Tout! weave much of their counterparts’ imagery into their own texts, making for novel, shared discourses that inflected readers’ conceptualisations of the different cycles of anti-establishment revolt.

Tout! was just one, albeit significant, international vector in the militant press of the period; the other Trotskyist, Maoist and anarchist sheets extolled and built durable links with their own

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² M. Tomsin, interview, 9 April 2008. Symbolic targets of recent years also included that on the American Express office in March 1968, which led to the 22 March occupation at Nanterre.
international affiliates. However, none quite matched the conscious political project of the rue Buffon team to direct international influences towards the transformation of the French gauchiste milieu (and beyond), especially through the importation of US underground tropes. Subsequently, *Actuel* and the concomitant French ‘parallel’ press reflected the triumphant residence of this American-style counterculture.

**VLR and Lotta Continua: the circulation of militant ideas and practices in France and Italy following 1968**

It was to Italy that VLR and other leftists turned their eyes after 1968, chiefly due to the upsurge of mass strikes in the Northern factories, in particular those of Fiat Turin and Pirelli Milan, in the spring through to autumn of 1969. This extended industrial unrest, dubbed the ‘hot autumn’ but then extending into what was termed by the Italian far left as ‘*le mai rampant/il maggio strisciante* or ‘the crawling May’, threw up a wealth of terms and practices that became touchstones for the French activists. Of VLR’s counterparts in Italy, the revolutionary groups that emerged from a fractured student movement, the spontaneist current Lotta Continua (LC) proved the most influential.

French and Italian militant optics shared a number of factors, the giant centres of car production Renault-Billancourt and Renault Flins near Paris, and the Fiat plants of Turin, workforces with large proportions of immigrant and young, unqualified workers and the presence of long established, Communist-dominated trade unions. It was within this industrial configuration that hundreds of French militants, many of them students, became *établis*, hoping to incite workers to action. A parallel movement developed in Italy, especially in the hot autumn of 1969, with the important difference that very quickly, radical students gained a considerable audience of workers, enabling them to hold mass meetings and lead demonstrations of workers outside the factories. The junction forged between Italian students and workers fascinated and inspired VLR. Roland Castro explains:

> Dernièrement les ouvriers de Fiat Turin étaient douze mille à manifester aux cris de: ‘Agnelli, l’Indochine est dans ton usine’. Si on parle tant de la Fiat, c’est parce que c’est une des usines d’Europe où la contestation est la plus radicale et la plus avancée. On voudrait donc assimiler cet exemple pour notre propre lutte.  

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3 R. Castro, ‘*De la parole à la lutte*’, *Tout! no.2*, 8 October 1970, p. 5.
This exemplarity motivated VLR members, friends and Flins workers into making several trips to Italy between 1969 and 1971 to witness the agitation and meet LC activists. In a lengthy article in the influential theoretical journal *Les Temps Modernes* on the Flins experience, leading VLR activist Tiennot Grumbach recounted that ‘all the comrades we brought to Turin to meet LC comrades widened their political outlook’. He noted that the French activists immediately grasped the meaning of LC slogan ‘Indochina is in your factory’: proletarian internationalism, support for the Vietnamese, and new tactics of struggle in Fiat such as ‘chequerboard’ strikes and large internal factory parades. For Grumbach the visits acquired added significance as they helped clarify aspects of French militants’ industrial work and re-oriented them after a difficult period in the Flins factory. ‘Lotta Continua deviendra … le point de référence central pour notre “travail ouvrier”’. Then *Vive La Révolution* director, Jean-Pierre Lecardonnel denotes the Italian group as ‘our sister organisation’ and shares in ex-VLR recollections of LC cadre visits to Paris and Flins. It appears that the exchange also registered in a shared perspective of armed struggle. Lecardonnel recalls that his comrades’ schooling in the martial art of Vo-Vietnam - a preparation for potential physical and military conflict- extended to a VLR-led training session in the Aosta Valley just across the French-Italian border, to which their Italian comrades were sent.

On the surface at least, transnational connections remained essentially ideological, transmitted to a partisan readership via the militant press. Several activists involved with the French workplace journal *Les Cahiers de Mai*, travelled to Italy and witnessed first-hand the worker-student assemblies at the factory gates, an experience that was to inform the later exchange between the *Cahiers* and Italian dissident Communist paper *Il Manifesto*. Visiting Vincennes student activist Stéphane Gatti remembers ‘drawing from the well of ideas and texts’ of the Italian autumn:

\[ \text{On était totalement fasciné... tous ces mots d’ordre qui fonctionnaient en France étaient des mots d’ordre de Lotta Continua sur la Fiat... ‘Qu’est-ce que nous voulons, tout’, ‘Nous sommes tous...} \]

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5 ‘Chequerboard’, or ‘chessboard’ strikes were partial, short-term stoppages in strategic departments or workshops, that could paralyse production in the whole factory. The tactical use of such strikes explains the reference to a board game. Leading LC member Luigi Bobbio also speaks of grèves-bouchon, ‘bottleneck’ strikes in a single plant that could halt production across a number of inter-dependent factories (Bobbio 2008).
6 ibid. p.21.
7 J-P. Lecardonnel, op cit.
8 ibid.
9 Marie-Noëlle Thibault, interview, 9 November 2009.
Furthermore, witnessing Lotta Continua in action was an inspiration to individual French
militants on more than just strikes over wages and work conditions. Jean-Michel Gérassi of the
GdB Censier passed through Turin in the summer of 1969; his acquaintance with Adriano Sofri,
leading member of LC, led him to attend their informal café gatherings, where workers would
turn up after their shifts to discuss their lives:

Il y avait un qui venait parler de la santé de sa femme, et de là comment était organisé le système
de santé, quelle alternative on pouvait trouver. J’étais très, très impressionné par ça, je me disais
‘C’est ça!’ Partir de la vie des gens et non pas d’une représentation abstraite de la révolution.11

Of all on the far left, the mao-spontex were to champion the struggles of Italian workers. In an
article entitled ‘L’essor du mouvement révolutionnaire en Italie’, La Cause du Peuple focused on
the huge clashes of Spring 1969 at Battipaglia between police and ‘thousands of workers,
peasants and students’, during which two demonstrators died. It dwelt on revolutionaries' ability
to organise autonomous mass workers demonstrations, in other words, independently of the
main trade unions, in Turin and Milan.12 As a supplement, the paper reprinted an entire pamphlet
of Lotta Continua, translated as 'Turin ‘69: la grève de guérilla’, indicative of new and
subversive forms of action in Italy's industrial centre. Over subsequent issues, LC slogans such
as ‘Nous sommes tous des délégués’, and ‘Ce que nous voulons: tout’ appeared as sub-titles,
militant statements now part of the French Maoist canon. The GP and its paper returned
periodically to Italy; one of their chief writers, André Glucksmann, spent a month in Milan in
1972 surveying the political landscape.13

Vive La Révolution picked up on the Italian scene in early 1970, in two lengthy, unsigned articles
including the reproduction of substantial LC texts and the paper's own diagnosis of the Italian
movement. The LC symbol appeared as the group's name worked into a forearm-and-fist
prefacing the text, as well as in a serigraphic montage in which Fiat boss Agnelli is beaten over

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10 S. Gatti, interview, 9 January 2009. A text by Milan auto workers appeared in Révolution Culturelle,
which Gatti co-authored with Jean-Paul Dollé and the GdB Censier.
12 La Cause du Peuple, no. 6, April-May 69, p. 16.
13 Luigi Bobbio, interview, 8 October 2008. Bobbio was a co-founder, leading member and biographer of
Lotta Continua
the head with the LC fist, against the background of the Beaux-Arts poster-style factory (fig. 7.1). The arrival of Tout! in September 1970 saw the application of LC language again, indeed in the very naming of the paper, while the first two issues replayed the slogan ‘Indochina is in your factory’. Castro also outlined the Italian particularism that set up a type of model for their French counterparts.

Il faut aussi connaître les différences qui ont permis un développement plus rapide de l’autonomie prolétarienne en Italie:
2. La profonde tradition antifasciste a créé un langage commun ouvrier-étudiant, l’ouvriérisme n’a pas la force que lui donne le P’C’F en France.
3. Le P’C’I, le syndicalisme sont moins forts dans les usines italiennes qu’en France. 14

In his excitement at the development of a genuinely unofficial workers movement, Castro overlooked the fact that, following the hot autumn of ‘69, the Italian unions were able to re-assert themselves during the industrial unrest, including at Fiat, the very centre of LC strength. 15 His antagonism towards the PCF and PCI was evident in the continuing use of inverted commas around the C of the Communist parties’ initials- demonstrating that the rivalries of the French May had far from disappeared. Nonetheless, LC was able to build and sustain a sizeable ‘autonomous’ workers current from the storm of strikes and stoppages, buoying the aspirations of French activists. VLR’s impulse to act as a Parisian hub for the diffusion of international militant news led to the group’s production of surveys of revolutionary movements in different countries. One such pack from November 1970, saw them look up to the much larger Lotta Continua as ‘the most powerful organisation of the Revolutionary Left in Europe’, primarily through the ability of workers to take hold of that organisation and become the ‘point of reference for thousands of [other] workers’. 16

The strong bond with LC during and after the hot autumn of ‘69 formed part of a circulation of activist ideas, images and practices between the militant worlds of France and Italy, a joint revolutionary imaginary nourished by historical and international references that really took off in 1968. Italian activists found in the French May a major source of inspiration, many having travelled to Paris during the events. Their papers were studded with re-workings of May’s posters. One issue of Lotta Continua picked up on the May 1971 strikes in the French Renault

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14 R. Castro, ‘De la parole à la lutte’, op cit.
16 Presse Informations Mouvement (PIM), Italie: dossier, 15 November 1970.
factories proclaiming ‘Fiat, Renault, la stessa lotta!/Fiat, Renault, the same struggle!’, which suggested the confluence of international worker’s struggles framed by parallel militant visions. An accompanying text, published in Tout! and reproduced in Lotta Continua as a letter from the ‘comrades of Flins’, projects the mao-spontex themes of industrial dispute in the post-May era:

A Flins, à Billancourt, à Cleon, ils sont 100, 200, 300 […] mais ces ouvriers-là, ils sont quelque chose de neuf: ils luttent pour lutter. Il n’ont pas envie de terminer après ‘satisfaction des revendications’, ils découvrent la force explosive de leur désir de vivre sans la discipline abrutissante du travail capitaliste, ils découvrent le plaisir de la lutte commune avec d’autres frères contre les chefs, ils émancipent le lieu de leur asservissement, ils ont envie de se connaître quand ils ne se connaissent pas, de respecter leurs coutumes et leur culture quand ils viennent de 23 pays différents […] Ils aiment bien discuter avec les ‘gauchistes-fascistes’ a condition qu’ils ne leur rabattent pas les oreilles de bouillie marxiste-prémâchée […] trois ans après mai, la révolution culturelle des étudiants, la contestation, celle qui met tout en cause de la famille au travail pénètre lentement les usines. Un état d’esprit nouveau s’est fait jour contre le despotisme du travail et le conformisme syndical. La critique s’élargit et va s’élargir à tout, la parole ouvrière se libère […] une force qui veut tout est née au printemps 71, cent ans après la Commune de Paris.17

The communiqué drew attention to the ideals of worker’s autonomy, immigrant fraternisation, and youth revolt unleashed by May, and redolent of contemporaneous Italian events. Mention of the 1871 Paris Commune reflected the centenary celebrations of the French left, shared in Italy by LC, who devoted a centre page spread to the historic revolt in their paper.18

However, while VLR members enthusiastically adopted the slogans and practices of their Italian comrades, the group was unable to make similar significant inroads in the workers movement. As Castro pointed out, the Communist CGT was still the dominant force in French factories and highly antagonistic to what it perceived as outside agitators. As for LC, a high level of workers struggles carried the movement for several years, before it dissolved in 1976, again due to internal divisions. Nonetheless, 1968-69 remains as a period when events opened up new vistas for far left militants everywhere, no more so than in France and Italy, where transnational imagination fused with militant action to forge a new, revolutionary language.

17 C’est parti pour le bonheur’, Tout! no.13, p. 5, and ‘Fiat, Renault, la stessa lotta!’, Lotta Continua, year III no.9, 26 May 1971, p. 27.
18 The Paris Commune was an important historical reference for the international left, as the first, albeit short-lived example of workers power. However, Lotta Continua saw in the ‘revisionist’ Communist commemorations an empty rhetorical exercise, reflecting a Maoist influence. Instead, the Commune bore a living relevance for the far left, particularly in its aspects of grassroots democracy and armed resistance.
European resistance, South and East

Coverage of Spanish affairs, in other words denunciation of General Franco’s fascist state, lay primarily in *Tout!’s* coverage of the landmark Burgos trial in December 1970, when a number of Basque militants faced the gallows for terrorism. The editors demonstrated cross-border solidarity in their interview with exiled members of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), itself an act of subversion considering the French state’s internal repression of Basque nationalists. One query linking the Portugese underground to ETA revealed the team’s general interest and support for grassroots military resistance to dictatorship that matched an international ‘Marxist-Leninist’ perspective of armed struggle- reflecting VLR affinity with the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF), the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP), Chile’s Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria and so on.19 By January, the French militants would congratulate themselves on their part in a pan-European mobilisation that forced Franco to commute the Burgos death sentences. However, *Tout!’s* treatment of the Secours Rouge (SR) Paris demonstrations carried a critique of the organisation in its apparent refusal to storm the city’s Spanish banks, and appeasement of the P’C’F to maintain a united front.20 By counterposing the SR comités de base to its PSU-Ligue-CdP état-major, *Tout!’ reflected the continual anti-hierarchical and spontaneist urges of VLR to deflect mobilisations toward extreme, often violent action, including on international issues where the French state was not seen to be the main enemy. But this was also the reflection of a minority viewpoint within the broad left movement. *Tout!’s* championing of such international, armed struggles, and attempts to bring them to the French metropolis remained largely confined to print.

Opposition to the Salazar-Caetano fascist regime in Portugal saw *Tout!’ act as a mouthpiece for individual Portugese living on the fringes of French society. The first example, a leftist’s indignation at his countrymen’s impoverished, bidonville lives, simultaneously allowed the paper to prolong its critique of French capitalist exploitation of immigrants. The second instance was of a Portugese army deserter, disgusted at the brutalities of colonial war in Guinea Bissau (fig.7.2). A later analysis of Portugal’s difficulties in mastering the rebellions of its African colonial subjects points to the domestic resistance to the state and hatred of its repressive

19 Though strictly-speaking the term ‘Marxist-Leninist’ covered Communists, Trotskyists and Maoists, it was understood to mean ‘Maoist’ at the time (and to an extent still does), moreover a pro-Chinese variant of Maoism. Such a movement in a dictatorship, colony or country with an internal ethnic revolt could also mingle traditional class struggle terminology with nationalist rhetoric.
20 ‘Burgos’ *Tout!’ no.6-7, 10 January 1971, p. 12.
political police Polícía Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (PIDE); this sense of the regime’s weakness anticipated the Carnation Revolution of 1974-75.  

Other, Mediterranean dictatorships came under fire, the paper presenting similar schemas of authoritarian but faltering regimes facing determined popular opposition. Thus Greece, in its trials and torture of student militants, and Turkey’s violent suppression of Kurdish nationalists, invited customary denunciations. Tout! ironically noted the dropping of traditional chauvinist rivalry between the two states, because ‘the fascist juntas of Athens and Ankara agreed to make Cyprus an American base’.  

The final, European revolt picked up by Tout! was in the East— that of Polish workers in December 1970 against the Gomulka regime’s food price rises. The paper imagined a ‘science fiction scenario’, a historical metaphor whereby the Russian troops had moved on to ‘liberate’ Paris at the end of the Second World War and the PCF’s Maurice Thorez had been installed at the head of a Communist-Socialist government. This was the team’s way of explaining the reactionary nature of the current Polish state: the Polish bureaucracy equated to a ‘red bourgeoisie’, living off the surplus value of production, the workers nominally owners of the means of production but in reality dispossessed. Eager to rescue the ‘true’ socialist consciousness of the masses, Tout! reported that workers sang the Internationale while being fired on by police, and concluded by affirming its internationalist credentials:

Aujourd’hui ce qui frappe ce sont les similitudes : Espagne, Pologne, France, États-Unis partout des mouvements populaires pour la liberté, partout la répression. Bourgeois blancs ou rouges vos pouvoirs craquent !

Trotskyist sheets celebrated the Polish uprising over the despised Stalinist bureaucracy, adding the call to free political prisoners. In a different, though committed reporting style, Politique Hebdo printed a letter from an eyewitness to events in Gdansk, its adjacent caricature suggesting that Gomulka’s replacement, Eduard Gierek, would offer little more than his predecessor (fig.7.3). In the event Gierek was forced to cave in and annul the price rises, but the Polish

21 ‘Un empire qui s’écroule’, Tout! no.9, 18 February 1971, p. 10. Individual ex-Tout! participants, among them Lebel and Ringart, later spent some time in Portugal, as witnesses to, indeed participants in the social movements that emerged following the overthrow of the Salazar’s regime (J-J. Lebel, interview, 22 May 2008). Furthermore, this can be understood as part of the convergence of radicals across Europe on Portugal to be part of the Revolution- a phenomenon sometimes dubbed ‘revolutionary tourism’.


23 ‘Pologne’ Tout! no.6-7, p. 12.
events would serve as a reminder that class struggles in Eastern Europe, from Berlin and Hungary in the 1950s, through Czechoslovakia in 1968 and on into the seventies, would both undercut Communist legitimacy and fuel far left alternatives at home.

Militant and ‘new press’ representations of China, Vietnam and third world liberation struggles

Post-1968, French militant preoccupations with third world struggles endured, but not as intensely as before the May events. The key international moments for the mid-60s gauchiste rejects of the UEC, namely Algeria, Cuba, China and Vietnam, were realigned in the militant pantheon. Algeria and Cuba were understood as complicated, revolutionary works in progress. Cartoonist Siné, following L’Enragé’s demise, continued to work on and off in Algeria, commissioned to provide the designs and logos for Algeria’s Sonatrach oil monopoly, and at one point the national football team strip (fig.7.4).24 As for Cuba, many were disappointed with Fidel Castro’s endorsement of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in summer 1968, Action adding its surprise at similar reactions in Hanoi and Pyongyang.25

Vietnam’s war continued to provide the headlines and icons for the front covers of Tribune Socialiste and many a leftist brûlot, although the groupuscules’ splits and reorientation towards both factory work and party-building in the aftermath of May left the once vital Vietnam committees quiescent. Consequently, Action urged its readers and CAs to integrate the Vietnamese cause into their activities.26 The far left did reconvene to protest at President Nixon’s visit to Paris in February 1969, for which silkscreens were drawn and NLF flags brandished. Vive Le Communisme reported that commandos attacked symbols of US imperialism including the offices of American Express and IBM, and ‘propaganda brigades’ traversed the city scrawling graffiti and holding impromptu rallies.27 However, increasingly in the leftist press, images of Vietcong and NLF fighters were replaced with those of the Palestinian fedayeen, in the awareness of a renewed guerrilla front against US imperialism closer to home, both

27 ‘Pourquoi la violence?’ Travailleurs étudiants, no.2, March 1969, p. 3. This was a Nanterre region Vive Le Communisme offshoot.
geographically and due to the mass presence in France of Arab immigrants, among them Arab militants.

In the leftist universe, Trotskyists, particularly the Ligue, privileged Latin America, and Maoists South East Asia as arenas of national liberation or left-wing struggle. Accordingly, the Fourth International-affiliated Rouge reported heavily on sister movements in Bolivia, Argentina and Brazil, La Cause du Peuple on Chinese Cultural and Vietnamese revolutions, based on the model of ‘popular war’. Generally speaking, Maoist organisations tended to glorify particular Communist guerrilla struggles, merging the local proletariat and peasantry into ‘the people’, while Trotskyists offered critical support for similar movements, arguing for a leading working class component.\(^\text{28}\) Anarchists, broadly speaking, refused to endorse national resistance configurations in accordance with their anti-statist, anti-borders philosophy, directing their critique instead against imperialist domination. Thus Denis Guedj of the libertarian Le Cri du Peuple intones:

\[
\text{Je préfère les luttes de libération qui ne sont pas nationales, parce que les luttes de libération natio...}
\]

These geopolitical fields were by no means exclusive to one or the other political tendency. The Ligue took a keen interest in both Vietnam and China, even staging a rally for the 20\(^\text{th}\) anniversary of the 1949 Chinese Revolution at which the mao-spontex staged a protest, Roland Castro mounting the tribune to cry calumny.\(^\text{30}\) Additional Ligue rallies took on the symbolism of international guerrilla revolt, foremost in the display of Che’s image and the NLF gunman. Maoists at first absorbed Chinese iconography; Vive La Révolution’s first issues sported heroic Chinese poster covers, while La Cause du Peuple, its masthead tattooed with the Mao bust, gradually assimilated these representations into its discourse of French worker-partisan resistance. However, GP writer Gilles Susong insists that the association ended there:

\[
\text{Nous n’étions pas ‘pro-chinois’, et la rubrique internationale (que j’ai eu en charge continûment de 1969 à début 1972 à la CDP, puis à J’Accuse et la CDP-J’accuse) n’a pas consacré plus de 2, 3 articles à la Chine […] Nous retenions de Mao l’esprit de révolte, l’union concrète des intellectuels et des travailleurs, la théorie militaire (‘guerre de partisans’), et la rupture avec la}
\]

\(^{28}\) Trotskyist critiques of national liberation movements grew more pronounced as the compass moved from Rouge through Jeune Révolutionnaire to Lutte Ouvrière.

\(^{29}\) D. Guedj, interview, 26 June 2009.

conception léniniste-stalinienne du Parti. Quant à la GRCP, nous étions comme tout le monde: nous ne savions pas ce qui se passait vraiment, et nous n’avions pas beaucoup le temps de nous en occuper.  

One group that did retain its contacts, enjoying favoured status with the Chinese regime, was the PCMLF. Unsurprisingly, these Marxist-Leninists, shortly to splinter three ways after 1968, were unsparing in the use of the ‘Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao’ pentych in their diverse publications, reciting the names on demonstrations, and garnishing each article with the triumphalist ‘Long live..!’ cries of support, typical of the Grand Timonier (Mao). Essentially, in the PCMLF ‘pro-Chinese’ framework, the struggles of European peoples were eclipsed by those of Asia, the Middle East, Africa and America whereas the divergent mao-spontex of the GP and VLR broke free from the orthodoxy of ‘Mao Tse Tung thought’, to consider the potentialities of revolution in France. By September 1970 Tout! would exclaim ‘Les prochinois en Prochine’, while La Cause du Peuple’s bust of Mao shrank till it disappeared altogether from the front page in 1972. Moreover, Tout! maintained a healthy interest in international movements, contrasting with its Maoist rival’s almost exclusive focus on domestic, worker-oriented campaigns from 1971-72.

One internationalist theme that was oft overlooked, but embraced by Tout!, was of the overseas French territories, or DOM-TOM. In Guadeloupe an independence movement had been growing through the 1960s, despite intervals of bloody state repression. The paper hailed the beginnings of a new autonomous trade union, Union des Travailleurs Agricoles (UTA) that organised the sugar workers, and later railed against arbitrary repression in the territory. In Martinique the police killing of a bystander with a teargas grenade to the head brought similar condemnation from Tout!, more so as the officer was assigned to protect French DOM-TOM Minister Pierre Messmer on his visit to the territory. When Defence Minister Michel Debré arrived in Réunion he was pelted with stones by protestors, a symptom of conditions on the island, somewhat exaggerated by Tout!, approximating a ‘French Vietnam’. With these reports the paper sought to shred the respectable ‘departmental’ status of the French overseas islands, persisting with the ‘60s left critique of colonialism.

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31 G. Susong, email interview, 12 October 2009. Readings of La Cause du Peuple confirm his diagnosis. GRCP was Grande Révolution Culturelle Populaire.
32 Départements d’outre-mer and Territoires d’outre-mer
Tout! delivered a special on the ongoing French intervention in Chad, in its January 1971 issue, a little over a year after VLR’s firebomb attack on the Chad embassy. The authors sought to lecture the far left on its duty to oppose French imperialism and support the FROLINAT, the tone reminiscent of VLR’s long Black Panther article. In fact L’Idiot had featured Chad in its livre-journal of June 1970, providing a history of the country, a narrative of the current conflict and an insider view of FROLINAT in action, though this accomplished leftist journalism was to remain confined to the page as Hallier’s enterprise did not fall back on an organisation.  

For VLR-Tout! it was not enough to resist ‘Spanish fascism and Soviet imperialism’, with the Burgos and Leningrad trials fresh in militant minds, but to be on constant watch for the home country’s military adventures- ‘our own monsters’. Indeed, France was seen to have ‘regained its virginity’ in the April 1969 army (legion) expedition to prop up President Tombalaye, installed since the country’s nominal independence in 1960; a colonial-style adventure seen to back an unpopular African regime bordering uranium-rich Niger. The double page spread, rich in imagery courtesy of Michel Quarez, included an accomplished sepia-tinged art-photo satire of Caporal Faust, the allegory of a brutal French military doomed to ‘dry naked under the African sun’(fig.7.5). In this exposé of Chadian politics, Tout! showed its friendly ties with Politique Hebdo by reprinting the news weekly’s interview with FROLINAT leader Abba Siddick.

The forces of French anti-imperialism had produced only ‘words’ in respect of Chad. Since May ‘68, rationalised Tout!, only Palestine had received practical support, Vietnam, Laos and even Cambodia having been ‘forgotten’. Therefore, when a mock peace treaty was signed between a delegation of American students visiting Hanoi and some North Vietnamese officials –people to people, so to speak- the paper reported excitedly on the US Movement-inspired project of extending these third world struggles to the big imperialist metropolises, by turning Mayday ‘71 into a day of action against the Vietnam War. Two issues later, in the context of ‘Indochinese front’ advances in Laos and Vietnam against the US military, the paper reiterated the call for a revolutionary Mayday, to ‘bring the war home’. However, this latest, supposedly higher ‘phase’ of anti-imperialist struggle would amount to little, as the 1 May demo in Paris concentrated Tout!’s attention on sexual, rather than national liberation movements.

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34 Notwithstanding the GP’s attempts to wrest the publication from Hallier.  
36 ibid.  
37 ‘Vietnam: traité de people a people – 1 Mai’, Tout! no.6-7, p. 11.  
*Tout!* upset the Maoist applecart in no.13’s publication of ‘Long live free Bengal’, even though the piece was written in a personal capacity, its author Hocquenghem. His objection was that the Chinese supported the Yahia Khan-led Pakistan government in ‘committing genocide against a people in revolt’, the Bengalis of East Pakistan. Furthermore, a substantial portion of the French leftist press refused to criticise China.

J’ai lu deux articles dans la presse gauchiste: dans *L’Idiot International*, ou il n’y a pas un mot pour condamner Yahia Khan, tellement on est occupé à justifier les Chinois – et dans *J’Accuse*: de son bureau. Glucksman veut bien reconnaître qu’il y a une révolte populaire, mais distingo mon cher, distingo! Révolte populaire n’est pas guerre populaire! Bengalis, vous n’êtes pas conformes, vous pouvez aller vous faire massacrer, vous ne me concernez plus. 39

Hocquenghem assimilated the leftist hand-washing to a general refusal to support ‘his’ struggle, and condemned the subordination of ‘living beings’ to a bunch of questionable principles, ending ‘Nous sommes tous des Bengalis, et nous vaincrons’. 40 Several years on, he would add in a preface: ‘Au printemps 1971, avant l’intervention indienne, les Bengalis sont les péde du tiers monde’. 41 This unprecedented journalistic style both consolidated *Tout!’*s departure from, indeed opposition to doctrinal, specifically Maoist rigidity, a key component in the decomposition of VLR. Further, its equation of personal, sexual revolt to other ‘liberation’ struggles, reflected the disruption and reordering of radical leftist thought incited by the new movements of 1971.

There was still time at *Tout!* for another Maoist-style proclamation: ‘Vive la guerre de partisans du FLP! Vive la lutte du peuple ceylannais!’ in response to a left-wing grassroots movement against the post-colonial Ceylon government. 42 But even this led to a critique of China, as evidenced by the pragmatic and satirical ‘Des parties de ping pong en diplomatie’. 43 Author Gilles Olive pointed out the deficiencies in Maoist internationalism, pointing to both Bengal and Ceylon as pieces on Mao’s strategic chessboard. In other words, for all the denunciation of US and Soviet domination, China was prepared to parley with its sworn enemy America in order to extend its own ‘imperial’ interests.

39 ‘Vive le Bengale libre’ *Tout!* no.13, p. 11.
40 ibid.
42 ‘Guerre de partisans a Ceylan’, *Tout!* no.14, p. 9.
43 ‘Des parties de ping pong en diplomatie’, *Tout!* no.16, p. 8.
Palestine: ‘Nous sommes tous des fedayin!’ rhetoric and reality

In the summer of 1970, a handful of VLR members and friends, including Amy Dahan, Anne Dollé, Didier Sandman, and Daniel Culkierman travelled to Jordan at the invitation of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS). Dollé explains that their aim was to meet with the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) of Nayef Hawatmeh, the left organisation of Palestine to which VLR was most attuned. The French party spent a short time in Amman, visited the Palestinian (refugee) camps surrounding the city and even met Fatah leaders, before moving to a desert camp, where they helped dig trenches and build shelters. Sandman and Dahan recall also taking part in military training, learning how to assemble, shoot and dismantle a Kalashnikov rifle, and engaged in gruelling physical exercise in the desert heat. Dahan maintains that for the French, it was more an exercise in solidarity, a symbolic gesture rather than, as has been suggested elsewhere, such training registering in the VLR discourse of armed struggle. In fact their Palestinian trainers were to push them too hard:

Ils nous tiraient dans les pieds, quand on ne courait pas assez vite. Sans doute c’était des balles à blanc, on ose espérer. Mais j’ai trouvé ça atroce. J’ai dit stop, assez, j’en ai marre de faire ça.

Overall, French impressions were divided. Dahan, while sensitive to the conditions of cramp and deprivation in the camps, felt uncomfortable at explicitly endorsing the fedayeen cause, explaining to her hosts that they were not necessarily at one with them on a solution to the Palestinian question. In response, ‘[les fedayin] avaient accepté qu’on était des intellectuels français, certains juifs, qui étaient venus d’idéalisme chercher une solution’. Sandman’s enduring image is that of the heroic resistance of an oppressed people, underlined by the Palestinians’ virtual control of Jordan:

‘En France vous avez des poignées de militants […] alors que là, dans les camps réfugiés, on avait l’impression de voir un people tout entier militant […] C’était très, très impressionnant’.

Most of the French group returned on 3 September, shortly before the onset of the Black September events, when Jordanian King Hussein’s army moved to destroy the Palestinian

44 A. Dollé interview, 8 February 2008. The PDFLP described its politics as ‘Marxist-Leninist’, and distinguished itself from the openly nationalist line of Fatah both by opposing alliances with neighbouring Arab regimes against Israel and assimilating the national question to class struggle.
45 See Bourseiller, p. 262.
47 ibid. Alain Geismar, then of the GP, also travelled to the Palestinian camps at this time.
movement. As a result of the ensuing bloodshed, the publication of a VLR pamphlet entitled *Vive la lutte victorieuse du peuple palestinien* was aborted and the copies pulped.\(^{49}\) The Paris Mutualité public meeting called to protest at the events saw Dahan speak from the tribune of what they had witnessed in the camps, while Dollé and another member of the delegation who had stayed for a while longer in Jordan penned a report on the situation for *Tout!*

Indeed, *Tout!* launched with Palestine as its headline theme on 23 September, bitterly attacking the US and ‘your puppet, Hussein’ and glorifying the Palestinian armed struggle. A detailed account of life inside the camps appeared in no.2, unsparing on the brutality of the conflict, particularly with reference to the bombing of Palestinians by the Jordanian airforce.\(^{50}\) Subsequently pro-Arab anarchist Siné, forsaking his earlier decision not to donate caricatures to the leftist press, sketched a damning indictment of US-Israel collusion for the paper (*fig.7.6*). Egyptian mass mourning at the recent death of Nasser was explained in terms of the people clinging to his 1950s, revolutionary image, though his ensuing capitulation to USSR ‘social imperialism’ exposed the contradiction in Arab nationalist strategy. ‘Mais la page est tournée: avec la résistance palestinienne, c’est la révolution, les masses qui ont la parole’.\(^{51}\) Despite this triumphalism, the insertion of an image of Mao laced with citations advocating the need for tactical compromises indicated that VLR accepted the reality of a Hussein victory and consequent Fatah retreat.

VLR militants were active in setting up *Comités Palestine* from September 1970, alongside the GP, some Trotskyists and a number of Arab students in Paris. A first action involved the protection of a PLO delegate come to speak at the faculty of Censier, from a commando-style attack by the Zionist group Beta, cited as another example of VLR street-fighting prowess.\(^{52}\) GP militants coalesced with some Arab workers on the issue and jointly pushed for an action outside the Chausson factory in Gennevilliers, where the immigrant presence was strong. This was the first step by young Arab militants in the direction of militant immigrant organisation built through interventions at the factory gates as much as in the foyers, hotels and cafes frequented

\(^{49}\) S. Courtois, interview, 9 June 2008.  
\(^{50}\) ‘*Vécu à Amman*, *Tout!* no.2, p. 6.  
\(^{51}\) *Tout!* no.2 8 October 1970 p. 6. Nasser had accepted the US Rogers plans (endorsed by the Soviet Union’s Kosygin) designed to broker a deal between Israel its Arab neighbours, involving Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Left critics, including in France VLR, argued that the strategy left Palestinians in the cold, and was typical of Arab regimes’ need to appeal to the ‘masses’, while seeking compromise with the big powers to ensure their own survival.  
\(^{52}\) M. Wlassikoff, interview, 2 April 2009.
by Arab workers; by February 1971 a pro-Palestinian public meeting at the Mutualité would attract hundreds of immigrant workers. Former Tunisian student Saïd Bouziri explains:

Cela a été comme une éruption car pour la première fois une majorité de travailleurs étrangers se réunissaient pour dire leur soutien à une cause externe (‘la révolution palestinienne’) et en même temps exprimer leur engagement dans des luttes pour l’amélioration des conditions de travail en France.⁵³

The Black September-initiated committees gave way to Comités Palestine in April, part-modelled on the pre-68 Vietnam committees and built through some of the older Algerian support networks animated by PCMLF stalwart Gilbert Mury. They were also viewed as one wing of a broader activist movement in support of immigrant workers’ fight for improved work and housing conditions, as well as against racist attacks.

The main paper to emerge alongside the Palestine committees was Fedai, adhering close to the Fatah line, and appearing both in French and Arabic. With a Kalashnikov emblazoned on its masthead, Fedai focused almost exclusively on the armed resistance to Israel and Hussein, reporting occasionally on pro-Palestinian film showings and public meetings in immigrant quarters around France. Photographs showed French activists selling the paper to immigrants on demonstrations. Such positive references to French youth and the ex-GP dominated umbrella organisation Secours Rouge, and finally the publication of a joint Fedai-Cause du Peuple-Politique Hebdo special in summer 1973 all pointed to a close co-operation between Arab and French militants. Indeed, the range of French Maoist press, from Vive La Révolution, Tout!, and La Cause du Peuple to the competing versions of L’Humanité Rouge and L’Humanité Nouvelle, shared a common adulation of the Palestinian cause, with slogans such as ‘Nous sommes tous des fedayin’ and ‘Victoire au peuple palestinien’ regularly peppering their covers and columns in the early 1970s. A return influence, notably of the Beaux-Arts posters, was visible in some of the other Arab left émigré material to be published in France in the early ‘70s (fig.7.7).

Trotskyist coverage was more theoretical, and by virtue of their critical stance on Arab nationalism, groups such as the Ligue did not enjoy such close links with the immigrant community. Rouge carried regular reports on Middle Eastern events, and called for support for the Palestinian cause, but was particularly hard on Fatah, arguing that Arafat’s signing of the accords in October effectively sealed Palestinian defeat. Thus Rouge could jeer at the pro-

chinois who shouted ‘Vive Arafat!’ at the September solidarity meetings, while condemning the Lambertist AJS for abstaining from the debate and failing to show support for the Palestinian movement.\(^5^4\) *Lutte Ouvrière* bore a more circumspect approach to the question, the group’s support for Palestinian rights tempered by a view that the Israeli working class could be won to the fight against its own regime.

The belief in the possibility of ordinary Israelis making common cause with the Palestinians was not confined to LO; Pierre Gangnet claims: ‘On s’accrochait un peu […] à la gauche israélienne […] mais personne ne l’a jamais vu réellement’.\(^5^5\) Furthermore, certain ex-VLR members today make clear their unease with VLR-*Tout!*’s purely pro-Arab stance. Castro himself ridicules the group’s former advocacy of a single, secular, multi-faith Palestine in the Middle East, stating that he is now for a two-state solution.\(^5^6\) Others appear to echo this renunciation. As a corollary, Courtois suggests that the ‘roundly anti-Semitic’ nature of the Palestinian discourse caused problems internally at VLR with its high proportion of Jewish members; Gangnet, part-Jewish himself, also speaks of divisions and rows on the question. At the time he produced an article in *Tout!* with the headline: ‘Appel aux juifs’, ranting against Jewish anti-Arab feeling that echoed the ‘final solution’ the Jews once had to endure.\(^5^7\) Notwithstanding Gangnet’s further suggestion of parallels between the Treblinka revolt and the Waadate refugee resistance, erstwhile VLR lyceen Pierre Haski, now at the innovative French news website *Rue89*, states:

> C’est extraordinaire parce que personne n’oserait écrire ça aujourd’hui […] ça serait poursuivi en justice.\(^5^8\)

On the other hand, one time BP member Gilles Olive denounces a trend among French intellectuals that equates criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism, and praises the attitudes of his former Jewish comrades: ‘Le fait de soutenir la Palestine c’était culotté’.\(^5^9\) In this he aligns with a number of former activists, some Jewish, who are candid in their former commitment and reiterate the assertion that, despite some reservations, the VLR-*Tout!* milieu was clearly pro-Palestinian.

\(^{5^4}\) ‘Quel soutien?’ *Rouge* no.84 19 October 1970, p. 10.
\(^{5^5}\) P. Gangnet, interview, 31 May 2008.
\(^{5^6}\) R. Castro, interview, 31 January 2008. The two being Israel and Palestine.
\(^{5^7}\) ‘Appel aux Juifs’, *Tout!* no.2 op cit.
\(^{5^8}\) P. Haski, interview, 3 December 2008.
\(^{5^9}\) G. Olive, interview, 27 February 2008.
The anti-Semitism debate is significant in that it highlights a malaise in the French far left on the Palestinian question in the early 1970s, accentuated by Black September and the 1972 Olympic events in Munich, and highlighted by the debate between GP leaders and Sartre in the pages of *La Cause du Peuple*. The discomfort felt by a number of Jewish *gauchiste* leaders in the anti-Zionism/anti-Semitism polemic is an important facet of the narrative explaining Maoists’ subsequent failure to shift into terrorist mode. Perhaps by way of reversing the negative charge of Gangnet’s article, *Tout!* published a strident attack on the Polish Communist regime’s play of the anti-Semitic card to divide the worker’s revolt against price rises, adding that anti-Semitism was ‘an indispensable aid to Zionism’. Moreover, the question of Palestine was not raised again until its very last issue, in the form of Richard Deshayes’ paean to a young friend from a Nanterre *Cité* who had died fighting alongside the *fedayeen* in Jordan. Deshayes’ romantic prose reflects the counter-cultural coloration of the paper, now virtually gutted of its rhetorical Marxism.

**VLR, Tout! and the symbolic power of the Black Panthers**

1968 saw a distinct radicalisation of the black movement following the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King and the subsequent riots and devastation of black ghettos. French militants were struck by the imagery of black pride and defiance, including the iconic shots of armed Panthers and Afro-American athletes at the Mexico Olympics making the black power salute. Following 1968, the Black Panther party (BPP), now seen as the radical zenith of the US struggle, acquired the status of heroes fighting in the ‘belly of the beast’ against the main enemy, American imperialism. Theoretically at least, the Panthers went beyond the simple exemplarity of how to conduct the struggle of an oppressed people; they acquired, indeed fostered a mythical authority, an international standing that left its imprint on the French far left press, no more so than in *Vive La Révolution* and subsequently, *Tout!*

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60 See A. Geismar, *Mon Mai 68* (Paris: Perrin, 2008), pp. 200-206. The GP officially criticised the Palestinian commando killings of Israeli athletes at the Olympics, prompting Sartre to justify the terrorist actions as the violence of the oppressed. Geismar stresses his then blindness to the ambiguities of Arab nationalism, that anti-Zionism was not then equated with anti-Semitism as readily as it is today. His subsequent defence of Israeli territorial integrity leaves him stating his previous pro-Arab stance as misguided.

61 ‘Pologne, et l’antisémitisme’, *Tout!* no.6-7, 10 January 1971, p. 12.

62 ‘Sourire a celui qui n’est pas mort’ *Tout!* no.16, 29 July 1971, p. 15.

63 See ‘Mouvement anti-guerre USA’ in *Tout!* no.2, 8 October 1970, p. 2.
The exemplarity of the Panthers to VLR lay in three essential elements of their *modus operandi*: an audacious, armed defiance of the US State, serving the black community, and the adoption of symbolic dress and rhetoric. In the formulation of their ideas and ‘ten-point programme’, BPP founders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale had absorbed and applied the anti-colonial ideas of black writer Frantz Fanon, within their own, American context: the necessity for violent struggle, the liberation of a ‘lumpen proletariat’ of black Americans.

Such urban guerrilla semantics chimed sweetly with the *mao-spontex* language in *Vive La Révolution*. In its earlier, Marxist-Leninist phase, the paper resounded with the text and images of the BPP. Huey P. Newton’s clarion call ‘All power to the people’, was the title of a lengthy article in late 1969, juxtaposing the famous photo of an armed and defiant Newton with the Panther symbol.\(^64\) The tone was didactic, bemoaning French *gauchisme*’s lack of knowledge of the Panthers. Much was made of the threat to internal US security the Panthers represented, and their inspiration to oppressed peoples elsewhere in the world. Mao was cited, first in his reference to Africa-American struggle as the ‘gravest threat to US security’ and then as a preamble to analysing the black activists’ community and food programmes: ‘Il faut se soucier davantage des conditions de vie des masses…’. The US government’s extreme fear of the Panthers was set forward as the reason for which the US police unleashed a vicious campaign of repression against both leadership and militants. *Vive La Révolution* stressed Newton’s opposition to organisational secrecy, as well as for armed self-defence, and counter-attack.\(^65\) In a sense these ‘lessons’ of the BPP served as a type of guide to action; it was in this period, 1969-70, that VLR conducted its attack on the Chad embassy, and was in the early stages of its anti-racist campaign in the Flins region. The actions did not derive from a BPP military training manual, rather they paralleled struggles abroad. More specifically, VLR practice resembled that of the Panthers’ community work, particularly around Nanterre’s *crèche sauvage* and the *Maison du peuple*, both of spring 1970.

Issue 5 of *Vive La Révolution* carried an even longer, four-page centrepiece on the Panthers, focusing again on their free breakfast and educational programmes. The filtered Mao-guevarist language of armed struggle was also in liberal use, with subtitles such as ‘Être les pillers du peuple’, ‘La pratique est le critère de la vérité’.\(^66\) *Vive La Révolution* reported on the BPP’s admiration for N.Korean Communist leader Kim-Il-Sung, and his concept of *Djouche*, meaning


\(^{65}\) ibid.

self-reliance. Here, a strong, vanguardist sense of the BPP leading, educating and fighting for the people emerged. Conversely, the Afro-American people would never allow the BPP to be destroyed, because it was ‘THEIR PARTY’. As if to round off this keynote issue, Vive La Révolution reproduced the poster of Seale and Newton, ‘Prisoners of USA fascism’ on the entirety of the grand format back page (fig.7.8).

Besides the Panthers’ ideology, militants were impressed by their attire and physical allure. Michel Persitz was excluded from the GP early in 1970 due to his independent activities with the BPP which involved the receipt and sale of The Black Panther and the role of translator and security for the Panthers. His time with them yielded the Vive La Révolution articles, as well as insights about the relationship between militants on both sides of the Atlantic:

Je pense que les militants français étaient fascinés par l’esthétique, le côté spectaculaire des BP… Ah… le poster de Huey et Bobby en veste de cuir avec des fusils ! Mais ils se rendaient mal compte de ce qui se passait vraiment dans les ghettos aux USA.  

Persitz’s comments on the Panthers’ image are borne out by the testimony of other activists and journalists of the time. However, when Connie Matthews, International Coordinator of the BPP, visited, there were mixed reactions in the same leftist milieu:

Elle se trimballait avec des espèces de ‘outfits’ Panthers obligatoires, la veste en cuir noir, l’afro, pantalon noir ; donc il y avait une espèce d’élégance, elle devait certainement l’apprécier au plan personnel. Mais ça choquait aussi des gens qui étaient dans une espèce de pénitence gauchiste ou il fallait être dans une humilité permanente toujours avec ce souci de se fondre dans le peuple et ne pas faire de vagues.

Indeed, Matthews’ glamorous aura, magnified by the presence of her Panther bodyguard, came with a disdainful attitude towards her French hosts, resulting in a number of altercations. Persitz witnessed Jean-Edern Hallier’s attempt to convince her to introduce him to the BPP in the US, as a scoop for his paper L’Idiot International. Already suspicious of Hallier’s grandiose reputation, Matthews’ reaction was swift.

Il n’était pas question de poser des problèmes de sécurité supplémentaires aux Panthers, qui étaient régulièrement victimes de fusillades et descentes de police. Il y a eu une violente dispute au cours de laquelle elle l’a même giflé et déchiré les billets d’avions que le journal avait payé

67 ibid. p. 9.
68 M. Persitz, email interview, 22 March 2010.
69 M. Persitz, interview, 23 March 2010.
pour le reportage... ‘Le BPP n’est pas à vendre!’ Finalement c’est moi qui ai fait le voyage, payé par le BPP et écrit l’article.  

A second incident occurred during Matthews’ visit to the site of the Maison du Peuple in Villeneuve-la-Garenne’s shanty town. This time she allegedly insulted a VLR student who disagreed with her suggestion of ‘arming the shanty town inhabitants in self-defence’, whereupon the student slapped her in the face, in turn prompting the bodyguard to draw his gun. The leaders of VLR were approached and asked to proffer apologies to the indignant Panthers but they refused. Furthermore, Stéphane Courtois relates having been summoned to the Georges V apartment of actor Jean Seberg to be reprimanded by Matthews over the wording of a chapter heading in a VLR-BPP pamphlet:

Connie Matthews logeait chez Jean Seberg, avenue Georges V; toutes les deux étaient en tenue super mode etc. […] J’ai pas pris ça très au sérieux, une grande révolutionnaire qui est venue pour m’engueuler et qui me reçoit dans un somptueux appartement à Georges V […] Je me suis dit ‘Qu’est-ce que c’est que ces grands bourgeois?’

Matthews’ hectoring tone underlined one type of BPP approach which was to play on white European leftist feelings of guilt in order to mobilise funds and exert political pressure for the cause in the US. She even drew on Jean-Paul Sartre’s image of a dying Europe begetting an imperialist monster, the USA, to stir up her European supporters. But overall:

Les Black Panthers ne prenaient pas très au sérieux les groupuscules gauchistes. A leurs yeux c’était des fils de bourgeois immatures qui s’amusaient et ne réalisaient pas ce qu’était combattre le pouvoir en place. Je me souviens du commentaire de Connie voyant des cars de flics stationner à longueur de journée au Quartier Latin ‘Jamais ils ne pourraient faire ça chez nous, on leur balancerait des cocktails molotov tout de suite!’ Ils n’en revenaient pas qu’en Mai 68 les choses en soient restées au jet de pavés.

70 ibid.
72 ibid. However, M.Chemin (interview, 15 July 2010) states that Castro did apologise.
73 S. Courtois, interviews, 9 June 2008 and 16 October 2008. Seberg, a Paris resident, was indeed a strong supporter of the Panthers, so much so that the US state, in the form of the FBI’s COINTELPRO initiative, issued the ‘misinformation’ in 1970 that the father of her unborn child was a Black Panther and not her husband Romain Gary. Profoundly affected by the adverse publicity, she eventually lost the child and repeatedly attempted to commit suicide on the anniversary of its death, apparently succeeding in 1979. Ward Churchill, “To disrupt, discredit and destroy”, in, Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, eds., Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: a new look at the Panthers and their legacy (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 92.
75 M. Persitz, email interview, op cit.
Ultimately, Panther ideas, imagery and practice were to remain largely paradigmatic, generating material for the leftist press. Pro-BPP benefits were advertised in Tout! and Le Pop, largely rallies crowned by the music of free jazz musicians such as Archie Shepp, staged at the Mutualité, and attracting crowds of leftist sympathisers.

However, Vive La Révolution, Tout!, and other coverage continued to focus on the US State’s repression of the BPP throughout its existence, the year 1970 representing a highpoint of arrests and incarceration. Following Bobby Seale’s gagging during the October 1969 trial of the Chicago 8, his case gained added internationally notoriety, with the Panthers convinced of the State’s intent on execution. BPP Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver, exiled in Algiers, but at the centre of international support for the party, stepped up the campaign of solidarity. His text on the trial provided VLR’s library Git Le Coeur with the information for a short brochure for dissemination among militants (fig.7.9). Another VLR-produced brochure of key Panther texts, Tout le pouvoir au peuple, à tous les peuples, offered angry perspectives of ‘counter-attack’ from Panther Don Cox, alongside Newton’s more lyrical piece ‘Prison where is thy victory?’ and a theoretical text outlining the subordinate position of Afro-Americans within the US economy and society.

The theme of state repression of the black and other minority movements was recurrent. No.3 of Tout! drew on the information of alternative US press agency the Liberation News Service (LNS), to focus on the October New York prison uprising of October 1970, and the campaign to free the militant black teacher Angela Davis, ending with the words: ‘Angela notre sœur, partout dans le monde tu as des amis. Nixon n’aura pas ta peau’. Davis’ imprisonment saw the construction of another international campaign of solidarity, but in a January 1971 correspondence with the prominent anarchist author Daniel Guérin, a representative of the Paris-based BPP solidarity committee argued that the focus for French solidarity should rest on all BPP figures, Seale and Ericka Huggins in particular as they faced a possible death penalty. Moreover, if French militants were to stay silent they would be ‘accomplices to murder’. In the context of a thriving US antiwar movement, Tout! shifted its focus geographically to American

76 ‘Wanted by the FBI’, Tout! no.3, p. 7.
77 BDIC, Fonds Daniel Guérin F Delta 721/70/1, Etats-Unis-Panthères Noires. The letter, which is also an appeal for money, is headed ‘Barbara Persitz’, then partner of Michel Persitz. According to a handwritten note in the margin ‘donated 100f’, it appears that Guérin was an active supporter. Persitz’s letter may have reflected a concern that the campaign for Davis’ release, organised in France by the PCF given her Communist Party membership, would overshadow that of the other Panther prisoners.
military bases in Spain and Germany where black GIs and BPP members had clashed with racist or Ku Klux Klan-supporting white soldiers.78

Subsequently, a new paper appeared entitled Guerre Dans Babylone, Black Panther Party Solidarity Committee, with Simone de Beauvoir as director of publication. Despite the anonymity of the writing team, the format, provisional headquarters of 28 rue Geoffroy St. Hilaire (La Commune bookshop) and the NPP printers all spoke heavily of VLR involvement.79 The sheet was saturated with Panther photos, cartoons, and little inserts of guns and assault rifles- not unlike several witnessed in the first issue of Tout! and omnipresent in The Black Panther (fig.7.10). A short editorial piece claimed the mantle of French purveyor of BPP thought:

Le journal Black Panther est non seulement en anglais, ce qui limite forcément sa diffusion en France, mais il est également interdit à l’importation, ce qui n’arrange pas les choses. C’est pourquoi nous entreprenons la publication de Guerre dans Babylone. Nous ne pouvons prétendre assurer l’information et la contre-information du ‘tac au tac’ car les problèmes de communication avec le BPP sont considérables […] M.Raymond Marcellin, […] ne semble pas particulièrement disposé à nous aider dans notre tâche, bien qu’au fond, il soit comme Huey P. Newton […] en faveur de la violence, lorsqu’elle est armée et organisée […] aussi en attendant d’être interdit, nous vous demandons de faire un effort pour que ce bulletin soit lu, circulé, discuté…80

The efforts of the Paris support committee coincided with the first bloom of Tout! when it was clear that the writing team’s coverage of the BPP rested in the context of a wider understanding of the US ‘Movement’ and the types of ideas that the Panthers could inspire in France. Accordingly, the paper replicated Newton’s first declaration of support for the women’s and gay liberation movements (fig.4.6). This was the first French press text to openly promote, albeit through the vector of the Black Panthers, the movement for homosexual freedom. Newton addressed the perceived inadequacies of the male revolutionary ego:

Whatever your personal opinions and insecurities about homosexuality and the various liberation movements among homosexuals and women….we should try to unite with them in a revolutionary fashion… Sometimes our first instinct is to want to hit a homosexual in the mouth and for a woman to be quiet. We want to hit a homosexual […] because we’re afraid we might be

79 In fact the Paris committee was only a small group that included ex-GP militant Michel Persitz, his wife Barbara, Git-le-Coeur’s Dimitri Pitoeff and his partner Marianne (M.Persitz, interview, 23 March 2010).
80 Guerre dans Babylone, no.1, undated (probably autumn 1970), p. 7. Castro states that relations with the Panthers were relaxed. ‘La formalisation était très faible, il n’y a que le Ministre de l’Intérieur qui croyait qu’il y avait des liens extrêmement forts’. (interview, 31 January 2008)
...homosexual […] we want to shut her up because we’re afraid she might castrate us or take the nuts we might not have to start with.\(^{81}\)

Newton’s statement lent *Tout!* a symbolic authority. Coming from the internationally-idolised figurehead of a black liberation struggle, who had made a virtue of military resistance, and an image of strong, black and cool that played on virile and masculine stereotypes, this militant stance against macho male behaviour prefigured the paper’s eventual shake-up of sexual sensibilities on the French far left. Furthermore, an adjacent article introducing the New York Young Lords, a Puerto Rican emulation of the Panthers, reflecting the *gauchiste* concern for the autonomy of ethnic movements.

Several months later, following a damaging split between the Newton-led West Coast Panthers and Cleaver’s group in Algeria, *Tout!* would present a more sober analysis, grappling with the complexities of the situation and finally tending towards support for the Oakland-based leadership, centred on *The Black Panther*. Extracts of a letter from the rebel faction of the New York 21 reprinted from the underground paper *East Village Other*, attacked the leadership for a militant community-based work routine that ‘drowns the perspective of armed struggle’. Indeed, the NY 21 members also criticised ex-SDS Weathermen for apparently softening their stance on armed struggle, after once lauding the underground group as the vanguard of the struggle. However, *Tout!* insisted that the most recent Weathermen communiqué was a must-read, suggesting that secrecy and ‘glorified’ armed struggle may not be the way forward for militants.\(^{82}\) A certain amount of soul-searching followed:

Il est clair que nous avons eu en France une vision assez triomphaliste des Panthères, comme s’ils avaient totalement contrôlé la communauté noire, comme si leur mouvement pouvait toujours foncer vite fait vers la victoire finale […] D’autre part, l’importance stratégique de la lutte pour abattre l’impérialisme US fait que nous sommes tous directement concernés par cette scission et ses prolongements […] Par le désarroi qu’elle jette dans tout le mouvement américain, elle risque de porter gravement atteinte à l’activité des comités de défense des prisonniers.\(^ {83}\)

It would seem that this confusion had also permeated the ranks of those at *Tout!* as in May, VLR, or at least those left of the disbanded group at La Commune, printed another pamphlet *Sur la scission du BPP* which simply restated the views of the Weathermen, the NY 21 faction,

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\(^{82}\) The Weathermen communiqué no.6 states: ‘This tendency to believe that planting bombs or taking up the gun is in itself revolutionary – and glorifying it – must be considered a military error.’

\(^{83}\) *Tout!* no.11, op cit.
Cleaver, the Young Lords’ *Palante* paper, and the ‘official’ Newton line on the damaging split, without offering a clear analysis of its own.

**Yippies, Weathermen and underground press**

There was not an immediate meeting of minds between US and French revolutionary movements. The American model drew on traditions of civil rights and student contestation, feeding New Left ideas, in contrast to the strong Marxist European traditions centred on the working class movement. A longstanding opposition to US imperialism saw the French revolutionaries take an active interest in the US antiwar movement, as the ‘fight from within’. *Action* published the caricatures of American political underground artist Ron Cobb to emphasise its affiliation to this movement. (fig. 7.11) On reporting the US presidential election campaign in late 1968, the French paper looked approvingly at the involvement of newly-radicalised young Americans, both in resisting the draft and mobilising against the Vietnam War. It called on the French CAs to show political support for the National Committee to end the War in Vietnam (MOBE), including the radical Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), despite the ‘naïveté’ of some of its proposals. Practical aid for American deserters in France was encouraged, ‘by all means necessary to carry the war to the heart of American imperialism’.  

With *Action* there was an exposition of Movement ideas. The paper suggested through its publication of an American professorial report denoting the ‘Student as nigger’, that a metaphorical class-racial divide between teachers and students extant in most US universities, might act as a spur to revolt, but only with a prior transformation of the self: ‘As with the blacks, the hardest battle is not against ‘the white’ (professor) but against what the white has done to you’. *Action* drew a global arc of resistance between universities from San Francisco, through Paris, Rome and Tokyo, setting students internationally against authoritarian administrations and police campus incursions. The paper’s internationalism was manifest in the editorial anticipating US President Nixon’s visit to Paris in February 1969; a later report on the suppression of the Berkeley student People’s Park in June concludes by counterposing America’s ‘police state’ to the fight for self-determination and a ‘new society’.

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Around the same time French-speaking American intellectual John ‘Tito’ Gerassi penned an article for *Les Temps Modernes* in which he developed a plain-speaking refusal of American society and institutions, and the advocacy of alternative society:


Gerassi discussed his ‘revolution of the self’, one of the staple Movement arguments, with his cousin Jean-Michel Gérassi and Guy Hocquenghem at the Ivry commune, while also teaching at Vincennes. There were further strong parallels between Tito’s rejection of existing communism as state capitalism in *Les Temps Modernes* and the Censier “Third way”: neither capitalism, nor state socialism but a permanent, self-managing cultural revolution.  

Through his discussions with French activists, Tito Gerassi was a vector of transnational influence; of the VLR-*Tout!* milieu, Hocquenghem, Lévy-Willard, Barda and Lebel, had travelled, some even had lived in the US, returning with a baggage of underground ideas and a definite sense of the underground press. However, much of the information on the Movement in 1969-70 came to the Paris leftist milieu via a band of ‘anarcho-radical’ friends of whom Francois Lasquin, Vincennes student and translator of US underground texts. Founder and animator of the Groupe 76, he involved French students Philippe Lorrain, and Marisabel Baylion and Americans Dan Rosenheim and David Caswell, variously co-habitants of a commune in the southern quarter of Paris Arcueil. Groupe 76 was a Paris affiliate of the American alternative press agency Liberation News Service (LNS) that supplied information to French leftist papers such as *L’Idiot* and *Tout!* For instance, Lasquin, now deceased, is said to have provided the Huey Newton text on women and gay liberation to the editorial team of *Tout!* In addition, the

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89 D. Rosenheim, email 19 October 2009. ‘Anarcho-radical’ is Rosenheim’s appellation.
90 ibid. Rosenheim states that they wrote articles from Europe for LNS under the name Groupe 76 and briefly published an underground newsletter called *Revolutionary Europe*.
91 L. Desrenards, ‘Hommage à Francois Lasquin’, 21 February 2006
group imported and distributed at least twenty underground press titles, including the *Berkeley Barb, LA Free Press*, and *East Village Other*.  

Indeed, *Tout!* resembled the US underground press in both form and content, more so than other French alternative ventures, including countercultural *Actuel* which focused on American dropout lifestyle choices, particularly music. *Tout!* could readily be compared with the *Chicago Seed* in its graphic style and colours and its eclectic themes of left politics, sexual freedom and dope (7.12); this led to occasional literary borrowings such as the chant: ‘Ho-ho-homosexuel!’ On the other hand, critical analysis was closer to that of the *Liberated Guardian*, a more serious paper with a Maoist-spontaneist bent that showed empathy for the homologous French movement and groups like Lotta Continua. Thus, in March 1971, *Liberated Guardian* celebrated the Paris Commune on its cover, in May it reported on an MLF demo in Issy and amongst its caricatures could be found Daumier and Siné. Confirming the marriage of politics and culture in the US underground, these were papers with a revolutionary political project, vectors for political action whose true equivalent in France was *Tout!*  

Initially at least, the rue Buffon editorialists recognized the value of a liaison with the US underground press, and aimed to establish a direct rapport, as shown by the letter sent on 25 September to American revolutionary groups:  

> First of all, we would be interested in sending you ‘TOUT’ in exchange for your newspaper or any information (article, leaflets, photos, cartoons etc…) …we’d like to set up exchanges with the greatest possible number of underground and radical newspapers and magazines as well as with leftist militant groups, ethnic and cultural liberation groups (gay, women, high school…).  

Some months later, a visitor from *Tout!* accessed the New York-based offices of the LNS, and reported back on the open, egalitarian ethics of the LNS team, believing these to derive from their cooperative practices and communal living:

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92 P. Lorrain, interview, 4 August 2008. Others were *Creem, Berkeley Tribe, Fifth Estate, Great Speckled Bird, Liberated Guardian, Nola Express, Outlaw, Quicksilver Times, Rising Up Angry, Chicago Seed, Sundance, Venceremos, BPP news service, Win*, and the French Canadian *Mainmise.*  

93 Taken from ‘Ho-ho-homosexual, the ruling class is ineffectual’ *Chicago Seed*, vol. 5, no.7, June-July 1970, p. 7.  

Ceci est vachement important parce que du fait de la diversité de l’information reçue et à redistribuer, il faut être non-sectaire et capable de tout apprécier, de la bande dessinée à l’information militante et politique.\footnote{‘Liberation News Service: unité de vie pour unité d’activité politique’, Tout! no.13, 17 May 1971, p. 4}

The article concluded with an appeal to readers to help set up such a news network in France: ‘Ça nous travaille depuis un moment’.\footnote{ibid.} While a French underground press network was already underway by mid-1971, part-nourished by the LNS and a companion news agency, Tout! was in reality already beginning to come apart, and thus ill-equipped to spearhead any such agency venture. On the other hand, the paper was listed in an inventory of the American Underground Press Syndicate (UPS) affiliates in France, alongside Actuel, L’Idiot Liberté, Le Pop, Le Parapluie and Vrouutsch, small to medium-circulation titles of a nascent French underground press.\footnote{L. Leamer, The Paper Revolutionaries (New York: Simon and Schuster 1972), p. 208.}

Jean-Michel Gérassi maintains that his American cousin introduced Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffmann, the leaders of the radical hippie Youth International Party (YIP), or Yippies, to the Paris left-underground scene. But specifically, it was Tout! collaborator Jean-Jacques Lebel, co-resident in New York and Paris during the 1960s, who had befriended the Yippies and other collectives such as the anarchist Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers. On the occasion of the Yippies’ visit to Paris in October 1970, Lebel organised a meeting, advertised in Tout!, in a large amphitheatre at the Faculté des Sciences. He acted as interpreter between Rubin, Hoffman and singer Phil Ochs, and a mix of French friends from Tout!, conseillistes and students:

I always wanted my friends from Tout! […] to understand what was going on in the US... something interesting, dynamic, but politically shallow. The Europeans could use some of that rough energy.\footnote{J-J. Lebel, interview, 28 February 2008.}

Lebel relates the Yippes’ stunt in the New York Stock Exchange when they threw dollar bills down to the traders and watched as they fist-fought to pick up the cash, capitalism’s ‘theatre of the absurd’.\footnote{ibid.} A similar joke was played in the amphi, one in attendance explaining: ‘We burned a five franc bill and it made the gauchistes scream!’\footnote{M. Baylion interview, 22 October 2009.} This situationist-style humour was fundamental to the philosophy of the Yippies’ fusion of politics and culture, ‘Revolution is
theatre-in-the-streets’. Evidently, there was a chasm between the two political cultures, French militants struggling to comprehend the Yippies’ anarchic attitude. Conversely, Lebel perceived his American friends to be arrogant, aloof, and assuming that the rest of the world was in thrall to US culture:

Abbie and Jerry rolled a big joint then proceeded to smoke it in front of everyone. They took the horrible, aristocratic attitude of Hollywood stars saying ‘We’re speaking in English’. And the others were saying what are you talking about? I tried to explain [to Rubin et al.] that they had to make an effort to meet these people halfway, that they had a different social and historical experience. They said ‘Oh fuck you man, this is too complicated let’s just get stoned’. So the whole thing was a big fiasco.

Similarly, VLR’s Annette Lévy-Willard recalls meeting Rubin through Lebel: ‘Pour nous c’était un idole mais quand on l’a vu en vrai, il ne racontait que des conneries’.

By contrast, a contemporary report on the meeting in underground rock sheet Le Pop was uncritical, indeed effusive in its praise for the Yippies. They were posited as cool, exemplary harbingers of a popular, youth culture way in advance of their ‘ideologically rock-hard’, and ‘chauvinist’ transatlantic counterparts in attendance- in this case the GP and slogan-spouting anarchists. Appreciative of the Yippies’ jocular, hairy countenance, Le Pop considered their advocacy of living revolution and media-savvy provocative pranks a healthy alternative to ‘narrow-minded’ French gauchisme. Interestingly, the paper commented that the Yippies overestimated the importance of French struggles, an early sign that the nascent French underground sought to move away from political activism.

Tout!, however, sent out mixed messages about the Yippies. Having swiped Rubin’s slogan ‘Do It!’ for one of its inaugural issues, the paper was more guarded following this encounter with the US pranksters. Initially, Abbie and Anita Hoffman’s invitation to the French leftist scene was printed alongside the publicity flyer for the Faculté des Sciences rendezvous; Yippie interviews and commentaries followed. Noteworthy in the Hoffmans’ text was the remark that May ‘68 was imperceptible on the streets of Paris, due to the presence everywhere of ‘cops, cops, cops’, a situation that would have been resolved with guns back home by the ‘Woodstock Nation’, Abbie’s conceptual mass of hippie radicals inspired by 1969’s huge festival of music and love. This somewhat patronising attitude was compounded by their subsequent appeal to the French to

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102 J-J. Lebel, op cit.
103 A. Lévy-Willard, interview.
104 Le Pop, no.10, 11 November 1970, p. 3.
cultivate pop music and grass-smoking for a new culture: ‘It’s time to build a little, brothers and sisters’. Rubin went on to accuse the leftist political parties, including VLR, of having killed free expression in the youth movement. A sharp retort, probably from a VLR activist, pointed to the lack of political substance in the Yippies, despite their synthesis of revolution and new culture. Furthermore the author was scathing about French militants’ deference to their American ‘big brother’:

La nouvelle culture née de Mai ne peut se ramener à l’importation du mouvement américain. Ce qui est pop là-bas devient élitaire ici. Alors, n’en n’ayons plus honte : la révolution culturelle française, branchée sur une réalité différente de celles des EU, celle d’une métropole impérialiste secondaire où la masse du peuple est concernée, est encore à inventer, pas à recopier.

Nonetheless, the Yippies’ regalia acted as a visual model for VLR youth group FLJ, in the effective adoption of the guitar, hash-pipe and gun coat-of-arms (the pipe replaced with a flower in the French version). Additionally, Richard Deshayes enunciated the US youth movement tropes of free love, street fighting and rejection of parents in the FLJ manifesto of no.9. The FLJ neatly transposed the Yippie blend of subversive political action and alternative lifestyles to its microcosm of French gauchisme. This influence eventually told in the paper, the last issue showing the extent to which the old VLR milieu had been recast in the trappings of the counterculture: calls for reprisals on youth killers, organisation of youth festivals, poetry and rock music.

*Tout!* made much of the relationship between the Yippies and ex-student radical collective the Weathermen, describing the latter as the ‘kamikazes of the American revolution’ in their chosen path of bombings against the State, and underground existence. However, Rubin played down differences between various sections of the US Movement, pointing to a shared revolutionary culture realised by collective dope smoking and rioting; ideological distinctions were glossed over. In the superficiality of Yippie political discourse Lebel is proved correct, but Rubin was right on the Weathermen’s sponsorship of dope-smoking. Acting as spokespeople for the Movement, the urban guerrillas advocated, even theorised the use of marijuana as a weapon, not in an offensive sense but for consciousness-raising purposes. This fact could be gleaned from the Weathermen communiqué no.6 signed by Bernadine Dohrn and reproduced in *Tout!*, when the

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106 ‘Les Yippies parlent’, *Tout!* no.4, p. 6.
107 ibid. ‘Mai 68 = Woodtock?’.
108 ibid.
paper tackled the issue of drugs. As part of its *Presse Informations Mouvements (PIM)*, VLR published additional information on the Weathermen in early 1971, relayed by Groupe 76. Interestingly, they were seen to embody the political and cultural struggles of American youth, the ‘principal, positive upshot’ of the death agony of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and an ‘irresistible attraction’ to the rest of the Movement. There was a romance attached to the admiration for Weathermen clandestine, terrorist activity juxtaposed with their warrior imagery (fig.7.13). Groupe 76 member Marisabel Baylion confirms:

> Pour nous c’était des héros, c’était complètement mythique, mais c’était des heros. Il y avait des communiqués des Weathermen qu’on attendait, comme des choses absolument merveilleuses […] ils attaquaient des compagnies ou des administrations qui étaient liés à des gens qui étaient impliquées dans la guerre.

Indeed, another member of the Groupe, Philippe Lorrain, speaks of the Weathermen’s exemplary shift from the political-ideological SDS to armed struggle in the context of a self-interrogation by individual *gauchistes*. VLR’s publication of the Groupe 76 texts hinted at a parallel urge to armed action in France. For student Michel Wlassikoff, violence could be rationalised in terms of ‘the evacuation of Marxist–Leninism and Maoism from VLR to take on the radicality of the American students’.

Final coverage of Movement action in *Tout!* came in June following the Mayday antiwar protests in Washington, built for months beforehand. The ‘lessons’ of Mayday, as recounted in, then translated from the *Quicksilver Times*, spelt a rejection of ineffectual pacific sit-in methods, favouring instead the guerrilla-style tactics of hit-and-run: small groups of radicals taking on the police at different spots around the city at different times, an ‘uncontrollable’ movement designed to provoke a repressive response –inc. detention camps- and thereby expose the ‘fascism’ at the heart of the US state. In tandem with this agitation, a peace camp called Algonquin City was set up in a city park, where:

> 50,000 guerriers et guerrières fumant la pipe et se défonçant au rythme des tams-tams électriques de notre danse de guerre. C’est très important cette union, entre les ‘planeurs’ et les guerriers”, toute la ville est venue à la fête se défoncer et détruire l’Etat- quoi de mieux ?

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109 ‘Stupéfiant!’ *Tout!* no.8, 1 February 1971, p. 6.
111 M. Baylion, interview, 29 October 2009.
112 P. Lorrain, interview, 26 June 2008.
113 M. Wlassikoff, interview, 2 June 2008.
114 ‘USA: quelques leçons de Mayday’, *Tout!* no.14, 7 June 1971, p. 11.
The Yippies, Weathermen and the Movement received enthusiastic coverage in underground Actuel, but in spite of Bizot’s personal acquaintance with American underground figures, the tone of the journal was one of sympathy, rather than a committed solidarity. Not once was a Yippie-style action called for. Citing chunks of Rubin’s Do It!, the Yippies were one element of an analysis that harked back to the Beats of the late 50s, and viewed as the confluence of the ludic and militant strands of the US underground. The emphasis was on the spectacular, Rubin’s clever media manipulation, rather than on the exigencies of street fighting. When Actuel caught up with Hoffman in 1972, via another article translated from the underground press, the Yippie was drawing back, exhausted from years of activism. Here, Actuel appeared to bemoan the decline of the US underground: ‘Après trois années glorieuses, le “Movement” tâtonne, la contre-culture s’essoufle’, but offered nothing in the way of remedy, nor lessons for an analogous French movement.115

A similar process of passive, though fascinated observation was engaged with respect to the Weathermen, with at first a chronology drawn up to explain their origins, an explanation of their strategic implantation in the communal movement and inventory of spectacular attacks on establishment targets. Significantly, the journal emphasised Weathermen’s investment of revolutionary hopes in American youth, as opposed to the working class. One of their self-critical texts appeared, denouncing male chauvinism and demanding individual transformation of the militant. Ultimately though, Actuel set the Weather underground on the same plane as the GP and the German Baader-Meinhof group: hardcore militants once ‘at the cutting edge of gauchisme’ but now removed from the people:

Ces coups restent isolés et ‘spectaculaires’. Les campus ne bougent plus guère. Une génération calme et désabusée a succédé à celle des grande batailles, les choses ont changé, la répression se calme, Berkeley, Nanterre, même dodo.116

Figure 7.1: Lotta Continua cracks Fiat boss Agnelli, *Vive la Révolution*, 1970.

Figure 7.2: *Tout!* prints the testimony of an army deserter, 1971.

Figure 7.3: Surreal caricature by Julem in *Politique Hebdo*, emphasizing the continuity of the Stalinist regime in Poland, 1971.

Figure 7.4: Siné’s contributions to the Algerian state included designs for the newly-nationalised oil industry and the national football squad.

Figure 7.5: ‘Vie et mort du caporal Faust’, Quarez’s condemnation of French imperialism in Chad, *Tout!* 1971.
Figure 7.6: Siné’s anti-imperialist work included this critique of Israel and the US in Tout! 1971.

Figure 7.7: Arab immigrant workers poster advertising a strike in 1973.

Figure 7.8: Huey Newton and Bobby Seale as international icons of liberation struggle- taken from the Black Panther, in Vive la Révolution, 1970.

Figure 7.9: Brochure of the Paris support committee for the Panthers, 1970.
Figure 7.10: One example of the ubiquity of gun imagery in the Black Panther, replicated in *Tout!* 1970.

Figure 7.11: *Action* showcases the art of the US Movement: Ron Cobb, 1968.

Figure 7.12: *Tout!* took from the look of US underground press like the *Chicago Seed*, 1970.

Figure 7.13: Weatherman, ‘AmeriKKKa’ *Presse Information Mouvements*, November 1970, p.5 (G.Olive)
8. Counterculture: Tout! and the underground press in France

Il fallait avancer en brisant le carcan de la pseudo représentativité des organisations groupuscoulaires qui enfermait l'expression de Mai 68 et la réduisait à un simple mouvement de révolte politique récupérable par les avant-gardes sur le modèle bolchévique, stalinien ou maoïste, pour laisser le mouvement vivre par lui-même en inventant ses propres formes autogestionnaires. C'est pourquoi on nous avait surnommé les "Mao spontex" Mao parce qu'on voulait une révolution culturelle dans les mœurs: pas celle de la Chine mais une révolution pour changer toutes les relations entre nous et avec notre environnement: relations entre les hommes, entre les hommes et les femmes, avec les enfants, relation à l'habitat et la manière d'habiter, relation à la manière de se vêtir, d'utiliser les transports, relation à la nature et l'environnement relations au travail et à la manière d'organiser les journées rythmées par le travail et non travail (cf. le mouvement de refus du travail comme désaliénation né à Turin) etc.¹

Thus Jean-Michel Gérassi of the Groupe de Base Censier sets out the political rationale that underpinned Tout!, despite himself not having participated in the press project. Although political, this was clearly a philosophy that led from the protest movement born of May towards chiefly cultural, indeed countercultural concerns. The French counterculture was not simply the importation of classic American underground forms; rather, it was a complex, hybrid phenomenon, blending the lifestyles themes of the US youth culture: free love, communes, drug experimentation, and rock, with those of French libertarian, utopian traditions. What grew in France around 1970 was another ‘duality’ of radical left politics and counterculture, the modern version of the 1920s surrealist-Bolshevik juxtaposition, with a degree of interpenetration best expressed by Tout! Indeed, the new movements of sexual liberation in France, dovetailing those of the US, combined new gauchiste forms and practices: the language of phallocrate and hétéroflic, the singing, theatrical demonstrations with personal, lifestyle change, underpinned by an optic of revolutionary social transformation.

However, we are concerned here with the ‘moment’ of arrival, the fusion of a US-style underground with alternative, dissident French currents, the adoption of these lifestyle themes by a willing French audience, and centrally, the role of Tout! in this process. I want to continue to show not only how the paper was a fundamental vector in the re-orientation of a significant gauchiste milieu, but also a crucial entry point for these American themes.² This chapter situates Tout! within a number of topical contexts, starting with the medium of underground press: the

¹ J-M. Gérassi, email 12 December 2009.
² More precisely these were Anlgo-Saxon themes, reflecting the underground scenes also present in London, Amsterdam and the Berlin Kommune. However, the US remained the model for French counterculturalists.
injection of ‘underground’ writing, art and BD into the French alternative press field. Here I set up a chronology that locates Tout! in a flowering of new titles and analyse the role of the paper in stamping the underground imprint in the alternative press field. Questions of status are addressed, the differences between large or medium circulation titles such as Tout! and Actuel, and small, short-term, local papers, bulletins and fanzines that proliferated from 1971. Art, caricature and comic strip were fundamental to the underground press, a creative wave sparked by the posters of May that crossed the current of colour and psychedelia arriving from the US, visible in the graphics of Tout!, Actuel and Le Parapluie, and in the ensuing effervescence of parallel press.

Communes and their attendant lifestyles make up the next passages on the developing counterculture in France. I examine how Tout! advocated collective living, the product of militants’ reflection on cultural revolution, its associated activists pioneers of new Parisian, suburban communes; Actuel in turn privileged the countryside commune, a ‘return to nature’. A countercultural ‘movement’ began to take shape, part-enabled by Actuel with its project of networking and small ads. Another lifestyle practice, then associated with creativity and pleasure, was the consumption of drugs; here I look at how Tout! dealt with the issue, straddling the fissure between left-political anxiety and youthful indulgence.

Often considered as the foremost trope of the counterculture, the rock and pop revolution did not take off in France until 1970, after its creative apogee in the Anglo-Saxon world. Moreover, rock icons tended to remain of the English and American variety, although Tout!, carrying the myth of rock’s revolutionary power, promoted little-known French bands. Folk artists were lauded for their ‘popular’, political commitment and the nascent underground attacked the ‘récupération’ of promoters and festival organisers. Correspondingly, Tout! encouraged the incorporation of grassroots musical and dramatic elements into political manifestations of the early 1970s, showing an appreciation for new, horizontal forms of theatre, and mirroring the festive demonstrations of the new liberation movements.

**Tout! and the underground press**

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3 J-P. Bouyxou and P. Delannoy, L’Aventure Hippie (Paris: Plon, 1992) p. 119. This assertion is supported by Bouyxou’s former participation in Actuel.
While *Action* was a clear political expression of the movement of May, it took a distinct turn, albeit cursory, to an underground, tabloid format in June 1969, departing from its hitherto rhetorical style. Organisational and financial difficulties put an end to the paper in June, thus checking any progress to a fully-fledged broadsheet of the counterculture. In assessing the import of his paper today, Jean Schalit asserts that *Action* left at a stage when it most resembled countercultural standard-bearer *Actuel*, of over a year later. However, the evidence does not quite bear this out. Countercultural elements were primarily graphic: a heavily sexual photo-roman series imagined by Jérôme Savary of the theatrical Grand Magic Circus, a surreal comic-strip, and Topor’s daft photo-faces, but these were of the French carnivalesque, satirical and surrealist variety, rather than the American-inspired psychedelia of *Actuel*. The exception was a solitary page of Robert Crumb’s *Headcomix*, apparently the first advertisement of the American’s artwork in the French alternative press (fig.8.1).

The cultural-libertarian élan of May thus passed briefly through *Action* before *L’Idiot International* lifted the baton of ‘paper of the movement’, hinting at a more culturally oriented approach in the far left press. However, Hallier and his team rapidly tilted towards Maoism, as yet too politically serious to fully embrace attendant questions of underground lifestyle and culture. Not until March 1970 did the first true underground paper appear. As its title suggests, *Le Pop* was primarily an example of the rock press, though alien to the professional and commercial standard-bearer *Rock & Folk*. Articles on the latest American or French act were interspersed with anti-establishment statements typical of contemporary *gauchisme*. In one comment the editors proclaimed:

> Dans ce journal où nous faisons appel à tout ce que les jeunes ont de sain et de vraiment digne d’une révolution... c'est-à-dire que nous faisons appel à tous ceux qui sont aptes à casser les cadres, qui refusent une 'moralité' [...] Nous ne pensons pas que Mireille Mathieu et Sheila puissent, un seul instant, drainer autour de leur musique et même du symbole qu'elles représentent autre chose que de chiens victimes de mauvais maîtres. Et nous sommes pour un monde sans chiens.  

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4 J. Schalit, interview, 3 April 2009.
5 “Headcomix”, *Action* no.47, 3 June 1969, p. 5.
7 *Le Pop*, no.6, 30 May 1970, p.2. Such publications being *Salut les Copains, Juke Box, Mademoiselle Age Tendre*. Other titles like *Best, Pop-Hebdo*, and *Fans* focused on Anglo-Saxon rock but as simple, youth-oriented pop journalism. Sheila and Mireille Mathieu were *hit-parade* pop-chanson starlets of the ‘60s and ‘70s.
Le Pop’s covers and layout followed an established black, white and red pattern reflecting limited means, but switched in the autumn to more provocative visuals, and a political underground writing that prefaced Tout!’s attacks on the récupération of rock. Indeed, preferred artists were leftfield, subversive rock musicians such as Frank Zappa, while interest in French artists stretched to avant-jazz psychedelic bands such as Gong and Magma. At this stage the paper could claim a readership of 20,000.8 Indeed Le Pop’s creators, Max Péteau, Jacques Anglade and Marc Balde sought to establish a free press syndicate in France with Tout!, Le Parapluie and La Veuve Joyeuse, adding it’s troubled underground protégé Free IX. December’s issue of Le Pop (bis) was a special given to the Hog Farm, a freewheeling US hippie commune that had taken up temporary residence in Paris in late 1970, and inspiration to Le Pop’s subsequent immersion in communal living.9 Again, lack of funds prevented the publication of the paper until May 1971, and this was to be its final issue. Following the summer, the group departed on its own caravan adventure around France as a nomadic paper of sorts, with a vague mission to create centres of subculture like a French Earth People’s Park.10 In the end, Péteau and friends instigated other press ventures like the local, ecological Le Courpatier. In all, the authors of Le Pop were the pioneers of an amateur, grassroots underground press that would take hold in France within months.

On a different, political plane, Tout! was still of an obvious underground quality, not simply in its visually arresting covers, but also in its ideology. From the outset, alternative lifestyles were encouraged, in a literal interpretation of changer la vie. For instance in no.1 the paper argued for the popular reclamation of music and leisure space during the summer holidays. The titles ‘Ici et maintenant’, and ‘Do it!’ from the second issue echoed the paper’s masthead declaration ‘Ce que nous voulons: tout’, clearly influenced by Italian strikers’ language, but particularly the Yippie, US Movement’s urgent speech that fused grassroots revolt with everyday life-change. An editorial piece summed up the countercultural thought at play:

8 Le Pop, no.8, 1 July 1970 p. 7. Comparing its circulation with the 2 million of France-soir, Le Pop dubs itself ‘an elite’.
9 ‘Mais non mais non c’est pas la nouvelle formule du Pop !’ Le Pop!, no.10 (bis) 25 December 1970, p. 5.
“DO IT” (Faites-le) disent les jeunes Américains, ceux de la ‘Youth culture’ de la civilisation que les jeunes construisent contre les porcs de flics et la publicité impérialiste. Ils disent aussi ‘laissez tomber’ : passez de l’autre côté de la barrière ; apprenez le mépris de l’argent ; n’ayez pas honte de votre corps, même nu ; construisez vous-mêmes vos rêves, votre sensibilité. Ne vous laissez pas imposer par Nous deux et Elle. Et aussi : créez, pas pour vendre. Comme les artistes, mais pour vous et pour les autres. ‘Branchez-vous : communiqons avec les gens, sachons que nous sommes une communauté. Qu’on crée ensemble notre vie, non, qu’on se la laisse imposer chacun dans son coin par celle de nos pères. 11

With this refrain - penned by Guy Hocquenghem - Tout! extolled the central anti-commercial, sexual and communal values of US counterculture. Moreover, this realignment on the individual within the collective impelled a process of ideological change at the paper and its organisational affiliate VLR. A detour from the holistic working class mission to the fulfilment of individual rights was in operation, embodied by the nascent women’s and gay liberation movements, (themselves characterised as cultural phenomena). Increasingly, Tout! would voice the countercultural concerns of ecology, drugs, sexuality, youth, the family, and anti-psychiatry. From no.12, and following the dissolution of VLR, the paper advocated the proliferation of autonomous, youthful subcultures, its layout colourful and unpredictable.

Following the government’s ban of Hara-Kiri Hebdo (HKH) in December, the editorial team of Tout! called for the collaboration of the ‘new revolutionary press’. The paper’s reference to Hara-Kiri Hebdo and L’Idiot, the libertarian Le Cri du Peuple and Vivre, and more ‘specialist’ journals Le Pop and Actuel indicated the new press milieu it saw itself moving in, a pot-pourri of ‘anarchisant’ and underground titles, distinct from the field of the organised far left.12 Tout!’s message of joyful resistance was further reinforced by L’Idiot Liberté, Hallier’s ‘underground’ side project, ostensibly ‘turned inwards’ but actually enamoured of the US Movement, introducing American countercultural themes and cartoons from the UPS (fig.8.2).13

While Le Pop was responsive to the need for an underground press alliance, the recently revamped rock and jazz magazine Actuel stood aloof from such fraternities, chiefly due to millionaire founder Jean-Francois Bizot’s project, aided by writers Michel-Antoine Burnier, Patrick Rambaud and Jean Pierre Lentin, to forge a US-style counterculture in France. The premise of Bizot was that, in 1969-70, an underground did not exist in France; the ‘strategic

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gambles’ would be to create one by pretending that it did exist.\textsuperscript{14} This was a little self-aggrandising, for a rock-led counterculture had gotten underway from December 1969 with the relocated festival of Amougies. The following summer witnessed the Biot and Aix festivals, and communes, indeed separate underground papers, notably \textit{Le Pop} and \textit{Tout!}, all existed already, indeed preceded the launch of \textit{Actuel}.\textsuperscript{15} Nonetheless, the journal would deliver a decisive impetus to the process. Indeed, imbued with the entrepreneurial spirit of the US free press, \textit{Actuel} became the principal medium by which the archetypal components of US counterculture were conveyed, devoting issues to the grand themes of communes, sex, ecology, rock, travel over the next five years.

Initially, \textit{Actuel} deliberately distanced itself from the Marxist far left, treating only VLR as a political ally, almost as its political wing. Hence \textit{Tout!} was seen as a companion paper, ‘beating the same drum as us’.\textsuperscript{16} Burnier describes \textit{Tout!} as ‘un journal frère’.\textsuperscript{17} Indeed, it was VLR sympathiser Jean-Paul Ribes, labelled by Bizot as the resident ‘professional revolutionary’, who was asked to cover strikes, demonstrations and other political actions in his ironically-titled rubric ‘En Attendant le Grand Soir’.\textsuperscript{18} The affinity between the two papers was clear from \textit{Actuel}’s lengthy interviews of VLR militants and Ivry communards in April 1971. By July, the underground monthly would declare:

Poète et paysan, artiste et militants: la politique pour la politique et l’art pour l’art ont pris une sérieuse vérole. Les tiroirs sont mélangés et la nouvelle culture secoue la commode. Panique: où sont passées les étiquettes? Tels camarades qui publiaient encore il y a un an un périodique marxiste-léniniste- président Mao dans la cartouche- viennent de sortir un spécial anti-fête des mères ou la révolution ne se sépare plus de l’amour et du complexe d’Œdipe. Communes, libération des femmes, des homosexuels, explosion dans les lycées, grèves sauvages: l’utopie immédiate réalise le gauchisme en le détruisant. Ce n’est encore qu’une utopie coincée entre le délire les flics et l’essoufflement : tout a commencé et tout est encore à faire.\textsuperscript{19}

While appreciating the rapid evolution of the \textit{mao-spontex} current, \textit{Actuel} appeared barely to register VLR’s dissolution and the subsequent demise of \textit{Tout!} On the contrary, it was already

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} L. Mercadet, op cit. See also \textit{Actuel par Actuel: chronique d’un journal et de ses lecteurs} (Paris: Stock, 1977) p. 29.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Here I refer to \textit{Actuel}’s re-launch as an underground publication in October 1970, having previously been a rock and jazz magazine.
\item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{Actuel par Actuel}, op cit. p. 49.
\item \textsuperscript{17} M-A. Burnier, interview, 26 March 2009.
\item \textsuperscript{18} J-P. Ribes, interview, 21 January 2008. This could be translated as the ironic ‘Waiting for the revolution’.
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{Actuel}, no.10-11, July-August 1971, p. 2. \textit{Tout!} had indeed published a supplement to no.14 specially for Mother’s Day, reproducing the paper’s anti-family/motherhood articles and images.
\end{itemize}
locked into its project of underground networking, with the publication of rock album releases and jazz concerts, *underguides* listing hippie hangouts across France, readers’ letter pages and small ads, and collaboration with commune pioneers. The paper’s print run jumped from 30-40,000 in the first year (1970-71) to 90,000 in subsequent years, sales holding at between 60 and 70,000.\(^{20}\) Despite its flagship role in the alternative press universe, *Actuel* happily advertised other alternative publications on a regular basis, from ‘professional’ ventures such as *Le Parapluie* and *Zinc* to the smaller *fanzines* and counter-informational bulletins. ‘Il n’y avait pas de rivalité pour être no.1 […] on était tous dans le même bateau’, states Mercadet today.\(^{21}\)

The imagery of *Tout!* was periodically revived in *Actuel*, partly as a reminder of the affinity with a fraternal revolutionary project, and a wish to avoid assimilation into the mainstream. Sixties’ psychedelic artist Nicolas Devil instrumentalised the ‘TOUT’ title logo and slogans in a pro-situationist, apocalyptic commentary on early ‘70s France (fig.8.3).\(^{22}\) With the input of Guy Hocquenghem from late 1972, *Actuel* took on a more provocative tone; his questionnaires to movement figures were an exercise in iconoclasm, an unsuccessful attempt to unveil the private life of the *gauchiste* leader, and contrast it with their public pronouncements.\(^{23}\)

Collaborators at *Tout!* were well aware of *Actuel’s* rapidly prominent place in the underground firmament. But opinions were, and remain divided on the ethics of Bizot’s enterprise. For Castro, *Actuel* was a contemporary, companion paper, ‘unburdened by politics’, Bizot a generous leader; but there is resentment in his assertion that Bizot ‘never gave *Tout!* its due’.\(^{24}\) It would seem that the ex-VLR chief wishes to share a slice of the historical cake, given Bizot’s standing as the alternative media guru of the intervening years, and his keynote publications on 70s counterculture: *Underground, L’Histoire* and *200 Trips from the Underground*, in which the references to Castro’s *brûlot* are but fleeting. On the other hand Jean-Jacques Lebel provides a more critical assessment of *Actuel*:

I liked *Actuel* of course, but you have to say it was already selling a certain type of music […] Also, it didn’t have the global approach of *Tout!* and *Le Pavé* and its professional attitude

\(^{20}\) M-A. Burnier, interview, 26 March 2009. Burnier holds the main internal archives for *Actuel*. Mercadet generalises that ‘all the others sold ten times less’. Op cit.

\(^{21}\) L. Mercadet, op cit.

\(^{22}\) ‘*Orejona*’, *Actuel* no.19 April 1972, p. 50.


\(^{24}\) R. Castro, interview, 18 March 2008.
totally conflicted with these. *Actuel* was good but it brought a new, professional look that was merchandising counterculture.25

Despite the personal warmth Lebel exudes towards Bizot in his interview, *Actuel* writer Mercadet contends that they disliked each other, on the basis of an underground rivalry exacerbated by the replacement of Lebel by Bizot as figurehead of the French underground.26 But if there was genuine ill-feeling towards the *Actuel* group, this came from *Tout!* cartoonist Philippe Bertrand, who, unprompted on the question, gives the Lebel critique extra spice:

>C’est très clairement […] les petits snobinards de la bourgeoisie culturelle un peu évoluée française, qui ont récupéré le concept underground pour en faire une mode […] pour moi c’était bidon ; pas seulement un ‘business’, mais pour briller, pour être à l’avant-garde, parce que les français, surtout les intellectuels, aiment être à l’avant-garde, dans les nouvelles idées ; il faut être ‘in’.27

Bertrand goes further while reviewing *Tout!*, stating that ‘Quand on voit ça, on voit qu’*Actuel* a tout piqué à *Tout!*’, an assertion that lacks credibility given the virtual simultaneity in the launch of the publications, and Bizot’s previous connections with the US underground press.28 However, *Actuel*’s tendency to monopolise the foreground in ‘underground’ retrospectives, alongside the very brevity of *Tout!*, has clearly helped obscure the role of the latter. Yet, in his enquête-based work on youth cultures and marginality, sociologist Gérard Mauger has recognised the paper as an early sign of the transfer of movement energies in early 1970s France, further citing *Actuel* as the embodiment of US underground importation.29

While this is broadly true, Mauger overstates the shift from political to countercultural *gauchisme*, later arguing mistakenly that besides the disappearance of Maoist movements, there was a ‘massive desertion’ of Trotskyists in 1972.30 Furthermore, historian Chris Warne draws on

26 L. Mercadet, op cit.
Mauger’s work to investigate Actuel’s role in ‘bringing counterculture to France’. However, both appear to have overlooked the pre-existence of a French counterculture, the surreal-situationist poetic, artistic traditions symbiotic with the revolutionary movements of the 20th century, of which Tout!, Le Parapluie and indeed Actuel were press vectors. On the other hand, even if French counterculture were to be understood as largely American-imported, then Tout! was a more lucid reflection of the US underground, incorporating as it did a radical political project, however ill-defined, that was absent from Actuel. A survey of Bizot’s journal reveals a focus on the lifestyle, artistic, hedonistic dimensions of Anglo-Saxon counterculture, simply reporting radical political movements, whereas Tout! mirrored the political-cultural duality of papers like Chicago Seed, Berkeley Barb, Liberated Guardian and many other ‘major’ underground titles. While Tout! stayed faithful to underground ideals, Actuel repackaged US counterculture (itself on the wane in the US) for a youthful French audience.

While Actuel set out to move ‘beyond gauchisme’, it occasionally returned to a polemic with the far left, notably the Ligue Communiste in December 1972. Bizot brought in Tito Gerassi for a duel with Krivine and Bensaïd, in which ‘hedonism, liberation of the body and refusal of self-sacrifice’ were the countercultural values pitted against the Ligue’s aloof, schematic militancy that was seen to fall back on Stalinist traditions. But as Warne notes ironically, in time Actuel came, discreetly, to uphold left theoretical traditions over the degeneration of American countercultural forms, in the hope this would ‘shield the French movement from the blandishments of capitalism’. This apparent reversal preceded a rejection of the audience that Actuel had built up over the years, via parodies of the ‘recuperating’ mainstream press and ridicule of the marginal hippie figure, the baba cool, before the journal itself folded in late 1975. A second version of Actuel appeared in 1979 as a glossy magazine divested of its former gauchisme, indeed, as Warne notes, resembling The Face in the UK.

summer of 1972, an observation he uses both to back the idea that political militants became hippies, and to rubbish GP leaders’ later claim that they dissolved their organisation over a year later to avoid a descent into terrorism; their troops had already disappeared into the cultural underground.
32 A major underground title would be the LA Free Press, which at its height sold 100,000. The Chicago Seed sold a maximum of 35,000; these were primarily individual State–based sales (figures from Abe Peck, phone 16 August 2010)
33 ‘Nez à nez avec Krivine et Bensaïd’, Actuel no.26 December 1972, p. 44-47.
35 ibid. p. 322 fn.
The autumn of 1970 was a truly innovative period for the alternative press in France. After *Tout!, Actuel*, and *Politique Hebdo*, came *Le Parapluie* in November. Editor Henri-Jean Enu headed a team of artistic and intellectual contributors who had been through May ‘68 together. Driven by May’s liberationist, creative energies, *Le Parapluie* was a three-year, thirteen-issue experiment that was to embellish France’s growing counterculture, particularly around the themes of ecology, art and literature, sexual freedom, drugs and progressive rock and jazz. Enu’s political trajectory had taken him from the Jeunesses Communistes to fundraising for the Vietnamese FNL. Despite his dislike of political labels, Enu settles for a Parapluie-era self-definition of ‘Marxiste-humaniste-progressif.’

Enu explains that the question of intellectual, creative freedom remained the touchstone for contributors. He advances the list of inter-war artists and intellectuals in a lineage that extends forward to the lettrists Isidore Isou and later, *Parapluie* contributor Jean-Louis Brau. Enu’s regular referrals to the keynote text of Isou, *Le Soulèvement de la Jeunesse*, underline the ideology-debunking lettrist drive to promote the creative urges of modern youth. The presence of Brau brought with it an awareness of the lettrist-situationist debates of the 1950s and ‘60s, though for Enu both represented forms of analytical categories enabling an innovative understanding of society. This wealth of cultural references highlighted a leaning towards the French, historical side of the countercultural duality.

Writers were given free, uncensored rein on the paper, the editor splicing the often incongruous titles, articles and images, the latter often companion pieces to a series of ‘textes inédits’ by Reich, Freud, Artaud and other thinkers that highlighted *Le Parapluie*’s particularity, that is, an ability to fuse original intellectual and artistic pieces with a youth culture sensibility. Enu himself best represented this juncture, with his tendency to reel off stream-of-consciousness poems, in the style of Beat writer William Burroughs’ incongruous cuttings, and his enthusiastic promotion of a French rock culture epitomised by bands such as Red Noise, Komintern and

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37 ibid.
Dagon. Sales jumped from 5000 around the first couple of self-financed issues, to 15-20,000, the Rototechnic printers maintaining a run of 35,000. Initially, the paper was distributed by hand and post, refusing the NMPP as a capitalist distribution network. With *Le Pop*, *Free IX* and *La Veuve Joyeuse* a Charter of the free press was drawn up, yet another attempt at grouping the earlier underground titles- a measure which *Tout!* approved, but which seems to have quickly vanished. Eventually, the paper was taken up by the NMPP, and with this more assured diffusion, plus the receipt of astute financial advice, *Le Parapluie* was allowed to survive the pitfalls of the newspaper economy.

By June 1971, the Halles complex in Paris would play host to the *Journées de la free press*, the first grassroots convention of alternative press ventures in France. Within a year an underground press had mushroomed numbering several hundred new titles and spread widely across France, with a flourishing of categories, including caricature and comics, rock reviews, eco-journals, counter-information bulletins, poetry sheets, wall posters, anarchist firebrands, local newspapers, *lycéen* papers, scientific and intellectual periodicals and all manner of *fanzines*. Indeed, most were a mix of two or more of these themes, and crucially for the parallel press, were not restricted to Paris; hundreds proliferated in smaller towns and villages across the Hexagon, many printed from *ronéo*-stencils, line drawn and hand-stapled, other better-financed were offsetted. Partly because they were often unregistered with the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and ignored by the NMPP, underground ‘journalists’ sought to establish or connect with independent, horizontal networks of press distribution. Thus Enu wrote of a ‘Syndicat de la free presse’ in *Le Parapluie*, while smaller chains of affinity sprang up in the years that followed. *Actuel* writer Yves Frémion animated the jokey ‘L’Amicale Laïque des Petits Merdeaux’ that grouped together twenty or so underground titles.

For the *underpresse* that followed in 1971 and after, *Tout!* served as a type of motto reference. Like Devil in *Actuel*, Léon Cobra, author of small poetry and fantasist *BD* journal *Le Tréponème Bleu Pâle* (*Le TBP*), was inspired by the slogan of VLR:

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38 Figures from H-J. Enu, op cit. Enu regularly appealed to readers to subscribe, and to take and sell the paper, offering 1F of the 3F cover price as a return for their efforts, and the occasional free LP.
39 ibid. That is, until the economic crisis of 1973 when the cost of paper shot up by 50% and forced Enu to close the operation.
41 See L. Cobra’s account of the amicale at: www.paris70.free.fr (http://paris70.free.fr/la_saga_du_treponeme_bleu_pale2.htm) (viewed 11 November 2009)
42 Underpresse is one of the terms used by journalist André Bercoff in his 1975 survey *L’Autre France*. 
J’écoutais Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison. C’était beaucoup plus important pour moi que Debord. L’IS je ne savais pas ce que c’était, l’IL non plus, j’ai découvert tout ça après. A l’époque je ne voulais pas être cultivé, je voulais vivre. C’était ça, vivre, vivre et vite ; ‘tout, tout de suite !’ C’est pour ça qu’on aimait ce slogan, c’était magnifique.  

However, Cobra shirked the reading of Tout! and the militant press, only ever buying Actuel and Charlie Hebdo; these were the emblematic publications of the counterculture, oriented towards music, pop and art rather than ‘19th century history’. Accordingly, Cobra swam in the nebulous movement of the early 1970s new culture, moving between festivals, selling Le Tréponème in the streets and marketplaces. His nomadic trajectory with the 3-issue mag gives a flavour of how sections of the parallel press collaborated, helping sell each other’s reviews:

On avait Krispur […] La Presse Pirate, Le Canaille, poésie principalement de brésiliens, de portugais… nous on avait Le Tréponème Bleu Pale, il y avait aussi Le Citron Hallucinogène, Beurk, L’Estrassa, une dizaine de revues […] Puis on est allé à Larzac, on rencontrait Frémion […] Libération organisait des galas, parce qu’ils avaient toujours besoin de fric ; ils réservaient une place gratuite pour la presse parallèle. Parce qu’on était dans le mouvement. On rentrait gratis, il y avait un stand où on pouvait vendre nos canards. Les premières années ça a toujours été ça.  

**Graphics, caricature and bande dessinée**

Graphically, Tout! stood uniquely at the junction of a French political design configured by the upheaval of May ‘68, and recently arrived US underground comic styles and themes. As such its first elements can be traced back to May’s posters and caricatures. Several serigraphic pictures taken from local campaigns replicate the Beaux Arts technique. More particularly, Tout! specialised in the posters’ powerful combinations of image and watchword, often substituting photos and caricatures for the silkscreen stencils, at times achieving a technical blend of forms, as with the caricatures of Gaullist power (fig.5.6) It was a style initially reproduced in one of Tout!’s antecedents, Action, whose editor Jean Schalit even contemplated producing a serigraphy paper.  

Among the Tout! resident artists to collaborate in the poster design and manufacture of May were Jean-Marie Léon, Bernard Kagan, and Michel Quarez. A poster-maker by trade, Quarez aimed, like Siné in L’Enragé, to condemn media brainwashing in a perpetuation of May’s protest (fig.8.4), and when not able to celebrate advances in the aftermath movement,

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44 ibid.  
45 ibid.  
46 J. Schalit, interview, 10 February 2008.
advocated a revolution in the head with ‘Chassez le flic de votre tête’, co-drawn with Wolinski. While primarily a paper of political action, Quarez’s imagery took on May’s surreal features, even situationist invective such as ‘Crève salope’. Attracted to Tout! by Hocquenghem, Quarez reproduced the psychic turmoil of such posters in response to the paper’s philosophical musings, evidenced by his dystopian urbanist cover of no.6-7, and cartoon mockery of the mao-spontex ramblings (fig.8.5).

Other militant organisations paid a lasting homage to the rapidly iconic Beaux-Arts posters: Rouge mingled much of the industrial, clenched fist imagery with its covers of iconic Third World revolt, these fashioned by SJP painter Lucio Fanti, while Latte Ouvrière stressed its workerist leanings but maintained a photographic or poster-cover style. Similarly, the electoral left Tribune Socialiste did not venture beyond a sobre journalistic, black, white and red style, occasionally accommodating poster-style covers (fig.8.6). Maoist papers on the other hand failed to convey the radical new imagery of 1968, their initially low-quality production staying with a mixed iconography of great leaders, clenched fist salutes and at times French syndicalist caricature. The mastheads of the clandestine PCMLF demonstrated the ‘cult of the personality’, regularly displaying the head-pentych of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao. Occasionally, L’Humanité Rouge, intended as the open, public face of the PCMLF, showed the biting, anti-capitalist artwork of Sergio Birga, also of the SJP (fig.8.7). By contrast, La Cause du Peuple paid little heed to design, its pages revealing a mix of workerist icons with little emphasis on graphic quality. However, the 1971 merger of La Cause du Peuple and J’Accuse stimulated greater use of the image in propaganda- partly as a response to the visuals of Tout! The ‘Maoisant’ L’Idiot International placed itself in the graphic lineage of the posters and Action, by sporting cover adaptations of, among others, the iconic ‘CRS-SS’. However, this jacket, was unmatched by its classic, black-and-white interior. L’Idiot did though innovate with the dual cover folding technique reminiscent of Melp! and replicated to greater effect in Tout! It later sprinkled in cartoons, including those of Tout!’s Bertrand, but it was left to its sidekick publication L’Idiot Liberté, also an autumn 1970 enterprise, to convey the type of caricature now the stock in trade of the ‘new press’.

47 M. Quarez, 1 April 2009. Crève salope, an insult of the Bordeaux situationist group Le Comité de Salut Public des Vandalistes, was published in a leaflet in April 1968, and found its way to the Sorbonne during the events. Here the phrase was also picked up and put to music by a young Renaud, later to become one of France’s left-wing popstars, and played before student and lycéen audiences. See Schnapp, Alain and Pierre Vidal-Naquet. Journal de la commune étudiante : textes et documents novembre ‘67-juin ‘68 (Paris : Seuil, 1969) pp.132-133. and for Renaud singing Crève salope: youtube.com http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXVD7fftXSA

48 G. Susong, email, 20 October 2009.
A devotee of French caricature and *Hara-Kiri*, Bertrand in turn supplied *Politique Hebdo* with his cartoons. The dissident communist weekly was a wholehearted promoter of French caricature and cartoons, and featured the surreal landscapes of Cardon, formerly of *Siné Massacre* and *L’Enragé*, the figurative metamorphoses of Barbe and the totemic *L’An 01*, by Gebé. Bertrand went on to join the first French underground cartoon strip paper *Zinc*, founded in May 1971 by Pierre Guitton and Gilles Nicolaud (fig.8.8). Influenced by the surreal sketches and the political satire of Willem in *Hara-Kiri*, and the sexual humour of Crumb, *Zinc* rolled back the boundaries of French underground *BD*. Guitton’s erotic fantasy trips, such as *Huguette et Francine*, resembled the zany adventures of Willem’s *Tom Blanc*, the graphic qualities enhanced by a freeform ‘spontaneity’. Broadly *gauchiste*, the team added to these dreamlike visions their anti-authoritarian satire of police, schools and the army, with a special place reserved for Pompidou (fig.8.9):

> On était contre [Pompidou] bien sûr, c’était la politique de droite, mais à propos du personnage Pompidou, il avait le coté plutôt rigolo pour les dessinateurs et caricaturistes ; c’était un bon sujet [...] Il y avait les sourcils, et la clope.

The pictography of a rock-infused American counterculture was in evidence as early as March 1970 in *Le Pop*, whose editorial board supplemented its photos of rock and jazz musicians with simple cut-outs of festival culture, psychedelic flyers and light show patterns. Vasco’s distinct black and white caricatures added journalistic brio. *Le Parapluiue* followed up in November with a more psychedelic imagery that massaged the contours of fantasy strips such as *Jacqueline Prothèse* (fig.8.10). *Le Parapluiue* played host to a huge variety of images, some provided by in-house cartoonists such as Philippe Legendre, and occasional sketches, paintings, collages and photos contributed by a range of artists or pinched from old prints. Several late issues promoted the elegant sensuality of Aubrey Beardsley sketches. Each issue contained at least one full page figurative or landscape fantasy, with surreal or psychedelic undertones. Close-up photos of the Rolling Stones and the Who came courtesy of rock photographer Dominique Tarlé whose repertoire spanned the big acts of the ‘60s and ‘70s. The arrival of such music and art-oriented underground titles stimulated the creation of smaller, whimsical journals such as *La Veuve*.

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50 ibid.
51 Beardsley was an English aesthetic artist of the late nineteenth century, influenced by Japanese woodcuts, whose elegant black and white ink drawings took on fantastic, erotic and grotesque themes.
52 Notably the Rolling Stones, both in concert, and in their 1971-72 tax haven of Nellcote in the south of France.
Joyeuse in early 1971, full of the artwork of amateur musicians Weintzem and Vitalis, the latter an occasional contributor to Tout!

Most importantly, US underground visuals were given a huge boost with the arrival of Actuel. The monthly journal took on the trappings of the British underground periodical Oz, with its multicoloured page format and background imaging, and was the foremost vehicle for the work of Robert Crumb, featuring one of his wild strips in every issue. A wide variety of cartoons and doctored photos were used to illustrate the successive countercultural themes. Occasionally, Actuel devoted whole issues to BD, particularly US strips lifted and translated from Zap Comix, the Californian home of Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, Spain Rodriguez, Victor Moscoso, Rick Griffin and S.Clay Wilson, all of whose work featured in Actuel at different times (fig. 8.11). Further US references included the political caricature of Richard Cobb and the lusty sci-fi fantasies of Rich Corben.

1970 thus witnessed the first flowering of a French underground imagery, emerging from satirical, situationist, graphic traditions and infused by the late 1960s pop visuals of the US underground press. Moreover, there was an interpenetration of both images and artists. Vasco of Le Pop produced work for Politique Hebdo, as did Cabu of Hara-Kiri, Bertrand of Tout!, Legendre of Le Parapluie, and Kerleroux of Action and Le Canard Enchaîné. Tout! employed the services of Siné and Wolinski, Reiser, Kerleroux, Bertrand and Soulas, whereas Actuel featured the work of Zinc artists Guitton and Besnainou, and shared Vitalis of La Veuve Joyeuse with Tout! Finally, Zinc displayed at various times the caricature of Vasco, Bertrand and Soulas. Thus there was an extensive cross-fertilisation of artwork that paralleled the commotion of radical ideas, in the political, satirical and underground press sectors of Paris between the years 1970 and 1971.

Communes

Tout!’s reflection on communal living was rooted in the actors’ inversion of traditional militant notions of radical change in the wake of May. Essentially, the axes of this reflection shifted from the collective:political, to the individual:cultural, drawing on several international, indeed transnational exchanges. Gérassi of the GdB Censier was involved in the production in 1969 of Révolution Culturelle, a close antecedent of Tout! in its reorganisation of these ideological themes:
On avait fait une revue avec Glucksmann et Jean Paul Dollé qui était une revue qui s’appelle Révolution Culturelle, un seul numéro est sorti [...] elle était fondée sur un malentendu. Il y avait ceux qui la voyaient comme révolution politique c’est-à-dire la mouvance de ce qui se passait en Chine, ça c’était Glucksmann […] alors que pour nous, c’était révolutionner soi-même.53

The few spin-off issues of Revolution Culturelle, drawn up consecutively at Vincennes and Censier over 1969-70, showed a disarticulation of the interpretation of the Cultural Revolution, the motto changer la vie coming to prevail in the thoughts of the GdB Censier.54 Furthermore, Hocquenghem’s travels to the US - in particular to the Californian communes of Berkeley- in the summer of 1969, Gérassi’s visits to Turin to witness joint student-worker activity, and the discussions with his visiting cousin - a left activist in the US ‘Movement’- on the re-centring of militant life on the ‘me’, all reinforced the urge to live together.

Pour nous, justement par cette rencontre qu’on avait eu avec mon cousin, qui lui emmenait ces éléments qui venaient des États-Unis c’était : révolutionner soi-même dans sa relation aux autres, sa mode d’approche […] y a eu tout en Mai 68, le courant le plus proche de ça c’était Lebel […] repenser tout, vivre autrement […] c’était quelque chose que nous voulions, qui était issu de 68, et on s’est aperçu que aujourd’hui c’était la question-clé, qu’on pouvait même l’aborder avec les ouvriers.55

Directing his fire against the social conservatism of the far left, Hocquenghem reproduced a keynote text from the final, April 1970 issue of Faire la Révolution in his mid-70s intellectual retrospective L’Après-Mai des Faunes, as a way of showing how the militant conceptualisation of cultural revolution had evolved:

Les deux voies qui s’offrent à nous aujourd’hui sont claires: changer l’individu en lui inoculant le vaccin prolétarien qui l’immunisera par une fantastique auto-répression contre ses propres désirs, ou bien changer la situation et les rapports à l’intérieur du groupe et entre le groupe et les masses.56

Hocquenghem’s complementary critique of the ‘hierarchical, oppressive’ family, simultaneously fed the GdB’s desire to break from sexual norms and raise new models of collective living. This impatient delineation from far left moeurs - ‘C’est bien joli de parler révolution culturelle, mais où en est-on deux ans après Mai?’- was underscored by the existence of the first urban communes such as the GdB Censier house in Châtenay-Malabry, the house of the

54 The CdB Vincennes produced Révolution Culturelle in June 1969; in October of that year the revamped GdB brought out Faire la Revolution as a supplement to Révolution Culturelle, and in April 1970 the second issue of Faire la Révolution was put together by the GdB Censier, this time as a supplement to Le Paria.
55 J.-M. Gérassi, op cit..
Hocquenghem parents in the spring of 1969, and in the later founding of the Villa des Roses commune in Ivry. One of the Censier communards, Marc Hatzfeld, sees in this early cohabitation the start of a Parisian communitarian life, mingling political activism and love affairs:

Àprès il y en a eu des centaines dans toute la France, on a voulu nous libérer dans notre vie quotidienne tout de suite ; pour moi en tout cas c’était l’aspect le plus important. Le rapport avec l’argent, les femmes, la sexualité en général, le rapport au travail, aux parents et avec la famille, nous avons rompu les liens et crée des liens nouveaux.  

Indeed, the Ivry commune was among the first political, experimental communes in Paris; another was the Groupe 76 collective in Arcueil, linked to the far left movements through the CdB Vincennes, and its distribution of US underground press, and set up in late 1970. Further communes initiated by circles close to VLR grew in Asnières and Pontoise through 1971, each drawing in wider numbers of ex-leftists and friends (fig. 8.12). While on a trip to the US in the summer of 1971, Yves Hardy sojourned in a hippie commune in New Mexico, moving on to a more political visit to Berkeley. On his return he co-founded a commune in Cergy-Pontoise with other ex-VLR members and friends, remembering the period as exceptional for openness, sharing, the making and unmaking of relationships. Pontoise and Ivry residents even discussed the notion of ‘encirclement of the towns by the communes’, a détournement of Maoist strategic language.

Tout! finally accounted for this communal life in ‘L’Impasse aux Roses, c’est là que j’habite’, where again, the living of one’s own life was rhetorically counterposed to gauchiste preoccupations:

Les formules toutes faites, ralbol! Je veux être moi, pur vrai. Je veux vivre chaque instant et en jouir comme un enfant et bander 24 heures sur 24 […] Je ne prétends plus à tout prix changer la vie, je change ce que j’ai envie de changer.

The personal, individual ethic impelled by Censier worked its way through VLR touching also the activists of the base ouvrière (BO) at Flins. This much is evident in Tiennot Grumbach’s late 1971 essay for Les Temps Modernes: ‘En cherchant l’unité de la politique et de la vie’, in which he sought to reconcile a more Maoist take on cultural revolution with the burgeoning of BO communes in the region.

58 Y. Hardy, interview, 20 December 2008.
Lors de la dissolution de VLR j’avais, comme d’autres, décidé d’entreprendre la longue marche vers la réappropriation du moi dans le travail politique. Je voulais penser ma pratique avec ma propre tête, ne plus me renier et chacun de nous, de la même façon, voulait se faire reconnaître par les gens non plus comme ‘touriste-du-gauchisme-venant-à-la-porte-de-l’usine’, mais comme étant soi-même avec et au milieu des autres. C’est ce que appelions notre ‘établissement dans la vie’.  

Ivry may have been an inaugural urban commune, but in the countryside communes were already underway. This was the case in the Cévennes, where several former members of the 22 mars had acquired houses in the hillside hamlet of Galon in 1968, settling in over the next year. Other soixante-huitards installed themselves in the hills of Ardèche. Whereas some grassroots activists had set out to ‘destroy the university’ and link up with workers in struggle, others such as Nanterre’s Chantal Lermyte sought to ‘desert the university’, as part of their rejection of bourgeois culture in general. It was the prelude to a much wider flight of young people from French mainstream, urban, consumer society to attempt to live by their own communal rules, in simple, often rural environments; researchers estimate that summer 1969 was the richest period for the establishment of néo-ruraux in typically hilly or mountainous regions as far apart as the Jura and Pyrenées-Orientales.

Whereas VLR-Tout! publicised urban collective initiatives, Ivry, the Maisons du Peuple, and occupations of empty houses as culturally-reoriented models derived from the Maoist line of ‘living with the people’, Actuel, from the outset, privileged rural communes as the key form of a nascent counter-culture. By summer 1971, the journal was working together with another commune-specific publication: C: Bulletin des Communautés edited by Michel Faligand, in a project to extend the network of communes across France. Actuel’s survey of 5000 readers, on their communal aspirations, including ideological, labour and even sexual preferences, shows how instrumental the journal was in the development of communard life in France. In addition to advice on how to acquire property in isolated areas, it mentioned the welcome to visitors given by 200 pre-established communes, in three rural zones. Finally, the proliferation of communiqués in the journal’s small ads forum from the journal’s second year cemented Actuel’s

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63 ‘Changer la vie tout de suite’, Antirouille no.16-17, June-September 1977, p. 21.
64 C. Lermyte, interview, 13 June 2009.
status as the principal media vector for communal life in the Hexagon. In 1973, the State identified 300 ‘stable groups of which 1,600 persons’ based on departmental statistics, a figure sociologist Laurent Quéro describes as a ‘peak’. 67

**Drugs: paranoia in the underground press?**

The addition of recreational and occasionally hallucinogenic drugs to the increasingly underground environment of VLR- *Tout!* was another factor in its displacement from the traditional, more puritanical *gauchiste* world. For some erstwhile Maoists, the festival of Biot in August 1970 provided their first joint-smoking opportunity. 68 Elsewhere, the Censier group was already a hive of sexual and pot-smoking activity. 69 Individuals such as Michael Memmi and Jean-Jacques Lebel were also smokers, in phase with the drugs dimension of the US underground. Lebel describes the transformative ambiance at VLR- *Tout!* partly enabled by the common consumption of pot:

> This group argued for months together and changed; we got stoned together, it was the only group where people got stoned. When you do that you become looser, more human. I saw people change like this. We also went to each others houses, we used to go to Annette’s house out in Evreux, smoke joints, talk, listen to music and dance […] it wasn’t the same type of rigid political rapport as inside other groups. 70

Contributors to the paper speak of smoking sessions at rue Buffon while the issues were being compiled. Inside its pages, *Tout!* exposed perceived hypocrisy over alcohol and tobacco, and like the May poster *L’Intox vient à domicile*, could not resist a stab at the ‘stultifying’ effects of television. 71 Against the background of new legislation banning the use of intoxicants, the paper set about ridiculing the medical classifications and government rationales. 72 Moreover, *Tout!* went beyond the critique of bourgeois drugs morality to attack the PCF in its moral

71 ‘Stupéfiants!’ *Tout!* no.8, 1 February 1971, p. 6.
72 The 31 December 1970 anti-drugs laws outlawed both the traffic and consumption of, amongst others, cannabis and LSD, seen as emblematic of the student movements of the late 1960s, in the government’s Rapport Henrion of 1995. See http://www.caat.online.fr/dossiers/loi1970.htm (viewed 9 June 2010).
conservatism via the pronouncements of Dr. Muldworf. Even Sartre, the paper’s director, was victim of a send-up (fig.8.13):

Attention, cet homme pourrait être toxicomane! [...] Son comportement s’est modifié [...] il a manifesté de brusques énervements, voire des colères inhabituelles devant les tribunaux en particulier [...] attitude équivoque sur les objets en sa possession [...] fréquente des toxicomanes notoires [...] a tendance à se cacher dans des endroits insolites [...] même s’il ne présente pas tous ces symptômes [...] il pourrait être toxicomane. 73

However, Tout! did not hold a line on the issue of drugs. There was a fear among older, leading VLR members that the police could infiltrate the organisation to entrap the militants, indeed Lebel explains that when he first met up with VLR, he was accused of being a cop, because he had brought hashish. 74 This fear of drugs was a feature of most far left organisations. For Weber of the Ligue:

C’était à cause des problèmes de sécurité. Celui qui addicte la drogue, est devenu cible pour la police, quand on dit au type, ‘si tu veux pas aller en prison, faut que tu nous informes’. 75

One witness at a Tout! meeting mentions that a VLR leader angrily rejected the inclusion of a Huey Newton passage that mentioned marijuana:

Un dirigeant, à l’occasion d’une lettre qui revendiquait les bienfaits de la marijuana, était très paranoïaque ; il a dit ‘Si on commence à parler de choses comme ça, les flics vont venir mettre de l’héroïne sous mon lit’ etc. Il y avait beaucoup de chefs gauchistes qui étaient assez opposés à toute consommation. C’est clair. 76

Younger VLR members also suspected an undercover police presence. Michel Wlassikoff, then a student at the university of Caen, mentions that in the space of a few months in 1971, the campus was flooded with high strength hashish and LSD, linked to the arrival of a ‘drop-out’, later identified as a police agent. 77 Both Wlassikoff and Richard Deshayes entertain the possibility that the police pushed drugs inside target groups of ‘undesirables’ such as gauchistes and even among youth in the Cités, in an ‘American-style scenario’ of State subversion. 78

73 ‘Attention ! Cet homme pourrait être un toxicomane !’, Tout! no.8, op cit.
76 The respondent wishes to remain anonymous.
77 M. Wlassikoff, interview, 2 April 2009.
78 ibid. and R. Deshayes, interview, 26 June 2009. After the COINTELPRO campaign of disinformation against the BPP, theories emerged about the flooding of US ghettos with drugs in the early 1970s, to prevent the radicalization of blacks. The issue is referred to in the 1995 film Panther by Mario van Peebles.
This caution was reflected in the paper, with the translation of a Weathermen communiqué that defended marijuana use but linked heroin and amphetamines - ‘death drugs’ - to the US State.\footnote{‘Extrait du communiqué des Weathermen’ Tout! no.8 op cit.}

Adjacent political opinions went further, describing the general use of drugs among militants as the product of their frustrations, an inability to reconcile ‘the dream with the revolution’, particularly since May.\footnote{‘Stupéfiants !’ op cit.}

Mai nous est venu du Vietnam, nous autres maoïstes avons été extrêmement exotiques dans nos réflexions politiques, puis le cœur des gauchistes s’est mis à battre au rythme du mouvement de masse de Turin- Le Mt américain, la nouvelle culture voilà le dernier mouvement de masse passionnant […] mais ceci dire que le mouvement a une double caractéristique de rupture et de fuite […] la drogue a moins d’importance pour le moment en France et en Italie qu’aux EU justement à cause de l’existence d’un mouvement de masse […] donnant à l’hypothèse révolutionnaire beaucoup plus de crédibilité immédiate […] en ce moment parmi ceux qui militaient, le hasch aurait plutôt tendance à alimenter la passivité.\footnote{‘Moi, ça m’énerve!’ Tout ! no.8, op cit. p. 7.}

There was no such reticence at neighbouring underground journal Actuel, explains Léon Mercadet today: ‘On fumait d’énormes joints chez Bizot ou au journal et on se marrait beaucoup’.\footnote{L. Mercadet, interview, 5 February 2010.}

\textit{Actuel} printed entire issues on a wide variety of narcotics and their properties. The language of the journal was suffused with American drug slang: ‘freak’, ‘joint’, ‘pot’. Its imagery, when not directly promoting drugs- as with its photos of joint rolling techniques, indulged in the surreal, multicoloured ‘trips’ of psychedelic imagery, amongst others Robert Crumb, ‘le dessinateur fétiche d’Actuel’, and \textit{Kris Kool} by Philippe Caza (fig.8.14).\footnote{L. Mercadet, email, 5 March 2010.}

\textit{In a condemnation of the new anti-drugs laws, Le Parapluie} slammed the official ‘escalating theory’ which held that cannabis led to heroin. One of its key collaborators Jean-Louis Brau, a historian of underground drugs, openly admitted his long term hashishe use and counterposed Marxist puritanism over ‘decadent drugs, to a ‘new form of thought opening up’\footnote{‘Dope news’, Le Parapluie no.1, November 1970, p. 11.}

\textit{Echoing this theory of mind-expanding drugs, Enu attacked the international campaign against hallucinogens, those ‘veritable vitamins of the spirit’.}\footnote{‘Drogue à la une’, Le Parapluie no.5, January-February 1972, p. 3.}

\textit{On the other hand Le Parapluie} considered heroin and amphetamines deadly, destructive, citing ‘acid guru’ Timothy Leary on their drawbacks.\footnote{Le Parapluie no.8, July-September 1972, p. 4}

Underground paper titles themselves reflected the dreamlike psychedelic ambiance invoked by
LSD: *Le Citron Hallucinogène, Acidulé, L'Or Vert,* and *Dérive* just some of the oddities of the underground press nomenclature.

Brau’s critique of the *groupuscules* on this theme marked a widening gulf between acolytes of the new counterculture and political *gauchisme* in France. With one foot in either camp, VLR experienced the drugs issue as yet another of the contradictions undermining its cohesion. Ultimately, *Tout!* was charged for defamation over an article in no.8 in which it was alleged the police protected heroin traffickers while pursuing and ensuring heavy sentences for the ‘young who smoke hashish’.\(^87\) However, little came of it, despite Sartre’s readiness to take up the challenge in court.

**Rock ‘n’ roll: festivals de fric?**

The main concern of *Tout!* with respect to rock and pop was to prevent the capitalist appropriation of the musical medium. Essentially, rock was viewed as a radical, grassroots product that worked against bourgeois cultural norms, but in perpetual danger of being sucked into a corrupt, profit-hungry music industry. Classical music could be identified by the leftists as either bourgeois, or as part of another world entirely. In this, Didier Sandman explains his feeling of marginalisation:

> Ma grande passion a toujours été la musique classique, y compris quand j’étais maoïste. Et croyez-moi, (rires) quand vous écoutez une symphonie de Bruckner vous êtes très, très loin. Et donc j’ai toujours été décalé par rapport à ça.\(^88\)

Stéphane Courtois also felt he had to hide his preference for classical, for instance with regard to a free jazz benefit for the BPP:

> Je me souviens que ce concert m’avait laissé froid. J’étais fan de musique non-classique à l’époque. J’allais clandestinement, suivre les concerts du domaine musical, parce que si mes camarades avaient su ça, ça aurait été terrible ; c’était toute la musique d’avant-garde de l’époque sous Pierre Boulez etc., ça passait au théâtre de l’Odéon. Mais Archie Shepp me laissait froid.\(^89\)

Rock musician, photographer and VLR partisan Michael Memmi, a self-professed ‘lumpen’, organised the transport of rock and pop bands on the back of his lorry in political demonstrations

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\(^{87}\) ‘Tout casse les bonnes moeurs’, *Tout!* no. 15, 30 June 1971, p. 1.

\(^{88}\) D. Sandman, interview, 9 March 2008.

\(^{89}\) S. Courtois, interview, 29 October 2008.
and fêtes populaires. For Memmi, the point about musical performance was its accessibility to the masses:

I learned that it’s not music that really matters, it’s the way you play it and where you play it. If you play rock ‘n’ roll in a theatre when you pay $200 to enter, its not really revolutionary music anymore, even if you scream ‘fuck the bourgeois!’... Now if you play some Vivaldi in front of the factory, and because of the music they stop working and come and sit in the grass, smoke a cigarette and talk to their neighbour, then music becomes revolutionary. And this idea led our way of being, and mine until now.

Others linked with Tout! identify jazz, blues and rock as the engines driving the underground scene, particularly the rock star groups of the Anglo-Saxon world: the Rolling Stones, the Who, the Doors. Special mention is made of Jimi Hendrix as a revolutionary force within music. Richard Deshayes, an avid listener, points to Hendrix’s ability to revolutionise the rock genre:


Jazz enthusiast Jean-Jacques Lebel had the good fortune to witness Hendrix play his version of the Star-Spangled Banner at Woodstock:

He destroyed the national anthem of the shit Pentagon. And turned it into a hymn of beauty. My God, I never thought I would live to experience such a fantastic process [...] that’s the whole thing of jazz, how the slaves of the plantations with their chains: shlugadda, shlugadda, beat out a rhythm [...] Jimi Hendrix showed us how to transform horror into beauty.

Hendrix’s destruction of the national anthem, subversion of the American flag, was also the subject of Hocquenghem’s tribute to the deceased guitarist in L’Idiot Liberté. Like Janis Joplin, Hendrix was strangled by society, overcome by an ‘excess of rhythm’, and ‘the rage of unfulfilled living’, unlike the recently departed de Gaulle. In an echo of the Doors’ Break on through (to the other side), Hocquenghem intoned:

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91 M. Memmi, interview, 3 August 2009.
C’est vraiment trop bête. Deux enfants du blues, ceux qui résumaient ce qu’il y a de plus chouette dans la pop ont défoncé la barrière.\textsuperscript{95}

His fusion of the political and cultural, identifying the rock musicians’ revolt with that of US blacks, was to support the drive for an authentic, creative French rock that would ‘restore some of the hope confiscated by the professional revolutionaries’ in the ‘cultural desert’ of May’s aftermath.\textsuperscript{96}

\textit{Politique Hebdo} commented on Hendrix’s passing in its no.0 test issue, stating his guitar instrumentalism was the totem of ‘a mythology that starts to create its own universe of freedom, immediate pleasure and revolution’, but questioning the artist’s faith in the creative capacity of drugs, such that:

\begin{quote}
Il avait choisi de mener sa vie comme sa musique: une sorte d’ouragan démoniaque qui s’achevait chaque fois dans un paroxysme de délire.\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

The new-look \textit{Actuel} paid tribute with a defiant, psychedelic poem extracted from \textit{La Veuve Joyeuse}, employing the same mirror-distorted picture of photographer Horace that graced the cover of the first \textit{Le Parapluie}.

\textit{Tout!’s} critique of the music industry and promotion of the Force de Libération et d’Intervention Pop (FLIP) followed from a growing anarcho-hippie contestation of rock festival organisation and artists who were considered to have ‘sold out’, which had seen protests, exacerbated by the presence of ‘Paris anarchists and Dutch Provos’, at the massive Isle of Wight festival end-August 1970.\textsuperscript{98} In fact, Wight followed the first, ‘half-failed’, rock festivals in France in Aix, Biot and Antibes, in the summer of 1970, the scenes of subversive fan intervention and heckling of American singers Leonard Cohen and Joan Baez.\textsuperscript{99} Enu and his experimental rock group Fille qui Mousse played Biot that summer, foreshadowing the musical, poetic spirit of \textit{Le Parapluie} later that year. However, rock festivals as counter-cultural paradigm came in for severe criticism in the paper, denounced as ‘festivals de fric’, and the paper attacked the practice of surrounding

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{95} ibid. p. 118
\textsuperscript{96} ibid. p. 119.
\textsuperscript{99} J. Vassal, \textit{Rock et Folk}, no.44, September 1970, p. 62. Vassal could not help but draw attention to Cohen’s substantial fee of $35,000, and the monthly printed a reader’s letter complaining of the food prices. \textit{Tout!} followed up with the slur, ‘Joan Baez Salope’, because of the folk singer’s employment of two nannies to care for her child whilst she toured (no.1, p. 5).
\end{flushright}
venues with barbed wire. Lebel was also present at Wight, where the promoters had set up a fence, barbed wire and security patrols.

We tore down walls so people could get in free. They said come up here on stage and say it... so I did, give me an f –F! give me a u-U!...101

In a 1970 film, he took to the stage to denounce the rock festival business as ‘a psychedelic concentration camp’, where thousands of young people were being herded into cramped spaces at inflated ticket prices.102 The festival concept was already marked by a tension between young rock fans, leftists and the State, when a Woodstock-style event, organised by Actuel in its pre-Bizot phase, was forbidden on French territory in October 1969, forcing the organisers to relocate to the Belgian border town of Amougies (fig.8.15).103 Even the conventional, though underground-influenced Rock & Folk would complain of the ‘pop psychosis’ uniting media, politicians and police against the gathering of large numbers of young people at musical events.104 Finally, the high cost of concert and festival tickets was seen to exclude large swathes of youth from popular backgrounds. Exasperated by this distancing of pop from the people, Tout! provided a small FLIP manifesto:

Désormais, la pop de sera pas qu’une marchandise de plus ou moins belle qualité, elle sera le véhicule de notre révolte contre le vieux monde, une arme subversive pour changer la vie et transformer de monde ici et maintenant, c’est-à-dire partout ou les luttes sont menées […] désormais nous choisissons les moments et les terrains ou intervenir, nous créerons nous-mêmes des situations. Nous serons, nous sommes déjà le FLIP.105

Comprising several revolutionary French bands, among others Komintern and Maajun, the FLIP’s sensibilities matched perfectly those of VLR, and in particular the youth, lycéen and student element of the mao-spontex. FLJ activists were instrumental in obtaining a platform for the movement at a Rolling Stones concert in September. Posing as rock journalists at a pre-gig press conference to challenge Mick Jagger on the expensive ticketing, Deshayes and his English-

100 ‘Festivals interdits’ and ‘Vrac’, Le Parapluie no.1, p. 4 and p. 11. Aix was seen as ‘le festival de l’encadrement/the hemmed-in festival’, Biot attacked for treating its audience with contempt, forcing them to sleep overnight on the spot in order to catch the musicians starting early the next day. Le Parapluie appeared similarly cynical with regard to festival-goers, describing the kids at Woodstock as ‘500 mille cons dans la merde/500k fools in the shit’, and the Isle of Wight festival as ‘Dachau!’ , with more than 600,000 people doling out cash to live in camps; ‘love-pisse-caca’.
102 ibid. See also www.youtube.com, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNvSy-KriuU for a clip of Lebel onstage (viewed 1 February 2010)
103 Top of the bill at Amougies were Pink Floyd, Captain Beefheart and Frank Zappa, Archie Shepp, Art ensemble of Chicago and Soft Machine.
104 Rock & Folk, op cit.
speaking comrade Memmi highlighted the contradiction between the Stones’ anthem *Street Fighting Man* and the economic exclusion of youth from the band’s concerts. In response, Jagger is said to have blamed the promoters and given the nod to a forced entry.\(^{106}\) The following evening, the FLJ broke through the barriers, leading hundreds of ticketless fans into the Palais des Sports (PdS), where Memmi succeeded in persuading Jagger to give the PA over to the invaders for several minutes, and Deshayes spoke of the need to ‘liberate pop’ from the stage.\(^{107}\) *Tout!* followed up, exhorting its readers to ‘refuse to pay’ for such spectacles.\(^{108}\) Whereas the VLR paper slated the Stones for their easy recuperation, a writer in *Le Pop* was more forgiving:

> La révolution à 6000 balles la place c’était suspect […] nous sommes exploités, mais les Stones le sont aussi. Ils en sont conscients et essaient de se débarrasser des escrocs professionnels, mais cela n’est pas toujours facile.\(^{109}\)

On the other hand *Actuel*, in its inaugural issue, dropped any real critique of the Stones’ commercialisation, playing instead on the group’s bad-boy image and analysing their discography. By March of the following year, the tone of Bizot’s monthly was transformed, that month’s issue being devoted to ‘Free, pop et politique’:

> Il existe différentes musiques pop. Mais, au-delà des tentatives de récupération, toutes témoignent d’une volonté de changer la vie. Si le free jazz est la musique de la révolution noire, la pop musique est celle de la révolte blanche.\(^{110}\)

This came close on the heels of the second, more explosive occupation of the PdS by thousands of young rock fans on 31 January, this time on the occasion of a Soft Machine concert, again with the FLJ at the forefront, and registering subsequently across a range of leftist papers including *La Cause du Peuple* and *Politique Hebdo*. Yves Hardy remembers the occasion well:

> Tous les militants connus du FLJ étaient présents […] on menait la charge avec Richard en tête ; il y avait une barrière avec des flics derrière, et on a tout renversé ; des milliers de gens sont rentrés. Il y avait eu une réflexion du FLJ, le fait de mener la charge avec le slogan ‘music gratuite pour le peuple’.\(^{111}\)

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\(^{106}\) R. Deshayes, interview, 15 April 2008.

\(^{107}\) M. Memmi, interview, 3 August 2009. Deshayes and *Tout!* speak of 3-500 invaders, Memmi of 3000 recalcitrant spectators in the PdS.


\(^{111}\) Y. Hardy, interview, 10 June 2008. Hardy recalls having been chased, beaten and arrested by the police following the concert.
Five thousand were reported to have taken over the venue, emptied the bar and handed out refreshments; *Tout!*’s account read like a call to the suburban street kids and expressed an impatience with far left groups:

On nous avait bourré le mou avec les révoltes de la faim, la révolution des musettes et d’un coup on a pigé que des esquimaux piqués, ça créait un climat subversif. Eh ! Les théoriciens de la Révolution, reprenez vos encrèrs, car j’ai bien dit un climat subversif.\footnote{112}

Coming in the same issue that denounced the grave police injury to Deshayes, the Palais article with its oblique reference to music was subsumed within a more general cry for youth freedom. Subsequent treatment of musical events in *Tout!* followed a similar motif. Red Noise singer Patrick Vian occupied the cover of no.11, as the police suppressed the mobile, open air rock show accompanying a Commune centenary demonstration. Another bittersweet criticism of the Stones lay in the paper’s jibe at Jagger’s glitzy July wedding in St Tropez, where visiting ‘freaks’ were chased away: ‘Dommage que ta musique soit extra…’.\footnote{113} Unlike in *Le Pop, Actuel, Le Parapluie*, and the bulk of the music press, *Tout!* supplied little or nothing in the way of rock or jazz analysis \textit{per se}. Popular music was distinguished as a cultural form that could be turned to subversive ends, an instrument that might impel the individual to a wider communion with the mass of rebellious youth. There was an additional generational question at stake, as said by Didier Sandman:

\begin{quote}
Le FLJ, ils étaient politiques mais plus dans la musique dans la fête ils n’avaient pas le background marxiste-léniniste qu’on a eu. C’était une autre génération quand même.\footnote{114}
\end{quote}

Accordingly, a young Thierry Haupais fused his political and musical interests in releasing a rock single under the pseudonym of Thierry Freedom.\footnote{115} Courtois contends that the record was produced in competition with the GP, whose resident chanteuse Dominique Grange had earlier issued \textit{Les Nouveaux Partisans}. Indeed, Castro was rattled by the quality of this GP salvo in the ‘war my organisation had with them’, but appears to ridicule Haupais’ effort, which included the refrain: ‘Nous sommes tous des fedayins, nous libérerons la Palestine’.\footnote{116}

\footnote{112 ‘Palais des Sports’, *Tout!* no.9, 18 February 1971, p. 7. Esquimau was/is a brand of ice cream lolly.}
\footnote{113 ‘Carnet mondain’ *Tout!* no.16, p. 14.}
\footnote{114 D. Sandman, interview, 25 February 2008.}
\footnote{115 The recently deceased Thierry Haupais went on to work as a rock critic in \textit{Libération} before founding a branch of Virgin in the 1980s and producing up and coming artists like Etienne Daho.}
\footnote{116 R. Castro, interview, \url{http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4sxbt_rue68-en-chansons-2_music} (viewed 16 March 2010)}
The revolutionary energies that fed the FLIP passed over in 1971 to the Front de Libération du Rock, made up of French bands Komintern, Lard Free, Barricade and others, but these turned out to be temporary campaigns. The underground press tended to privilege Anglo-Saxon rock and jazz, and the argument that rock possessed radical mobilising powers quickly lost ground. Deshayes retrospectively views 1971 as the turning point, with the Beatles having gone, Jimi Hendrix then Jim Morrison dying, and conflates their passing with the dissolution of the VLR scene. Indeed, in its increasing disillusionment with corporate American ‘Rock Culture’ and ‘Youth Revolution’, Actuel sought out and promoted fresh underground musical forms in the European field, and began a new importation of electronic German bands such as Can, Neu! and Kraftwerk in 1972. In its final issue of October 1975, resident rock critic Jean-Pierre Lentin cherry-picked five or six acts from each rock subculture of the previous five years, in a predominantly Anglophone field, to conclude: ‘La fin des années ‘70 appartient à de nouvelles musiques’; these would be hybrids, offshoots and amalgams of electronic, jazz-rock and world music.  

‘Approchez! Approchez! Théâtre révolutionnaire à Billancourt’

Theatre after May entered a period of self-interrogation and a challenge to established forms, against the hierarchies, specialisations and distances associated with the mainstream bourgeois spectacle. The drive, inspired in part by the revolutionary-political and festive aspects of May, and new, often international models, was to democratise production and abolish the ‘fourth wall’ between actors and audience. A regular purveyor of the latest developments in theatre, Tribune Socialiste noted the flourishing of a ‘guerrilla theatre’ at the 1969 World Festival in Nancy. The political Bread and Puppets performances were seen as the bridge between large-scale production and an international mushrooming of radical grassroots troupes:

Ces troupes sont nombreuses [...] et elles viennent de tous les points du monde [...] éphémères peut-être parce que condamnées a mal vivre, mais sans cesse renaissantes, et capables d’éclairer les significations du moment.

117 J-P. Lentin, ‘Rock 1970-1975 : le petit Lentin illustré’, Actuel, no.58, October 1975, p. 70. Oddly, Lentin does not mention punk rock, despite the journal having picked up on the phenomenon as early as January 1974 (although this was considered a US trend with the New York Dolls).
118 Tout! no.5, p. 3.
The counter-cultural space opened by VLR-Tout! in the gauchiste political milieu accommodated other forms of art and performance, notably street theatre. This was first used by VLR as a defence propaganda tool during the Meulan trial, with a troupe of sympathising actors and lycéens. Hélène Bleskine, one of the animators, describes their work as ‘agit-prop’, the political extension of a suburban théâtre lycéen VLR had received word of and actively sought out. Although Bleskine shies from overly political labels, Tout! dubbed the November 1970 spectacles outside Renault-Flins and Billancourt ‘Revolutionary theatre’, a microcosm of May ‘68 with ‘imagination, speech and meaningful actions’, its photos revealing the predominantly immigrant workers who watched on laughing and smiling. Tout! was well disposed to political performances. Bleskine, who later joined VLR and settled in the Gargenville commune, cites as inspiration the Bread and Puppets and Campesinos troupes, vectors of radical American influence in Europe, while Lebel was the harbinger of happenings in France.

The accoutrements of this street theatre: masks, banners, placards and drums, were deployed again during the Paris Commune centenary celebrations the following spring, mixed in with the rock music played from the back of Memmi’s truck. Groups from the rock federation FLIP, including Fille qui Mousse, Komintern and Red Noise, played to a big crowd ‘dancing joyously’ in the Marché aux Puces, before police broke up the party and took the musicians to Beaujon (fig.8.16). During the 1971 World Youth Theatre Festival in Nancy, Bleskine and Memmi were co-organisers of a spectacular gauchiste cortege on the Mayday demonstration- also an international day of action against the Vietnam war- with its pig’s head effigies of Nixon and Dassault, conga rhythms, dances and chants.

Street theatre, music and dancing using humour and derision, were being built in to political parades, as witnessed simultaneously in the Paris Mayday demonstrations; these also saw the MLF and FHAR contingents, including the Gazolines transvestites strutting to the chant of ‘Prolétaires de tous pays caressez-vous’. Tout!, as an advocate of this political-cultural fusion was fully reflective of these developments, even if in contradictory ways. The paper reported on the Magic Circus’ street drumming outside a Mutualité event marking the Commune centenary,

121 H. Bleskine 16 September 2008.
124 H. Bleskine, op cit.
126 Martel, op cit., p. 27.
which drew large crowds from the hall in rhythmic dancing. Michel Quarez provided some of the visuals for Savary’s show before moving on to the absurdist street troupe Albert et sa Fanfare Poliorcétique, an act that doubled up as a rock’n’roll group. For Quarez, it was easier to maintain relations with those of the sous-art, against ‘high-culture’.

Similarly, Tout! passed judgement on other ostensibly radical theatrical pieces, such as 1789, by Ariane Mnouchkine’s Théâtre du Soleil. Whereas a TS critic praised the thought-provoking grand spectacle, the Tout! writer panned the piece for its perceived failure to connect the historic Revolution with current popular reality: the figure of Henry, engaged in the class struggle, furthermore unable to pay his seat in such a venue:

Le théâtre – spectacle – d’avant-garde, c’est pas le théâtre de la révolution mais le dernier théâtre d’aliénation dont la bourgeoisie va se servir.

That said, it seems ex-members of VLR were instrumental in bringing the Théâtre du Soleil to the Val de Seine region two years later for a performance of 1793, the follow-up to 1789. In so doing, the initiative incurred the indifference or hostility of the local press. ‘Il y a toujours des bastilles à prendre’, noted a leaflet of the Mantes Comité D’Action Culturelle. Tout!’s preference for politically engaged theatre with the aim of abolishing the divide between actors and spectators, was later witnessed in the platform given to militants working with Occitan outfit Lo Teatro de la Carriera. Discussions with the audience were said to reveal a local, popular desire to contest French ‘colonisation’ of the provinces, to the point of taking up the armed struggle.

127 ‘Difficile fête’, Tout! no.10, 12 March 1971, p. 8. One of the best known new performance troupes, Le Grand Magic Circus, formed by Jerôme Savary in 1968 as a project to re-connect with audiences in popular venues, brought a mixture of theatre, carnival, fairground and orgy, against an exclusive and elitist theatre. Photo novella forms of Savary’s sexual, absurdist mise en scène were donated to Action, in its counter-cultural turn mid-1969.
128 M. Quarez, interview, 1 April 2009.
129 ‘1789’, Tout! no.9, 18 February 1971, p. 2.
131 ‘Lo Teatro de la Carriera’ Tout! no.16 29 July 1971, p. 4.
Figure 8.1: The first manifestation of Robert Crumb in the post-May ’68 alternative press, *Action* 1969.

Figure 8.2: ‘D’où viennent les idées justes?’ *L’Idiot Liberté* also reproduced US underground work, this Mao & Marx bros. taken from the *Chicago Seed*, 1970.

Figure 8.3: Nicolas Devil works the imagery of *Tout!* into his situationist diatribe, *Actuel* 1972.

Figure 8.5: An exercise in self-deprecation: Quarez’s cartoon satirises the accompanying diatribe.

Figure 8.4: Two paper covers from late 1968 play on the dangers of the mainstream press.
Figure 8.6: *Tribune Socialiste* displays a Beaux-Arts style poster cover, one of many in the leftist press. 1969.

Figure 8.7: More caricature from the Salon de la Jeune Peinture, Sergio Birga in *L’Humanité Rouge*.

Figure 8.8: *Zinc*, the first French underground paper to specialise in *bande dessinée* (BD), 1972.

Figure 8.9: Pompidou, a favoured subject of caricaturists, *Zinc*, 1972.
Figure 8.10: *Le Parapluie*’s wild sex and rock BD, ‘Jacqueline Prothese’, 1971.

Figure 8.11: Another American underground artist featured in *Actuel* was Victor Moscoso, 1971.

Figure 8.12: Guy Hocquenghem, Jean-Michel Gérassi, Marc Hatzfeld and friends at the Pontoise commune circa 1971.

Figure 8.13: Mockery of the drugs panic in *Tout!* , with Sartre as victim, 1971.
Figure 8.14: The psychedelic dreamscapes of Caza: Kris Kool in *Actuel* 1970.

Figure 8.15: 1970 publicity in *Le Pop* for a BPP benefit concert and the film of early rock festival at Amougies.

Figure 8.16: Police interrupt the Fête de la Commune, Marché des Puces, in March 1971.
Conclusion: Tout!, the legacy

*Tout!* lasted shortly, but burned brightly. Contextual readings reveal the paper’s kaleidoscopic nature. Politically, it was a revolutionary project that shunned notions of power seizure, attempting instead to break students and young workers from the traditional values of work, school and the family, to revolt and live differently, collectively. In the context of Pompidou’s France this entailed the iconoclastic assault on authority figures including de Gaulle, Chaban-Delmas, and the PCF’s Georges Marchais and Dr. Muldworf, coupled with an intellectualised, provocative derision of the social, moral and sexual conservatism of the age; as such it diversified from the vanguard, workplace-centred preoccupations of papers like *La Cause du Peuple* and *Lutte Ouvrière*. Instead the paper privileged emerging ‘identity’ movements alongside new anti-institutional groups in the military, prisons and psychiatry, effectively launching the FHAR and sharing its know-how with the feminist *Le Torchon Brûle*.

*Tout!* was affected by the prevailing anti-gauchiste repression led by Marcellin in the aftermath of 1968; the disfiguring police attack on Richard Deshayes provoked fear and rage, uncovering notions of a physical, armed riposte- unrealised. On the other hand, the State avoided a courtroom confrontation with protective director Sartre over the provocative sexual rights issue 12 of *Tout!* Strong internationalist outlooks, indeed transnational links, particularly with militant Italian students and workers, and (Afro-)American radical groups, influenced the VLR-*Tout!* redefinition of their political project. Despite the clash of US and French far left political cultures, a profound impact of the American ‘Movement’ was felt in the introduction of underground press motifs in *Tout!* and new countercultural bedfellows like *Le Pop* and *Actuel*, as much in psychedelic, cartoon imagery as in a rehashed radical rhetoric. The paper was fully engaged with the newly emerging forms of counterculture in France: communes; libertarian, experimental lifestyles; rock and street theatre; it addressed new social and environmental concerns with a creative zeal that was to typify the burgeoning parallel press.

Clearly, May ‘68 was the bedrock of *Tout!* Writing in 1970, Castro, Hocquenghem and friends sought to recapture what they viewed as its essential aspects: the festive, grassroots organisational and communicative manifestations of the mass ‘Movement’. Further, intertextual analysis uncovers the propaganda filiations with May’s paper *Action* and the Beaux-Arts posters. The historical lineages of *Tout!* lay in the angry, satirical script, merging a mutated jargon of Marxist-Leninism with rebel slogans and poems, and in old anarchistic caricature juxtaposed
with a colourful, modern graphic design. The paper’s creators and supporters viewed its form as innovative, standing out from the militant crowd, its message for immediate life-change as heralding new social movements and a burgeoning underground. But while attaining a respectable, predominantly youthful readership, and coaxing tentative local press projects, Tout! fell victim to its progenitor’s inherent contradictions. VLR dissolved as the gender and sexual movements diverged from the proletarian, street-fighting elements, leaving the paper to drift before exhausting its own financial and energy resources. Jacques Barda provides an apt metaphor: ‘Tout! was a centrifuge that broke off spinning’.¹

My combined narrative and contextual history, indeed microhistory of Tout!, uncovers the full existence of a unique, heterogeneous milieu shaped by the mass upheaval of 1968, and standing in 1970 at the crossroads of three interconnected trends: political gauchisme, new social movements and counterculture. I have shown how Tout! in effect condensed and fused these currents in a rich, caustic matrix of text and image, curving away from militant Marxism towards a revolutionary utopian future. This moment, 1970-71, was pivotal in the birth of autonomous, identity movements and a shift to the emerging youth counterculture, Tout! its most significant press vector. And in terms of press form, the paper introduced a new type of layout, brash and artistic, setting up a model for subsequent radical publications.

Oral history hugely enriched my understanding of Tout! More than just a necessary technique in the unveiling of historical detail- much needed in the case of the under-documented Tout!- the testimony delivered a mixed body of opinion, feeling and nuance that showed how writers, artists and activists lived the moment and looked to the future. Key points to emerge from the memories relate to the refusal of political and moral norms in the France of the 1960s, principally the dual conservatism of Gaullism and the PCF, and the rupture of ’68: a magical, transformative moment in the recalled experience. Tout! represented the desire to revive the themes of May, to reconnect with a wider audience along the lines of a France-Soir rouge. What struck was the new paper’s diversity, its sheer difference in language and appearance, but also the divergence of its component movements. A sense of untrammelled debate and creativity, but also of le bordel, emerges clearly from people’s recollections. For the Toutiens, their paper had served more as a movement itself, incestuous yet disruptive in its political-personal relations, than a mere publication.

¹ J. Barda, interview, 8 September 2008.
For several, the summer of ’71 represented the end of the élan of May.² Institutional authority, in the university, workplaces and society at large, shaken to its core in 1968, was felt to have regained the initiative, if not triumphed over the Movement. But while some moved towards careers, others ‘dropped out’, travelling, joining communes and even sliding into delinquency; others still re-invested in the new, ‘identity’ movements they had helped to impel. Furthermore, a disparate number resurfaced later in the decade at established gauchiste daily Libération, ironically described by its co-founder Serge July as a ‘France-Soir de gauche’. For another co-founder Philippe Gavi, the ex-VLR sensibility- dubbed désirant- served as a counterweight to the Maoism of the ex-GP:

A Libération j’emmènerais tout l’esprit de VLR… En fait j’ai fait venir les gens de VLR pour contrer l’opposition des maos… on a crée Libé en Mai 73 et quelques gens de VLR sont arrivés.³

Unlike Libération, Actuel, or Rouge, Tout! failed to endure, therefore did not possess a unified core that could maintain or project its legacy. In the autobiographies of two major protagonists, Castro and Hocquenghem, the paper is barely mentioned.⁴ However, in assessing the legacy of Tout!, what can be said for certain is that the paper pierced the dominant sphere of conservative social and sexual morality in early 1970s France, galvanising the gay liberation movement FHAR. In the process it highlighted the gap between the Communists and certain leftist movements on more than just ‘revisionist’ or reformist questions. Tout! further reinforced a drift from the paradigm of working class revolution in left radical or progressive groups, shifting the locus of struggle onto the self within the collective. Its evolution in the space of a year from mao-spontex broadsheet to scattersgun youth movements manifesto manifested an unstable process of self-questioning and re-evaluation of militant priorities across leftist circles at this time. With this work I have disinterred Tout!, and shown how this innovative press form uniquely exemplified the fusion of radical currents inspired by May ’68, contributing to the political, cultural history of both France and the international radical movements of the early 1970s.

² Notably Richard Deshayes and Marc Hatzfeld.
Appendix 1 : Questionnaire

Avant 1968 aviez-vous une activité politique quelconque?

Comment étaient les moeurs et la vie sous de Gaulle à votre souvenir?

Quelle était votre participation (si vous en aviez) aux événements de mai-juin 68? Votre compréhension de ce qui se passait? Souvenirs frappants? Perspectives conséquentes?

Lisiez-vous une presse issue de 68, exemples Action, L’Enragé, ou presse gauchiste, par exemple Servir le Peuple, ou Avant garde jeunesse?

Vous souvenez-vous d’affiches/images/slogans particulières?


Comment perceviez-vous la réforme de Faure, la nouvelle société de Chaban, les ‘complots’ de Marcellin?

Militiez-vous en tant qu’étudiant sur la fac?

Quels étaient vos liens avec le mouvement ouvrier dans cette période? Grèves ou actions significatives eg. Lip?

Quel était votre regard sur/relation avec le PCF? Et le PS à partir de 71? Comment perceviez-vous le programme commun? Souhaitiez-vous une victoire de la gauche aux élections?

C’était quoi, le gauchisme à votre avis? Etiez-vous gauchiste ou d’extrême gauche?

Que voulait dire mao-spontex ou spontanéiste? Pouvez-vous décrire votre temps à, ou proche de VLR? Suiviez-vous l’évolution du groupe sur le plan Paris/national? Et leur dissolution?

Comment trouviez-vous le journal Tout! Était-ce lisible, intéressant? Vendiez-vous? Si oui, était-ce bien apprécié?

Pouvez-vous ajouter un mot à propos de vos opinions jadis sur ces groupes et leurs journaux :


Quelles étaient vos principales références internationales?

Pouvez-vous justifier, voire engager une violence militante ou révolutionnaire à ce moment-là?
Et les nouveaux mouvements avec journaux: femmes et *Le Torchon Brûle* – homosexuels et *Le Fléau Social/Antinorm* – écologie et *La Gueule Ouverte* – immigrés-prisonniers-antimilitaristes, etc. ?

C’était quoi la contre-culture en France à votre avis? ‘Sex, drugs, rock ‘n’ roll’ à l’américaine ou autre chose plus complexe?

Viviez-vous en communauté? Participez-vous à des activités collectives, de vie, ou de travail alternatives?

Lisiez-vous *Actuel*? Autres journaux alternatives: *Zinc, Le Parapluie*, presse locale et de contre-information?

**Note:** this was the standard questionnaire used with most of the respondents. For VLR-*Tout!* specifically, I added more detailed questions on the paper, as listed below, and some on the individual experience of the actors. In turn participants at other press projects, eg. *Actuel*, had a similar smaller section on their own paper(s).

| Quels étaient ses précurseurs ou influences ?
| Comment le journal était-il différent? Articles ou numéros frappants ?
| Les suppléments: *Spartacus – La lutte continue – Ils veulent tuer?*-*Le Paria*?
| L’impression des tracts? Se faisait-elle dans l’imprimerie du journal? Par ronéo?
| Comment avez-vous compris le changement du journal *VLR* au journal *Tout!* En forme et en contenu ?
| Adhésion à l’UPS?
| Relations avec Sartre, directeur de publication ?
| Etiez-vous à VLR ? Comment compreniez-vous son évolution ? Pourquoi ont-ils dissout ?
| Qu’est-ce qui a mené à la fin de *Tout!* à votre avis ? Auriez-vous des infos précises ? |
Appendix 2: Thematic breakdown of *Tout!*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T! Intl (pal)</td>
<td>Intl (It)</td>
<td>T! philo</td>
<td>Hols pop</td>
<td>intl repn</td>
<td>T! philo</td>
<td>Intl work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Work racism</td>
<td>Intl (US)</td>
<td>T! philo</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>Work philo</td>
<td>Intl (pal)</td>
<td>repn</td>
<td>Repn pop</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Racism repn</td>
<td>racism repn</td>
<td>Work pop</td>
<td>repn</td>
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<td>Intl (bpp)</td>
<td>Work Intl (q)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>deG dance</td>
<td>repn</td>
<td>Repn dance</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>Work psych</td>
<td>Intl (y) (port)</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>Vlg immig</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pomp Intl (sp)</td>
<td>T! Intl (pal)</td>
<td>Repn theatre</td>
<td>Immig repn</td>
<td>Work repn</td>
<td>Yih repn Intl (bp)</td>
<td>SR Intl (sp)</td>
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<td>6-7</td>
<td>Pomp urban</td>
<td>T! Intl (chad &amp; esp)</td>
<td>Anti imp philo</td>
<td>Intl (cha)</td>
<td>chad</td>
<td>Work stud</td>
<td>Lumps mdp</td>
<td>mlf</td>
<td>Intl (viet/us)</td>
<td>Intl (pol mld)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Work Viol</td>
<td>Yih T!</td>
<td>Work (bat)</td>
<td>Philo work</td>
<td>Eco work</td>
<td>Drugs Intl (pal)</td>
<td>army</td>
<td>Sex school</td>
<td>Intl (erit immig)</td>
<td>SR Work / pop</td>
<td>Work mld</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Repn (Rd)</td>
<td>theatre</td>
<td>commune</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>Work (BO) Repn (RD)</td>
<td>Yih (fij)</td>
<td>Yih (RD)</td>
<td>SR stud Intl (lao Moz/ang)</td>
<td>eco</td>
<td>Repn (sac cr)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>repn</td>
<td>Intl (reu)</td>
<td>philo</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>lycee</td>
<td>Intl (bpp) T! (make)</td>
<td>Intl (bx) Yih feti</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>Intl (it) T! Repn(bec) lycee</td>
<td>Women innmig</td>
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<td>gay</td>
<td>Gay (phiol) Sex (phiol)</td>
<td>psych</td>
<td>Psych eco Intl (us)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Family work</td>
<td>T! Yih repn</td>
<td>Repn Intl (guad) racism</td>
<td>Mthr day</td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>Philo (ptbgs)</td>
<td>Intl</td>
<td>Intl (italy Intl (us) lib</td>
<td>Muld</td>
<td>PC</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>T! (repn)</td>
<td>Repn eco Mlf Tuot</td>
<td>Work (snct)</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>Rob repn Urban alien</td>
<td>Yih repn</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Philo (vivre)</td>
<td>yth occ</td>
<td>Occ theatre larz</td>
<td>occ</td>
<td>Bisex psych Intl (chi gree</td>
<td>Mlf gay</td>
<td>Eco yth</td>
<td>Yih feti</td>
<td>Yih repn</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yih repn</td>
<td>Yih (fij) rob</td>
<td>Yih (pal) ccult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International: 18.5% - Repression: 14.1% - Workers: 13.4% - *Tout!: 7% - Philosophy: 5.1% - Women: 5.1% - Gay: 4.5%
Racism/immigration: 3.8% - Youth: 5.8% - Lycées/students/school: 3.8% - DeGaulle/Pompidou/PCF: 2.6% - Pop/theatre/dance: 3.2% - Urbanism/ecology: 2.6% - Psychiatry: 1.9% - Communes: 1.3% - various 2%
Appendix 3: Radical left and underground papers 1968-75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Print run</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Status/affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>30-50k (wk)</td>
<td>Movement (CAs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cahiers de Mai</td>
<td>1968-74</td>
<td>10-15k (mth)</td>
<td>Workers movement (CAs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribune Socialiste</td>
<td>1968-</td>
<td>30k (wk)</td>
<td>20-25k</td>
<td>Parliamentary far left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Humanité Rouge</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>35k (wk)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marxist-Leninist (Maoist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Cause du Peuple-J'Accuse (1st)</td>
<td>1968-74</td>
<td>10k-80k (wk)</td>
<td>Maoist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouge (1st)</td>
<td>1968-74</td>
<td>25k-30k (wk)</td>
<td>20k</td>
<td>Trotskyist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latte Ouvrière</td>
<td>1968-</td>
<td>30k (wk)</td>
<td>20k</td>
<td>Trotskyist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeune Révolutionnaire</td>
<td>1969-</td>
<td>15k (mth)</td>
<td>Trotskyist</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hara-kiri-Charlie Hebdo</td>
<td>1969-</td>
<td>180k (wk)</td>
<td>120k</td>
<td>Left-satire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Idiot International (1st)</td>
<td>1969-72</td>
<td>30k-100k (mth)</td>
<td>25-70k</td>
<td>Mao-movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politique Hebdo</td>
<td>1970-</td>
<td>40-45k (wk)</td>
<td>22-25k</td>
<td>Independent communist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>1970-72</td>
<td>16k (tri-mth)</td>
<td>Libertarian</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivre</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>15k</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pro-situationist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Révolution</td>
<td>1971-</td>
<td>15k (mth)</td>
<td>7-8k</td>
<td>Trotskyist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tout!</td>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>45-55k (bi-wk)</td>
<td>15-25k</td>
<td>Mao-libertarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actuel (1st)</td>
<td>1970-75</td>
<td>40k-90k</td>
<td>60-70k</td>
<td>Underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Parapluie</td>
<td>1970-73</td>
<td>35k</td>
<td>5-20k</td>
<td>Underground</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zinc</td>
<td>1971-74</td>
<td>6-30k</td>
<td>20k</td>
<td>BD-underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Pop</td>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>20k (mth)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pop-underground</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le Torchon Brûle</td>
<td>1971-74</td>
<td>35k</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s liberation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le Fléau Social</td>
<td>1972-75</td>
<td>7k</td>
<td>2-3k</td>
<td>Gay liberation-situationist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Antinorm</td>
<td>1972-75</td>
<td>5k</td>
<td>2-3k</td>
<td>Gay liberation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average print runs and sales over the period. Print figures drawn from APPP, GaBr20, La presse révolutionnaire. For Hara-Kiri/Charlie Hebdo, Stéphane Mazurier. Sales figures estimates from papers, editors, and publications L’Autre France: l’underpresse and Les Tigres en Papier.

**NB:** for several papers the print runs could fluctuate wildly; La Cause du Peuple for instance would print and sell near the 10-20k mark in its early phase; J’Accuse, a temporary outing, had initial large print runs, before merging with La Cause. L’Idiot debuted at around 100k and quickly fell to around 30k. Actuel’s first year saw 30-40k printed, in its final year 90k.
Primary sources: papers and journals

*Action*, Michel Dixmier archive.
*Actuel*, Michel Dixmier archive.
*L’Antinorm*, BDIC 4P 8610
*APL*, BDIC 4P 7757
*L’Assaut XVème*, Stéphane Courtois documents.
*Avant-Garde Jeunesse*, BDIC 4P1208 rés.
*Berkeley Barb*, BDIC FP 5061
*The Black Panther*, BDIC FP 3172
*Les Cahiers de Mai*, BDIC 4P 8070
*La Cause du Peuple*, Michel Dixmier archive.
*Chicago Seed*, BDIC FP 5050
*Clarté*, Prisca Bachelet archive
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