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# The Cultural Contradictions of Cold War Education: The Case of West Berlin

JEREMI SURI

The history of the Cold War in the 1960s is a history of disillusionment and unintended consequences. Writing in the aftermath of this turbulent decade, sociologist Daniel Bell observed that the promises of liberal capitalism in the twentieth century – individual enterprise, extensive wealth creation and technological progress – had produced their own internal detractors. Many of the young beneficiaries of capitalist enterprise, wealth and technology in the most prosperous Western societies no longer wished to support this system of relations. Raised in privilege, Bell's students at Harvard and other universities felt free to reject dominant political and economic institutions in search of cultural alternatives that emphasized more transcendent values. The very successes of capitalism undermined its hold on the minds of young men and women who took their high standard of living for granted. Modern societies confronted, in Bell's famous phrase, 'the cultural contradictions of capitalism'.<sup>1</sup>

Bell's analysis remains powerful, but it suffers from a neglect of the Cold War context that framed the development of capitalist institutions after 1945. Soviet–American rivalry transformed capitalism. Confronted by a communist adversary that appeared capable of endless 'crash' production programmes, the US government and its allies pushed for rapid advances in science and technology. To stay ahead of Soviet slave labour, Americans emphasized innovation, with generous federal support. Recent studies of the US 'military-industrial complex' have highlighted this point, particularly as it relates to the ways American policy makers contributed to a culture of inventiveness rather than enforced regimentation in the industrial facilities, military institutions and universities funded for anti-communist purposes.<sup>2</sup>

The inventiveness financed during the Cold War gave the United States a tremendous long-term advantage in its competition with

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the Soviet Union. American society produced a string of qualitative leaps in computers, communications and consumer products that outstripped the quantitative capabilities of communist 'crash' programmes. Over time, Moscow fell far behind the technological advances in the West. A consciousness of this shortcoming, as much as its material effects, contributed to the collapse of the communist bloc by the end of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> As early as the 1960s Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev understood this problem and sought to redress it with rapid – frequently erratic – action on many fronts.<sup>4</sup>

America's comparative advantage in international competition, however, had a complicated domestic side. The programmes that encouraged US and West European innovation also inspired rebellion against the leadership of these societies. Sophisticated citizens could build better cars and rockets, but they now desired better politicians as well. By the second half of the 1960s the residents of the United States and its closest allies felt secure enough from international dangers to turn their attention to far-reaching reforms at home. Bell lamented that this revolt of the privileged was a cultural contradiction of capitalism. Integrating the international context with the local experience of popular unrest, we can more accurately call this a cultural contradiction of the Cold War.

Higher education is a particularly appropriate place to look for evidence of this contradiction. Between 1955 and 1965 the number of students enrolled in higher education at least doubled in the United States, France and West Germany. In Great Britain university enrolments grew by nearly as much: 98 per cent. Through 1970 this dramatic growth continued (see Table 1).

Policy makers in Washington, Paris, London and Bonn financed this massive expansion in higher education because they understood, correctly, that a learned citizenry would out-compete its Soviet counterparts. Leaders, however, overlooked the ways in which higher education would also provide a setting and a set of skills for dissident

TABLE 1  
TOTAL ENROLMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

	US	West Germany	France	Britain
1955	2,812,000	133,884	152,246	85,200
1960	3,789,000	203,335	216,426	107,700
1965	5,921,000	279,345	368,154	168,600
1970	8,581,000	386,244	602,712	228,000

behaviour. The newly educated citizens who challenged Soviet technological capabilities also took to the streets against the men who made expanded university enrolments possible. To the dismay of Lyndon Johnson, Charles de Gaulle, Harold Wilson and Willy Brandt – as well as Daniel Bell – Cold War education undermined the domestic foundations of Cold War foreign policy.<sup>5</sup>

West Berlin and its famous institution of higher learning, the Free University, were a microcosm for all of these trends and contradictions. Located at the geographic centre of the Cold War, the Free University symbolized the creative advantages of West against East. The violent protests organized by students during the late 1960s also revealed the threat that this institution posed to the cohesion of Western societies. The Free University was a Frankenstein that turned on its creators. Like the monster in Mary Shelley's novel, it pointed to a wider series of unintended local disruptions triggered by international political and social transformations.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Cold War and the Founding of the Free University**

The Free University emerged from a set of student-led initiatives in West Berlin. Unlike any other German institution of higher learning, this was an institution founded in November 1948 as a response to public demand among citizens who found themselves alienated from the Soviet-dominated Humboldt University in East Berlin. Contrary to the rigid administration of its counterpart, the Free University encouraged experimental courses and creative pedagogy. Students in the Western institution had an extensive voice in admissions and curricular decisions. The Free University was, at least in its earliest years, an experiment in democratic education, within a hardening context of Cold War conflict.

The West German and American governments, as well as prominent anti-communist institutions (particularly the Ford Foundation), funded the Free University because they recognized its attraction for men and women in the East.<sup>7</sup> This institution was an integral part of the Western alliance's 'magnet' strategy in West Berlin, and Europe in general. Policy makers in Washington and Bonn expected that the dynamic and democratic environment created by the Free University would attract the most ambitious and innovative minds from both Western and Eastern Europe. Drawn to the vigour and excitement of this institution, citizens from Soviet-dominated nations would now reject the grey and regimented life they endured

under communist authority. In this sense, innovative government-sponsored higher education in West Berlin was a sophisticated form of Cold War subversion.<sup>8</sup>

During its first decade, the Free University served the purposes of its Cold War sponsors with remarkable success. Between 1949 and 1961 more than one-third of the student population at the university came from East Germany. East–West contacts in this setting allowed Western authorities a unique opportunity to exert informal influence over some of the best and brightest emerging from the communist milieu. The virtues of the relatively open and democratic society in West Germany became evident, even as many students remained critical of US foreign policy. Most significant, the fact that students from East Germany had to travel outside of the communist milieu for a dynamic intellectual and social discourse highlighted the shortcomings of the Soviet-dominated states.<sup>9</sup>

The East German construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 marked a turning point for the Free University, the Cold War and the local experiences of West and East German students. The forced separation of the two Germanies turned the dynamic and cosmopolitan environment around the Free University rigid and tense, like the Soviet–American rivalry in Central Europe at this time. East German students could no longer travel by street car (*S-Bahn*) to the Western university. West German and American-sponsored anti-communist propaganda became more dominant within the Free University. The West German government began to discourage, and even repress, potentially dissident experimental ideas. The Free University was now isolated from the East and smothered by its Western sponsors.<sup>10</sup>

Cold War conflict in the 1960s undermined the hopes for a truly open and democratic model of education at the Free University. This model always served the political interests of Washington and Bonn, but it also had a recognized legitimacy from the space it offered for relatively uninhibited interactions between the citizens of different societies before 1961. While relations among students from West and East were a definite ‘magnet’ for American-sponsored interests, they also created an important degree of stability in Central Europe. Knowledge and contact across Cold War divides humanized the Soviet–American conflict. Personal relationships between communist and non-communist students placed some limits on the violent effects of Cold War propaganda.<sup>11</sup>

The Berlin Wall severed these personal relationships, enforcing clear and rigid political boundaries. It also created new sources of

internal instability. The Free University no longer served as an environment where diverse political groups came together in a consensual and relatively open setting. Like the city of West Berlin, the Free University suffered from a pervasive sense of social abnormality. Here was a city and a university surrounded by a wall, preaching open and democratic education. The Free University benefited from increasing sums of funding to showcase the virtues of freedom in the West, but it also came under increasing pressure to repress communist points of view. West Berlin and the Free University became social pressure-cookers for anxiety, discontent and, very soon, angry protest against the isolating structures of the Cold War.<sup>12</sup>

### The Free University and the Revolt against the Cold War

In the context of tightening Cold War divisions during the 1960s, the Free University developed as the 'Berkeley of West Germany'.<sup>13</sup> It symbolized the remarkable political and economic accomplishments of the Federal Republic, while cultivating radical dissent. Students in West Berlin revolted against the division of the city, the government in Bonn, and the Cold War in general. The Free University attracted many politically left-leaning men from across West Germany because residence in the city of West Berlin – due to its unique Cold War status – offered an exemption from the Federal Republic's mandatory military service.

By the late 1960s 'most active groups among the student body', according to West German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, 'desire[d] the immediate overthrow of social structures'. Radical students became 'the backbone of an extra-parliamentary opposition that seeks new forms of organization in clubs and informal centers, and a social basis wider than the university'.<sup>14</sup> The student opposition around the Free University criticized not only the content of current government policies, but also the silences about prior collaboration between West German political leaders and Nazi war criminals. For this new post-1945 generation, the structures of Cold War authority prohibited a fair and open reconciliation with past injustices.<sup>15</sup>

German youth dissent grew particularly disruptive in late 1966. Students blamed the American government for prolonging the division of Germany, and supporting a 'Grand Coalition' of the dominant West German parties – the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) – that constrained political debate. In December groups of young men and women demonstrated

throughout West Berlin, including the crowded shopping area known as the 'Kurfürstendamm'. One student leaflet pledged to restore 'democracy, a socialist alternative, [and] a new left party' in West Germany. The protesters proclaimed their opposition to the 'bankruptcy of the established parties'.<sup>16</sup>

Altercations between students and law enforcement officers in West Berlin, including alleged incidents of police brutality, escalated through the end of 1966 and the early months of 1967. In January 1967 West Berlin authorities entered the offices of the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund – one of the leading West German youth groups.<sup>17</sup> They searched through the organization's materials, confiscated membership files, and accused the group of conducting illegal anti-government activities. This heavy-handed police behaviour had the contradictory effect of strengthening public support for the student protesters throughout West Germany. In addition, it contributed to a more confrontational climate, especially within West Berlin and around the Free University. The social tension in this old Prussian city now approximated the polarized atmosphere of Berkeley.<sup>18</sup>

West German authorities worried not only about the mounting protests of the New Left. They also confronted a resurgent nationalist Right. In 1967 and 1968 the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) won between 7 and 9.8 per cent of the vote in local elections. Friedrich Thielen and Adolf von Thadden – the leaders of the NPD – called for a strong, independent and reunited Germany, free of the 'alien' interests that allegedly corrupted the states on both sides of the Berlin Wall. 'Our nation' (*Volk*), the NPD Manifesto proclaimed, 'is being merged into two antagonistic systems'. 'Territorially alien powers are assuming the guardianship of the peoples (*Völker*) of Europe and jointly maintaining the division of Germany and of Europe for their own political aims'.<sup>19</sup>

Like the students on the Left, the NPD attacked what it called the 'unrestrained materialism' that harmed the people's spiritual and moral health (*Volksgesundheit*). The party's 28,000 members condemned the 'Grand Coalition' for repressing traditional German family and community traditions. Instead of increased federal aid to universities, the NPD argued that the 'youth want and need decent, clean standards to look up to'. The NPD demanded a strong central government that would eliminate 'public immorality'.<sup>20</sup>

In retrospect, the challenge from the nationalist Right appears quite tame. The NPD never crossed the critical five per cent threshold

in national elections required for seating in the West German Bundestag. During the late 1960s, however, worries about the party animated radical students and government officials responsible for protecting the social order. Protesters at the Free University renounced the alleged return of 'fascists' to German politics. They blamed their leaders and their parents for failing to expunge Nazi influences.<sup>21</sup> Policy makers feared that continued student radicalism would inspire more counter-demonstrations on the Right. Excessive police repression of left-leaning protesters could also legitimize the militant rhetoric of the NPD. Student demonstrations at the Free University posed a very difficult dilemma for a society scarred by memories of both the Weimar period of social disorder and the Nazi years of excessive state power.<sup>22</sup>

Washington's attempts to secure West German financial and moral support for the war in Vietnam added another layer to the troubles around the Free University. Repeatedly, American leaders argued that the sanctity of anti-communist commitments in Southeast Asia was vital for NATO's international credibility. Communist advances in Vietnam would allegedly encourage enemy incursions in Europe as well. American representatives like Secretary of State Dean Rusk argued that Bonn's aid for US efforts in Vietnam was a matter of West German security and obligation to its most important ally.<sup>23</sup>

Student protesters in West Berlin turned this argument on its head. They contended that America's support for South Vietnamese dictators discredited the democratic claims of the anti-communist states. The war in Southeast Asia was not an isolated, far away event for the men and women attending the Free University. They felt the presence of military forces – Warsaw Pact and NATO – all around them. They feared that the indiscriminate and brutal violence exhibited by the allegedly most advanced societies in Vietnam would reverberate in their contested territory. The dogmatic reaction of local police and university officials to the protests of late 1966 only heightened these student anxieties. 'Today Vietnam, Tomorrow us', the protesters predicted.<sup>24</sup>

The 'America House' in West Berlin – established to build cultural contacts between the United States and West Germany – became a favoured target for demonstrations and physical attacks in 1967. Early in the year members of the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund defaced the building, throwing makeshift water-balloons filled with red paint at its glass and concrete exterior. They accused the United States of propagating imperialism through its cultural,



economic and military programmes overseas. Protesters argued that Washington acted as an 'occupying' power in West Germany, stifling creative, sometimes socialist-inspired, reforms. The 'America House' in West Berlin found itself under student siege for much of the next decade.<sup>25</sup>

American Vice President Hubert Humphrey visited the city on 6 April 1967, seeking to reinvigorate German–American friendship after the first attacks on the US cultural centre. Humphrey hoped to arouse the same public displays of goodwill that greeted President John F. Kennedy's 'Ich bin ein Berliner' speech in June 1963. Kennedy had also spoken to an enthusiastic Free University audience about the 'unity of the West' and future work for a 'peaceful reunification of Germany'.<sup>26</sup>

Humphrey's appearance in West Berlin succeeded only in extinguishing the still lingering legacy of Kennedy's earlier trip. Before his arrival, rumours spread of an assassination attempt organized by some of the West German students who had attacked the 'America House'. The police in West Berlin arrested 11 young people and tightened security on the eve of the vice president's visit.<sup>27</sup> Kennedy had travelled in an open-topped car, mingled with crowds, and delivered his famous oration from an open platform. Humphrey, in contrast, gave a short nondescript speech to the Berlin House of Representatives, avoiding any uncontrolled contact with Berliners on the street.<sup>28</sup>

During Humphrey's short time in West Berlin more than 2,000 students demonstrated against American policies at the city offices of *Der Spiegel* – a popular newsweekly that many protesters accused of supporting US activities. The vice president was so dismayed by his treatment overseas, especially in West Berlin, that he lashed out against his critics. In a National Security Council meeting soon after his return to Washington, Humphrey uncharacteristically interjected that the 'Europeans have rejected the world after the loss of their colonies. They resent U.S. power. . . . The Europeans are selfish. We should challenge them to participate in the world outside their borders. We must keep pounding at them on this problem'.<sup>29</sup>

Humphrey correctly identified rising anti-American sentiment in West Berlin. Protesters had seized the initiative in the streets – they were now the ones pressurizing state officials. Student demonstrations continued after the vice president's visit, including a sit-in of more than 300 men and women at the meeting of the Free University's Academic Senate on 19 April 1967. For the first time in its history,

the rector of the school had to call police onto the campus. Fears of disorder and excessive reaction rose yet again as university officials struggled to punish disruptive individuals while avoiding additional provocation.<sup>30</sup>

In June another foreign visitor inspired disruptive activity in West Berlin. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi – the Shah of Iran – made a dramatic state visit at that time. The Persian dictator and his glamorous wife travelled around West Germany in an attempt to foster closer economic and cultural ties between the two societies. Leaders in both states saw themselves as emerging ‘middle’ powers, poised to challenge Soviet and American global dominance, as well as growing Chinese power in Asia. During an extended discussion, the Shah and West German Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger emphasized new opportunities for joint projects in weapons development and industrial production. West Germany would provide technical know-how and some capital. The Iranians would supply their own capital, labour and, of course, oil. Working together the two states hoped to escape the limits of the bipolar international system.<sup>31</sup>

For residents of West Berlin, however, it appeared that deeper relations with the Shah would only prolong the injustices of the Cold War world. Within the Free University, a number of Iranian émigrés publicized the frequent domestic brutalities of the government in Tehran.<sup>32</sup> The Shah’s security forces beat, tortured and often murdered critics at home. No one could challenge the authority of the absolute ruler. The Shah and his close associates accumulated and flaunted ostentatious riches while the majority of the country’s citizens were mired in poverty.<sup>33</sup>

The Iranian leader was an anti-communist and a modernizer who maintained friendly relations with the Western powers in an important strategic area, but he was hardly a democrat. In the rush to build deeper economic and cultural ties with the Shah, the Federal Republic – like the United States and other Western nations – neglected the Iranian leader’s grave domestic shortcomings.<sup>34</sup> ‘We Germans’, one student leaflet proclaimed, ‘have, with the help of the other great powers, supported a dictator. We cannot legitimize such a dictator with assistance and heartfelt reception’. ‘Through our demonstration’, the protesters announced, ‘we want to direct your attention to the true conditions in Iran.’<sup>35</sup>

The domestic brutalities perpetrated in Iran, with Western aid, were not isolated occurrences. Students in West Berlin recognized that communist containment, economic development and concerns for

international stability frequently led democratic leaders to underwrite domestic violence. In Southeast Asia and Latin America this was so common by the 1960s as to almost escape notice. In Europe – including West Germany – the widespread acceptance of the divided status quo on the continent reflected a choice for security over self-determination. ‘Iran is for us’, the protesting students explained, ‘just one example of the difficult problems in the developing countries today’. The ‘realities’ of international politics appeared to smother real democracy. By demonstrating against the Iranian shah, the American vice president and other allies, members of the Free University hoped that they could inspire greater international concern for ‘basic democratic rights’.<sup>36</sup> While they did not completely overlook the violence of ‘leftist’ regimes – especially those in the Soviet bloc – protesters focused their attention on the brutalities of ‘right-wing’ anti-communists.

#### The Free University and the Allure of Global Revolution

The Shah arrived in West Berlin on 2 June 1967. Throughout the day protesting students trailed his entourage, shouting ‘freedom for Iranians’ and ‘Shah, Shah, Charlatan’, as well as other more crude epithets. In the evening, as the foreign guests travelled to the city Opera House for a performance of Mozart’s ‘Magic Flute’, more than 800 men and women attempted to block the streets. An army of police officers and the Shah’s personal bodyguards reacted to the aggressive crowd with brutal force. After the delayed dignitaries finally reached their destination, the Iranian personnel accompanying the entourage used large sticks and other projectiles to beat the protesters. The West Berlin police, according to reports in *Der Spiegel*, acted similarly.<sup>37</sup>

Amidst the disorder on the Berlin streets, a plain-clothes police officer fired two shots at approximately 20 minutes after 8 o’clock. Benno Ohnesorg, a 26-year-old Free University student, fell to the ground and died soon thereafter. By almost all accounts Ohnesorg was only a peripheral participant in the demonstrations. No one provided evidence that he directly provoked the West Berlin police in any way. According to the bishop of his church, Ohnesorg was ‘not a fanatic’ but a good citizen, active in the student religious community.<sup>38</sup>

Ohnesorg’s murder threw the city into virtual chaos. According to a prominent newsweekly, the anguish exhibited by students and other sympathetic citizens after the incident rivalled the emotions unleashed by the construction of the Berlin Wall almost six years earlier.<sup>39</sup>

The mayor of West Berlin – Heinrich Albertz – gave an address on television the next day, pleading for ‘security and order’. He accused an extreme minority of ‘terrorizing’ the population.<sup>40</sup>

This student minority only grew in size and unruliness during the coming days. More than 4,000 men and women gathered on 3 June 1967 to condemn the entire West Berlin city government for Ohnesorg’s death. The angry protesters demanded the resignation of the mayor, the police chief and other officials.<sup>41</sup> Accused of authorizing widespread brutality, Mayor Albertz soon resigned.<sup>42</sup> The city of West Berlin never regained the ‘security and order’ that government and university officials demanded. A frustrated Chancellor Kiesinger lamented that the youth of his nation had fallen victim to an ‘international sickness’ that infected all of the major states.<sup>43</sup> The West German government struggled to repress proliferating student demonstrations without provoking more radicalism, or an NPD-advocated reaction.

In the second half of 1967 one fiery student emerged as the chief agitator for protest activity in West Berlin. Rudolf ‘Rudi’ Dutschke came from East Germany, the province of Brandenburg. The communist government had barred him from higher education when he refused to participate in mandatory military service during the late 1950s. As a consequence, Dutschke attended the Free University – the only post-secondary institution from which he was not barred. After the construction of the Berlin Wall he fled to the Western half of the city, continuing his studies in sociology, philosophy and political science at the Free University.<sup>44</sup>

Unlike most other students in Western Europe and the United States, Dutschke understood the domestic cruelties of the Soviet bloc at first-hand. In West Berlin, however, he found many of the promised freedoms unfulfilled. Dutschke took particular aim at the ‘manipulation’ of power that allowed dominant political and economic groups to make policy without popular consent. He blamed government ‘bureaucracy’ for prolonging Cold War divisions in Europe, supporting dictators around the world, employing violence in Southeast Asia, and neglecting inequalities between rich and poor. The established political institutions in West Germany ‘blocked’ necessary reforms, according to this analysis.<sup>45</sup> ‘We must always make more people conscious and politically mobilized’, Dutschke announced. Active students would harass established elites, creating the foundation for what he called an ‘anti-authoritarian camp’.<sup>46</sup>

Sit-ins, demonstrations and organized student heckling prohibited regular instruction at the Free University during late 1967 and early 1968.<sup>47</sup> Dutschke's followers did much more than voice radical rhetoric. At times, student activity became explicitly violent. Men and women began to identify themselves as members of an 'academic proletariat' that, in Marxist terms, required the use of force against its oppressors.<sup>48</sup> During protest marches students hurled tomatoes, rocks and even bricks at the police.<sup>49</sup> Dutschke was careful never to advocate student violence, but when pressed he refused to condemn it.<sup>50</sup>

Free University students saw themselves as players in a larger global revolution. In his diary Dutschke wrote with relish about the development of an international movement against both American and Soviet domination. He intentionally overlooked the domestic abuses of Mao Zedong, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro because these figures publicly challenged the Cold War status quo. They were vanguards for radical change in image, if not reality. Following Mao's inspiration in particular, Dutschke called on students around the world to lead a 'long march' through the institutions of society, overturning established centres of power from within and without. '[T]he third front is set up', Dutschke wrote in his diary. Like guerrilla fighters in Bolivia and South Vietnam, men and women in West Germany would wage a militant struggle to smash the existing order.<sup>51</sup>

In this context, the Vietnam War provided both an inspiration and an opportunity for the student protesters in West Berlin. Dutschke and others saw the fierce fighting around the time of the Tet Offensive as overriding confirmation of the destruction that followed from Western attempts to foster 'development' in the Third World. In South Vietnam, American bombs and guns protected an unpopular, corrupt government that looked more like the Shah's dictatorship than a democratic state. America and its West European allies had become 'imperialists', according to this analysis. Vietnamese villagers and German students would struggle as a united 'third front' to 'revolutionize the masses'.<sup>52</sup>

American setbacks in Vietnam opened the possibility of successful resistance from the periphery and from within. 'Comrades, Anti-authoritarians, People!', Dutschke exclaimed, '[w]e have an historic opening.' 'Real solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution comes from the actual weakening and upheaval in the centres of imperialism'. Students, natives, and guerrilla fighters had all become proletarians under the domination of repressive 'fascists'. The time for a global 'emancipatory struggle and national self-determination' had arrived.<sup>53</sup>

After Tet the tide of history appeared to move in favour of the weak and downtrodden.

On 17–18 February 1968 students at the Free University organized an international 'Vietnam Congress', using the war to bring 10,000 protesters and intellectuals together from all across Western Europe.<sup>54</sup> Reform through existing institutions had become 'hopeless', Dutschke remarked in his diary. 'We must do something else'. 'We will make the Vietnam Congress', he wrote, 'into an international manifestation of solidarity with the bombed and struggling people'.<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, Dutschke addressed the attendees of the Congress, calling for 'revolutionary struggle' against the domination of the great powers in Asia, Latin America and other parts of the world.<sup>56</sup>

Demonstrations throughout West Berlin and the rest of West Germany grew more confrontational after February 1968. The government proposed a set of 'emergency laws' allowing expanded police powers to control unruly crowds. Students besieged government buildings, foreign embassies and the offices of university administrators. Instead of sitting in, men and women now staged 'go-ins', which included physical harassment and deliberate property damage. Almost all institutions of authority came under attack, including communist-supported organizations that appeared hesitant to join the student radicals.<sup>57</sup>

On the afternoon of 11 April 1968 an unemployed worker, Josef Bachmann, shot Rudi Dutschke three times at close range. Dutschke miraculously survived, but he never fully recovered before his death in 1979. Students immediately blamed the government and the press for encouraging the attack.<sup>58</sup> That night more than 5,000 young men and women marched to the centre of West Berlin, angrily condemning the entire 'system'. The next day another 5,000 students protested in front of City Hall. Demonstrations with even larger numbers continued, reaching a crescendo during the month of May. When the West German Bundestag passed the long debated 'emergency laws' for public order on 30 May 1968, protesters demanded popular 'agitation' to undermine the existing regime. The student revolt had, by this time, become a self-conscious 'guerrilla' struggle.<sup>59</sup>

The men and women who took to the streets did not achieve the radical changes they sought. They did, however, reorient West German society. Before 1968 West Berlin was a Cold War frontier, an outpost of communist containment. The East Germans and the Soviets constituted the greatest threat to the city. After 1968 the most pressing danger to West Berlin and the Federal Republic came from within.

Moscow did not want war but expanded trade and economic assistance from the West.<sup>60</sup> University students who received more financial aid from the state than other citizens were now the main enemies of order. They continuously attacked the government through words, demonstrations, and in some cases, acts of terror. Through the next decade, extreme 'extra-parliamentary opposition' would remain a source of violence and uncertainty for the West German leadership.<sup>61</sup>

### Conclusions

The geographic position of West Berlin reflected the conflict between the capitalist and communist states after World War II. This was a Cold War city. The Free University came into existence as a Cold War university sponsored, by its American and West German benefactors, as a 'magnet' for citizens in the Soviet bloc. The Free University offered a model of democratic education that highlighted the inventiveness and openness of the West, in contrast to the regimented and authoritarian East.

The tightening of Cold War divisions in the 1960s, especially following the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, transformed West Berlin and the Free University from places of hope into sites of despair. Privileged students, receiving generous government support to showcase the virtues of the West German regime, felt betrayed by the makers of foreign policy on both sides of the Wall. Young men and women at the Free University, and many other institutions of higher learning around the world, revolted against the Cold War. In West Berlin, students pursued a vision of global revolution that appears naïve in retrospect. The rhetoric of Rudi Dutschke and the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund commanded a wide following in the late 1960s because of the profound disillusionment born of the lived Cold War experience in an isolated and sometimes besieged urban community. Students were desperate for a new vision that promised something other than permanent Cold War isolation and conflict.

The history of the Free University and the West German student revolt in the 1960s underscores the cultural contradictions of Cold War education. As Daniel Bell suggested, the successes of American-sponsored enterprise, wealth and technology gave students in West Berlin the freedom to rebel. After all, the citizens of the more regimented, impoverished and technologically deficient Soviet bloc could not even contemplate public protests on the order of those

around the Free University. Policy makers in Washington and Bonn built a vibrant university community in West Berlin to showcase the superiority of their societies. The large cohort of bright-eyed students who came to West Berlin, however, matured into a combustible source of violent protest when they found that the international rhetoric of Cold War freedoms did not match the reality of Cold War isolation. The geopolitics of West Berlin made the Free University an important instrument of American influence in Europe, but the social life of West Berlin made the university a source of violent anti-Americanism. The Free University embodied a profound cultural contradiction.

American and West German leaders re-made the political and social landscape of West Berlin through their support for the Free University. At the international level, the new institution contributed many valuable resources to the policy of communist containment. At the local level, the student community around the Free University challenged the values underpinning this policy dogma. The Cold War, in this sense, created a dialectical relationship between the international and the local. As with all dialectics, this one produced many surprising outcomes – most notably the worldwide turbulence of the late 1960s and its lingering wounds. The cultural contradictions of Cold War education have carried into a post-Cold War world.

#### NOTES

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1. Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1996, originally published in 1976), especially pp.33–84.
2. Michael Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945–1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). This emphasis on inventiveness in American institutions does not, of course, negate the regimenting influences of Cold War culture within the United States. On this point see, Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, especially pp.1–22, 419–62; Rebecca S. Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); Ellen Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Science and technology were not free of regimenting influences in the United States, but they greatly benefited from unprecedented resources and encouragement for innovative research.
3. See Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Jeremi Suri, 'Explaining the End of the Cold War: A New Historical Consensus?' *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4 (Fall 2002), pp.60–92.



4. See William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), pp.507–77; John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.261–6.
5. For a more extended discussion of the foreign policy aims behind Cold War education, and the statistics on student enrolments, see Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp.88–130, 269–71.
6. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus*, ed. Marilyn Butler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Shelley initially published her novel in 1818.
7. For an account of the Ford Foundation and its Cold War investments in Europe, see Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard Stone Between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp.143–213.
8. On American attempts to attract East European citizens and states away from Soviet control, see Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, The Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp.235–7; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp.65–71.
9. See James F. Tent, *The Free University of Berlin: A Political History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp.1–176.
10. See *ibid.*, pp.277–320.
11. See, for example, how even a staunch anti-communist like West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was careful to distinguish between the asserted evils of communism and the goodness of ordinary citizens, especially those suffering under Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. Adenauer Rede in der Freien Universität, West Berlin, 5 Dec. 1958, 16.25, 1958/Band 2, Adenauer Nachlaß, Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus, Rhöndorf, Germany.
12. See Alexandra Richie, *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1998), pp.770–78.
13. Jürgen Habermas, 'Student Protest in the Federal Republic of Germany', reprinted in *idem, Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1970), p.15. Habermas originally delivered this lecture in November 1967.
14. *Ibid.*, p.18.
15. See Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000), pp.37–41; Wilfried Mausbach, 'Auschwitz and Vietnam: West German Protest Against America's War During the 1960s', in Andreas W. Daum, Lloyd C. Gardner and Wilfried Mausbach (eds.), *America, the Vietnam War, and the World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.279–98. The seminal text on this subject is Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (München: Beck, 1996).
16. 'Protest!' circa Nov.–Dec. 1966, Folder: Berlin, 1966–67, Box 87, German Subject Collection, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, California (hereafter German Collection). See also Rolf Uessler, *Die 68er: APO, Marx und freie Liebe* (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1998), pp.192–207; Gerhard Bauß, *Die Studentenbewegung der sechziger Jahre* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, 1977), pp.34–41.
17. For the circumstances surrounding this event in West Berlin, see Jacques Schuster, *Heinrich Albertz – der Mann, der mehrere Leben lebte: eine Biographie* (Berlin: Alexander Fest Verlag, 1997), pp.183–98. American writers often confuse the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund in West Germany with Students for a Democratic Society in the United States. Both used the initials SDS.

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The two groups were very different in origin, and they never created significant organizational ties. The Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund, initially formed in September 1946, remained closely associated with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in Western Germany until 1960. From 1960 through 1970 the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund acted as an independent student group, growing progressively more radical in its criticism of the established West German parties. Torn by internal disputes, the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund dissolved itself in 1970. Students for a Democratic Society, in contrast, emerged only in 1959–60 without any party affiliation. It had no explicit socialist tradition, and it began as a very moderate organization committed to 'participatory democracy', civil rights and nuclear disarmament. During the course of the 1960s Students for a Democratic Society grew more extreme in its criticism of established political institutions in the United States. The organization moved far to the ideological Left – the 'New Left' – but it never embraced socialist traditions in the way that the German student group did. Students for a Democratic Society also disbanded in the early 1970s, torn by internal strife. On the history of the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund see Jürgen Briem, *Der SDS: Die Geschichte des bedeutendsten Studentenverbandes der BRD seit 1945* (Frankfurt: päd.extra Buchverlag, 1976). On the history of Students for a Democratic Society see Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973). For an analysis of the parallels and divergences between the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund and Students for a Democratic Society, see Michael A. Schmidtke, 'Reform, Revolte oder Revolution?: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (SDS) und die Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) 1960–1970', in Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (ed.), *1968 – Von Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998), pp.188–206.

18. See Schuster, *Heinrich Albertz*, pp.183–98; Tent, *The Free University of Berlin*, pp.321–2; Richie, *Faust's Metropolis*, p.779.
19. The Manifesto of the NPD, first promulgated in 1965, reprinted and translated in Ivor Montagu, *Germany's New Nazis* (London: Panther Books, 1967), pp.127–31, quotation on p.127. See also Fred Richards, *Die NPD: Alternative oder Wiederkehr?* (München: Günter Olzog Verlag, 1967), pp.126–9; David Nagle, *The National Democratic Party: Right Radicalism in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1970), especially pp.35–122; David Childs, 'The Far Right in Germany since 1945', in Luciano Cheles, Ronnie Ferguson and Michalina Vaughan (eds.), *Neo-Fascism in Europe* (London: Longman, 1991), p.72.
20. The Manifesto of the NPD, pp.128–31; Patrick Moreau, *Les Héritiers due IIIe Reich: L'extrême Droite Allemands de 1945 à nos Jours* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1994), pp.7–14, 76–8, 91–4; David P. Conradt, *The West German Party System: An Ecological Analysis of Social Structure and Voting Behavior, 1961–1969* (London: Sage Publications, 1972), pp.38–42.
21. See 'Akademisches Proletariat?', Folder: Berlin 1966–67, Box 87, German Collection; Uesseler, *Die 68er*, pp.65–84.
22. See 'Stand der Deutschlandfrage', 24 May 1965, Band 5, IIA1 – 80.00, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn, Germany [hereafter PA/AA]; Klaus Hildebrand, *Von Erhard zur Großen Koalition, 1963–1969* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1984), pp.202–18, 283–301, 365–83.
23. See Telegram from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to the Department of State, 14 Dec. 1965, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [hereafter FRUS], 1964–68, Vol. 13, pp.283–4. For a detailed discussion of US–West German government relations during this period and the issues of 'off-set payments' for American soldiers in Europe and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as the Vietnam War, see Thomas Alan Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

24. Aufruf, circa 1967, Folder: Berlin, 1967, Box 87, German Collection. See also Mausbach, 'Auschwitz and Vietnam', pp.279–98. On the various strands of the West German 'extra-parliamentary opposition' that came together in late 1966, see Pavel A. Richter, 'Die Außerparlamentarische Opposition in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1966 bis 1968', in Gilcher-Holtey (ed.), 1968, pp.37–46.
25. See Richie, *Faust's Metropolis*, p.779; Andreas W. Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), p.182.
26. See John F. Kennedy, Remarks in the Rudolph Wilde Platz, Berlin, 26 June 1963, *Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy*, 1963, pp.524–5; idem, Address at the Free University of Berlin, 26 June 1963, *ibid.*, pp.526–9, quotations on p.529. See also Richie, *Faust's Metropolis*, pp.771–3; Tent, *The Free University of Berlin*, p.281; Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin*, pp.112–45; Suri, *Power and Protest*, p.28.
27. See Tent, *The Free University of Berlin*, p.322; Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin*, p.182; '11 Seized in Berlin in a reported Plot to Kill Humphrey', *New York Times*, 6 April 1967.
28. For the text of Humphrey's speech see *The Department of State Bulletin* 56 (1 May 1967), pp.680–81. On Humphrey's West European tour between 28 March and 8 April 1967 see Carl Solberg, *Hubert Humphrey: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), pp.304–6.
29. Summary Notes of the 569th Meeting of the National Security Council, 3 May 1967, FRUS, 1964–68, Vol.13, pp.572–3. These quotations are from Bromley Smith's summary of Humphrey's remarks. Humphrey's comments were uncharacteristic because he had a long record in the US Senate as an active internationalist, confident in the future prospects of transatlantic political partnership. See Solberg, *Hubert Humphrey*, pp.181–98.
30. See Tent, *The Free University of Berlin*, pp.322–3.
31. See Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kiesinger mit Schah Reza Pahlevi, 28 May 1967, *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [hereafter AAPBD], 1967 (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), Vol.2, pp.797–808. See also Aufzeichnung des Staatssekretärs Rolf Lahr, 4 Jan. 1967, AAPBD, 1967, Vol.1, pp.19–22. On the early development of post-1945 West German 'Weltpolitik' – expansion of influence in the developing world – see Karl Carstens an Ludwig Erhard, 4 Oct. 1963, Band 159, B2 – Büro Staatssekretäre, PA/AA; Karl Carstens an Willy Brandt, 5 Dec. 1966, Mapped 641, N1337 – Karl Carstens Nachlaß, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, Germany.
32. See Tent, *The Free University of Berlin*, p.323.
33. James Bill argues that the Shah of Iran pursued a policy of controlled 'reform from above'. He sought to modernize the Iranian economy by encouraging land reform and industrial development, according to Bill, while also retaining tight control on political behaviour. The growth of vocal opposition groups within Iran during the 1960s motivated the Shah to use force against domestic reformers. The Shah would not allow citizens to challenge his dictatorship. See James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American–Iranian Relations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), pp.141–9, 161–9.
34. See *ibid.*, pp.169–76.
35. 'Warum Wir demonstrieren', in 'Dokumente des 2. Juni 1967 und der Zeit danach', Folder: Berlin, 1967, Box 87, German Collection.
36. *Ibid.*
37. See the eyewitness accounts in *Der Spiegel*, 12 June 1967. See also Uessler, *Die 68er*, pp.244–55; Schuster, *Heinrich Albertz*, pp.199–226; Tent, *The Free University of Berlin*, pp.323–4.
38. See *Der Spiegel*, 12 June 1967.
39. *Ibid.*

40. Heinrich Albertz, 'Sicherheit und Ordnung müssen gewährleistet bleiben', in 'Dokumente des 2. Juni 1967 und der Zeit danach', Folder: Berlin, 1967, Box 87, German Collection.
41. Anzeige, in 'Dokumente des 2. Juni 1967 und der Zeit danach', Folder: Berlin, 1967, Box 87, German Collection. See also Rudi Dutschke's diary entry for 3 June 1967, in Gretchen Dutschke (ed.), *Rudi Dutschke – Jeder hat sein Leben ganz zu leben: Die Tagebücher, 1963–1979* (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2003), pp.39–41.
42. See Schuster, *Heinrich Albertz*, pp.227–32.
43. Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kiesinger mit dem iranischen Botschafter Malek, 15 June 1967, in AAPBD, 1967, 2, pp.911–17, quotation on p.916.
44. On Dutschke's background, his emergence as a protest leader, and his subsequent decline, see Ulrich Chaussy, *Die drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke: eine Biographie* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 1993); Gretchen Dutschke, *Wir hatten ein barbarisches, schönes Leben: Rudi Dutschke, eine Biographie* (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1996); Kraushaar, 1968, pp.89–129; Bernd Rabehl, *Rudi Dutschke: Revolutionär im geteilten Deutschland* (Dresden: Edition Antaios, 2002). Both Kraushaar and Rabehl emphasize Dutschke's indignation regarding the enforced division of the German nation.
45. See Rudi Dutschke, 'Mallet, Marcuse 'Formierte Gesellschaft' und politische Praxis der Linken hier und anderswo', (1965) in Wolfgang Kraushaar (ed.), *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail, 1946–1995* (Hamburg: Rogner und Bernhard, 1998), Vol. 2, pp.186–7.
46. See Rudi Dutschke interview in *Der Spiegel*, 10 July 1967.
47. Radical students formed a parallel 'Critical University', offering their own seminars and ad hoc courses. See 'Kritische Universität: Provisorisches Verzeichnis', Wintersemester 1967/68, Folder: Berlin, 1967, Box 87, German Collection; Bernd Rabehl, *Am Ende der Utopie: Die politische Geschichte der Freien Universität Berlin* (Berlin: Argon, 1988), pp.225–38.
48. See 'Akademisches Proletariat?' circa late 1967, Folder: Berlin, 1966–67, Box 87, German Collection; 'Zur Situation an der FU', 6 Dec. 1967, Folder: Berlin, 1966–67, Box 87, German Collection.
49. See Uessler, *Die 68er*, pp.256–96; Tent, *The Free University of Berlin*, pp.328–32.
50. See Rudi Dutschke, 'Professor Habermas, Ihr begriffloser Objektivismus erschlägt das zu emanzipierende Subjekt' (9 June 1967), in Kraushaar (ed.), *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, pp.251–3; Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), pp.617–19.
51. Rudi Dutschkes Tagebuch, 17 June 1967, in idem., *Mein langer Marsch: Reden, Schriften und Tagebücher aus zwanzig Jahren* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.70; Gretchen Dutschke (ed.), *Rudi Dutschke*, pp.53–4. See also Kraushaar, 1968, pp.81–8; Jeffrey Herf, 'War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement', *International Security* 10 (Spring 1986), pp.172–4.
52. Dutschke, 'Rebellion der Studenten' (1968), in *Mein langer Marsch*, pp.68–69.
53. Ibid.
54. Students at the Free University organized the 'Vietnam Congress' in conjunction with students at the Technical University in West Berlin. See Einladung 30 Jan. 1968, Folder: Berlin, 1968, Box 88, German Collection; Erklärung zur Internationalen Vietnamkonferenz – Westberlin, 17/18 Feb. 1968, Folder: Berlin, 1968, Box 88, German Collection; Bauß, *Die Studentenbewegung der sechziger Jahre*, p.95; Rabehl, *Am Ende der Utopie*, pp.256–68.
55. Dutschke, Tagebuch, Jan. 1968, in *Mein langer Marsch*, p.122.
56. See Dutschke, *Mein langer Marsch*, pp.71–2.
57. See Offener Brief an die Regierung der Volksrepublik Polen, 12 March 1968, Folder: Berlin, 1968, Box 88, German Collection.

58. 'Freunde und Genossen!', 11 April 1968, Folder: Berlin, 1968, Box 88, German Collection.
59. See *Aktuell* 1 (12 April 1968), Folder: Periodicals, *Aktuell* – Berlin, Box 86, German Collection; Report from the Rector of the Free University, Folder: Berlin, 1968, Box 87, German Collection.
60. On this point, see Suri, *Power and Protest*, pp.245–58.
61. See Stefan Aust, *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1985), especially pp.103–320; A.D. Moses, 'The State and the Student Movement in West Germany, 1967–77', in Gerard J. DeGroot (ed.), *Student Protest: The Sixties and After* (New York: Longman, 1998), pp.144–9. Jeffrey Herf argues that the youth revolt in the late 1960s gave rise to a West German peace movement that refused to acknowledge serious security threats from the Soviet Union during the 1970s and early 1980s. See Herf, 'War, Peace, and the Intellectuals', pp.172–200.