

**The Entangled Sites of Memory:  
The Significance of Photography for the Contentious Movements  
of May 1968 and June 1936**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the photography of two major strike movements in French history, both of which have attained 'iconic' status and both of which produced substantial and diverse photographic records. The central aim of the thesis is to analyse these images, drawn from archives, exhibitions, digitised and printed collections, and examine their relationship to the collective memories and historiographical narratives of the strike movements. It analyses the entanglements and commonalities between the photographic representations of the two movements, and argues that the photographic record of these strike waves needs to be analysed in relation to the social context it was produced in.

Drawing on the work of Walter Benjamin and John Berger, it proposes an approach that links the production of a photographic record to the social contestation it displays, as well as analysing what the photographic afterlives of the movements tells us about how they have been subsequently understood.

This thesis approaches this photographic record on three different levels: through particular photographers or exhibitions, through discrete themes and framings and as individual photographs. It provides an analysis of diverse body of sources, some of which have been extensively used and re-used, and others that are less well known. A key area of enquiry is how the preservation and presentation of the photographic record links to the historiography of the events they depict. This thesis places the photographic record of two important strike movements within contemporary historiographical debates and highlights the value of a comparative approach informed by methodical innovations, such as entangled and transnational history.



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## Introduction

This thesis explores the photography of the most significant two strike movements in French history, June 1936 and May 1968. Following the election of a Popular Front government in May 1936, a general strike swept the country, resulting in the Matignon Agreements on the 7 June, which established collective bargaining rights, wage increases and paid holidays.<sup>1</sup> 32 years later, in May 1968, conflicts between police and students in Paris rapidly generalised into another general strike that became the key reference point for social contestation in France for decades.<sup>2</sup> Both these strikes have attained an iconic position, depicted in widely replicated photographs acquiring an almost symbolic status.<sup>3</sup> Yet both movements produced substantial and diverse photographic records well beyond the most recognisable images. The central aim of this thesis is to analyse these images - drawn from archives, exhibitions, digitised and printed collections - in order to establish their relationship to the collective memories and historiographical narratives of the strike movements. It analyses the entanglements and commonalities between the photographic representations of the two movements. This thesis approaches this collection of material at three scales: the photographic theme or convention, the itinerary (of a particular photograph or photographer), and the commemorative event (anniversary, exhibitions, and publications). It provides an analysis of a diverse body of sources, some of which have been extensively used and re-used, and others that are less well known. A primary area of enquiry is how the preservation and presentation of the photographs' links to the historiography of the events they depict. This thesis places the images within contemporary historiographical debates and highlights the

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<sup>1</sup> Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934-38*. (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8-10.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Frank, 'Introduction', in Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, Robert Frank, Marie-Françoise Lévy and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), *Les Années 68: le temps de contestation* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 2000), 16.

<sup>3</sup> André Gunthert, 'Les icônes du photojournalisme, ou la narration visuelle inavouable', in Daniel Dubuisson, Sophie Raux (eds.), *A perte de vue. Sciences et cultures du visuel*, (Dijon, Presses du Réel, 2014); 'Les Icônes du Photojournalisme: de l'information à la Pop Culture', Audrey Leblanc and Dominic Versavel, (eds.), *Icônes de Mai 68: Les Images ont une histoire*, (Paris: BnF Éditions, 2018), 19-31.

value of a comparative approach informed by methodological innovations, such as entangled and transnational history.<sup>4</sup> Fundamentally, its goal is to write social and labour history through photographs. By analysing the images of both strike movements alongside one another, we can trace the continuities and ruptures in how both industrial action and social contestation were visualised.

## **Historiography of 1968**

Much of the historiography of May '68 has probed the results or potential legacy of the movement. For example, almost immediately after the events, Raymond Aron sought the meaning of the 'elusive' revolution.<sup>5</sup> In many cases, this would involve working May into contemporary political narratives. By the 1980s, Gilles Lipovetsky was reducing the politics of May to an ephemeral 'communication', prefiguring neo-liberal hegemony.<sup>6</sup> Further diminishing the movement's political content, Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman's *Génération* became the archetypal reduction of a nationwide mass strike movement to the biography of a few dozen activists, who would incidentally repudiate their Marxism and become major metropolitan journalists, politicians and media-figures.<sup>7</sup> Kristin Ross's work was a vital re-evaluation of the 'Afterlives' of May, re-asserting the centrality of collective anti-capitalist politics to 1968, and critically examining how accounts such as Hamon and Rotman's came to obscure this.<sup>8</sup> The concept of an 'afterlife' is an important one for this project. An 'afterlife' entwines the material and ideological impact of a movement with the

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<sup>4</sup> Marcel Van der Linden, 'The Promise and Challenges of Global Labor History', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 82, (2012); *Transnational labour history: explorations*. (London, Routledge, 2017); Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and theory*, 45, 1, (2006), 30-50.

<sup>5</sup> Raymond Aron, *The Elusive Revolution: Anatomy of a Student Revolt*, Trans. Gordon Clough, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> Gilles Lipovetsky, *L'Ère du vide: essais sur l'individualisme contemporaine*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération vol. 1: les années de rêve, vol. 2: Les années de poudre*, (Paris: Seuil, 1987 and 1988).

<sup>8</sup> Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); 'Establishing Consensus: May '68 in France as Seen from the 1980s', *Critical Inquiry*, 28, 3, (2002), 650-676.

process of historiography and memorialisation. In analysing the entangled histories of these strike movements, we must pay attention to how identifying and debating their afterlives is a historical process in its own right. Photographs too have afterlives; images of moments now passed that continue to linger into new presents.

The subsequent trajectories of former '68ers have had intellectual, as well as political ramifications. Julian Bourg chronicled what he characterised as a 'turn to ethics', and Peter Starr saw it as a movement towards theory reflecting the 'logics of failed revolt'.<sup>9</sup> How these aspects relate to photography specifically will be explored in Chapter 6 on Photography and '68 thought'. Ross stood against what she termed 'sociological' approaches to May that reproduce the classificatory logic she saw as antithetical to the movement. Academic examinations of 68 have sometimes followed this classificatory logic. Michael Seidman's statistical analysis attempts to downplay the radicalism of May.<sup>10</sup> It also forms part of a persistent argument locating the birth of the consumer society in 1968.<sup>11</sup> However, sociology has produced more nuanced sympathetic analysis through social movement theory. For example, Ingrid Gilcher-Holtley's analysis of the processes of mobilisation and limitations of spontaneity.<sup>12</sup> More recently, she has drawn parallels with other movements, arguing they can trace a common insistence that 'another world is possible' back to 1968.<sup>13</sup>

Making links beyond the months of May and June 1968 is a key part of French historiography, as historians developed a temporal perspective of the '68 years', broadening

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<sup>9</sup> Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought*, (Montreal & Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007); Peter Starr, *Logics of Failed Revolt: French Theory after May '68*, (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1995), 114.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Seidman, 'Workers in a repressive society of seductions: Parisian metallurgists in May-June 1968', *French Historical Studies*, 18, 1, (1993), 255-278; *The Imaginary Revolution; Students and Workers in 1968*, (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Sedlmaier & Stephan Malinowski, "'1968' – A Catalyst of Consumer Society", *Cultural and Social History*, 8, 2, (2011), 255-274.

<sup>12</sup> Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, 'May 1968 in France: The Rise and Fall of a Social Movement', in Carole Fink, Phillipp Grassert and Detlef Junker (eds), *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, 'The Dynamic of Protest: May 1968 in France', *Critique*, 36, 2, (2008), 201-218.

<sup>13</sup> Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, 'Introduction', in Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, (ed.) *A Revolution of Perception?: Consequences and Echoes of 1968*, (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014), 11.

the frame of analysis beyond a single event and into a longer historical process. Edited volumes such as *Les Années 68: le temps de contestation*, and the later *68: une histoire collective 1962-1981* set out a clear chronology for the ‘68 years’ that covered a multitude of topics.<sup>14</sup> Xavier Vigna has explored working-class militancy and self-identity using the same periodization.<sup>15</sup> Vigna’s work is of particular relevance for this thesis in the way it contributes to a more explicit labour history of 1968.<sup>16</sup> These accounts have also brought into view the wider variety of participants in the events, as well as the interaction between different groups. The much-mythologised contacts between students and workers were subject to more serious examination.<sup>17</sup> For Boris Gobille, it is these connections that are the defining feature of May. Debate over the causes or consequences of May overlooks the short-term ‘conjunctural’ crisis itself, distinguished by the twin mobilizations of workers and students.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Étienne Balibar (who collaborated with Louis Althusser on *Reading Capital*) insists on seeing ’68 as a ‘conjunction’ of multiple distinct elements, which cannot be easily collapsed into a whole.<sup>19</sup> Photography offers a way of studying how these component parts were visualised, both in relation to each other and the representation of the movement as a whole.

Following the 2008 anniversary, works such as the collective volume *Rethinking France’s last Revolution* explored the events and impact of 1968 beyond the Latin Quarter,

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<sup>14</sup> Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, Robert Frank, Marie-Françoise Lévy and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), *Les Années 68: le temps de la contestation* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 2000); Phillippe Artières, Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, (eds.), *68: Une histoire collective 1962-1981*, (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> Xavier Vigna, *L’Insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68: Essai d’histoire politique des usines*, (Rennes, 2007); *L’espoir et l’effroi: Luttes d’écritures et luttes de classes en France au XXe siècle*, (Paris, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Keith Mann, ‘A Revival of Labor and Social Protest Research in France: Recent Scholarship on May 1968’, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 80, (2011), 203–214; Alexis Bonnet, ‘L’Autogestion et les Cédétistes Lyonnais’, in Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, Robert Frank, Marie-Françoise Lévy and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), *Les Années 68: Le temps de contestation* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Xavier Vigna and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, ‘Les rencontres improbables dans « les années 68 »’, *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire*, 101, 1, (2009), 163-177; Xavier Vigna, ‘Beyond Tradition: The strikes of May-June 1968’, in Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne, James S. Williams, (eds.), *May ’68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011), 47-57.

<sup>18</sup> Boris Gobille, ‘L’Événement Mai 68: Pour une sociohistoire du temps court’, In *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales*, 63, 2, (2008), 319-349.

<sup>19</sup> Étienne Balibar, ‘Scattered Notes on “May ‘68” and its Interpretations.’ *Crisis & Critique*, 5, 4, (2018), 52-83; Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar, and Ben Brewster. *Reading capital*. Vol. 19. London: Nlb, 1970.

considering immigrants, sexual politics and regional events, as well as workers and students.<sup>20</sup> Thematic examinations of ‘the 68 years’ have also widened conceptions of identity spanning religion and gender.<sup>21</sup> Transnational approaches are another innovation in the re-examination of ’68 since 2008. Félix Krawatzek argued that the shift from lived memory to a historically packaged ‘event’ resulted in a process of commodification that minimised the global resonances of May. This marginalisation of the awareness of African, Asian and Latin American movements presents May as a ‘nationally-framed’ core to a European memory of 1968.<sup>22</sup> Daniel Gordon’s *Immigrants and Intellectuals* foregrounded the transnational relationships at play within the protest movement, and the continued relevance of such relationships into the following decades.<sup>23</sup> Richard Wolin’s *Wind from the East* returned to the local ramifications of transposing Maoism into France.<sup>24</sup> Analysing the impact of these transnational influences on the photographic record can demonstrate the rich interconnections that shaped the visualisation of protest.

Yet transnational accounts often remain limited in their scope. Richard Vinen’s *The Long ’68: Radical Protest and its Enemies* is exemplary in this respect. Taking a cue from the concept of the ’68 years’ Vinen argues that the combination of widened chronology with a transnational perspective shifts the meanings associated with ’68 dramatically. For example, an account of German events ending in 1968 would present the disintegration of the student

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<sup>20</sup> *May ’68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011), 263-278

<sup>21</sup> G. Barrau, *Le mai 68 des catholiques*, (Éditions de l’Atelier/Éditions Ouvrières, 1998); Jonathan Judaken, ‘Alain Finkielkraut and the Nouveaux Philosophes: French-Jewish Intellectuals, the Afterlives of May’68 and the Rebirth of the National Icon’, *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* (2006): 193-223; Sandrine Sanos, ‘Being in Parentheses: Memory, Sex, and Jewishness in Diane Kurys’s Visions of May’68.’ *French Historical Studies*, 41, 2, (2018), 335-363; Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, "Genre et politique: les années 1968." *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* 3 (2002): 133-143; Vincent Porhel and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel. "68", révolutions dans le genre?." *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 29 (2009): 7-15; Sara M. Evans, ‘Sons, daughters, and patriarchy: Gender and the 1968 generation’, *The American Historical Review* 114, 2, (2009), 331-347; Kristina Schulz, ‘Remembering 1968: feminist perspectives’ In Sarah Colvin, Katharina Karcher, (eds.) *Women, Global Protest Movements, and Political Agency: Rethinking the Legacy of 1968*, (London: Routledge, 2018), 29-42.

<sup>22</sup> Félix Krawatzek, ‘Made in France? The (re-) invention of ‘Mai 68’' *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 24, 4, (2017), 578-605.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Gordon, *Immigrants & Intellectuals: May ’68 and the rise of Anti-Racism in France*, (Pontypool: Merlin Press, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s*. (Princeton University Press, 2017).

movement as its outcome. On the other hand, ending a periodisation in 1977 might present terrorism as its culmination, and ending in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century might result in a narrative of the rise of the Green Party.<sup>25</sup> However, Vinen does not push this point further, and the bulk of the book covers case studies of France, the US, Germany and Britain, first through relatively conventional narratives of the upheavals in each country, then thematic comparison. Although the account refers to other struggles around the globe, it is rooted in a Western context.<sup>26</sup>

Personal testimonies, such as *Le jour où mon père s'est tu* (The Day My Father Went Silent), Virginie Linhart's memoir of her Maoist father Robert, contributed another dimension, as increased attention was paid to the memory and commemoration of '68.<sup>27</sup> One major project collected the oral testimonies of activists from across Europe.<sup>28</sup> Chris Reynolds examined the construction of a 'consensus' around May's memory, and commemorations have proved to be a key moment for igniting debates around the place of May in contemporary history.<sup>29</sup> This thesis will examine the role of photography in the process of commemoration, and how commemorative practices have contributed to the reception of strike photography.

Michel Wieviorka argues that these ongoing debates around May revolve around three main questions.<sup>30</sup> The first is the degree to which it was part of a global movement, and the commonalities and differences with other protests of the year. The second is the long running dispute over the 'meaning' or characterisation of May: a 'movement' for those sympathetic or simply 'the events' to those more hostile. Finally, Wieviorka comes to an evaluation of its political and social impact. These latter two questions also flow into the discussions about

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<sup>25</sup> Vinen, *The Long '68*, 14-15.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Long '68: Radical Protest and its Enemies*, (London: Allen Lane, 2018).

<sup>27</sup> Virginie Linhart, *Le jour où mon père s'est tu*, (Paris: Le Seuil, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Annette Waring (eds.), *Europe's 68: Voices of Revolt*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Chris Reynolds, *Memories of May '68: France's Convenient Consensus*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Michel Wieviorka, 'May '68: The Debate Continues!', *European Sociologist Issue 42: 1968 - 50 Years On*, 42, (2018).



whether May is a source of ongoing inspiration or is now ‘dead’. The metaphor of dead or living memory became prominent during May ‘68’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, when both former *gauchiste* Daniel Cohn-Bendit and president Nicholas Sarkozy pronounced May as ‘finished’ or ‘liquidated’, whereas activist Daniel Bensaïd sought to challenge May’s ‘ossification’.<sup>31</sup> Donatella Della Porta characterises each of 1968’s decennial anniversaries with a particular focus derived from their contemporary context: violence in 1978; pragmatism in 1988, neoliberalism’s ascendancy in 1998; and new protests following the crisis of that system in 2008. In 2018, she sees ‘the search for radical innovation in democracies.’<sup>32</sup> Perhaps more than the specific themes Della Porta identifies, the concept of ‘resonance’ is important, demonstrating how such themes take on new prominence in new circumstances.

In 2018, Paris hosted a series of major exhibitions on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of May ‘68. There was a major photographic exhibition at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), and at the Archives Nationales, *Archives de Pouvoir* presented May through the documentary record.<sup>33</sup> These will form the basis of Chapter 7, which focuses on photography and commemoration. There were also regional commemorations, such as *Lyon 68*.<sup>34</sup> Given the passage of 50 years, access to state archives has now opened up. As the state becomes visible to more scrutiny, the police have increasingly become a focus of research. Seidman pioneered this approach, but was particularly reliant on police reports and testimony.<sup>35</sup> The spring 2018 issue of *Modern & Contemporary France* carried articles by Oliver Davis and Nick Hewlett devoted to the

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<sup>31</sup> Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Stéphane Paoli, and Jean Viard. *Forget 68*, (La Tour-d'Aigues: Éditions de l'Aube, 2008); Daniel Bensaïd, ‘1968 in France: an Unclassified Affair’ in *Memories of 1968: International Perspectives*, Ingo Cornils and Sarah Waters (eds.), (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 186-189; Daniel A. Gordon, ‘Memories of ‘68 in France: Reflections on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary’ in *Memories of 1968: International Perspectives*, Ingo Cornils and Sarah Waters (eds.), (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 58-59. The insistence of May as still alive is best seen in the title of a 2008 initiative: *May ‘68: it’s still only the beginning*.

<sup>32</sup> Donatella Della Porta, ‘1968 in 2018: The Resonance of a Rebellious Year’ *European Sociologist Issue 42: 1968 - 50 Years On*, 42, (2018).

<sup>33</sup> Philippe Artières and Emmanuel Giry, (eds.) *68: Les Archives du Pouvoir: Chroniques Inédites d’un État face à la Crise*, (Paris: L’Iconoclaste and Les Archives Nationales, 2018); Audrey Leblanc and Dominic Versavel,  *Icônes de Mai 68: Les Images ont une histoire*, (Paris: BnF Éditions, 2018).

<sup>34</sup> Vincent Porhel and Jean-Luc De Ochandiano, *Lyon 68. Deux décennies contestataires*, (Lyon: Lieux Dits, 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Seidman, ‘Workers in a repressive society of seductions, 258, -273-274; *The Imaginary Revolution*, 110-120, 181.

perspective of both those setting state policy and the rank and file police enforcing it.<sup>36</sup> The legacy of opposition to police violence is also receiving renewed attention, incorporated into analysis of the reception and interpretation of May in relation to contemporary movements. Davis again highlights the centrality of ‘anti-police’ sentiment to May ‘68, and Perry Zurn highlights the continuity with later movements, especially prison reform.<sup>37</sup> Chris Reynolds compares the role of anti-police sentiment in ‘68 with the Nuit Debout movement, and Alex Corcos has emphasised the legacy of Situationists in a comparison of these two movements.<sup>38</sup> David Porter’s examination of French anarchists also stresses the continuing relevance of May as a reference point for contemporary activist movements.<sup>39</sup> Chapter 1 will engage with the visual communication of these ideas.

Ludivine Bantigny’s *1968: De Grands Soirs et Petit Matins* brings together many of these recent trends in an attempt to recover the energy, emotion and hope of the struggles and debates of May.<sup>40</sup> Highlighting the diversity of protagonists, Part 1 of the book covers ‘students, peasants, workers’, and Bantigny examines the role of place in strikes and occupations as well as subversion, political parties, and internationalism. There is also a concern with the ‘other side’ - police and law enforcement - which is the focus of Part 2. The third section explores the sensory and emotional experience of May, as well as the perception of gender and temporality, while the final part turns to an examination of ‘projects and imagined futures’.<sup>41</sup> On one hand, these incorporate a longer chronology and a more diverse

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<sup>36</sup> Oliver Davis ‘Managing (in)security in Paris in Mai ’68’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 26, 2, (2018), 129-143; Nick Hewlett, ‘Disorder, *les forces de l’ordre* and the re-ordering of capitalism in May–June 1968’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 26, 2, (2018), 115-128.

<sup>37</sup> Oliver Davis, ‘The anti-police of Mai ’68 fifty years on’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 26:2, (2018), 107-114; Perry Zurn, ‘Curiosities at war: the police and prison resistance after Mai ’68’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 26, 2, (2018), 179-191.

<sup>38</sup> Chris Reynolds, ‘From *mai-juin* ’68 to *Nuit Debout*: shifting perspectives on France’s anti-police’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 26, 2, (2018) 145-163; Alex Corcos, ‘*Mouvement/Occupation/Debout*: the Situationist International and their legacy of protest’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 26, 2, (2018), 165-178.

<sup>39</sup> David Porter, ‘French anarchists and the continuing power of May 1968’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 24, 2, (2016), 143-159.

<sup>40</sup> Ludivine Bantigny, *1968-De grands soirs en petits matins*, (Paris: Le Seuil, 2018).

<sup>41</sup> The issue of subjectivity is one that Bantigny and Gobille have also explored elsewhere, see Ludivine Bantigny and Boris Gobille. ‘L’expérience sensible du politique: Protagonisme et antagonisme en mai-juin 1968’, *French Historical Studies*, 41, 2, (2018), 275-303.

set of participants. On the other, they include a consideration of the subjectivity of those participants, and the less tangible facets of their experience. This thesis will strive for a similar multi-scalar approach, analysing the particular lenses deployed by photographs, and what they tell us about the understanding of contestation in the moment it is depicted. However, it will also look to the broader frameworks which structure how these images are interpreted in relation to each other, their own historical context, and the context they are studied in.

### **Historiography of 1936**

As with interpretations of May, political divisions mark the history of the Popular Front. Julian Jackson's breakdown of the French historiography of the Popular Front up to the 1990s shows a field largely split on political grounds.<sup>42</sup> The three tendencies Jackson identifies roughly corresponded with political positions on the Popular Front itself, though other political readings have questioned the efficacy of the Popular Front from the right (for example, Seidman argued for the success of Daladier's 'counter-revolutionary' antifascism, anticipating Gaullist nationalism, as opposed to the failure of the Popular Front's 'revolutionary antifascism').<sup>43</sup> A *gauchiste* lineage, epitomised by Daniel Guérin's *Révolution Manquée*, stressed the Popular Front as a potentially revolutionary movement, betrayed by Blum's government.<sup>44</sup> Historians working in the tradition of the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF) transitioned in parallel to the party's de-Stalinisation to acknowledge changes in the party line, though consistently emphasising the role and autonomy of the Communist Party.<sup>45</sup> They also paid more attention to the pre-1936 formation of the front than Blum's government.

<sup>46</sup> Danielle Tartakowsky subsequently offered more nuanced approaches to the PCF's history,

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<sup>42</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, xi-xii.

<sup>43</sup> Seidman, Michael. 'Was the French Popular Front Antifascist?' in Hugo García, Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet, Cristina Clímaco (eds.) *Rethinking antifascism: history, memory and political uses, 1922 to the present*, pp. 43-60. (Berghahn, 2016).

<sup>44</sup> Daniel Guérin, *Front populaire, révolution manquée? Témoignage militant*. (Paris: Julliard, 1963)

<sup>45</sup> Gino G. Raymond, 'The French Communist Party During the Fifth Republic: A Crisis of Leadership and Ideology', (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 141-167.

<sup>46</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, xii.

albeit still within a tradition still indebted to the party. Finally, Socialists, such as Jules Moch, were positive towards Blum to the point of ‘uncritical adulation’.<sup>47</sup> The entanglement of party positions and the memorialisation of the Popular Front is of concern here due to the *Parti Socialiste*’s role in the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016, a critical moment for the party in power during François Hollande’s presidency. Chapter 7 on memorialisation will explore this conjunction through the use of photographs during commemorations.

However, as with the conceptualising of the ‘’68 years’, French social historians have more recently developed a ‘plural’ approach to the Popular Front, operating on multiple scales.<sup>48</sup> Analysis of the medium term economic crisis and the longer-term responses to Taylorisation accompanied examination of the strikes themselves.<sup>49</sup> Some of these also identified photography as an area of research.<sup>50</sup> The strike movement of 1936 is part of the history of workers politicisation, as well as the political parties relationship to workers.<sup>51</sup>

Other work on the Popular Front examined the cultural history of the period. Andrew Dudley and Steven Ungar develop the idea of a ‘poetics’ of culture in 1930s Paris.<sup>52</sup> Notably, Pascal Ory’s *La belle illusion: culture et politique sous le signe du Front Populaire 1935-1938* provides an overarching vision of the cultural efforts of the Popular Front itself, which Ory sees as establishing a vocabulary of ‘cultural policy’.<sup>53</sup> Thus, this is a significant moment in which to analyse the impact of culture on political movements and how culture is

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<sup>47</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, xi; Jules Moch, *Le Front Populaire: grande espérance* (1971).

<sup>48</sup> Xavier Vigna, Jean Vigreux and Serge Wolikow, *Le Pain, La Paix, La Liberté: Expériences et territoires du Front Populaire*, (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Antoine Prost, "Les grèves de mai-juin 1936 revisitées." *Le Mouvement Social* 3 (2002): 33-54.

<sup>50</sup> Jean Bouvier (ed.) *La France en Mouvement: 1934-1938*, (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 1986); Rebérioux, M., 1988. Le cinquantenaire du Front populaire. *Le Mouvement social*, (143), 115-130.

<sup>51</sup> Keith Mann, ‘Political Identity in Transition: Metalworkers in Lyon during the French Popular Front, 1935-39’, *Labor History* 48, 3 (2007): 301-325; Michael Torigian, *Every factory a fortress: The French labor movement in the age of Ford and Hitler*, (Ohio University Press, 1999).

<sup>52</sup> Dudley Andrew and Steven Ungar, *Popular Front Paris and the poetics of culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>53</sup> Pascal Ory, *La belle illusion: culture et politique sous le signe du Front Populaire 1935-1938*, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1994); Pascal Ory, Interview by Élise Karlin, *L’express*, 19/04/2016, [https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/pascal-ory-sans-staline-il-n-y-a-pas-de-front-populaire\\_1784063.html](https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/pascal-ory-sans-staline-il-n-y-a-pas-de-front-populaire_1784063.html), (accessed 15/07/2019).

consciously politicised. Jessica Wardhaugh's work explores how ideas of the nation were constructed and communicated, and Susan B. Whitney looked at processes of youth mobilisation.<sup>54</sup> Both these examples frame these issues through the comparison of left and right, and others have examined the cultural policies of specific political parties.<sup>55</sup> The thematic analysis of cultural politics has been a rich source for historians, encompassing shifting gender roles<sup>56</sup>, the involvement of youth and politicisation of childhood<sup>57</sup>, travel<sup>58</sup>, education and sport.<sup>59</sup> All of these are influential on the photography of the period, which is a significant field of intersecting cultural and political innovation in its own right. Historians have examined the interaction of political and media systems.<sup>60</sup> Of particular relevance to this thesis are Danielle Leenaert's history of the pioneering photo magazine *Vu*, Michèle Martin's description of the industry of photojournalism, and<sup>61</sup> Simon Dell's analysis of the political dimensions of photojournalism uses a Gramscian reading to explore the attempt to create a visualisation of the Popular Front that reflected shifting political circumstances.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Jessica Wardhaugh, (ed.), *Politics and the Individual in France, 1930-1950*, (London: Legenda, 2015); *In pursuit of the people: political culture in France, 1934-39*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Susan B. Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> Mattie Fitch, 'The people and the workers: Communist cultural politics during the popular front in France.' *Twentieth Century Communism* 9, 9 (2016), 40-67.

<sup>56</sup> Caroline Campbell, 'Gender and Politics in Interwar and Vichy France.' *Contemporary European History* 27, 3, (2018): 482-499. Susan B. Whitney, 'Embracing the Status Quo: French Communists, Young Women and the Popular Front', *Journal of Social History*, 30, 1 (1996), 29-53. Geoff Read, *The republic of men: gender and the political parties in interwar France*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2014); Nick Underwood, 'Dressing the Modern Jewish Communist Girl in Interwar Paris' *French Politics, Culture & Society* 34, 1 (2016), 86-103.

<sup>57</sup> Lee Downs, Laura. 'Municipal communism and the politics of childhood: Ivry-sur-Seine 1925-1960', *Past & Present* 166 (2000): 232-233; *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-class movements and the colonies de vacances in France, 1880-1960*. Duke University Press, 2002.

<sup>58</sup> Bertrand Metton, 'From the Popular Front to the Eastern Front: Youth Movements, Travel, and Fascism in France (1930-1945)', (2015).

<sup>59</sup> Michaël Attali, Jean Saint-Martin, Luc Robène, and Thierry Terret. "Strengthening Minds and Bodies within the French School System. Physical Education for Boys and Girls between 1936 and 1950." *War & Society* 37, no. 3 (2018): 166-186.

<sup>60</sup> Marc Flandreau, and Frederic Zumer. "Media Manipulation in Interwar France: Evidence from the Archive of Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, 1914-1937." *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 1 (2016): 11-36.

<sup>61</sup> Danielle Leenaerts, *Petite histoire du magazine Vu (1928-1940): entre photographie d'information et photographie d'art*, (Peter Lang, 2010); Michèle Martin, 'La guerre dans l'avant-guerre: les photo magazines des années 1930', in Karine Taveaux-Grandpierre and Joëlle Beurrier (eds.), *Le Photojournalisme des années 1930 à nos jours: structures, culture et public*, (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014), 21-37.

<sup>62</sup> Simon Dell, 'Festival and Revolution: The Popular Front in France and the Press Coverage of the Strikes of 1936', *Art History*, 23, 4, (2000), 599-621; 'On the metaphor and practice of photography: Socialist realism, the Popular Front in France and the dynamics of cultural unity', *History of Photography*, 25,1, (2001), 52-60;

## Methodology of the history of Photography: Benjamin, Berger and Entanglement

Historians of labour movements are increasingly looking to photography as a means of understanding both the subjective experience of contentious politics, and its historical legacies.<sup>63</sup> In a British context, Stephen Brooke has demonstrated how photographs contribute a rich source for understanding working-class lives and the environments they were lived in.<sup>64</sup> Jack Saunders argues this must go further than using images simply for illustrative purposes, but must examine how images ‘conveyed and constructed’ the world of work and the labour movement.<sup>65</sup>

Yet, confining the history of photography to a branch of art history has limited the interrogation of its social role, instead enshrining a debate over its canonical or ontological status (see chapter 6).<sup>66</sup> Aby Warburg rejected the ‘arbitrary selection of evidence by art historians’, emphasising the need to see works of art in relation to their social context.<sup>67</sup> Visual Sociology has offered alternative conceptions, and oral history has seriously engaged with photography, both as part of the practice of photo-elicitation and as a subject of study.<sup>68</sup> These methods points to the role of memory in understanding photographs. Photographs can be *lieux de mémoire*, to use Pierre Nora’s term denoting sites where memory is embedded and sacralised, responding to a disappearance of ‘lived’ collective memory in modern times.<sup>69</sup> For

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*image of the Popular Front: the masses and the media in interwar France*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>63</sup> Matt Perry, ‘Introduction: Visualizing Labour’, *Labour History Review*, 84, 2, (2019), 105-113.

<sup>64</sup> Stephen Brooke, ‘Revisiting Southam Street: Class, Generation, Gender, and Race in the Photography of Roger Mayne’, *Journal of British Studies* 53, 2, (2014), 453-496.

<sup>65</sup> Saunders, Jack. ‘Emotions, Social Practices and the Changing Composition of Class, Race and Gender in the National Health Service, 1970–79: “Lively Discussion Ensued”’, *History Workshop Journal*, (2019).

<sup>66</sup> Douglas R. Nickel, ‘History of photography: the state of research’, *The Art Bulletin*, 83 (2001), 548-558.

<sup>67</sup> Alon Confino, ‘Collective memory and cultural history: Problems of method’, *The American historical review* 102, 5 (1997), 1391; Carlo Ginzburg, ‘From Aby Warburg to EH Gombrich: A problem of method’, in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013), 21.

<sup>68</sup> Tim Strangleman, ‘Representations of labour: Visual sociology and work’, *Sociology Compass*, 2 (2008), 1491-1505; Tim Strangleman, ‘Ways of (not) seeing work: the visual as a blind spot in WES?’, *Work, Employment and Society*, 18 (2004), 179-192; on oral history see Penny Tinkler, *Using Photographs in Social and Historical Research* (London: Sage, 2013). A. Thomson and A. Freund (eds.) *Oral History and Photography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’ *Representations*, 26, *Memory and Counter-Memory* (1989), 7-8.

Nora, sites of memory ‘stop time’ and ‘immortalise death’, exactly the function of photography’s indexicality in André Bazin’s ‘Mummy Complex’.<sup>70</sup> Roland Barthes called the central message of photography ‘Ça-a-été’ (This has been).<sup>71</sup> Yet this conception produces a static vision of photography. Derek Sayer has argued that Barthes’s characterisation of the ‘funereal immobility’ of photographs demonstrates their capacity for distorting a moving world.<sup>72</sup> However, to grapple with the complex interplay of memory and re-interpretation provoked by a photograph, we need to consider this moving context. A photographic image is not produced and received in isolation. Ultimately, it exists within ‘economic, social, technological and political practices’ that can be studied historically.<sup>73</sup> This is why this thesis approaches photographs as historical sources, rather than taking an art-historical approach.

The developments that have produced, framed and interpreted photographs need to be analysed as historical processes influenced by their context, but also by layers of active decisions on the part of photographers, editors, publishers, curators and critics. The process of building archives out of a diverse photographic record involves several processes which shape the extent of material contained within. This also introduces inconsistencies in how the photographs and accompanying information is presented to us. Archives can be structured by photographer, by agency or by publication, and each of those alters the characteristics of the material. Archives structured around the work of prominent photographers, such as that of the Magnum agency or Gilles Caron’s archive, are some of the most prominent sources of photographs. However, these represent only a small proportion of the total photographic record, and there are difficulties in accessing photography from other sources, not present in archival collections which have been assembled around such authorial figures. Alternatively,

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<sup>70</sup> Nora, ‘Between memory and History’, 19; André Bazin, ‘The Ontology of the Photographic Image’, trans. Hugh Gray, *Film Quarterly*, 13, 4, (1960), 7.

<sup>71</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, (London: Vintage, 2000, first printed Editions du Seuil, 1980), 96.

<sup>72</sup> Derek Sayer, ‘The Photograph: the still image’, In Sarah Barber, Corinna Peniston-Bird, (eds.), *History beyond the Text*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 63-85.

<sup>73</sup> Benjamin, ‘Little History of Photography’, in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008). 274-298.

there are collections assembled around publications which include a wider variety of images, including those that were not initially published. They also include photographers who were affiliated to organisations such as unions and political parties, which is especially pronounced in the case of the *L'Humanité* collections examined here. Again though, a filtering process is happening. The work of the photographers with neither professional success nor institutional affiliation is not preserved in a publicly available form. This thesis will range widely across the photographic records, but will focus on collections organised by both photographers, such as those at the BnF, Magnum, Roger-Viollet, and BDIC, as well as mediated photographs from magazines and newspaper archives (both mainstream and activist), and books and exhibitions.

Similar filtering effects can also be observed within collections. Archivists, and sometimes photographers themselves, will discard or remove photographs from collections, producing uncategorised 'killed' photographs or negatives.<sup>74</sup> Digitisation is another clear example of how new technologies have re-shaped photographic practices and records.<sup>75</sup> Only certain proportions of given collections will be digitised, and this varies dramatically depending on the available resources. Magnum have extensive online collections, whereas in the Kagan archive for example, relatively few images have been digitised. The decision of what is digitised is also subject to editorial decisions, just as in the initial archiving process. Copyright law also affects this process.<sup>76</sup> The segments of a collection that get digitised are often those that are already well known, or the most relevant to a contemporary event such as an anniversary. These decisions are also made regarding the public use of photographs. The material publicly displayed (publicity, exhibition, publishing) is a tiny fraction of the archived

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<sup>74</sup> Allen C. Benson, 'Killed negatives: the unseen photographic archives' *Archivaria*, 68, (2010), 1-37.

<sup>75</sup> Martin Lister, 'Photography in the age of electronic imaging', in Liz Wells (ed.), *Photography: A critical introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 305-346; Paul Conway, 'Modes of seeing: Digitized photographic archives and the experienced user', *The American Archivist*, 73, 2 (2010), 425-462.

<sup>76</sup> Emily Hudson and Andrew T. Kenyon, 'Digital Access: The Impact of Copyright on Digitisation Practices in Australian Museums, Galleries, Libraries, and Archives', *UNSW Law Journal*, 30, (2007), 12-52.



photography. There is also an issue that, in order to be replicated, eg in a book, the photograph must already have undergone some form of archiving process, will most likely be in a collection, and then subsequently will probably be within the subset of that collection which is best preserved, digitised, or already in a replicable format. i.e. the most recognisable photographs.

Catherine Clark has analysed Paris as a site of photographic practice and as the subject of photographic histories, tracing the emergence of the French capital as a 'cliché'.<sup>77</sup> French scholars examining the photography of May '68, particularly Audrey Leblanc, have placed a great deal of emphasis on the construction of 'iconic' photographs, highlighting how specific photographers and photographs became culturally significant.<sup>78</sup> This project aims to marry that approach with one that engages with the wider range of strike photographs, including many photographs that did not attain an 'iconic' status. Eric Margolis and Jeremy Rowe made a similar distinction between 'historic' and 'vernacular' photographs, and analysing this distinction enables us to question why replication privileges certain images over others, and thus to evaluate the process of reproduction.<sup>79</sup>

Art Historian Antigoni Memou analysed photographs of May '68 as part of a wider project on photography and social movements, comparing them to images of revolt in Mexico and the anti-globalization movements of the 1990s, and showing the importance of seeing these photographs as documenting social contestation.<sup>80</sup> This thesis will contextualise the photographic record of May '68 within both the broader wave of contestation in the 1960s and

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<sup>77</sup> Catherine E. Clark, "Capturing the moment, picturing history: photographs of the liberation of Paris." *The American Historical Review* 121, 3, (2016): 824-860; *Paris and the Cliché of History: The City and Photographs, 1860-1970*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>78</sup> Audrey Leblanc. 'The Color of May 1968: Paris Match and the Events of May and June 1968', *Etudes photographiques*, 26, (2010); 'Fixer l'événement', *Sociétés & Représentations*, 32, (2011), 57-76; 'Gilles Caron LE photographe de Mai 68, l'oeuvre d'une politique culturelle?', in Gil Bartholeyns, (ed.) *Politiques visuelles*, (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2016).

<sup>79</sup> Eric Margolis and Jeremy Rowe, 'Methodological approaches to disclosing historic photographs', In Eric Margolis, Luc Pauwels (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Visual of Research Methods* (2011), 337-358.

<sup>80</sup> Antigoni Memou, *Photography and Social Movements: From the Globalisation of the Movement to the Movement Against Globalisation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

70s, but will also make links to the struggles of the 1930s. Where Memou takes individual moments of unrest and compares their photography, this thesis aims to use those photographic records to chart a larger constellation of links and influences across the process of mobilisation and de-mobilisation. It will also look further back to older visual repertoires, such as the Paris Commune, and forward to the photographic ‘afterlives’ of selected images. Thus, it proposes not just cultural criticism of photography, but a history of the photographic representation of social contestation. Here Warburg’s stress on the ‘social mediation of images’, is a useful guide, aiming ‘to reconstruct the connection between artistic representations and the social experiences’ that produced them.<sup>81</sup>

John Berger argued that we should attempt to ‘incorporate photography into social and political memory’, rather than substituting the photograph itself for an awareness of the context and circumstances that produced it.<sup>82</sup> The aim of this thesis is to write social and labour history through photographs. Methodologically, it aims to provide a framework to analyse photographs historically, charting how they have been understood at various moments, and restoring their political content. This approach entails two key challenges. The first is to avoid an art-historical approach, particularly the limitations of a ‘canon’, which not only excludes significant proportions of the photography produced, but also through the prominence of a select few images, obscures that exclusion. Therefore, a major part of this project is an examination of the historical conditions that produce such a canon, and a consideration of how the interpretation and political impact of photographs is affected by their canonical status.

The second challenge is to maintain a historical viewpoint. Berger argued a collective must use the language of images to ‘situate itself in history’.<sup>83</sup> This means resisting a post-

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<sup>81</sup> Confino, ‘Collective memory and cultural history’, 1391.

<sup>82</sup> Berger, ‘Uses of Photography’, 58.

<sup>83</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 33.

structuralist vision that sees the meanings in photographs as infinitely malleable and therefore risks drifting into ahistorical interpretation.<sup>84</sup> Reading images as text is a process that defers meaning, avoiding any specific historical context.<sup>85</sup> Both the immediate context of production and the context of re-production constitute an entanglement of meanings, which need to be unpicked in a historical manner. To overcome these two dangers, this thesis draws on the work of Walter Benjamin and Berger to establish a framework that can address both the historical context of photographs as well as their replication and multiplicity.

Walter Benjamin examined the impact of photography at several points in his writings.<sup>86</sup> Crucially, Benjamin explores photography as a historically rooted process, producing specific meanings at specific times. In his account of Second Empire Paris, the *Capital of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, he shows how photography, alongside the arcade, exhibitions and Baudelaire, created a new way of seeing the world, a new mode of perception that was rooted in the historical, material and ideological frameworks of bourgeois reaction and emergent capitalism.<sup>87</sup> This link between the photographic possibilities of visualising the world, and the historical moment of their creation is especially relevant for contentious moments. In these moments, different possibilities of social organisation become possible, not in a utopian, carnivalesque sense of a temporary inversion of power, but as the governing hegemony breaks down; new routes out of the crisis appear.<sup>88</sup> Photography offers a means of envisioning this abstract possibility, again, not through a totalising utopian imaginary, but by documenting

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<sup>84</sup> Sarah Edge, 'Photography and Poststructuralism: The Indexical and Iconic Sign System', in Benoît Dillet, Iain MacKenzie and Robert Porter, (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism* (2013), 318.

<sup>85</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Copy, archive, signature: a conversation on photography*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

<sup>86</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Little History of Photography', in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 274-298; Walter Benjamin, 'Review of Freund's Photographie en France au dix-neuvième siècle', in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and other writings on Media*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 2008), 312-314.

<sup>87</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Paris, Capital of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century', in *The Arcades Project*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>88</sup> Antonio Gramsci, 'State and Civil Society', *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 445-557.

social reality. The photographs in question here offer fragmentary glimpses of the actions of people not going to work, demonstrating, or building a barricade. All are captured by the camera and so become part of a larger counter-hegemonic representation of social contestation.

Returning to Benjamin, we can consider how these fragmentary snapshots might generate new perspectives on the past. Benjamin's work on temporality and the engagement with a fragmentary and non-linear past, notably the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, has further relevance in an account of how photography becomes part of the entangled histories of these movements. He argues for a conception of the past as present, not statically, but 'flashing up in moments of danger'.<sup>89</sup> Waves of social contestation are exemplary 'moments of danger', both for the threatened old order, but also for strikers and protestors risking their livelihoods and safety for a potentially different future. Photographs offer a means of analysing how the visualisation of strike action re-appeared at other contentious moments.

Structuring the comparison around the strikes as moments of social contestation follows from the approach used to study the '68 years', broadening out the focus beyond just strike action to include its pre-histories and legacies. But it also allows us to consider concurrent forms of unrest alongside the labour disputes, such as the student movement in 1968, and electoral politics in 1936. Yet retaining a focus on the 'moments' can also enable us to chart the specific context that photographs were produced in. Photographs are historically situated documents, not atemporal images. They are not just a link between a past moment of capture and their interpretation in the present but are also shaped by the intervening time. This encompasses changes in visual culture and political narratives, as well as processes of archiving and display. But the temporal dislocation they represent is important. Benjamin's conception of the past 'flashing up at moments of danger', especially in the revolutionary

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<sup>89</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in S. E. Bronner and D. M. Kellner, (Eds.), *Critical Theory and Society. A Reader*, (New York/London: Routledge, 1989), 255-263.

now-time, offers a way of seeing photographs in the context of moments of social contestation.<sup>90</sup> Especially within French History, which has often been characterised as a series of revolutionary moments, this process is important.<sup>91</sup> Benjamin follows in a Marxist tradition which emphasises continuities between apparently distinct revolutionary episodes. Marx's metaphor of an 'old mole' from the *18<sup>th</sup> Brumaire*, conveys this sometimes subterranean linkage.<sup>92</sup> Daniel Bensaïd again returns to it as a means of conceptualising linked crises.<sup>93</sup> The entangled photographic records offer a means of making the work of the mole visible.

Illustrating Benjamin's notion of a past-present entanglement, photographer Jean-Claude Seine remarked that when looking at his photographs of striking workers in May '68, his daughter told him 'Papa, tu as réussi à faire en 68 des photos de 36!' (Dad, you managed to make pictures of 36 in 68!).<sup>94</sup> Likewise, David Harvey identifies a 'cultural mass' drawing on working class traditions of the 1930s during the 1960s.<sup>95</sup> This entanglement re-contextualised images of the strike, but unlike the photographs of student unrest, evocations of 1936 did not become part of the popular image of '1968'. The images following the tradition of the 1930s then subsequently appear anachronistic because the constellation of social forces and actors that made them relevant disintegrated. The dismantled tradition they were a part of left the photographs as part of a 'cancelled future'.<sup>96</sup> Particular images, such as

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<sup>90</sup> Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'.

<sup>91</sup> Pierre Laborie, *Le chagrin et le venin, Occupation, Résistance, Idées reçues*, (Paris: Bayard, 2011), 1.

<sup>92</sup> Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. xi, 185.

<sup>93</sup> Daniel Bensaïd, 'Revolutions: Great and Still and Silent', in *History and Revolution: Refuting Revisionism*, Mike Haynes and Jim Wolfreys, (eds.), (London: Verso, 2007), 202-216.

<sup>94</sup> Lionel Bourg, Jean-Claude Seine, *Un Proletariat Rêvé: Photographies de Jean-Claude Seine*, (Genouilleux: Éditions La passe du vent, 2010).

<sup>95</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Historical Change*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 346-349.

<sup>96</sup> Mark Fisher borrowed the phrase from Franco Berardi to argue that from the 1980s, neo-liberal societies experienced the 'slow cancellation of the future' as cultural paucity deprived people of the ability to imagine an alternative to the present order. This is in many ways the apotheosis of a longer process of right-wing fightback to the idea of an alternatively structured society traceable to '1968'.

Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of my life: Writings on depression, hauntology and lost futures*. (John Hunt Publishing, 2014.); Franco Berardi, *After the future*. (AK Press, 2011), 13.

Seine's, are intelligible within specific historical moments. These contexts no longer exist. Therefore, social history, as well as art history, is required to understand their historical, rather than just aesthetic meanings. The entanglement between 1968 and 1936 is one such context. Photographs of 1936 acquired resonance in 1968, and so produced more photographs that in turn can only be properly understood in this light.

This thesis must also address how the photographic record of both movements appear in the present. 1968 was far more dominant in the media through its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018 compared to the 80<sup>th</sup> of the Popular Front two years prior. But beyond these events (examined in Chapter 7), 68 forms a more recognisable part of cultural background noise. Outside of specific reference points (congee payees, festive occupations) examined in later chapters, the Popular Front does not have that kind of ubiquitous familiarity and is now passing rapidly outside living memory. Negotiating this disparity in visibility means recognising how it shapes a comparison between the photographic records of the two movements. To a certain extent, this thesis replicates this imbalance, with more attention devoted to 1968. But in order to address the contemporary reception of these linked bodies of work this is necessary. Looking back at 1936, we can see how it is refracted through 1968. 1936 does appear within images of 1968, as summarised in the Seine quote, and this can profoundly alter how we view the movements.<sup>97</sup> This process 'refracts' the image 1936, bends its photographic record to those subjects which are replicated in 1968. So, this refraction is in part due to the chronology, of 68 both following 36 and being closer to the present. But is also in part a conscious construction. This thesis invokes the photography of 1936 to highlight the labour dimension of 1968 in the photographic record. This comparison also draws out the longer continuities and pre-history of the '68 years.

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<sup>97</sup> Bourg, Seine, *Un Proletariat Révé.*

This relationship does not occur in a vacuum. Photographs of these movements are being constantly used, replicated, and re-interpreted. We must first do the work of de-mystification, not to return to an unmediated past, but to be conscious of the specifics of its mediation. Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility* directly addresses how photography constitutes a process of reproduction that stands against an earlier 'auratic' form of art.<sup>98</sup> By standing against mystification, Benjamin argues that the challenge is to politicise art, to stand against Fascism's aestheticizing politics. Benjamin saw the dismantling of aura as inherent to the material technologies of photographic reproduction, but replication also has the potential to further obscure the event photographed. This is not the aura of a single, unique original, but a single photographic image endlessly replicated to the exclusion of others. Such an image becomes an 'iconic' photograph, shorthand for its subject, and metonymic for an entire event. The implication of Benjamin's aura on photography then is that we must move beyond photographers associated with such 'iconic' 'canonical' images and engage with the wider mass of photographs produced, and explore the construction of a canon as a historical process in its own right.

Berger expanded Benjamin's ideas on photography in the context of the 1960s. Downstream of *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproduction*, *Ways of Seeing* presents Benjamin's arguments in a new context of television and advertising.<sup>99</sup> The essay *Antiquarian and Revolutionary* directly addresses Benjamin's work, highlighting his 'hypersensitivity to the dimension of time'.<sup>100</sup> Berger also argues that the meaning of a photograph is not a result of its formal composition, but its play with time. It asserts the significance of a particular moment as well as subject, and amplifies the fundamental

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<sup>98</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, Thomas Y. Levin (eds.), Edmund Jephcott (trans.), (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 19-56.

<sup>99</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*.

<sup>100</sup> John Berger, 'Walter Benjamin: Antiquarian and Revolutionary' in *Landscapes: John Berger on Art* (London, New York: Verso, 2016), 54- 59.

message: *'I have decided that seeing this is worth recording'*.<sup>101</sup> There is an important distinction here between Berger's formulation and Barthes' *'Ça-a-été'*.<sup>102</sup> Whereas Barthes gives a passive absolute, Berger remains alert to both the agency of the photographer and the material process of recording.

Another essay, 'Appearances' explores how combining photographs can construct a visual argument beyond their individual content, as in Berger's collaboration with photographer Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man*, which uses Mohr's photographs as an integral part of the text and displays an alternative relation for politics and photography.<sup>103</sup> *A Seventh Man* adopts this format to address migrant labour in Europe, using the documentary value of the image to re-enforce the moral claims of the text. However, the book also makes wider claims about the relationship between documentary photography and political engagement. This is only possible from a standpoint that emphasises the documentary value of the photograph; it cannot flow from the post-structuralist free-floating signifier. The signifier relates to a specific signified – a human subject – whose claim to dignity and recognition are articulated through the picture. Howard Becker argues the use of photography in *A Seventh Man* is a form of 'specified generalisations', evidencing broader arguments without losing the specific embodiment of these within individual people, places, and events.<sup>104</sup>

The value of individual experience is a central theme in Berger's work, but not in a sentimental frame, and always with an eye on the structures that shape and determine that experience. Another example is the *Into Our Labours* trilogy, that explores the peasant experience in the twentieth century.<sup>105</sup> Bruce Robbins argues this humanist valorisation of

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<sup>101</sup> John Berger. *Understanding a photograph*, (London: Penguin, 2013).

<sup>102</sup> Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 96.

<sup>103</sup> John Berger, 'Appearances', in John Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (New York: Vintage, 1995) 81-129; Jean Mohr and John Berger, *A Seventh Man*, (London: Penguin, 1977).

<sup>104</sup> Howard S. Becker "Visual evidence: A Seventh Man, the specified generalization, and the work of the reader." *visual studies* 17, 1 (2002): 3-11.

<sup>105</sup> John Berger, *Pig Earth*, (New York: Pantheon, 1988); *Once in Europa*, (New York: Pantheon, 1987); *Lilac and Flag*, (New York: Pantheon, 1990).



‘experience’ fits into a wider divide in Marxist criticism of the 1970s. Berger shared this positive emphasis on ‘experience’ with both E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams. Perry Anderson identified the double nature of experience as both a quotidian illusion (following Althusser) and a conscious learning (according to Thompson).<sup>106</sup> In the case of Benjamin, Robbins framed this ‘retreat into experience’ as a response to the limitations of his time, caught between Stalinism and social democracy.<sup>107</sup> For Berger, it expanded, partly due to the interpellation of his own ‘international’ experience, a ‘structurally cosmopolitan’ orientation following the transnational nature of the art field.<sup>108</sup> Berger’s validation of ‘experience’ is not a simple retreat into peasant localism, but an engagement with how even those apparently isolated communities experience the penetration of capitalism.

This perspective of following individual experience as part of larger historical structures can be carried over to the uses of photography, which is precisely what Berger and Mohr do in *A Seventh Man*. Robbins argues that both Benjamin and Berger perceive ‘a threat to "experience" in the free-floating polysignification of the photograph’, but this is only true if we take the photograph as an image, rather than a historical artefact.<sup>109</sup> Both Benjamin and Berger demonstrate that by approaching photographs historically, we can see both how they record the past, and how they construct an image of it. We cannot understand the historical role of photography if we detach the practice of photography from the images it produces.

Likewise, a similar distinction has been established between ‘private’ and ‘public’ photographs. The former relates to Bourdieusian middle-brow snapshots, where the practice is sociologically important, but the images themselves, like Barthes’s winter garden photograph, are inaccessible.<sup>110</sup> The latter refers to hyper-referential mediated icons. The first are invisible,

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<sup>106</sup> Bruce Robbins, ‘Feeling Global: Experience and John Berger’, *Boundary*, 2 (1982): 291-308.

<sup>107</sup> Robbins, ‘Feeling Global’, 296-297.

<sup>108</sup> Robbins, ‘Feeling Global’, 296.

<sup>109</sup> Robbins, ‘Feeling Global’, 299.

<sup>110</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Shaun Whiteside. *Photography: A middle-brow art*. (Stanford University Press, 1996), Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, (London: Vintage, 2000, first printed Editions du Seuil, 1980).

save chance archiving, the second unavoidable. In his response to Susan Sontag's *On Photography*, Berger distinguishes between the photographer's orientation as a 'reporter to the rest of the world' and as a 'recorder for those involved'.<sup>111</sup> The former produces the objectifying gaze Sontag was so critical of, but the latter respects the ambiguities and non-linear nature of memory, and produces a context that renders the experience it captures intelligible. Berger argued that the distinction between the private and the public uses of photography could be transcended 'if the past becomes an integral part of the process of people making their own history', producing a 'living context' which recognises that photographs continue in time, are not 'arrested moments'.<sup>112</sup> In this analysis of strike photographs, approaching them not just as records of the past, but also as elements in its ongoing construction, Berger's ideal will provide a guiding aim for this thesis.

Comparative approaches to history have been a rich source of methodological innovations.<sup>113</sup> While there may be subtle differences between the terms *Histoire croisée*, 'Entangled History' and *Verflechtungsgeschichte* or *Beziehungsgeschichte*, these approaches all share common concerns with challenging the assumptions of straightforward comparison.<sup>114</sup> Entangled history emerged as an attempt to both overcome methodological nationalism and consider both cultural transfers and comparative models together.<sup>115</sup> Closely linked to the introduction of postcolonial concepts to new imperial histories, entangled history's influence has also spread into conceptual history and comparative literature.<sup>116</sup> It

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<sup>111</sup> John Berger, 'Uses of Photography', *About Looking*, (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, 1980), 58; Susan Sontag, *On photography*, (London: Penguin, 1977).

<sup>112</sup> Berger, 'Uses of Photography', 57.

<sup>113</sup> Stephen Smith, *Revolution and the people in Russia and China: A comparative history*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 8-9.

<sup>114</sup> Jürgen Kocka, 'Comparison and beyond', *History and theory*, 42, 1 (2003), 42.

<sup>115</sup> Sapiro, Gisèle. 'Comparativism, transfers, entangled history: sociological perspectives on literature', *A Companion to Comparative Literature* (2011), 226.

<sup>116</sup> Kathleen Wilson, (ed.) *A New Imperial History: culture, identity and modernity in Britain and the empire, 1660-1840*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Margrit Pernau, 'Whither Conceptual History?: From National to Entangled Histories', *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 7, 1 (2012), 1-11; Sapiro, 'Comparativism, transfers, entangled history'.

stresses that the objects of comparison cannot be considered separate from the encounters between them, and that these encounters help constitute the objects of study.

Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann's concept of *histoire croisée* emphasises the constructed nature of objects of comparison using spatial metaphors. Meanings are generated, rather than uncovered, through 'crossings', demanding a degree of reflexivity in analysis.<sup>117</sup> This approach argues that when particular areas of historical inquiry are viewed together, the process reflexively affect the kinds of questions and comparisons being made. It aims to go beyond a direct comparison, which in this case would simply identify the commonalities and differences in the photographic record of each movement, but to use the two cases in order to thematically explore photographic practice and representation at moments of labour unrest and social contestation.

This focus provides a novel way of conceptualising both the links, transfers and parallels in historical fields, but also the process of comparison itself. Similar themes of reflexivity and relationality have been a core part of theories of photography. Those following in the tradition of Walter Benjamin have emphasised the reproducible, socially constructed nature of the photograph, where context determines meaning.<sup>118</sup> However, others such as Bazin and Barthes followed a different line, privileging the visual image as a link back to the past and the domain of memory.<sup>119</sup> These sometimes contradictory qualities of linkage and contextual construction are what make *histoire croisée* a useful approach for analysing

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<sup>117</sup> Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison', 30-50.

<sup>118</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Little History of Photography', in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 274-298; *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, Thomas Y. Levin (eds.), Edmund Jephcott (trans.), (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 19-56.

<sup>119</sup> André Bazin, 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image', trans. Hugh Gray, *Film Quarterly*, 13, 4, (1960), 4-9; Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, (London: Vintage, 2000, first printed Editions du Seuil, 1980).

photography. Mapping out this shared course introduces a critical awareness of the uses of photography as a medium for analysing entangled comparisons.

As a starting point, photographs can function as a vector for cultural transfers and other entanglements, as images rapidly cross boundaries in an increasingly mediated world.<sup>120</sup> The capacity of photography to facilitate transfers is evident in their visual nature. Iconic photographs, for example, are frequently categorised as universal, potentially bypassing language barriers; however, their dependence on context and frames of reference must always be considered. The transnational nature of many of the most significant photo-agencies, such as Magnum, throws up entanglements. As transnational actors, photojournalists moved from covering the Popular Front in France to the Spanish Civil War or from documenting Parisian Maoists to Cultural Revolution China. Taking a collective biographical approach to photographers establishes entanglements not just on a personal level, but also in the ideas and itineraries motivating the choice of assignments and subjects.<sup>121</sup> Gisèle Sapiro offers one model for this kind of approach, notably demonstrating how an individual's cultural production relates to their political responses to a given historical moment.<sup>122</sup>

Photography already has an established relationship to the field of memory, functioning as a tool of commemoration, nostalgia or a *lieu de mémoire*.<sup>123</sup> Oral history has turned to photography as a means of facilitating recall and exploring an individual's

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<sup>120</sup> Jocelyne Dudding, 'Photographs of Maori as cultural artefacts and their positioning within the museum', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 15, (2003) 8-18; Patrick Vauday, 'Photography from West to East: clichéd image exchange and problems of identity', *Diogenes* 49, 193 (2002), 47-56.

<sup>121</sup> Conceptual history has been another field to successfully adapt approaches derived from *Histoire Croisée*, see Jani Marjanen, 'Undermining methodological nationalism: *Histoire croisée* of Concepts as Transnational History' in Mathias Albert, Gesa Bluhm, Jan Helmig, Andreas Leutzsch, Jochen Walter (eds.), *Transnational Political Spaces: Agents - Structures - Encounters*, (Frankfurt, New York: Campus Verlag, 2009), 239-263.

<sup>122</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, *The French Writers' War: 1940-1953*, Translated by Vanessa Doriott Anderson and Dorrit Cohn (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), originally published as *La guerre des écrivains*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1999; 'Comparativism, transfers, entangled history: sociological perspectives on literature', In *A Companion to Comparative Literature*, Ali Behdad, Dominic Thomas, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 225-236.

<sup>123</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' *Representations*, 26, *Memory and Counter-Memory* (1989), 7-8.

relationship to their pasts.<sup>124</sup> More recent developments in the burgeoning field of memory studies have also adopted an explicitly ‘entangled’ perspective in the form of a concern with plurality and dynamism; acts of remembering can be interpreted within multiple frames, and thus analysed in terms of multiple perspectives.<sup>125</sup> They also explicitly derived a focus on asymmetries and cross-referential mnemonic practices from Werner and Zimmermann’s work.<sup>126</sup>

Viewing photography as an entanglement in this way can bring other issues into focus. Both *Histoire Croisée* and the literature on photography share a set of concerns relating to the framing and construction of their subjects of study. For photography, the framing and presentation of their subject convey large amounts of information. The wider social framing has taken on increasing importance as technical shifts and the rapid proliferation of images has shaken faith in the photograph as an uncomplicated, objective piece of evidence. More recently, a whole field of media studies addressing these issues has developed under the banner of ‘framing theory’.<sup>127</sup> Issues of scale are also common ground; Werner and Zimmerman’s metaphor of ‘focal length’ referring to the process of choosing the parameters of study, reveals how the definition of a project’s scope is often conceived of in visual terms, as the project itself is envisioned.<sup>128</sup> Photographs themselves in some ways represent a micro-scale analysis, isolating single moments, scenes and settings. Yet these need to be integrated within the historical process, thus avoiding de-contextualisation and misrepresentation. When dealing with larger numbers of photographs, there are further difficulties – and dangers – in establishing generalities across a wider collection of individual moments. Analysis at a large scale is needed to discern representative conventions, whereas small scale examination is

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<sup>124</sup> Alexander Freund, and Alistair Thomson, eds. *Oral history and photography*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

<sup>125</sup> Gregor Feindt, Félix Krawatzek, Daniela Mehler, Friedemann Pestel, and Rieke Trimçev, ‘Entangled Memory: toward a third wave in memory studies’, *History and Theory*, 53, 1 (2014), 24-44.

<sup>126</sup> Feindt, Krawatzek, Mehler, Pestel and Trimçev, ‘Entangled Memory’, 31-35.

<sup>127</sup> Porismita Borah, ‘Conceptual issues in framing theory: A systematic examination of a decade's literature’, *Journal of communication*, 61, 2, (2011), 246-263.

<sup>128</sup> Werner and Zimmermann, ‘Beyond Comparison’, 43.

required to understand the variation and complexity within these patterns. This thesis will examine how, in the case of strike photography, those photographic moments come together to create an aggregate picture of larger waves of contestation.

The reflexivity displayed in choosing the appropriate scale for the topic of analysis is an integral part of an entangled approach. This involves an awareness of the position of the observer, and their relationship to the object of study. Comparison is traditionally constructed from a detached, external perspective, yet scholars are continually engaged with their subjects of study and must account for this.<sup>129</sup> There is a clear parallel with the role of photographer, idealised as an independent witness, yet inextricably part of the environment which they document. Using Henri Cartier Bresson as his example, Jean-Pierre Montier argues that the photojournalist blended the conventions of travel reportage with a claim to objectivity.<sup>130</sup> This tendency for photographs to be seen as objective testimony has a long history developing from their referentiality and use as evidence.<sup>131</sup> Yet they must be viewed as historically constructed objects, and doubly so, as both the taking of the photograph, and then its presentation and reception carry their own contexts. As with *histoire croisée*, this context is an integral part of the content of analysis, and the image itself provides an entanglement between the two.<sup>132</sup> Continuities or changes can be highlighted through the interpretation of a single visual element through multiple reproductions.

Multiple linkages can also derive from the replication of a single image in many new contexts, tracing its appearances across time and space. Benjamin's idea of 'technological reproducibility' is especially relevant here, exploring how reproduction demystifies the 'aura'

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<sup>129</sup> Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison', 33-34.

<sup>130</sup> Jean-Pierre Montier, 'Henri Cartier-Bresson, 'Public Intellectual'?' *Études photographiques*, 25, (2010), 146-179.

<sup>131</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), 66-102.

<sup>132</sup> Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison', 47.

of an individual artwork, and thus its claim to authenticity.<sup>133</sup> Photographs referring to other photographs can create multiple intercrossings, framing one subject in terms associated with another. This can reinforce existing tropes and build conventions (for example how practices such as ‘portrait photography’, or ‘street photography’ become codified), or defamiliarise through the careful breaking of such conventions. For Benjamin, the power of photography does not lie in its ‘capitulation to fashion’, which can produce beauty in ‘any soup can’ but without meaning on a human level. Rather, it lies in the use of the camera to bypass cliché and ‘paralyse associative mechanisms in the beholder’.<sup>134</sup> Benjamin advocates this as surrealist-inspired ‘constructive’ photography, rather than mere reproduction. Even when it is deliberately refusing existing associations, photography is entwined with wider processes, and especially with the observer’s own perception; indeed, it privileges this relationship above all else.

*Histoire Croisée* thus offers a framework that integrates an awareness of how context, framing and historicity shape meanings whilst retaining a powerful relationship to the past evoked by photography’s links to memory and indexicality. Some of these concepts will be returned to in Chapter 6, on Intellectuals, Photography, and “68 thought”, which examines the relationship between photography and the (assumed) intellectual heritage of 1968, exploring the entanglements between the theorisations of image and the debates over the ‘legacy’ or ‘heritage’ of May ‘68. This chapter addresses how the intellectual heritage of the 1960s (or its subsequent construction) has approached photography, and considers how this has affected the methodology employed in this thesis.

## Sources and Structure

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<sup>133</sup> Benjamin, ‘Little History of Photography’; *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, 19-56.

<sup>134</sup> Benjamin, ‘Little History of Photography’, 293-295.

The photographic record of these two strike movements is both substantial and fragmented. In terms of digitised images whilst some agencies such as Magnum have searchable collections, other sources are without substantiating documentation, lacking an accessible catalogue, search function or important metadata. There are also many pages across the internet that replicate uncategorised or untraceable images. With regard to analogue images, archival research simultaneously revealed both rich collections, but also the difficulties of cataloguing them. Entering the Kagan Archives at the *Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine* (BDIC, now *La Contemporaine*) to be confronted with boxes of unsorted negatives and discovering the scale of photography held at the *Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis* were both exciting and daunting in equal measure.

Furthermore, different classificatory regimes apply to photographic collections. Some organisations, such as Magnum or the *Bibliothèque Nationale* sort by photographers, whereas other archives often sort by date or location, then sometimes by photographers. Anonymous material, or that organised via publications, is either unclassified, or uses different rubrics again. Exhibitions, publications and other collections of photographs ‘in use’ rather than preserved as singular images further complicate matters. In many cases this contextual information is as significant as the photographs themselves. For example, contact sheets or the blurbs from photo-agencies are particularly revealing about the process of constructing a singular photograph. Archival process itself often contributes to the isolation of images from the contexts of their production. In some cases, contact sheets and blurbs are preserved, if only sporadically; in others, photographs are collected in boxes, or mounted in large format photobooks. The relative prominence of individual photographers in the organisation of collection of photographs is one way strike photography is divided into a canonised corpus of ‘historic’ or ‘iconic’ images, and a mass of anonymous, unknown, persona photographs or forgotten reportage. This reflects wider patterns of the historicisation of these movements in



privileging some viewpoints over others. These issues have re-oriented the research focus in productive ways, allowing the collapsing of distinctions between professional and amateur photography and focusing on the production, deployment and interpretation of strike photographs. It examines how photographers created meanings around the strikes, how these were conveyed in print, and how they have been affected by commemoration. This qualitative approach engages with both the diversity of the photographic material available, as well as the new perspectives of recent historiography.

Part one of the thesis focuses in on the concrete details of strike photography, analysing framings, locations and certain photographers' work at specific moments in these entangled waves of social contestation. It explores how photography can inform our understanding of historically relevant aspects of the strikes, such as policing, spaces of labour, and biographies of photographers or their subjects in the strike movements.

Chapter 1 uses a granular analysis of the initial publication, dissemination, and deployment of photographs, to examine how photography responded to rapidly changing events. Using framing theory, and concepts derived from social movement theory, it asks whether the presentation of social conflict within strike images had a reciprocal relationship to their context, with images used to drive and shape the forms of protest action. It analyses how photographs presented conflict between strikers or demonstrators and the police, and following Simon Dell, whose interests these images served.

Chapter 2 examines photographs of factory occupations, an aspect of strike photography which shows some of the strongest links between the two movements. It explores the significance of the factory as a site of strike photography, and how participants interact with the camera to articulate their protest. It argues that there was a specific repertoire of images that strikers used in both 1936 and 1968, and that this has not yet received scholarly attention.

In Chapter 3, specific examples are analysed to examine the variety in strike photographers' aims, backgrounds, and purposes. This chapter also deals with the establishment of 'canonical' figures considering the historical circumstances that have produced them, and how subsequent readings of their work have altered the dominant narratives of the photographic record. It argues what we now perceive as the most recognisable images of 1936 and 1968 owe their prominence to retrospective framings.

The second part of the thesis then zooms out to address the wider patterns of mediation, dissemination, and re-contextualisation which have shaped the reception of strike photography. Taking the ideas of the '68 years' and applying a similarly wide lens across both strike waves, it examines the connections between the 1930s and the 1960s, and from both movements to the present. It also addresses the ways in which intellectual traditions that claim an origin in 1968 have shaped how we approach photography as a historical source. Chapter 4 tackles the theme of 'generation' that is especially prominent in the historiography of May '68, and looks at how photographs either conform to or challenge such a view of the strike movement. It analyses why participants are framed as part of cohorts, and how these are characterised, and compares how the photography of 1936 dealt with similar themes. It also builds on analysis from Chapter 3 to explore commonalities in the visual repertoire of the photographs.

Chapter 5 engages with two significant historiographical developments in the study of '68 years' and labour history more broadly. It demonstrates how photography relates to transnational activism and explores how the medium interacts with a broadened chronology, even going beyond the '68 years' in its repertoire of visual references. These two forms of reference, geographic and temporal, situate the photography of both movements in larger contexts, but also offer insight into how participants related their actions to broader frameworks of solidarity and revolutionary aspirations.

Chapter 6, ‘Intellectuals, Photography, and “68 thought”’, examines the relationship between photography and the (assumed) intellectual heritage of 1968, exploring the entanglements between the theorisations of image and the debates over the ‘legacy’ or ‘heritage’ of May ‘68. It argues that poststructuralist approaches to images either failed to engage with the historical context of photographs, or else produced a simplistic relationship between power and images that failed to account for the agency of photographer. It returns to Walter Benjamin and John Berger as inspirations for an alternative approach that takes into account the social context of photographic production.

As previously mentioned, a series of exhibitions that contained photography of both strike movements were fortuitously held during the period of researching this thesis. As well as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibitions of May ‘68 in 2018, 2016 saw the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Popular Front. This was accompanied by a major photographic exhibition at the Mairie de Paris curated by Francois Denoyelle, as well as a smaller exhibition in the suburb of Montreuil hosted by the *Musée de l’Histoire Vivante*. In 2018, the Bibliothèque Nationale hosted an exhibition specifically on the photography of May ’68, and visual culture was well represented in other exhibitions. Chapter 7 explores the contemporary use and display of photographs from both movements in these exhibitions in more detail, in order to bring together the issues explored in the second half of the thesis. It will assess whether the most recent waves of commemoration follow the same conventions identified elsewhere in the thesis, or if they mark a shift in the way strike photographs are presented.



# Chapter 1. Conflict and Harmony in Strike Photography

This chapter explores how photography represented these strike movements as ruptures with the status quo and how it helped define their exceptional status. It contrasts how photographic representation have either heightened a sense of conflict or been used to foreclose the disruptive potential of strike action. May '68 was the most profound moment of industrial conflict and protest since the end of the Second World War. Yet it shares with 1936 a persistent characterisation as a 'festival'. This attitude stretches from both contemporary accounts to more recent historiography, and from those sympathetic to the movement to its outright detractors.<sup>1</sup> Gerd-Rainer Horn draws explicit parallels between 1968 and 'the heady spring and early summer of 1936'.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will assess how photography contributed to the festive characterisation of both movements, but will also analyse how the medium depicts the serious confrontations which undercut this representation. Militant Pierre Goldman recalled disappointment that when De Gaulle returned at the end of May, 'The festival was over.'<sup>3</sup> Other activists responded to the end of the strike with a commitment to ongoing, sometimes violent struggle, in part because of the state violence they had witnessed.<sup>4</sup> This dichotomy of 'war or festival' obscures the actual pattern of social conflict. Whilst state violence did not reach the levels other contemporary movements faced, activists did face beatings, deportation and imprisonment. Nick Hewlett approximates seven deaths.<sup>5</sup> Kristin Ross's arguments about *matraquage*, highlight contemporary understandings, but there is a

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Aron, *the Elusive Revolution: Anatomy of a Student Revolt*, Trans. Gordon Clough, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969); Michael Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution; Students and Workers in 1968*, (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2004); Aristide R. Zolberg, 'Moments of Madness', *Politics & Society*, 2, 2 (1972), 183-207.

<sup>2</sup> Gerd-Rainer Horn, "1968: A Social Movement Sui Generis." In Stefan Berger, Holger Nehring (eds.), *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 51

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Goldman, *Souvenirs obscurs d'un Juif polonais né en France*. (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 71

<sup>4</sup> Robert Gildea, 'Utopia and conflict in the oral testimonies of French 1968 activists', *Memory studies* 6, 1 (2013), 43-44.

<sup>5</sup> Nick Hewlett, 'Disorder, les forces de l'ordre and the re-ordering of capitalism in May-June 1968', *Modern & Contemporary France* 26, 2 (2018), 116.

wider visual repertoire to interrogate.<sup>6</sup> Photography was one of the ways violent confrontation was recognised and communicated and these depictions shaped the course of mobilisation. This was a process also present in the 1930s, although here images of violence and conflict were used to both mobilise and de-mobilise. As in 1968, harmony, not conflict, characterises contemporary coverage and this has deeply coloured the iconic representations of the strike.<sup>7</sup> However, violence is present, but displaced in the photographic record. Primarily it is represented in images of the riots of 1934, which are presented as a violent rupture to which the Popular Front was a non-violent response. It is also present in the images of the repression of strikes in 1938, which failed to achieve the response of those two years prior. The festive and nationalist depictions of the 1936 strikes obscure their potential for broader social contestation, and the violent responses to the strikes of 1938 are rendered invisible in contemporary recollections of the Popular Front. In the case of both movements then, photography offers an opportunity to see how social contestation can be characterised in sometimes conflicting ways at different moments within disputes.

### **Photographing Social Contestation**

We must show awareness of the initial publication, dissemination, and deployment of these photographs. Photographs of an ongoing event, such as a strike, have a reciprocal relationship to their context. They are an attempt to capture a specific vision of the moment, and to then distribute that image to help make events clearer, more explicable, and present them within a certain frame. Yet photographs are also responding to other images and depictions of events, as photographers make choices about what images will compliment, change or challenge the media discourses of that moment. Even mainstream press coverage

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<sup>6</sup> Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Simon Dell, *The image of the Popular Front: the masses and the media in interwar France*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

provides a way for demonstrators to recognise themselves and their struggle and give it the validation derived from recognition by wider society. In her experience of a major Worker-Student Assembly demonstration in Turin on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1969, Luisa Passerini reflected that ‘with their full page photographs, the next day’s newspapers confirmed our impression that we were shaking up the system of power.’<sup>8</sup>

The ability of photographs to impinge upon news cycle, creating and shaping framings that respond dynamically to events depends on the rapid collection, evaluation, and reproduction of images. The value of immediacy in photography was an aspect that became increasingly important with technological developments in the medium. The development of portable cameras preceded the 1930s, but the reduction in size in models such as the iconic 35 mm Leica gave photographers new opportunities to photograph subjects *in medias res*. Photographers such as Cartier-Bresson championed the role of the photographer in finding the images of most significance and the perfect formal composition to convey this.<sup>9</sup> Yet, perhaps just as important were developments in publishing, as the rapid rise and brief heyday of the photo-magazine offered new venues for publication and fuelled a huge demand for visual material.<sup>10</sup>

Shifts in publishing were also important in 1968. The emergence of colour photography offered a new choice for those photographers with the means to get expensive colour film, though many stuck with black and white. ‘May 1968 coincides with the beginnings of a period now idealised by professionals’.<sup>11</sup> In this professional self-idealisation, there are clear parallels with the 1930s. Audrey LeBlanc’s work on the photojournalism of 1968 explores the role of agencies such as *Gamma* in the production and dissemination of

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<sup>8</sup> Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy, 1968*, translated by Lisa Edelberg, (Hannover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 104.

<sup>9</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, ‘The decisive moment’, (*New York*, 1952).

<sup>10</sup> John Raeburn, *A Staggering Revolution: A Cultural History of Thirties Photography*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Audrey Leblanc, ‘Fixer l’événement: Le Mai 1968 du photojournalisme’ *Sociétés & Représentations*, 32, (2011), 58.

photographs of May.<sup>12</sup> Photojournalism in the 1960s distinguished itself from other kinds of news photography by the publication of extended stories, where the photograph no longer played a purely illustrative role, but was the story itself. There were clear differences between photographing for newspaper and magazine publications. The former needed things ‘hot’, often only single images, whereas the latter required a more connected series of images, and could afford the photographer time to develop a story that was both relevant to the immediate news, and had some lasting value.<sup>13</sup> Images themselves had to go through several hands, in a ‘process of negotiation between journalists, designers and iconographers’.<sup>14</sup> This somewhat undermines the notion of the autonomous photographer, and the single self-contained image that tells its own story. Photographs need to be historicised, as products of a ‘complex system’ that constructs its own representation.<sup>15</sup>

This also applies to the images produced in the context of activist groups or the environment of an occupation. In an interview, Philippe Vermès, a participant in the *Atelier Populaire*, notes the democratic nature of decision making ‘We have to not be Trotskyites, Situationists, anarchists . . . We’d vote—20 against, 30 for, or whatever . . . the next day the poster would come back to get approval, and we’d vote again.’<sup>16</sup> Vermès is referring to poster making, not photography, but again, the same process of editorialisation is present.

Through the repeated presence of specific frames such as police brutality or festive occupation, photographs can have an impact on the course of events. When studying this process as it applies to moments of social contestation, photographs link into the cycle of mobilisation and de-mobilisation.<sup>17</sup> Certain framings appear at specific moments, such as one

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<sup>12</sup> Leblanc, ‘Fixer l’événement’, 57-76.

<sup>13</sup> Leblanc, ‘Fixer l’événement’, 59.

<sup>14</sup> Marion Fontaine, ‘L’œil intelligent. Le choix des photos politiques dans *Le Nouvel Observateur*’, *Sociétés & Représentations*, 12, 2001, 312.

<sup>15</sup> Leblanc, ‘Fixer l’événement’, 76.

<sup>16</sup> William Bostwick, ‘An interview with Philippe Vermès, the Occupy artist of Paris ’68’, *Print*, 23 January 2012, <http://www.printmag.com/article/rock-versus-paper>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>17</sup> David S. Meyer, ‘Protest and political opportunities’ *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30, (2004), 125-145.



of increased participation, potentially preceding and encouraging it. Framings may shift once the scale of the strike's participants are evident, and alter again as the cycle ebbs and the return to work takes hold.<sup>18</sup>

A closely related question is how photographs reflect the nature of protest at given times within this process. This is not simply indicative of the repertoire of action (street demo, occupation, barricades), but the extent to which they are framed as inclusive or exclusive, pacific or violent, or successful or futile.<sup>19</sup> Examining strike photography within an immediate context can help assess how its use has shifted, to move away from later narratives use of images, and highlight how photographs constructed events themselves. Understanding this can then put later framings into a historical perspective, as part of a shifting process of visualisation.

### **A Crisis of Representation**

Both Jessica Wardhaugh and Simon Dell characterised France in the 1930s as facing a 'crisis of representation', where failing faith in the ability of Third Republic politicians, in a context of challenges to democracy across Europe, tested belief in the legislature's mandate.<sup>20</sup> The choice of the term 'representation' is significant here, as it corresponds to an inability to visualise effectively a version of 'the people' in harmony with the regime. This is Wardhaugh's broader argument, that the 1930s saw new attempts by both left and right to form such a vision. The Popular Front's cultural policies and attendant photography should be seen in that context.<sup>21</sup> Dell argues for a similar 'crisis of Jacobinism', as the Radicals were

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<sup>18</sup> John Kelly, *Rethinking industrial relations: Mobilisation, collectivism and long waves*, (London: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> Verta Taylor, and Nella Van Dyke. "'Get up, stand up": Tactical repertoires of social movements', in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, Hanspeter Kriesi (eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004): 262-293.

<sup>20</sup> Jessica Wardhaugh, *In Pursuit of the People: Political culture in France, 1934-39*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 22-55.

<sup>21</sup> Wardhaugh, *In Pursuit of the People*, 23.

unable to present themselves as the natural party of the republic in the wake of the riots of the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1934.

The riot images are chiefly crowd scenes and stone throwers, themes and framings common in coverage of social contestation. The images of the riot at Place de la Concorde are a touchstone of much coverage, offering a breach with the pre-existing order, and a clear rationale for the inception of the Popular Front. The images of violence mobilise key tropes of civil disobedience, including barricades, bandaged and bloody demonstrators, and brawls with police.<sup>22</sup> One of the most striking photographs is that of a figure hurling cobbles at police lines, which has come to be used as the defining image of the riots. (Figure 1.1).<sup>23</sup> The actions of the right in 1934 provide a founding moment for the Front whose closest parallel in May would perhaps be the clearing of the Sorbonne. In the 1930s, this large-scale, co-ordinated violence from the leagues provides an example for the visual rhetoric of the Popular Front to define itself against. This is one potential reason for the trope of harmony to emerge so strongly.

Dell's examination of the 6<sup>th</sup> February uses journalist Carlo Rim's account of a photojournalist's hat being shot as a means of situating photography in the midst of unfolding events. Rim's focus on photography indicates a newly widespread practice as 'photography has become anonymous', and how it has 'come down into the street'.<sup>24</sup> The photojournalist comes into street at the same time as it has become an arena of political contestation, both in the sense of the new 'mass' politics of both left and right, but also in a very physical sense as seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> February. Dell admits he is 'certainly not the first' to open an account of the

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<sup>22</sup> Collection Roger-Viollet, 'Violence 1934', <https://www.roger-viollet.fr/fr/s-1159257-violence-1934/page/1#nb-result>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>23</sup> Collection Roger-Viollet, Manifestation du 6 février 1934, à Paris, organisée par les ligues de droite. Affrontements place de la Concorde. RV-48774.

<sup>24</sup> Dell, *The image of the Popular Front*, 1-10; Carlo Rim, 'Grandeur et servitude du reporter photographe', *Marianne*, 70, 21 February 1934.

Popular Front with 6th February 1934.<sup>25</sup> The visualisations of the Popular Front are attempts to articulate hegemony in a rapidly changing political context. The evocation of harmony in the 1936 strike was successful, but contingent, and could not be statically maintained as tensions between parties and over Spain increased.<sup>26</sup> Dell argues the coherence of these frames was dependent on shifting political context.

### **The Harmonious Strike and Displaced Conflict**

Responding to political scientist Stanley Hoffmann's characterisation of the interwar years as a 'stalemate society', historians have increasingly emphasised the period following 1934 as a moment of systemic crisis for the Third Republic.<sup>27</sup> However, the strikes of 1936 are primarily seen through a frame of harmony.<sup>28</sup> In the Roger-Viollet archive, there are many photographs of dancing in occupied factories and workplaces.<sup>29</sup> Workers at the TSF perform acrobatic moves with a radio clearly visible in a trolley.<sup>30</sup> Biscuit makers dance at La Courneuve.<sup>31</sup> One photograph shows workers dancing with one another, with an accordion.<sup>32</sup> Whilst contemporary music was the subject of some debate in the cultural organs of the Popular Front, its appearance in the occupations is chiefly visible in the ubiquity of

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<sup>25</sup> Simon Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front: The Masses and The Media in Interwar France*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2

<sup>26</sup> Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front*, 151-153.

<sup>27</sup> Caroline Campbell, 'Gender and Politics in Interwar and Vichy France', *Contemporary European History*, 27, 3 (2018), 482-499; Stanley Hoffmann, 'Paradoxes of the French Political Community' in Jesse R. Pitts, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, François Goguel, Stanley Hoffmann, Charles P. Kindleberger, and Laurence Wylie (eds.), *In Search of France*, (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014, first published 1963), 1-32; Kevin Passmore, 'The French Third Republic: stalemate society or cradle of fascism?' *French History*, 7, 4. (1993): 417-449.

<sup>28</sup> Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front*, 100-117.

<sup>29</sup> Collection Roger-Viollet, 98998.

<sup>30</sup> *Extension de la grève dans les usines de la région parisienne. Au son de la TSF, les ouvriers s'amuse. Tirage gélatino-argentique*, 4 June 1936. Roger-Viollet, Fonds France-Soir. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, FSE-003161-009.

<sup>31</sup> *Popular Front, June 1936. Striking biscuit makers occupying the English factory Huntley and Micrometers at La Courneuve (France)*, Roger-Viollet, RV-339764

<sup>32</sup> *Au son de l'accordéon, les ouvriers dansent à Bécon-les-Bruyères (Hauts-de-Seine). Tirage gélatino-argentique*. 30 mai 1936. Roger-Viollet, Fonds France-Soir. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, FSE-003160-002.

accordions, and occasionally radios.<sup>33</sup> In the film *Si j'étais le patron*, for which Jacques Prévert provided the dialogue, conditions are improved at a factory by allowing workers to have music, and their work becomes a dance.<sup>34</sup> This dancing also extended beyond occupations into public spaces, particularly into the summer, as the part of more organised festivities. A Capa photograph shows dancing in the street on Bastille Day.<sup>35</sup> Jackson characterises the photographs of dances as part of a 'prevalent atmosphere of "Joy"'.<sup>36</sup> Michael Seidman sees them as part of a resistance to work.<sup>37</sup> British examples show dance as an established component of explicitly leftist cultural organisation.<sup>38</sup> Yet Dell highlights the mediation of the dances, mentioning their reproduction in both Radical paper *L'Œuvre*, *L'Humanité* and *Le Peuple*.<sup>39</sup>

Images of dancing illustrate the need to present a harmonious atmosphere as endemic to the occupations, and certainly document the kind of pastimes that kept strikers entertained. Though it is difficult to assess how spontaneous these events were, other examples show more choreographed frivolity in the occupations. Whilst dances imply an atmosphere of light-hearted subversion, and a perhaps whimsical attitude, other photographs show the deliberate invocation of the carnivalesque. Cross-dressing forms a central part of a David Seymour photograph of workers dancing for the camera (Figure 1.2), and another Roger-Viollet image documents a burlesque complete with drum and clown uniforms.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Moore, Christopher Lee. 'Music in France and the popular front (1934-1938): Politics, aesthetics and reception' PhD diss., McGill University, 2006; "Socialist realism and the music of the French popular front." *The Journal of Musicology* 25, no. 4 (2008), 473-502.

<sup>34</sup> *Si j'étais le patron*, Richard Pottier, 1934.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Capa, *Bal de Rue le 14 Juillet 1936*, Magnum Photos, *Le front populaire des photographes*, (Editions Terrebleu, 2016), 143.

<sup>36</sup> Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934-38*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 96.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Seidman, 'Towards a History of Workers' Resistance to Work: Paris and Barcelona during the French Popular Front and the Spanish Revolution, 1936-38' *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, 2 (1988) 191-220.

<sup>38</sup> Stacey Prickett, "'The People's Dance: Workers, Politics and Movement in 1930s Britain', In *Dance History: Politics, Practices and Perspectives Conference Proceedings*, (2010) 71.

<sup>39</sup> Simon Dell, 'Festival and Revolution: the Popular Front in France and the press coverage of the strikes of 1936', *Art history* 23, 4, (2000), 599-621; *L'Œuvre*, 28 May 1936, 5; *Le Peuple*, 4 June 1936, 4.

<sup>40</sup> David Seymour, *des ouvriers se distraient pendant l'occupation de l'usine*, Magnum Photos, *Le front populaire des photographes*, (Editions Terrebleu, 2016), 100-101; *Fin du défilé burlesque dans la cour du grand*

Photographs of a gas works at Poitiers display carnivalesque scenes as workers enact a parodic procession, interring a collection of documents in a pile of coke.<sup>41</sup> Other images of the same occupation show elaborate costumes (including cross-dressing) and musical instruments.<sup>42</sup> This is alongside images of collective athleticism and more conventionally posed images; one shows a human pyramid and another a group shot of workers posing for the camera with raised fists.<sup>43</sup> Militancy is not entirely absent, and gestures such as the fist, or the presence of effigies formed part of the representation of the strike, but were not its defining characteristic.<sup>44</sup>

Photographs displaced conflict and violence into a longer cycle of social contestation, focused on 1934 and 1938. The strikes of 1938, far from reprising 1936's vision of unity, rapidly led to recriminations between Communists and Socialists.<sup>45</sup> This in turn hindered the production of a coherent visualisation, and Dell notes the absence of the 1938 strikes from press coverage. It is the deliberate depiction of open schools and functioning public services that make the front pages of *Le Matin*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Journal* and *Le Jour-L'Echo de Paris* in December 1938.<sup>46</sup>

Occupied by workers again, Billancourt was a key site of contestation. Its clearance by force in November 1938 was a clear marker of the 'decisive' defeat of the strike.<sup>47</sup> Workers arrested at Billancourt are photographed, not at the site of contestation in the factory, but

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*magasin des Trois-Quartiers. Tirage gélatino-argentique. Paris (IXème arr.)*, 12 juin 1936. Roger-Viollet, Fonds France-Soir. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, FSE-003161-002.

<sup>41</sup> Noël Gérôme, 'Images de l'occupation de l'usine à gaz de Poitiers', in Jean Bouvier (ed.), *La France en Mouvement: 1934-1938*, (Champ Vallon, 1986), 62-67.

<sup>42</sup> Gérôme, 'Images de l'occupation de l'usine à gaz de Poitiers', 65.

<sup>43</sup> Gérôme, 'Images de l'occupation de l'usine à gaz de Poitiers', 66-67.

<sup>44</sup> Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front*, 118.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Torigian, 'The end of the Popular Front: The Paris metal strike of spring 1938', *French History* 13, no. 4 (1999), 464-491.

<sup>46</sup> Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front*, 151.

<sup>47</sup> Martin Upchurch and Graham Taylor. *The crisis of social democratic trade unionism in Western Europe: The search for alternatives* (Routledge, 2016).

being processed in the police station.<sup>48</sup> The image appeared on the cover of on the cover of regional newspaper *Le Grand écho du Nord de la France* on the 26<sup>th</sup>, alongside an image of a crowd at the gates of Les Forges du Nord-Est near Valenciennes, leaving the factory.<sup>49</sup> This anonymous photograph shows a row of men in a nondescript room, with only the presence of a police officer hinting at the location. A couple of posters promote temperance and cleanliness in the workplace. However, the calendar reading November 24<sup>th</sup> reveals this image was taken the day a huge police operation cleared the factory.

The illustrated daily *Excelsior* used an image of workers arrested en masse on its front cover for the 25<sup>th</sup> November, with the claim that police evacuated ‘15,000’ workers with tear gas.<sup>50</sup> The exterior photograph simply shows a line of workers surrounded by police, but those inside show a gas grenade being thrown at the factory wall and an officer alongside a military van ‘wrecked’ by workers inside the factory.<sup>51</sup> The following days’ issue again shows striking workers cleared from their workplaces in the Nord department. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, photographs show a massed crowd of workers at a mine in Denain pushing back the police vans, but the front page is again a mass of *Gardes Mobiles* arresting them.<sup>52</sup> *Le Grand écho du Nord de la France* used similar photographs.<sup>53</sup> On the 27<sup>th</sup>, a huge crowd is shown massing at the gates of a factory in Anzin, the caption tells us they are ‘gathered to evacuate’.<sup>54</sup> These images of

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<sup>48</sup> *Protestors From Renault Arrested In Billancourt In 1938, FRANCE - NOVEMBER 25: Arrested workers at Billancourt's police station on November 25, 1938.* (Photo by Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images) <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/104406504>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>49</sup> *Le Grand écho du Nord de la France*, 26 November 1938, p1, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4144105s.item.r=%2725+November+1938%27>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>50</sup> *Excelsior* had been one of the first papers to extensively use photography, as early as the First World War, in order ‘to take advantage, for the benefit and pleasure of the general public, of the tremendous progress made over the past decade in the typography, photographic art and photoengraving industries’. Pierre Lafitte “Notre program”, *Excelsior*, Nov. 16, 1910, 1, p2; *Excelsior*, 25 November 1938, p1. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4611805n.item>, (last accessed 30/08/19); Thierry Gervais, ‘Photographies de presse?. Le journal L’Illustration à l’ère de la similigravure’, *Études photographiques* 16 (2005), 166-181; Jean-Noël Jeanneney and Jeanne Guérout, *Jours de guerre (1914-1918) : Les trésors des archives photographiques du journal Excelsior*, (Paris: Les arènes, 2013).

<sup>51</sup> *Excelsior*, 25 November 1938, p3.

<sup>52</sup> *Excelsior*, 26 November 1938, 1, 3 <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k46118062.item>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>53</sup> *Le Grand écho du Nord de la France*, 25 November 1938, 1, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4144104c/f1.image.r='25%20November%201938'>

<sup>54</sup> *Excelsior*, 27 November 1938, 1, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4611807g.item>

crowds are reminiscent of 1936, but the message is the reverse. The workers are not taking and occupying the factories but leaving them.

Photographs from the *Excelsior* archive document Billancourt itself on the 25th, showing police in the factory itself and standing by rifles (Figure 1.3).<sup>55</sup> Police talk over a barricade made out of barrels, and in another they almost directly recreate the images of workers from two years before, posing in massed ranks by a half built chassis.<sup>56</sup> The same framings that in the photographs from 1936 serve to assert workers control of the factory are here deployed by the police to construct a symbolic sense of ownership over the space of the factory.

In sharp contrast to the thronging crowds of occupiers in 1936, photographs of several factories present them as completely deserted.<sup>57</sup> In others, the only visible people are the police.<sup>58</sup> A couple of passers-by only serve to accentuate the emptiness of one image showing the windows of Billancourt put out by the strikers.<sup>59</sup> From the present day, these photographs prefigure the depictions of empty factories now associated with de-industrialisation.<sup>60</sup> One exception shows a crowd clustered round the entrance to a Citroën factory in Paris.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Grève aux usines Renault, gardes mobiles dans l'usine. Boulogne-Billancourt (Seine puis Hauts-de-Seine)*, 25 novembre 1938, *Excelsior* – L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86619-30.

<sup>56</sup> *Grève aux usines Renault, gardes mobiles dans l'usine. Boulogne-Billancourt (Seine puis Hauts-de-Seine)*, 25 novembre 1938, *Excelsior* – L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86619-29; *Grève aux usines Renault. Barrage. Boulogne-Billancourt (Seine puis Hauts-de-Seine)*, 25 novembre 1938, *Excelsior* – L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86620-6.

<sup>57</sup> *Grève générale. L'usine Renault est fermée. Boulogne-Billancourt (Seine puis Hauts-de-Seine)*, 30 novembre 1938, L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet 86620-30; *Grève aux usines Renault. Barrage. Boulogne-Billancourt (Seine puis Hauts-de-Seine)*, 25 novembre 1938, 86620-5;

*Grève générale. L'usine Liorée & Olivier fermée. Argenteuil (Val-d'Oise)*, 1er décembre 1938. Photographie du journal "Excelsior", *Excelsior* – L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86621-1;

<sup>58</sup> *Grève aux usines Renault, gardes mobiles dans l'usine. Boulogne-Billancourt (Seine puis Hauts-de-Seine)*, 25 novembre 1938, *Excelsior* – L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86620-3; 86620-4; *Grève générale. L'usine "La Fournaise". Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-denis)*, 1er décembre 1938, *Excelsior* – L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86620-31

<sup>59</sup> *Le Grand écho du Nord de la France*, 27 November 1938, 1,

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k41441066.item.r=%2725+November+1938%27>

<sup>60</sup> Tim Strangleman, "'Smokestack Nostalgia,' 'Ruin Porn' or Working-Class Obituary: The Role and Meaning of Deindustrial Representation' *International Labor and Working-Class History* 84 (2013): 23-37; Andrew Emil Gansky, "'Ruin Porn' and the Ambivalence of Decline: Andrew Moore's Photographs of Detroit' *Photography and Culture* 7, 2 (2014): 119-139; Steven High, 'Beyond aesthetics: visibility and invisibility in the aftermath of deindustrialization', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 84 (2013): 140-153.

<sup>61</sup> *Grève générale chez Citroën rue Balard. Paris (XVème arr.)*, 30 novembre 1938, *Excelsior* – L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86620-29

However, again there is clear contrast to 1936, with the crowd facing inwards, rather than presenting itself to the camera. Several of these images formed a montage on the cover of *Excelsior* on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, under the headline ‘*L’Échec de la Grève Generale*’ (The failure of the general strike).<sup>62</sup> They show troops guarding the metro, a bus depot, the Gare St Lazare, the post-office, a row of post vans and the tram in Lille. Officers stood by guns at the Prefecture of Police, and on the metro demonstrate the threat of lethal force is present.<sup>63</sup> Other images show waste disposal and delivery services functioning normally.<sup>64</sup>

The central message in this photographic coverage is a clear rebuttal of that found in the images of June 1936. The crowd photographs show factories emptied of workers who had previously occupied them, in an almost exact opposite of 1936. The pictures from following days show their empty interiors occupied instead by armed police. After the Popular Front’s collapse, any claim to control in the wake of 1936 is visibly exorcised by enacting the most famous images of that strike in reverse. In a Bakhtinian reading, the carnival has ended, and the world turned upside down is righted again. The images of police demonstrate it required a deliberate act on behalf of capital to revoke the gains of 1936. Finance minister Pierre Reynaud’s legal rollback was accompanied by a symbolic reversal in the photography of the strike.

Unlike a singular festive moment, the changes wrought by the Popular Front strikes do not revert to the status quo on their own. At Billancourt, ‘*Camarades rester dans l’usine jusqu’à ce que Daladier foute le camp*’ (Comrades stay in the factory until Daladier quits) is pictured daubed on a gate.<sup>65</sup> Workers do not agree to leave the factory of their own volition,

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<sup>62</sup> *Excelsior*, 1 December 1938, 1. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4611811c/f8.item>

<sup>63</sup> *Grève générale. Le service d'ordre dans le métro*. Paris, 30 novembre 1938. *Excelsior* – L’Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86620-19; *Grève générale. Préfecture de police, gardes mobiles*. Paris, 30 novembre 1938, 86620-22

<sup>64</sup> *Grève générale. Voitures de livraison des grands magasins*. Paris, 30 novembre 1938. *Excelsior* – L’Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86620-25; *Grève générale. Enlèvement des ordures*. Paris, 30 novembre 1938. 86620-26, 86620-27.

<sup>65</sup> *Grève aux usines Renault, inscription "Camarades rester dans l'usine jusqu'à ce que Daladier foute le camp" sur une porte. Boulogne-Billancourt (Seine puis Hauts-de-Seine)*, 25 novembre 1938, *Excelsior* – L’Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86620-2.



and in a few places attempts at resurrecting the imagery of 1936 are visible. *L'Œuvre*, paper sympathetic to the Radical Party which had been supportive of the Popular Front, leads with an image far more reminiscent of 1936: workers behind the bars of an occupied factory, as a woman passes them mugs through the gate.<sup>66</sup> The headline leads with spreading occupations in the Nord and Paris regions, with Billancourt's clearance given second billing.

### Street Fighting and Cobblestones

In 1968, conflict with the authorities was the subject of significant photographic coverage during the nights of the barricades from the 10<sup>th</sup> May which saw intense street fighting between police and demonstrators across the Latin Quarter. Like in the 1930s, these images were used to make connections between events on the ground and wider ideas about social conflict. As in 1934, the image of the lone cobble-thrower emerging from the crowd is key for connecting depictions of protest. This framing is a mainstay of May '68 coverage; the Ecole de Vaugirard photographs depict crowd scenes from within, including cobbles being hurled at police, alongside protestors fleeing water-cannon and the wounded being treated.<sup>67</sup> Georges Melet and Jean-Pierre Rey both used it in their photographs.<sup>68</sup> Gilles Caron's photograph of a demonstrator hurling a stone across an empty street towards barely visible police lines is an important example (Figure 1.4).<sup>69</sup> Key in establishing Caron's reputation, it appeared on the cover of one retrospective of his images, which also took the slogan *Sous les*

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<sup>66</sup> *L'Œuvre*, 25 November 1938, 1.

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k46216480.r=%2725%20November%201938%27?rk=21459;2>

<sup>67</sup> BnF, Ecole de Vaugirard, EP 5248 Boite Fol.

<sup>68</sup> Georges Melet, Paris Match Archive, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/events-of-may-1968-in-paris-may-6th-le-6-mai-1968-journée-news-photo/162760726>, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/events-of-may-1968-in-paris-may-6th-6-mai-1968-news-photo/162760510>, (last accessed 30/08/19); Jean -Pierre Rey, Manifestation du 6 mai 1968, CODHOS, [http://www.mai-68.fr/galerie/oeuvre.php?val=70\\_0\\_manifestation+6+mai+1968#img70](http://www.mai-68.fr/galerie/oeuvre.php?val=70_0_manifestation+6+mai+1968#img70), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>69</sup> Gilles Caron, *Student riots, Rue Saint Jacques, Paris, France, May 6th, 1968*, Foundation Gilles Caron, Contact Press Images.

*pavés la plage* as its title.<sup>70</sup> The image has a striking visual force, framing the stone-thrower starkly against a hazy background, where police lines are barely visible. This frame is key in Caron's construction as a photographer of the '68 years. The late 1960s was also a crucial moment in the definition of photographers, and especially photojournalists, as 'authors' with individual perspectives on the world. Caron's 'consecration' as one of these photographers was contemporary with his own death in Cambodia in 1970.<sup>71</sup> Audrey Leblanc links Caron's canonisation to what she describes as the defining photograph of May, his image of Cohn-Bendit facing a police officer.<sup>72</sup> Claude Cookman highlights several aspects to Caron's documentation of May: The 'Cohn Bendit Sequence', but also 'photographs of police excess' (see below).<sup>73</sup>

The same motif recurs in another of Caron's most recognisable images, that of two boys throwing stones during the Battle of the Bogside in Derry in 1969. He uses the convention again in another image from Derry and another shows a figure in close up from behind, head cropped out, holding a cobble behind their back.<sup>74</sup> A montage for an exhibition of Caron's '68 photographs in London contained images of Paris, but also the two children from Derry, with no explanation.<sup>75</sup> In its wider form, the cobblestone throwing figure also provided a central theme for the 2017 exhibition *Soulevements*.<sup>76</sup> Roughly translated as 'Uprisings', this exhibition brought together diverse representations of revolt, and prominently featured Caron's images. Caron's images of May were also featured in

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<sup>70</sup> François Armanent (ed.) *Sous les pavés la plage: May '68 vu par Gilles Caron*, (Paris: Éditions Le Sirène 1993)

<sup>71</sup> Gaëlle Morel, 'Gilles Caron, auteur photographe dans les années 1960?', *Revue de l'art* 175 (2012): 59-66.

<sup>72</sup> Audrey Leblanc, 'Gilles Caron LE photographe de Mai 68, l'oeuvre d'une politique culturelle?', in Gil Bartholeyns, (ed), *Politiques visuelles*, (Les presses du reel, 2015).

<sup>73</sup> Claude Cookman, 'Gilles Caron and the May 1968 rebellion in Paris', *History of Photography* 31, 3 (2007), 239-259.

<sup>74</sup> *Manifestations, Londonderry, Irlande du Nord, août 1969*, Collection Fondation Gilles Caron and Collection Musée de l'Elysée, [http://www.jeudepaume.org/pdf/DossierDocumentaire\\_GillesCaron.pdf](http://www.jeudepaume.org/pdf/DossierDocumentaire_GillesCaron.pdf);

<http://www.culturenorthernireland.org/features/visual-arts/decisive-moments-gilles-caron-derry>

<sup>75</sup> <https://photolondon.org/event/pavilion-commission-gilles-caron-may-68/>

<sup>76</sup>; <http://www.jeudepaume.org/index.php?page=article&idArt=2523>, <http://soulevements.jeudepaume.org/>

retrospectives for the tenth anniversary. One, with foreword by Raymond Depardon, used an action shot of a man bent double running from a police officer, truncheon raised as its cover.<sup>77</sup>

## Photography and Police Violence

The nights of the barricades were the ‘critical event’ that saw the movement transcend its initial milieu, as the perspectives of different social groups aligned behind criticism of the police.<sup>78</sup> Photographs played a significant role, as images of police brutality were integral to initial coverage. A double page spread in *Life* on the 24<sup>th</sup> May featured a montage of ten photographs from Paris. With the exception of Jean Pierre Rey’s *Marianne Du Mai* (see chapter 4), all featured students throwing cobbles at police, or being beaten by them (Figure 1.5).<sup>79</sup> Coverage of police violence tends to either normalise its presence or dismiss singular exceptional events. However, at certain times, the police lose control of the narrative, and the issue becomes one of public debate.<sup>80</sup> Photography offers one example of how this happened in 1968. Kristin Ross used the concept of *matraquage* to explain responses to police violence in May, referring to the police baton. The *matraque* ‘features prominently in accounts, documentary film footage and the political iconography of May-June’.<sup>81</sup> Ross dealt with the absence and memory of the 1961 Paris massacre in conceptions of *matraquage*, and Elie Kagan’s photographs of that night have been instrumental in preserving its memory.<sup>82</sup> The reprise of these themes is visible in one of Kagan’s photographs from 10-11 May is stretcher-bearers making their way through a cobble-strewn street.<sup>83</sup> These underline the continuities of

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<sup>77</sup> Gilles Caron and Raymond Depardon, *Gilles Caron-reporter 1967-1970*, (Paris: Chêne, 1978).

<sup>78</sup> Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, ‘The Dynamic of Protest: May 1968 in France’, *Critique*, 36, 2, (2008), 207.

<sup>79</sup> *Life*, 24 May 1968, 30-31.

<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=D1UEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>80</sup> Regina G. Lawrence, *The Politics of Force: Media and the Construction of Police Brutality* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2000), 15-16.

<sup>81</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 27

<sup>82</sup> Moustafa Bayoumi. "October 17, 1961." In *On the Edges of Development*, pp. 27-35. Routledge, 2009; Andrew L. Hansen "And Paris Saw Them: An Examination of Elie Kagan's Photographs of the Paris Massacre of October 17, 1961." PhD diss., Miami University, 2005.

<sup>83</sup> BDIC, Tirages Kagan, Nuit et matin des barricades: 10-11 mai 1968, KAG T (846)

violence of the French state, from Vichy, through the use of torture in the Algerian war, and then back to the metropole as police deployed violent repression. Maurice Papon's trajectory is illustrative. Involved in the deportation of Jews under Vichy, Papon was Police Chief during the both the aforementioned massacre and the killing of protestors at Charonne Metro in 1962, and subsequent president of Sud-Aviation, elected to the National Assembly and Cabinet. It was not until the 1990s he was convicted of crimes against humanity for his role under Vichy.<sup>84</sup>

Photographic representations of police violence were vitally important in the initial stages of the movement for generating sympathy with student militants and turning their specific conflict with the police into the spark for a more general opposition to the state.<sup>85</sup> It served to bring various groups into the contestation, and ultimately to widespread strike action. A communiqué of the Comités d'action lycéens and the March 22 Movement of student activists from Nanterre leads with the title '1000 blessés 3 morts gaz de combat' (1000 wounded 3 dead of combat gas).<sup>86</sup> The first issue of *Action*, the paper of the March 22 Movement, contains six images of massed police at the Sorbonne in as many pages, including one of a baton charge, a gas canister being fired, and ending with a figure being beaten in the street (Figure 1.6).<sup>87</sup> In this final image, the man clutches his head while being dragged by the legs by what is presumably a plainclothes officer, as two helmeted CRS wield batons above his head. Viewed from above the victim, and between the police, three photographers are shooting the scene. The image is notable, not just for the beating, but the apparent disregard of the police for onlookers.

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<sup>84</sup> Richard J. Golsan, 'Memory's bombes à retardement: Maurice Papon, crimes against humanity, and 17 October 1961' *Journal of European Studies* 28, 109-110 (1998) 153-172.

<sup>85</sup> Ludivine Bantigny, *1968-De grands soirs en petits matins*. (Paris: Le Seuil, 2018), 52-53.

<sup>86</sup> *1000 blessés 3 morts gaz de combat*, Comités d'action lycéens (CAL)/Mouvement du 22 mars, 05 May, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=178>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>87</sup> *Action*, 1, 07/05/1968, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2534>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

The second issue carried a double-page spread, under the heading ‘We Accuse!’, referencing the historic injustice denoted by Zola’s ‘J’accuse’, which listed the ‘arsenal of (police Chief) Grimaud’, including provocateurs from the extreme right, and several kinds of gas, which were explicitly compared to those in use in Vietnam. This accompanied a series of photographs of police beating protestors.<sup>88</sup> A Sorbonne professor, Dr Francis Kahn, investigated the effects of gas, and is mentioned in the piece as providing services for those affected.<sup>89</sup> One elderly woman was caught in tear gas on 6 May and died of respiratory failure, though an inquest certified this as natural causes due to prior condition. In private correspondence, Kahn complained that her doctor, ambulance driver, and family did not cooperate with his investigation, and assumed this was due to ‘hard pressure from the police’.<sup>90</sup>

Though tear gas had been used in previous strikes (for example in 1938) its widespread deployment in May and June signalled an escalation of policing methods, which were highly visible in photography. For example, the use of water cannon and dogs on civil rights activists in the US is a defining feature of the photographic record of that movement.<sup>91</sup> Images from the Ecole de Vaugirard (the *École nationale de photographie et cinématographie*) specifically photograph empty canisters lying amongst the rubble of pulled up paving stones.<sup>92</sup> The photographic quality of tear gas makes it a particular reference point for documenting repression. Protestors are photographed against white clouds forming a white background. This striking visual effectively isolates the subject(s) from the environment. This can produce a sense of dislocation, as in Barbey’s reportage of Flins.<sup>93</sup> Photographs of the May Day protests in the following years repeatedly use the image of CRS riot police wading

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<sup>88</sup> *Action*, 2, 13/05/1968, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2540> . (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>89</sup> *Action*, 2, 13/05/1968, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2540>. (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>90</sup> Anna Fiegenbaum, *Tear Gas: from the battlefields of World War One to the Streets of Today*, (London, New York: Verso, 2017), 117-119.

<sup>91</sup> Martin A. Berger, *Seeing through race: A reinterpretation of civil rights photography*, (University of California Press, 2011), 37.

<sup>92</sup> BnF, Ecole de Vaugirard, EP 5248 Boite Fol.

<sup>93</sup> Bruno Barbey, Yvelines department. Flins-sur-Seine. Riot police near the Renault car factory. 7 June 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYE46RH.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

through gas.<sup>94</sup> In the Ecole de Vaugirard photograph of protestors fleeing an armoured car with water cannon, the blank background effectively draws focus to the two elements, and highlights the disparity between them.<sup>95</sup> That two of the running figures are apparently smiling undercuts the menace of the vehicle. Whereas in 1938, though we know tear gas was used, it was not part of the photographic record to the same extent. Its presence in images of 1968 shows a movement more consciously developing its visual representation in response to repression.

The activist press used photographic evidence of violence to underpin broader criticism of the state, often deploying caption, illustration and juxtaposition to highlight its significance. A Marcuse quote: ‘an advanced industrial society’ captions a photograph of a well-dressed woman lying face down, possibly unconscious, in the street as a passing police officer takes a swing at her head.<sup>96</sup> The original photograph is by Gilles Caron, and he photographed many instances of violence.<sup>97</sup> These demonstrate the almost casual way in which the police beat those already incapacitated, including a sequence where successive groups of officers beat the same pair of students. Contact sheets show Caron did photograph wounded police officers, but these images did not fit the narrative of state repression, and were not published.<sup>98</sup>

In the use of caption we see links drawn between individual incidents of brutality captured in photography with a wider systemic analysis that mobilises outrage in the service of a critique of the state as a whole. This press also used a transnational lens to connect what was happening in France with the global uprisings of 1968. Images in *Action* show police

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<sup>94</sup> BnF, A. Munoz de Pablos, EP-34- Boite Pet Fol.

<sup>95</sup> BnF, Ecole de Vaugirard, EP 5248 Boite Fol.

<sup>96</sup> *Magazine Littéraire*, 8, May 1968, 12-13 <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2473>. (last accessed 30/08/19); Herbert Marcuse, ‘Repressive Tolerance’, in: Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, jr., and Herbert Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969, first published 1965)

<sup>97</sup> During a demonstration on Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris, May 6, 1968. Fondation Gilles Caron, Gilles Caron, Two Members of the Guardes mobiles Assault a Demonstrator, gelatin silver print, 1968. Gilles Caron (Contact Press Images).

<sup>98</sup> Cookman, ‘Gilles Caron and the May 1968 rebellion in Paris’, 246.

brutality in contemporary struggles, Brazil, Japan and the US.<sup>99</sup> These photographs explicitly compared an apparently shared experience of state repression, and helped build a sense of internationalism and solidarity. Though some of the movements depicted, notably Brazil and Mexico, faced far more extreme violence (in Mexico culminating in the Tlatelolco massacre in October), the photographs show a more familiar situation of police beating protestors.

As a medium, these pictures provoked discussion. One activist recalled that, though *Action* was for him limited as a journal, it served as a tool to spark public debate.<sup>100</sup>

Documenting police violence legitimised the struggle against state violence and obviously unreasonable oppression. Another student described his ‘awakening’ to ’68 when jolted out of complacency by the conflict between his notion that ‘in a liberal democracy the police are not the Gestapo’ and the conduct of the CRS at Sorbonne.<sup>101</sup> Maoist *Gauche Prolétarienne* militant Yves Cohen explained he joined the organisation as a result of the deaths of high school student Gilles Tautin and two Peugeot workers at the Sochaux plant. He uses a visual record to trace this commitment, identifying himself in photographs of Tautin’s funeral ‘wearing a black jacket, and I remember wearing that black jacket for two years after that’.<sup>102</sup>

The highest profile victim of police violence was probably high school student Gilles Tautin. 17 year-old Tautin was a member of the Maoist group *Union des Jeunesses Communistes Marxistes-Léninistes* (UJC(ml)) and drowned in the Seine fleeing police when their march to the Renault factory at Flins was violently dispersed. His death generated another wave of condemnation of police violence, which used his photograph as a key symbol.

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<sup>99</sup> *Action*, 17, 25/06/1968, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2606>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>100</sup> ‘Firsthand Account - The Montreuil CA’, in *Mouvement Communiste, May-June 1968: An occasion lacking in workers’ autonomy*, (2006) <http://libcom.org/library/firsthand-account-montreuil-ca>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>101</sup> Robert Gildea, James Mark & Anette Warring, (eds.), *Europe's 1968: Voices of revolt*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

<sup>102</sup> Gildea, ‘Utopia and conflict in the oral testimonies of French 1968 activists’, 43-44.



The close-up portrait of Gilles Tautin's face was replicated in photo-collages, banners and posters. In one example, posters with his face are pictured arranged in a hammer and sickle.<sup>103</sup> It appears in Godard's *Tout va Bien* (1972), which Margaret Atack argues represents 'May in quotation marks'.<sup>104</sup> *La Cause du Peuple*'s identifies Tautin's death with the state repression as a whole: 'Hundreds of proletarians wounded. Gilles stands witness for all of them. Who killed our comrade?: The cops, the Gaullist dictatorship.'<sup>105</sup> Tautin's death also illustrates the intensification of police violence in June, which while attempting to force factories back to work, targeted the students and young activists who ventured to the suburbs in solidarity. The earlier leniency with which the police were ordered to treat *lycéens* with was no longer apparent.<sup>106</sup> *Lycéens* thus appeared as a distinct group when their youth intensified the portrayal of innocent victimhood. This is evident in other images. The bloodied youth on the cover of *Action* uses the same framework of references, re-purposing the photograph of an anonymous young militant brutalised by police as a symbol of state violence.<sup>107</sup> This image was also used in a Beaux Arts poster, and appears almost identical to the youth silenced by De Gaulle in the 'Sois-jeune et tais-toi' poster.<sup>108</sup>

Bruno Barbey's pictures of the funeral march show marchers holding up many copies of Tautin's portrait.<sup>109</sup> Social movement theorists used the idea of 'injustice symbol' as a means of assessing how such replicated images can rapidly spread and affect processes of

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<sup>103</sup> Archives de la Somme, Fonds Claude Dewaele (88J), 88J28, Photographie montrant des affiches posées au sol formant le symbole communiste de la faucille et du marteau. Mort de Gilles Tautin, lycéen, militant maoïste du Mouvement de soutien aux luttes du peuple et membre de l'Union des jeunes communistes marxistes-léninistes, 12 June 1968. <http://archives.somme.fr/ark:/58483/a011521024490ygtfds>

<sup>104</sup> Margaret Atack, *May '68 in French Fiction and Film: Rethinking Society, Rethinking Representation*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>105</sup> 'A Comrade is Dead', *La Cause du Peuple*, 14, 11 June, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2790#> (last accessed 20/08/2019).

<sup>106</sup> Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution*, 238-239.

<sup>107</sup> *Action*, no.7, 11 June, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2568>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>108</sup> *Affiche des manifestations de mai 1968, 'De Gaulle assassin', réalisée par l'Atelier Populaire des Beaux-Arts, France*. (Photo by API/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images), <https://www.gettyimages.ae/license/840440340>, 'Beauty is in the Street: A Visual Record of the May '68 Paris Uprising', Ed. Kugelberg & Vermes, 242.

<sup>109</sup> Bruno Barbey, Demonstrators on the day of Gilles Tautin's funeral, 15 June 1968. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDK3VN3Z.html>; <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDY4V8CI.html>, (last accessed 20/08/2019).



mobilisation.<sup>110</sup> Thomas Olesen developed the concept of a ‘visual injustice symbol’ in his analysis of how the portrait of Khaled Said, a young man killed by police, was deployed in the Egyptian Revolution of 2010-2011, and there are similar circumstances to the use of Tautin’s portrait.<sup>111</sup> Whilst others are also victims, the cause célèbre is a student that personifies unjustified state violence.

There are two levels of meaning at work in Tautin’s portrait, which are to a certain extent contradictory. One is the young innocent who serves as an accusation of arbitrary action by the state. The other is the face of a martyred radical. Barbey’s photographs of the funeral march juxtaposes the portrait alongside raised fists (Figure 1.7).<sup>112</sup> The style of the portrait references the high-contrast black and red of *Guerrilla Heroico*’s Che Guevara, and recalls Tautin’s membership of the UJC(ml). This wider funeral iconography is apparent in Gerard-Aimé’s photographs of Pierre Overney’s 1972 funeral, showing a banner of his portrait.<sup>113</sup> Reporting on Tautin’s death, the cover of *Action* on the 11<sup>th</sup> June uses the portrait of a youth bleeding from the head, along with the repeated accusation of ‘*Assassin*’.<sup>114</sup> Taken from photographs of street fighting, this is not Tautin’s portrait used in the funeral, but the image works precisely because of Tautin’s non-uniqueness. He could have been any of the young people involved in the clashes.

Tautin is an exemplary injustice symbol, but by the time his image achieves this status, the cycle of contestation has moved on. By June, the high point of mobilisation has

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<sup>110</sup> David Kowalewski, ‘The Protest Uses of Symbolic Politics: The Mobilization Functions of Protester Symbolic Resources’, *Social Science Quarterly* 61, 1 (1980), 95-113; Nicole Doerr, Alice Mattoni and Simon Teune. "Toward a visual analysis of social movements, conflict, and political mobilization." In *Advances in the visual analysis of social movements*, pp. xi-xxvi. (2013); Thomas Olesen, ‘Dramatic Diffusion and Meaning Adaptation: The Case of Neda’, in Donatella Della Porta and Alice Mattoni (eds.), *Spreading protest: Social movements in times of crisis* (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2014).

<sup>111</sup> Thomas Olesen, “‘We are all Khaled Said’: Visual Injustice Symbols in the Egyptian Revolution, 2010–2011”, In *Advances in the visual analysis of social movements*, 3-25. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2013.

<sup>112</sup> Bruno Barbey, Demonstrators on the day of Gilles Tautin’s funeral, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDK3VN3Z.html>; <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDY4V8CI.html>.

<sup>113</sup> Michel Puech, *40 Ans après, Pierre Overney*, <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/michel-puech/blog/050312/40-ans-apres-pierre-overney>.

<sup>114</sup> *Action*, issue 7, 11 June 1968, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2568>, (last accessed 20/08/2019).

passed, and the strike was beginning to fragment. There is a clear contrast with the images of police brutality used in the early part of May. These images are not a single repeated picture, but a series of photographs that document the recurrent use of force by police. By necessity, they freeze motion from a distance or at an angle that does not fully show what is occurring. However, this repetition on a theme adds to their potency, in that it proves the habitual nature of state repression, and makes their critique into a systemic one. It is harder to blame individual officers, when the evidence shows many examples, and when collated they make a strong argument. The double page spread in *Action* on the 13 May used five images of police brutality.<sup>115</sup> They provide the reference point for the *Atelier Populaire* poster of the CRS raising his truncheon, which codifies the theme.<sup>116</sup> The uniform anonymous representative of the state draws on other photographs of the CRS highlighting the helmet and goggles.<sup>117</sup>

Ubiquitous in the posters, the CRS in masks are frequently visible in photography, and have a clear de-humanising effect, rendering the police representatives of the whole Gaullist order. Caron's photographs of police 'rendered the officers as types instead of individuals.'<sup>118</sup> These images look back to the experience of occupation and resistance. The slogan 'CRS-SS' dates to the miners' strikes of 1948, and was again used prominently in the early 1960s, following the massacres of Algerians on 17 October 1961 and of protestors Charonne on 12 February 1962.<sup>119</sup> The equivalence is particularly effective because of the pervasive narrative of the 'resisting nation' propagated by the Gaullist state.<sup>120</sup> It links to criticism of De Gaulle himself, who mobilised the memory of the resistance in a 'personalised exercise of

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<sup>115</sup> *Action*, Issue 2, 13 May 1968, 4-5. <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2540>, (last accessed 20/08/2019).

<sup>116</sup> Johan Kugelberg; Philippe Vermès, *Beauty is in the street : a visual record of the May '68 Paris uprising*, (2011).

<sup>117</sup> *Action* 12, 18/06/1968, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2586>, (last accessed 20/08/2019).

<sup>118</sup> Cookman, 'Gilles Caron and the May 1968 rebellion in Paris', 247.

<sup>119</sup> Chloé Leprince, "CRS SS", l'histoire d'un slogan qui ne date pas de 1968, *France Culture*, 19 April 2018, <https://www.franceculture.fr/histoire/crs-ss-lhistoire-dun-slogan-qui-ne-date-pas-de-1968>, (last accessed 20/08/2019).

<sup>120</sup> P. Lagrou, 'The politics of memory: resistance as a collective myth in post-war France, Belgium and the Netherlands, 1945-1965'. *European Review*, 11, 4, (2003), 527-549.

presidential power'.<sup>121</sup> Repression of social movements is not always predicated on such overt use of state power, also incorporating the action of non-state groups (such as right-wing militias) and resource distribution.<sup>122</sup> However, the heightened visibility of state violence in May, and the use of caption and juxtaposition to link it to broader social critique has cemented the concept of *Matraquage* in its visualisation.

There is a distinction between the subjects of police violence, and the violence of protestors themselves, which, aside from the police, often targeted the environment. The photographic representation of the protestors violence has a strong symbolic component, using pictures of the CRS to stand in for the state as a whole, thus the photographs conserve and replicate the symbolic violence perpetrated and convey it to new audiences. Overturned cars proliferated in press coverage.<sup>123</sup> Bruno Barbey photographed barricades made of wrecked car parts at Yvelines on the 7<sup>th</sup> June.<sup>124</sup> As ubiquitous tokens of France's modernisation, cars become targets for rioters. Photographers captured this evidence of the scope and violence of the barricades, if not a direct critique of consumerism, hostility to its immediate manifestations.<sup>125</sup> Such photographic representations recurred in 2005 when riots in the Parisian suburbs were symbolically associated with the burning car. Reportedly 10,000 cars were destroyed in what Fabien Jobard characterises as 'highly ritualised acts of destruction.'<sup>126</sup> Many of the participants used a language of class to explain their situation, arguing that the dominant language of race was imposed by the media.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Gino Raymond. "Sarkozy-de Gaulle: Recycling the Resistance myth." *French Cultural Studies* 24, no. 1 (2013): 93-103; P. Lagrou, 'The politics of memory', 527-549.

<sup>122</sup> Jennifer Earl, 'Tanks, tear gas, and taxes: Toward a theory of movement repression', *Sociological Theory*, 21, 1 (2003), 44-68.

<sup>123</sup> 'Le quartier latin a trouvé ses armes: les pavés at le feu', *Paris Match*, 999, 22-28 June 1968, 102-103.

<sup>124</sup> Bruno Barbey, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDIU7FY2.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>125</sup> Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the reordering of French culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996), 15-19.

<sup>126</sup> Fabien Jobard, 'Rioting as a political tool: The 2005 riots in France', *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 48, 3 (2009), 235.

<sup>127</sup> John P Murphy. "Baguettes, berets and burning cars: The 2005 riots and the question of race in contemporary France." *French Cultural Studies* 22, no. 1 (2011): 33-49, 41-42.

In 1968, the cobbles too were ripped up to be used as missiles. The scattered cobbles left after a riot were captured by Marc Riboud, who also depicted the construction of barricades from within the crowds, showing egalitarian collective action in the human chains passing cobblestones (Figure 1.8).<sup>128</sup> Elie Kagan and Henri Cartier-Bresson both photograph the same phenomenon.<sup>129</sup> Kagan's photographs of the night of 10-11 May showcase an array of subjects that characterise coverage of the barricades: Burning cars, piles of cobblestones, and impromptu encounters between those holding the barricades and passers-by.<sup>130</sup> These consumer objects, the fabric of the city, and the inhuman police have in common the fact they stand in for broader aspects of society – consumerism, urban alienation, repression - which protestors vocally critiqued.<sup>131</sup> We might read the influence of theorists such as Lefebvre and the Situationists into the images, with their concern for the how capitalism manifested through urban space and patterns of everyday life.<sup>132</sup>

Caron's photograph of a lone flag atop a small pile of rubble in the deserted Rue St Jacques captures a sense of lingering defiance, but also effectively marks the end of May's major demonstrations and the fragmentation of strikes and protests into June.<sup>133</sup> Its stillness and emptiness contrast with photographs of abandoned barricades in the immediate wake of the first confrontations, which often include crowds of observers. Cartier-Bresson documents these observers photographing the wreckage, perhaps reflecting his own position.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> <http://marcriboud.com/en/countries/may68/>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>129</sup> BDIC, Tirages Kagan, Nuit et matin des barricades: 10-11 mai 1968, KAG T (841).

<sup>130</sup> BDIC, Tirages Kagan, Nuit et matin des barricades: 10-11 mai 1968, KAG T (841) à (855), 3524/8323, <https://argonnaute.parisnanterre.fr/ark:/14707/a0114032678721rzMxJ>; Henri Cartier-Bresson, Trying to stop the riot police moving up from the Place St Germain des Pres, a group of demonstrators arm themselves with cobblestones to be used as missiles. 1968, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDOBWCLD.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>131</sup> Michael Löwy, 'The revolutionary romanticism of May 1968', *Thesis Eleven* 68, 1, (2002), 95-100.

<sup>132</sup> Henri Lefebvre, 'Critique of everyday life', (New York: Verso, 2002, first published 1947, 1961, and 1981); Tom McDonough, "Situationist space." *October* 67 (1994): 59-77.

<sup>133</sup> Gilles Caron, The Black Flag of the Anarchists in the rue Saint-Jacques, gelatin silver print, 10 June 1968. (Contact Press Images).

<sup>134</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson. Rue de Vaugirard. 1968. Wall inscription: Jouissez sans entraves ("Pleasure without limits"), <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD1GVHAY.html>; Watching the riots. 1968; <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDY33LL.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

Much of the police photography also centred on damage to property the morning after the night of the barricades.<sup>135</sup> The prominence of wreckage in the police archive photographs shows the perspective of the state dominated by concerns over the defence of property and by extension, the propertied.<sup>136</sup> These photographs show piles of debris documented as evidence of vandalism, curious bystanders picking over the remains, and the first of the clean-up operations beginning.<sup>137</sup> Here the symbolic content of the wreckage is dismantled, as it once again primarily signifies property. Audrey Leblanc and Dominique Versavel have argued that the night of the barricades is distinctive due to the absence of ‘iconic’ photography comparable to images of Cohn-Bendit or the ‘Marianne du Mai’.<sup>138</sup>

More distinctive in the police archive is the accompanying aerial photography, firmly situating the barricades in the network of left-bank streets.<sup>139</sup> This is one case where the Foucauldian interpretation of photography as an extension of the state surveillance apparatus is appropriate.<sup>140</sup> From surveillance to mugshots, the evidentiary power of photography has been a tool of police and legal systems since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>141</sup> The contrast with photographs of police violence produces a clear dichotomy. The forces of order see only violence to property, and their opponents see the violence done to their bodies. The framing and reproduction of both sets of photography serve to foreground these perspectives.

## Conclusion

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<sup>135</sup> Archives de Préfecture de police de Paris, Le Pré Saint-Gervais, FB art 6, *Événements de Mai 68*, bât P.

<sup>136</sup> Oliver Davis, ‘Managing (in)security in Paris in Mai ’68’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 26, 2, (2018), 139.

<sup>137</sup> Archives de Préfecture de police de Paris, Le Pré Saint-Gervais, FB art 6, *Événements de Mai 68*, bât P.

<sup>138</sup> Audrey Leblanc and Dominic Versavel, (eds.),  *Icônes de Mai 68: Les Images ont une histoire*, (Paris: BnF Éditions, 2018), 105-117.

<sup>139</sup> Archives de Préfecture de police de Paris, Le Pré Saint-Gervais, FB art 6, *Événements de Mai 68*, bât P.

<sup>140</sup> John Tagg, ‘Power and photography: part one, a means of surveillance: the photograph as evidence in law’, *Screen Education*, 36, (1980), 17-55.

<sup>141</sup> Jens Jäger, ‘Photography: a means of surveillance? Judicial photography, 1850 to 1900’, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* 5, 1, (2001), 27-51.

Photography provides evidence of past contentious movements. It catalogues the repertoires of protest used, and how these actions use visual representations to marshal particular responses. It also evidences the repertoires of repression used against them. These photographic depictions also render a contingent set of circumstances into an uninterrupted narrative. In the 1930s, the images of a 'festive' strike are usefully contrasted with the depictions of social disorder in 1934 and successful repression in 1938. The subsequent attempts to create a harmonious vision of the movement created an alternative to the crisis in representing the nation. This set of conventions provided both a counter to potential militancy and a positive assertion of the legitimacy of the strike action. Yet its transitory nature can be seen in the photography of strikes in 1938, which amount to the deliberate reversal of this symbolic repertoire. In May and June 1968, photographers were more likely to address such issues in the moment of conflict itself. They responded to the conflict between protestors and police by documenting police brutality and the destruction of the urban environment. These images reveal some of the ideological targets of the movement, but more than that their use, replication and dissemination show how photography functioned as a mobilisation tool. They demonstrate how a critique of state violence was an integral mobilising factor in 1968 and provides an example of how this was communicated. These examples establish that the photography of these two strike movements was an important component in forming ideas about the meaning and purpose of social contestation. In both strikes a division between framings which emphasised social conflict or harmony, shows how photographs characterise processes of discontent in multiple ways. The photographic record established particular conventions that served political purposes, either in justifying or denigrating protest. These conventions are a link between both movements and demonstrate the continuity of framings such as the cobble-throwing figure. The next chapter will explore another continuity, looking at how photographers framed strikers within their immediate environment – the factory.







## Chapter 2. Photography at the Factory

This chapter examines the photographic depiction of factories during the strikes of May and June 1968 in France, and the Popular Front. These photographs form a distinctive subset of images of the strikes, offering a key visualisation of the labour dispute and its relation to the broader political movement. They also allow us to analyse the shifting visualisation of the factory through French history, from the fordist assembly lines of the 1930s, to the late-fordist shifts in production in the 1960s, to the post-industrial present. Using research on images from newspapers, photojournalists' collections and archival sources, it seeks to explore a facet of the visualisation of 1968 often neglected in representations focused on street protest and university occupations in Paris and situate these photographs in a broader historical context of images of the factory. To do this it draws on the depictions of factories during 1936, which formed a key component of the imagery of that strike.

For Keith Reader 'May [1968] lives on as image rather than narration', yet even within that visual tradition, the focus has not been equally distributed.<sup>1</sup> Richard Vinen notes 'Students in '68 are portrayed in words, frequently their own words, but workers are often remembered in pictures.'<sup>2</sup> While workers have left some testimonies, frequently students have been featured in the most heavily reproduced pictures too.<sup>3</sup> The factory gates are an important part of the photographic record. They are the subject of a significant proportion of photographs and were a place where photographers of 1968 interacted with occupying workers. This was a space in which workers could consciously manipulate the environment to address the wider world. Banners, effigies, and graffiti were all direct messages, building a

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Reader, Khursheed Wadia, *The May 1968 Events in France: Reproductions and Interpretations*, (London, 1993), 117.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Long '68: Radical Protest and Its Enemies*, (London, 2018), 11.

<sup>3</sup> Xavier Vigna, *L'espoir et l'effroi: Luites d'écritures et luites de classes en France au XXe siècle*, (Paris, 2016); Antigoni Memou, 'Photography and Memory: Rethinking May '68', *Philosophy of Photography*, 3, (2011), 83-96.

distinct visual repertoire of protest. They also addressed the observer directly, functioning as a form of internal caption. The relationship of workers to the camera also responds to photographic conventions, often not in candid shots, but acknowledging the observer, posing for the image. In the context of a movement so often characterised by the seizure of speech, as opposed to the seizure of power, the photographs potentially represent a means of a seizing visual representation. Siting this at the gates of an occupied factory puts these statements in relation to the material conditions of the strike. Yet it also illustrates how the factory relates to other aspects of the movement, despite the separation of workers and students, and trade-union control of the representation of workers.

When presented with the photographs illustrating Phillippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel's edited volume *68: Une Histoire Collective 1962-1981*, Julian Jackson and Robert Gildea both welcomed the alternative to the 'clichéd' and 'endlessly reproduced' photographs of Daniel Cohn-Bendit.<sup>4</sup> The book was illustrated with a series of images from the collection of the PCF newspaper *L'Humanité* taken by *correspondants*, contributors who submitted material to the paper.<sup>5</sup> The *L'Humanité* archive, at the *Archives Départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis*, encompasses both the newspaper's own photography and that of its *correspondants*, who were an 'informal press agency' composed of activists, newspaper editors, journalists and photographers, working on the model of the Soviet *rabcors*.<sup>6</sup> This collection incorporated a significant amount of material unpublished before 2008.<sup>7</sup> These photographs are just one component of a much larger field of worker-centric photography. Together with images from photojournalists, they constitute a corpus that can contribute to

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<sup>4</sup> Julian Jackson, 'The Mystery of May 1968', *French Historical Studies*, 33, 4, (2010); Gildea, Robert, 'Forty Years on: French writing on 1968 in 2008', *French History*, 23, 1, (2009) 108-119; Phillippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, (eds), *68: Une Histoire Collective 1962-1981*, (Paris, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Vincent Lemire and Yann Potin, 'Les correspondants-photographes de L'Humanité: un regard différé sur les années 68', in Phillippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, (eds), *68: Une Histoire Collective 1962-1981*, (Paris, 2008), 165-173.

<sup>6</sup> Alexandre Courban, 'Une autre façon d'être lecteur de L'Humanité durant l'entre-deux-guerres : « rabcors » et « CDH » au service du quotidien communiste', *Le Temps des médias*, 7, 2, (2006), 205-217.

<sup>7</sup> *Mai 68: Instantanés d'Humanité: Catalogue de l'exposition aux archives départementales de la Seine-saint-Denis*, (Seine-Saint-Denis, 2008).

analysis of the labour dimensions of the strike.<sup>8</sup> They also offer suggestions as to how participants themselves visualised the strike.

### **Depicting Workers at the Factory**

The tradition of using the factory gates as visual shorthand for industry and its workers has precedents going back to the Nineteenth Century. Film pioneers the Lumière brothers made it the subject of the very first motion picture *La Sortie des ouvriers de l'usine Lumière* in 1895, and from the beginning the choice of representing workers at the factory has had political implications.<sup>9</sup> Emilie Bickerton argues that the Lumières' work predates a division in the representation of proletarian and bourgeois subjects, using the same technique and framing as for the middle-class subjects of *Le Débarquement du Congrès de Photographie à Lyon*.<sup>10</sup> In the case of early film, it is possible that there had not yet developed the conventions for signifying class, while in photography, bourgeois portraiture has a long history intertwined with realist painting.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, when workers appear in those poses, they consciously invoke the conventions derived from bourgeois portraiture. In this, there is an explicit claim to recognition, and an implicit claim to do so on the same terms as anybody else. This has precursors in the formality of Communard portraits and barricade photos, which enabled their subjects to assert their otherwise undocumented existence.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to Bickerton, Harun Farocki locates the Lumières film in a very specific tradition of depicting workers at the factory. Farocki argues that the factory has not attracted

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<sup>8</sup> Keith Mann, 'A Revival of Labor and Social Protest Research in France: Recent Scholarship on May 1968', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 80, (2011), 203–214.

<sup>9</sup> *La Sortie des ouvriers de l'usine Lumière*, Louis Lumière, 1895.

<sup>10</sup> Emilie Bickerton, 'A New Proletkino?', *New Left Review*, 109, (2018).

<sup>11</sup> Heather McPherson, *The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Walter Benjamin, 'Review of Freund's *Photographie en France au dix-neuvième siècle*', in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and other writings on Media*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 312–314.

<sup>12</sup> Jeannene M. 'Przyblyski Revolution at a Standstill: Photography and the Paris Commune of 1871', *Yale French Studies*, 101, (2001), 54–78.

film but constantly repelled it, repeating its first images of workers emerging from a closed space where the camera cannot go.<sup>13</sup> In the case of photography, de-industrialisation has made factories an attractive subject once more, but at the cost of their social and historical context. Photographers now approach factories as urban ‘ruin porn’.<sup>14</sup> In 1968, some factory images did emphasise the factory as a space apart. Fortress-like gates and walls separated the private factory from public space. In capitalist production, the factory is a closed entity, taking in materials and labour, and spilling out goods, obscuring their internal workings. Guy Le Querrec’s image of a worker leaning on the gate evokes prison bars, referencing factory discipline (Figure 2.1). A small sign solicits donations to the strike fund. The man’s pose, and his sideways glance through the bars, out of the frame, evoke suspicion, and a dog wandering in the background only contributes to the atmosphere of an empty, closed off space.<sup>15</sup> Another image uses the same idea, again, the worker’s hands-in-pockets stance conveys boredom, the strike banner is mostly cropped out, leaving only the words ‘claims’ and ‘democracy’ visible, and an old sign firmly denies entry to anyone ‘foreign’ (étranger) to the factory.<sup>16</sup> In another, women at Billancourt peer out a crack between window and concrete wall.<sup>17</sup> These penal references also prefigures the link between factory and prison developed by French critics in the early 1970s.<sup>18</sup> In these images, the factory gates are a threshold that cannot be crossed.

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<sup>13</sup> Harun Farocki, ‘Workers Leaving the Factory’, *Nachdruck/Imprint* (Berlin, New York, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Tim Strangleman, “Smokestack Nostalgia,” “Ruin Porn” or Working-Class Obituary: The Role and Meaning of Deindustrial Representation’ *International Labor and Working-Class History* 84 (2013), 23-37; Sarah Arnold, ‘Urban decay photography and film: fetishism and the apocalyptic imagination’, *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 2 (2015), 326-339.

<sup>15</sup> Guy Le Querrec, Paris. 13th arrondissement. During strike, workers greet the trade union demonstrating. Friday, 24 May 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDKCZXQS.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018); The ‘wandering dog’ is also prominent in 1930s unemployment photography with similar associations of desolation, see Kurt Hutton, *Unemployed Man*, January 1939. Original Publication: *Picture Post*, 86, ‘Unemployed’, 21st January 1939 (Photo by Kurt Hutton/Picture Post/Hulton Archive/Getty Images) <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/alfred-smith-one-of-the-countrys-1-000-unemployed-people-news-photo/2696341>, (last accessed 19/07/2019).

<sup>16</sup> Guy Le Querrec, Boulogne-Billancourt. During the strike at the Renault factory. Friday, 17 May 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDKCIOXA.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018)

<sup>17</sup> Guy Le Querrec, Boulogne-Billancourt, During the strike at the Renault factory. Friday, 17 May 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDKCIN2M.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018)

<sup>18</sup> Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. "Intellectuals and power." *Language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews* 205 (1977), 210; Michel Bosquet, ‘The “Prison Factory”’, *New Left Review* 73 (1972), 23.

Seen from outside, the closed Fordist world looks out at a wider society, but is restrained by industrial discipline.

Farocki argues representing workers at the factory produces a variety of political meanings. First, it collectivises representation, as ‘The work structure synchronizes the workers, the factory gates group them, and this process of compression produces the image of a work force’. Then, the collective can be characterised, for example as “‘the exploited” “the industrial proletariat” or “the society of the masses.””<sup>19</sup> Presence at the factory thus defines workers, and the setting serves as shorthand for their identity as a class. Whilst part of a representative tradition of factory images, strike photographs form a distinct subset. In a film installation, Farocki acknowledges this, explicitly distinguishing the example drawn from 1968 by using red titles (all others are white).<sup>20</sup> The location is no longer just a workplace, but a site of social contestation. In this context, by addressing the camera, workers are able to state both their identity as workers, but also take some control of the meaning associated with the factory. Workers visually form a united front when they mass together. Their physical organisation presents a claim to autonomy.<sup>21</sup> The intentions of the photographer, the publisher’s and editorial policies, and the preconceptions of the audience all mediate this process. The prior history of the setting imposes meaning on all of these. It also offers opportunity to bend these associations and use these references for tactical purposes.

Considering May ‘68 in a broader timescale has been a key feature in recent research.<sup>22</sup> This has focused on exploring the afterlives of May, or exploring how May was a beginning to a longer period of labour unrest.<sup>23</sup> Photographs also capture how the movement

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<sup>19</sup> Farocki, ‘Workers Leaving the Factory’.

<sup>20</sup> Farocki, *Workers Leaving the Factory in 11 Decades* <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/farocki-workers-leaving-the-factory-in-11-decades-t14332>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>21</sup> Simon Dell, *The image of the Popular Front: the masses and the media in interwar France*, (Houndmills, 2006), 99.

<sup>22</sup> Mann, ‘A Revival of Labor and Social Protest Research in France’, 203–214.

<sup>23</sup> Xavier Vigna, *L’Insubordination Ouvrière dans les années 68: Essai d’histoire politique des usines*, (Rennes, 2007).

looked back to previous cycles of contestation. Many *l'Humanité* photographs deliberately replicate the motifs and framing used in images of the Popular Front from 1936. Thus, Renault workers at Cléon gathered outside at tables, playing cards recall visions of department store workers doing the same.<sup>24</sup> There was organised, as well as spontaneous, entertainment. In 1968, Isabelle Aubret is pictured singing outside Billancourt on 21 May.<sup>25</sup> The paper *Nord Matin* pictured a worker with an accordion, and while the musical culture has changed, the photographic framing has not, as photographs show workers themselves with guitars under a sign announcing the occupation.<sup>26</sup> Occupied factories become the site for *boules*, cards, reading, volleyball, skipping (Figure 2.2).<sup>27</sup> Women at the Luchaire factory in Saint-Cloud read, knit and sew.<sup>28</sup> There is ping-pong at Renault, card games at the Gare St Lazare.<sup>29</sup> While the pastimes may have been incidental, it is a deliberate choice of the photographers to foreground them, and when the theme is so widespread, it begins to characterise the occupations themselves as a space of free time.

Several interpretations of May '68 explicitly characterise the movement as festive or ludic, and though these focused on the student movement, playfulness was not restricted to the occupied Latin Quarter.<sup>30</sup> Some photographs depict the factory forecourt as a place of solidarity and camaraderie. The photography of Jean-Claude Seine, who worked for *L'Humanité* and the CGT magazine *La Vie Ouvrière*, embodies these tropes.<sup>31</sup> The image 'Solidarité ouvrière' shows black and white workers hugging, while others climb ladders against the gate. Several pose standing on the top, but the atmosphere is relaxed.<sup>32</sup> In one

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<sup>24</sup> Artières and Zancarini-Fournel, *68: une Histoire Collective*.

<sup>25</sup> Isabelle Aubret Singing For The Strikers In France 1968, Getty Images, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/104414186>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>26</sup> Vigna, *L'Insubordination Ouvrière*, 71; Jacques Prayer/Gamma-Rapho, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/954055844>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>27</sup> *Mai 68: Instantanés d'Humanité*, 53, 57, 66; Artières and Zancarini-Fournel, *68: une Histoire Collective*.

<sup>28</sup> Archives Départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Bobigny, 83 Fi/173 14.

<sup>29</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/173 17, 83 Fi/173 12.

<sup>30</sup> Raymond Aron, *La Révolution introuvable. Réflexions sur les événements de mai*, (Paris, 1968); Gilles Lipovetsky, *L'Ère du Vide: essais sur l'individualisme contemporaine*, (Paris, 1983), 244-7.

<sup>31</sup> Lionel Bourg, Jean-Claude Seine, *Un Proletariat Rêvé: Photographies de Jean-Claude Seine*, (Genouilleux, 2010).

<sup>32</sup> Jean-Claude Seine, «Solidarité ouvrière». *Usine Chausson. Gennevilliers. Mai 68*.

image, the electric guitar replaces the inter-war touchstone of the accordion and in place of bicycles, there are now mopeds (Figure 2.3).<sup>33</sup> Seine's version of *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, referencing Manet's painting of a nude woman picnicking in the woods with fully dressed men is an image of female workers at the entrance to a radio factory in Amiens eating out on a small patch of grass surrounded by industry.<sup>34</sup> Photographer Robert Doisneau also used the title for a Renault advert in 1936 featuring a family picnic which closely resembles the leisure imagery linked to the Popular Front's introduction of paid holidays.

Simon Dell argues that in 1936, photographs of festivity captured only one aspect of the strikes, and their subsequent canonisation uncritically reproduced it.<sup>35</sup> In his view, these pictures took hold as union organisations established control over the strike and re-directed its aims towards pay and hours and away from challenging the social relations of production. Therefore, images of the 'joyous strike' served to combat grassroots militancy and redefine it using established models of social organisation. Within these depictions, themes such as cross dressers display the momentary reversal of rules described by Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque.<sup>36</sup> Bakhtin sees the medieval carnival (and its representation in later renaissance literature) as a movement from the realm of official culture characterised by work, hierarchy and authority into an unofficial one defined by reversal, parody and humour.<sup>37</sup> However, this is fundamentally a temporary process, and its transience serves to re-enforce the status quo.

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<sup>33</sup> *Piquet de grève. Usine Gobin-Daudé. Asnières. Mai 68*, Bourg and Seine, *Un Proletariat Rêvé*.

<sup>34</sup> Jean-Claude Seine, «*Déjeuner sur l'herbe*». *Usine d'appareils radio. Amiens. Mai 68*, Bourg and Seine, *Un Proletariat Rêvé*.

<sup>35</sup> Simon J Dell, 'Festival and Revolution: The Popular Front in France and the Press Coverage of the Strikes of 1936', *Art History*, 23, 4, (2000), 599.

<sup>36</sup> Jacquenet and Mesnet factory, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDI944WW.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>37</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson, (Minneapolis, London, 1984), 122-123.

In 1936, imagery of occupied department stores, and museums show these images of festivity extended beyond factories. Photographs show strikes at the Louvre,<sup>38</sup> Printemps,<sup>39</sup> and the Opera.<sup>40</sup> Strikers in a cinema lounge in front of the screen.<sup>41</sup> Card games are again prominent.<sup>42</sup> *Printemps* strikers pose for the camera with the toy horses, in a mock beauty contest, and after 13 days of occupation employees in an occupied department store hold a dance.<sup>43</sup>

However, it was in the factories where these images represented the starkest break from the highly regimented Fordist production, which subjected a worker's every action to disciplinary processes but alienated them in a highly fragmented production line.<sup>44</sup> Photography itself had been a key tool for the scientific management of labour, as part of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth's time and motion studies.<sup>45</sup> Yet, through leisure, the worker was again a whole person. Robert Capa and David Seymour's images of mealtimes and sleeping workers highlight the quotidian experience of occupation (Figure 2.4).<sup>46</sup> Seymour's images of

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<sup>38</sup> 'La grève au Louvre: [magasin]: [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse', <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028287z.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=193134;0>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>39</sup> 'La grève au Printemps: [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse', <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028306v.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=321890;0>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>40</sup> 'La grève à l'Opéra-Comique: le personnel occupe le théâtre: [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse', <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9046199r.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=386268;0>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>41</sup> 'Grève dans un cinéma: [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse', <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028290f.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=150215;2>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>42</sup> 'Grève aux Messageries Hachette: [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse', <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028284q.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=343349;2>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>43</sup> 'Mlle Paris chez les employés en grève du Printemps: [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse', <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028394f.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=407727;2>; '13ème jour de grève dans un grand magasin: les employés font le ménage: [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse', <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028355b.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=450646;0>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>44</sup> Michael Torigian, *Every factory a fortress: The French labor movement in the age of Ford and Hitler*. (Ahens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 1999), 8-13

<sup>45</sup> Sharon Corwin, 'Picturing efficiency: precisionism, Scientific Management, and the Effacement of Labor', *Representations* 84, 1 (2003), 139-165.

<sup>46</sup> David Seymour, Parisian suburbs. National strike for the 40 hour week, paid holidays and collective agreements. Workers during a sit-in at their factory. June 1936, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYB8D97.html>; Sleeping workers in Gaumont studios show this trope also extended beyond factories: 'La grève dans les Studios Gaumont : [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse',



workers sleeping on hay show that the uncomfortable conditions of occupation could be an egalitarian experience of shared adversity. Meals are prepared collectively (with musical accompaniment), or consist of bread and tinned meat piled on trestles.<sup>47</sup> Capa's depictions of mealtimes show picnics, but also show food donated by a sympathetic butcher.<sup>48</sup> A photograph of a bread delivery to one factory, seven men laden with all they can carry, illustrates both the occupations' dependency on broader support and their capacity to self-organise.<sup>49</sup> The recurrent presence of large quantities of food conveys well-supplied, organised occupations, and like the entertainments carries a sense of the good life.<sup>50</sup> In a cheese factory, workers play cards on a giant cheese display, with plenty of produce laying across it.<sup>51</sup> Images of families meeting across the walls also portray the workers as complete human beings, with lives outside the factory.<sup>52</sup>

According to Xavier Vigna, 1968 had 'reactivated' memories of the Popular Front in northern France, as strikers rediscovered the 'magnified gesture' of collective action. This combined with the tradition still carried by the older segments of the workforce.<sup>53</sup> Photography is part of this conceptualisation. A regional communist newspaper, *La Liberté* wrote that 'we saw again . . . the great and moving scenes of June 1936, when the workers,

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<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90282839.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=107296;4>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>47</sup> David Seymour, Boulogne-Billancourt. National strike at the Renault Factory for the 40-hour week, paid holidays and the collective labour agreement. Workers preparing the quick-lunch. June 1936 <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDHAK40.html>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>48</sup> Robert Capa, St Ouen, near Paris. May-June 1936. Sit-in strikers at the Lavalette Construction Company plant, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDZCB106.html>; Saint-Ouen, near Paris. May-June, 1936. Sit-in strikers at the Lavalette Construction Company plant. Black pudding sausages sent by a butcher supporting the strikers, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD1VDZ2H.html>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.parisenimages.fr/fr/galerie-collections/2455-1-greves-1936-ravitaillement-usines-goodrich-colombes-hauts-seine>

<sup>50</sup> Fosse Arenberg pendant les grèves de 1936, Compagnie des Mines d'Anzin, Cartes postales Delcampe, 1936, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fosse\\_Arenberg\\_pendant\\_les\\_gr%C3%A8ves\\_de\\_1936.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fosse_Arenberg_pendant_les_gr%C3%A8ves_de_1936.jpg)

<sup>51</sup> 'Grève dans l'alimentation chez Damoy ; employés jouant aux cartes sur des meules de gruyère : [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse',

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90455740.r=1%27Agence%20Meurisse1936greve%201936%20greve?rk=579402;0>

<sup>52</sup> Robert Capa, St Ouen, near Paris. May-June, 1936. Sit-in strikers at the Lavalette Construction Company plant, sat on the surrounding walls in order to see their friends and families, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYFTH0.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>53</sup> Vigna, *L'Insubordination Ouvrière*, 70-71.

occupying the factories, were fed by their wives or by the workers' municipalities.' A photograph of a woman passing a bag to a worker wearing a cap accompanied the article.<sup>54</sup> For Vigna, these photographs fix 1968 in a 'memorial frame' first expounded in 1936, and again in the strikes of 1947-48. They also freeze a particular moment of 1968, as the strikes pivot towards a conclusion. The articles express a wish for a 'Popular Government', a formulation generally used by the PCF, and so Vigna links the evocation of the Popular Front with a clear electoral impulse.<sup>55</sup>

The parallels with 1936 in the *L'Humanité* collection suggest a deliberate effort, supporting a policy of de-escalation and return to work. The need to present a united, pacific workforce seeking material demands marginalises revolutionary politics within the occupations, and the student 'false revolutionaries' who the paper initially condemned.<sup>56</sup> As the official paper of the Parti Communiste Français (PCF), *L'Humanité* clearly charts the party's public line through the events of 1968. This representation of the strike is especially important given the largest trade union, the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) was so closely linked to the party as to make distinction in policy impossible. The PCF and CGT opposed initial protests as the work of adventurists but were forced into participation following the May 13th outbreak of strike action, and the swing of public opinion against De Gaulle. Once past this initial opposition to protests, the CGT participated in strikes by attempting tight control of occupations, though this was subject to huge variations and despite a growth in influence, was still far short of enabling the party to 'instrumentalize' the movement.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *La Liberté*, 19 May 1968.

<sup>55</sup> Vigna, *L'Insubordination Ouvrière*, 71.

<sup>56</sup> George Marchais, *L'Humanité*, 3 May 1968.

<sup>57</sup> Maud Anne Bracke, 'The Parti Communiste Français in May 1968', Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder, and Joachim Scharloth, (eds.) *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960-1980*. (Berghahn Books, 2013) 64-83.

In some ways, the PCF had a more complex relationship with 1968 than this narrative might imply. May '68 did not mark a sea change in the fortunes of the PCF, but instead was part of a longer process of decline for the party that did not culminate until the 1980s.<sup>58</sup> By the late 1960s, the party was at an impasse determined by longer trends. The party maintained reformist policies and was unable to differentiate itself from social democrats, unable to draw on a resistance myth effectively claimed by the Gaullists, and still tainted by its Algerian war record. Furthermore, it had to negotiate its relationship with a supposedly supportive Soviet Union that was relatively content with De Gaulle's foreign policy of *détente*.<sup>59</sup> Given the Party's firm commitment to an electoral and institutional strategy of gaining power, and controlled, conventional forms of industrial action, it was unable to respond to the rapidly changing events.<sup>60</sup> This idealised version of the PCF/CGT's May '68 is present in photographs, though, where despite events on the ground, Communists were able to construct their own vision of the strike.

Particularly notable in this regard are images in the *l'Humanité* collection celebrating the return to work, otherwise almost entirely absent from the photographic record. Photographs depict workers voting to end strikes and the removal of banners from factory gates and roofs (Figure 2.5).<sup>61</sup> Here, workers peacefully vote for the return to work, rather than the drawn-out reality, as across June workers were forced back, sometimes by vicious police brutality, which led to deaths at Renault Flins and Peugeot Sochaux.<sup>62</sup> Neither is there any sign of the painful disappointment seen in the film *Reprise du Travail aux Usines*

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<sup>58</sup> David Bell and Byron Criddle. 'The decline of the French communist party', *British Journal of Political Science* 19, 4, (1989), 515-536; George Ross, 'Party decline and changing party systems: France and the French Communist Party', *Comparative Politics* (1992), 43-61; Andrew F. Knapp 'Historic decline: the French Communist Party and the parliamentary elections of 1986' *Journal of Communist Studies* 2, 2 (1986), 207-211.

<sup>59</sup> Bracke, 'The Parti Communiste Français in May 1968.' 68-70.

<sup>60</sup> Talks between CGT deputy general secretary Henri Krasucki and Secretary of State for Employment and future president Jaques Chirac point to a close relationship with the authorities. Daniel A. Gordon, 'Talking Out of Revolution: Henri Krasucki and Jacques Chirac's Secret Pigalle Negotiations and the Resolution of the French General Strike of May-June 1968.' *Labour History Review* 83, 3 (2018), 219-247.

<sup>61</sup> *Mai 68: Instantanés d'Humanité*, 96, 99-101.

<sup>62</sup> Kristin Ross, *May '68 and it's Afterlives*, (Chicago, 2008), 150.

*Wonder*, where a distraught young female worker harangues a union representative, shouting and crying that she will not return to the same conditions in the workshop, with the same boss and hierarchy.<sup>63</sup>

However, given that many of the *correspondant* photographers were not under the direct control of the paper, to suggest that the framing was the result of editorial policy is overly simplistic. The vast majority of the images in the archive are unpublished. The evocations of 1936 are so commonplace; they suggest that, among photographers affiliated with the communist press, the Popular Front was the lens through which they viewed 1968. It is in this context that we can see why Jean-Claude Seine's photographs were so evocative of '36 in 68'.<sup>64</sup> Strikers themselves may also have filtered their experience through this hegemonic lens. Older workers and militants would have memories, and Michael Seidman demonstrates that older militants were a significant in initiating strike action.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, it is plausible that occupiers either deliberately evoked '36 themselves or used their memory as a model for how they presented their own occupations. For example, visiting Trotskyist militant Maurice Brinton references allusions to 1936 during the Billancourt occupation, and that during the singing of the *Internationale*, the older workers know the full lyrics, the younger only the chorus. Someone mentions this is the first time in twenty years that they have heard the song inside Renault.<sup>66</sup>

### **Seizing Sight: Signs, Graffiti, and Effigies**

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<sup>63</sup> J Willemont, P Bonneau, *Reprise du Travail aux Usines Wonder*, (1968); Yann Darré, 'Le cinéma, l'art contre le travail', *Mouvements*, 3 (2003), 120-125.

<sup>64</sup> Bourg and Seine, *Un Proletariat Révélé*, 14.

<sup>65</sup> Michael Seidman, 'Workers in a repressive society of seductions: Parisian metallurgists in May-June 1968', *French Historical Studies*, (1993), 261.

<sup>66</sup> Maurice Brinton, 'Paris: May 1968', *Solidarity Pamphlet*, 30, (June 1968).

The *l'Humanité* collection documents many picketed gates adorned with various posters, slogans and banners.<sup>67</sup> These are a key feature of the broader genre of picket photography, which is evidently attracted to the visual dimension of protests. The widespread presence of posters, effigies, and banners directly address cameras as well as passers-by at the intersection of factory and street, and dictate photographic framing.

A Citroën factory at Gennevilliers has signs with demands, CGT stickers, posters on the gate and a tricolour flag.<sup>68</sup> This again refers to Popular Front iconography, where the PCF used red flags and tricolours flying together to meld patriotic pride in a revolutionary past with revolutionary aims for the future.<sup>69</sup> Another example from Citroën taken during CGT leader, chief negotiator and PCF central committee member Henri Krasucki's visit on the 7 June shows a crowd filling the frame, with the factory as a backdrop. The twinned flags dominate the foreground. (Figure 2.6)<sup>70</sup> The national-popular imagery recalls the idea of sovereignty within established traditions, but the ambiguous potential of the tricolour in 1968 is seen from the other side in its prominence during the 30 May pro-Gaullist demonstration. Antigoni Memou has shown how photographers assimilated this demonstration into the same iconographic repertoire as others in May, obscuring their clear ideological distinctions.<sup>71</sup> The prominence of the tricolour (as well as the attire and age of attendees) is one of the highly distinctive aspects of its visualisation. Photographs also obscure the aggressive sound of this demonstration, as chants of 'Cohn-Bendit au Dachau', and horns honked in rhythm to '*Algerie Française*' are silenced by an apparently peaceful nationalist image.<sup>72</sup>

Photojournalists' images of Billancourt focus on messages that address the immediate situation. Declarations of strike are ubiquitous, setting out concrete demands such as wage

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<sup>67</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/172, 199, 200, 205, 201, 202, 203, 206.

<sup>68</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/174 23.

<sup>69</sup> Jessica Wardhaugh, *In Pursuit of the People: Political culture in France 1934-39*, (Houndmills, 2009), 83-86.

<sup>70</sup> ADSSD, AD93, 98 Fi/680018.

<sup>71</sup> Antigoni Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, (Manchester, 2013), 119-121.

<sup>72</sup> Matthew Screech, 'The Myth of May 1968 in bandes dessinées', *Belphégor. Littérature populaire et culture médiatique*, 15, 2, (2017).

rises, retirement at 60 and bargaining rights. Phrasing such as ‘our 1000 F’ clearly frames the wage rise as already belonging to the workers, and demands are framed as ‘legitimate claims’.<sup>73</sup> These details envision a CGT narrative of material demands. On 27 May, workers at Billancourt rejected this narrow focus on workplace, rather than political, issues to the apparent surprise of union representatives.<sup>74</sup> A sign held up in front of Billancourt that day urges workers to ‘continue the action’.<sup>75</sup> In this context, it is notable the *L’Humanité* collection portrays the return to work, depicting workers voting to end strikes and the removal of banners from factory gates and roofs.<sup>76</sup>

By contrast, one of Barbey’s photographs Billancourt contains signs stating: ‘Students, Workers, Solidarity’, and ‘we have full/plenty in the boots 'my general'’ (the idiom translates to being fed up with a situation).<sup>77</sup> These statements, and others like them, function as internal captions when reproduced in photographs, explaining the context of these images without editorial mediation.<sup>78</sup> However, whilst limiting editorial control at the level of publication and redistribution, these slogans reflect how messages were shaped and circulated at a local level. They illustrate local power dynamics, rather than the unmediated voice of an idealised worker. The relationship between *L’Humanité* and the CGT is reflected in the posters seen in the paper’s collection. In front of walls adorned by CGT posters, occupiers hold up copies of the paper.<sup>79</sup> There is also an assertion of presence: ‘*En grève depuis le 20.5.68 Usine Occupée*’ (On strike since 20.5.68. Factory Occupied). Pointing to the different patterns of unionisation at different factories, some banners show inter-union solidarity ‘CGT

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<sup>73</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/174 311.

<sup>74</sup> Chris Reynolds, ‘May ‘68: a contested history’, *Sens Public* (2007).

<sup>75</sup> Strike At Renault Factories, 27 May 1968, Getty Images, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/104404735>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>76</sup> *Mai 68: Instantanés d’Humanité*, 96, 99-101.

<sup>77</sup> Bruno Barbey, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD0VTGY.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>78</sup> Matt, Perry, “‘Murderer, Delinquent or Unemployed’”: Photojournalism and Visualizing the French Unemployed in the 1930s’, *Labour History Review* 84, 2, (2019), 161.

<sup>79</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/172 55.

CDFT FO, *Nous sommes en Grève pour nos salaires 40h*’, (CGT CDFT FO, We are on strike for our salaries and 40 hours).<sup>80</sup>

Other signs explicitly refute the desire to return to work, stating the length and commitment of the strike to emphasise demands. On June 5 workers still posing with *L’Humanité* have a sign that reads ‘*3e Semaine: La Reprise du Travail se fera Après satisfaction de nos légitimes revendications, salaires, Accord d’establishment, libertés syndicales*’ (3<sup>rd</sup> week: the return to work will be after the satisfaction of our legitimate claims, salaries, accord with the company, freedom of association).<sup>81</sup> One of many signs visible in images of a large picket at a Citroën factory declares it ‘*En grève illimité*’ (on unlimited strike).<sup>82</sup> Another from Carbone Lorraine’s plant on the same day announces ‘*Usine Occupée Pas de Reprise*’ (Occupied factory no return).<sup>83</sup> At St Ouen: ‘*Nous ne Cedons Pas, Nous ne Rentrons Pas*’ (We’re not giving up, we won’t go back in!).<sup>84</sup> Other signs at the ARMCO Pierrefitte factory restate the commitment of striking workers: ‘*33eme Jour en Grève*’ (33 days on strike), ‘*5eme semaine, Nous avons toujours le moral*’ (fifth week, our morale is still strong), ‘*Tous pour un, un pour tous*’ (all for one and one for all), and ‘*nous continuons*’ (we continue).<sup>85</sup> One occupied factory, with red flags out the window declares ‘*non à l’aumône, oui au maintien de la grève*’ (no to alms, yes to maintaining the strike).<sup>86</sup>

Graffiti on the wall of the Gennevilliers plant proclaims ‘*il faut tenir et lutter*’ (we must hold and fight) in large letters, overlapping a much smaller poster headlined ‘increases in labour wages for all’ filled with illegibly small text.<sup>87</sup> Other graffiti followed similar conventions to signs and banners containing material demands, graffiti at Billancourt

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<sup>80</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/1867.

<sup>81</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/174 311.

<sup>82</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/174 77.

<sup>83</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/172 207.

<sup>84</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/174 285.

<sup>85</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/174, 271, 277, 280, 281.

<sup>86</sup> ADSSD, 83 Fi/172 48.

<sup>87</sup> ADSSD, 98Fi/680015.

demanded ‘our 40 hours, retirement at 60’ (Figure 2.7).<sup>88</sup> The witty libertarian slogans daubed around occupied universities are a key touchstone of evocations of May and are often used by those highlighting the cultural rather than political heritage of the movement, ‘reducing the language of May to a few poetic phrases’.<sup>89</sup> In the factories, the content might be more prosaically centred on material issues, but these resist recuperation into a discourse of ephemeral communication. However, the Gennevilliers example shows this should not be reduced to ‘bread and butter’ issues in all cases, the political imperative of class struggle literally overwrites wage claims.

The form also retains political implications, as graffiti offers a means of expression with different associations than other signs. It can be deployed without much preparation and it is often used by those excluded from broader political processes.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, it constitutes a politicisation of space. By putting demands/statements onto the fabric of the factory itself, it expresses control over, or at least a claim to use, over the walls it covers. Regardless of content, some practitioners and critics see the defacement of private property as ‘inherently political’, by challenging norms of capitalist ownership.<sup>91</sup> The ephemeral nature of graffiti means that photography plays an important role in documenting it, as well as capturing the integral relationship it has to its immediate environment. In this context, photographs of strike demands graffitied on an occupied building, alongside pickets make their claims in several ways. They claim ownership of the factory structure, and use it to state what is owed. They also serve as speech for the silent workers pictured. Again, this is a kind of internal caption, providing a voice and content for the address to camera formed by the posed workers. When seen in light of trade union involvement, it is important to stress that

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<sup>88</sup> Guy Le Querrec, Boulogne-Billancourt. During the strike at the Renault factory. Friday, 17 May 1968. <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDKCILBY.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>89</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 185-186.

<sup>90</sup> Lisa K. Waldner and Betty A. Dobratz, ‘Graffiti as a form of contentious political participation’, *Sociology Compass*, 7, 5, (2013), 377-389.

<sup>91</sup> Waldner and Dobratz, ‘Graffiti as a form of contentious political participation’, 379-382.



this content is still speaking on behalf of the workers. It is easy to perceive the image as the ‘authentic’ collective speech of workers; we must be attuned to the coercive power of the unions in shaping the message, and presenting themselves as the voice of the workers.

Effigies are another recurring feature in the images. A well-attested part of diverse repertoires of protest, they are an exemplary example of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque again present at the factory gates.<sup>92</sup> Charles Tilly identifies them as part of the ‘revolutionary’ repertoire carried over from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and E.P. Thompson counts them as a component of the ‘rough music’ tradition.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, there are effigies present in 1936.<sup>94</sup> At Billancourt in 1968, a large effigy hangs from a tree, trussed in ropes to hold its bulky stuffed sacks together, with a carton face and the label ‘le capital’ (Figure 2.8). Other signs also adorn the effigy, again demanding ‘our 1000 F’. Signs declaring the factory on strike and occupied are present at the foot of the tree and on the wall behind, so the effigy sits within a series of unequivocal statements.<sup>95</sup> One is present at the gate of Berliet in Lyon (see below), a long skinny caricature, whose visibly protruding nose is an allusion to De Gaulle.<sup>96</sup> This personalised response, relying on the carnivalesque, was part of a broad repertoire, anchored in longer-term traditions that was seen across the protests of 1968 in different national contexts. Ilaria Favretto has shown they were present in Italian labour disputes in the period, questioning the divisions between pre-modern and modern repertoires of protest.<sup>97</sup> In

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<sup>92</sup> Florian Göttke, ‘Burning effigies with Bakhtinian laughter’, *The European Journal of Humour Research*, 3, 2, (2015), 129-144.

<sup>93</sup> Charles Tilly, ‘The Routinization of Protest in Nineteenth-Century France’ (Michigan, 1978). draft of paper for the Fourth Annual Colloquium in Nineteenth-Century French Studies), 6; E.P. Thompson, ‘Rough music reconsidered’, *Folklore*, 103, 1, (1992) 3-26.

<sup>94</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale Française, Paris, ‘grève dans une usine de métallurgie, mannequin pendu’ [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028321j.r=greveusine%20usine?rk=278971:2>, (last accessed 20/06/2018)

<sup>95</sup> Bruno Barbey, Boulogne-Billancourt. A dummy in the form of a factory boss being hung outside the Renault car factory, which is on strike, 17 May ‘68, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDZVZIRY.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>96</sup> Vincent Porhel and Jean-Luc De Ochandiano, *Lyon 68. Deux décennies contestataires*, (Lyon: Lieux Dits, 2017), 94; Institut d’histoire sociale CGT du Rhône. Caricatures of De Gaulle were also a key component of posters and magazines, leaning on the silhouetted nose and *képi* cap.

<sup>97</sup> Ilaria Favretto, ‘Rough music and factory protest in post-1945 Italy’, *Past & Present*, 228, 1, (2015), 207-247.

photographs, modern technology allows historic techniques that would have been transient in a Bakhtinian sense to be preserved and disseminated.

Effigies could also be brutally direct in their invocation of execution. One example has the sign '*Pompidou tu seras pendu*' (Pompidou you will hang).<sup>98</sup> Another is used in an Atelier Populaire poster.<sup>99</sup> The threat to the personage of the boss was not merely symbolic. 1968 saw bosses held hostage at Sud-Aviation in Nantes, Renault-Cléon, the Compagnie des piles industrielles in Elbeuf, and at the Kléber-Colombes factories at Elbeuf, Le Havre and Rouen. These drew on a tradition of 'Bossnapping' that had antecedents in the Popular Front and the strikes of 1947.<sup>100</sup> Nick Parsons argues that the relative weakness of collective bargaining, and corresponding labour militancy produced a 'permissive ideational environment' for illegal action towards managers in France dating back to the Nineteenth century.<sup>101</sup> Effigies represent a clear link between wider anti-capitalism and local circumstances, opposing capital, not just in general, but in the specific person of the boss.

### **Iconic factories: Berliet, Sud-Aviation, and Renault Boulogne-Billancourt**

Alongside the effigy, the entrance to the Berliet factory in Lyon are a striking example of another way presenting the factory gates could be manipulated to communicate striker's aims. Alongside graffiti and the effigy, the letters of the firm's name were rearranged to spell out *Liberté*, subverting the factory branding and making a declaration of control (Figure 2.9). Like the effigies, this is also a direct reference to the owner, given the company name is the name of the boss, capital personified.

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<sup>98</sup> ADSSD, 98Fi/68 00 70 B1.

<sup>99</sup> Bnf, [Mai 1968]. 'En lutte pour les libertés syndicales, Atelier populaire ex Ecole des Beaux-arts', [affiche] / [non identifié], <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90182423?rk=5171699;2>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>100</sup> Graeme Hayes, 'Bossnapping: situating repertoires of industrial action in national and global contexts.' *Modern & Contemporary France*, 20, 2, (2012), 185-201.

<sup>101</sup> Nick Parsons, 'Legitimizing illegal protest: The permissive ideational environment and 'bossnappings' in France', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 51, 2, (2013), 288-309.

The rearrangement of letters is often referred to as symbolic of a broader conception of May, though the specifics of what is being symbolised vary. Julian Bourg dates the sign change to 22 May and mentions it in a list of sketches typifying the strike (striking footballers, authors and weathermen, department store occupation and narrow defeat of the censure of govt.).<sup>102</sup> In this case it is part of a familiar shorthand of the diversity and originality of occupations that mark the high watermark of May. Julian Jackson references the sign as a rare glimpse of the voice of workers themselves, unobscured by the narratives of trade union representatives.<sup>103</sup> This highlights the power of the sign as a physical presence, and refers to the factory gates as a marker of authenticity. Rod Kedward mentions Berliet as an example of reciprocal ‘carnavalesque’ influence between workers and the student movement.<sup>104</sup> Yet attributing this *détournement* to student involvement is to miss the earlier precedents at Berliet. Though the sign change is often associated with 1968, it also took place in 1944.<sup>105</sup> Though the factory had not been occupied since 1936, in 1944 workers were participating in the management of Berliet.<sup>106</sup> Like Louis Renault, Marius Berliet was arrested for collaboration. The factory was then requisitioned, and under Marcel Mosnier, a Communist engineer, workers actively participated in the running of the firm, via a *comité patriotique d’entreprise* (later *comité d’entreprise*).<sup>107</sup> The sign thus makes an obvious reference to the liberation itself, but hints at the possibilities of self-management. ‘*Berliet-Liberté*’ is thus both evidence of 1968’s optimism, but more significantly, it is also testament to an intergenerational experience of worker control. Though the photograph is often reproduced anonymously, one version was taken by Alain Deneulin.<sup>108</sup> Deneulin also

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<sup>102</sup> Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought*, (Montreal, 2007).

<sup>103</sup> Julian Jackson, ‘Rethinking May ‘68’, in Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne, and James S. Williams, (eds.) *May ‘68: rethinking France’s last revolution*, (Houndmills, 2011).

<sup>104</sup> Rod Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu*, (London: Penguin, 2006), 425.

<sup>105</sup> Adam Steinhouse, *Workers’ Participation in Post-liberation France*, (Lanham, Oxford, 2001), 110.

<sup>106</sup> Vincent Porhel and Jean-Luc De Ochandiano, *Lyon 68. Deux décennies contestataires*, (Lyon, 2017).

<sup>107</sup> Steinhouse, *Workers’ Participation in Post-liberation France*, 102.

<sup>108</sup> Stéphane Sirot, *Le Syndicalisme, le politique et la grève, France et Europe: XIXe –XXIe siècles* (Nancy, 2011).

photographed the Algerian war, and the Popular Front.<sup>109</sup> His image of Saint-Fons chemical workers from 1936 is built around the gates, a perfect example of the conventions described above. A crowd of smiling workers salute the camera through the bars, as others lie against them, alongside children and a woman with a bicycle.<sup>110</sup>

Berliet is not the only image where factory signs feature prominently. Gilles Caron photographed workers looking over the top of the sign at Sud-Aviation in Nantes (Figure 2.10). Sud-Aviation is particularly significant, given that they were the first to occupy during May itself. The factory had been involved in a local dispute since early April, which rolled into the events of May, culminating in the barricading of the factory on the 14<sup>th</sup> and the boss being taken hostage.<sup>111</sup> The multiple uses of this photograph during May itself illustrate the importance of photographs within contemporary reportage, but also the diverse meanings that framing and captioning could add to one image.

Caron's picture appeared in *L'Express*'s exceptional supplement published on 20 May.<sup>112</sup> This was the last issue printed until 17 June. The magazine explained in an insert that strikes had disrupted production, but that the authors remained supportive of the action.<sup>113</sup> As opposed to the internal captioning of graffiti or at Berliet, here external captions had a marked effect on the image's meanings. In *L'Express*, the photo is captioned 'ils sont fous, ces parisiens' (They are mad, these Parisians) and illustrates an article on '*Provinces: la révolution amortie*' (Provinces: The dampened revolution). The article describes calm occupations, in contrast with violent disruption in Paris and the total collapse of services in the capital. Coupled with the glance off-camera, the workers appear in a relaxed, informal pose. Antioni

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<sup>109</sup> Alain Deuneulin, *Pacification: Regard D'Alain Deuneulin Sur La Guerre D'Algerie*, (1988).

<sup>110</sup> Alain Deneulin, *Occupation d'une usine de l'industrie chimique à Saint-Fons pendant les grèves de 1936*, Photothèque IHS-CGT, [http://www.numerique.culture.fr/pub-fr/vignette.html?img=data/2001/FR-DC-X0004\\_001/0001.JPG&id=FR-DC-X0004\\_001](http://www.numerique.culture.fr/pub-fr/vignette.html?img=data/2001/FR-DC-X0004_001/0001.JPG&id=FR-DC-X0004_001), (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>111</sup> François Le Madec, *L'Aubépine de Mai: Chronique d'une usine occupée — Sud-Aviation Nantes 1968*, (Nantes, 1988).

<sup>112</sup> *L'Express, Supplement Exeptionnel*, 20 May 1968.

<sup>113</sup> Audrey Leblanc, 'The Color of May 1968', *Études photographiques*, 26, (2010)

Memou refers to this image, which appears uncredited in *Action* no.7 as one of the only photograph of workers in that publication.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, Memou argues that there is no visual sign in Caron's image that the workers are occupying or even on strike, and that 'only the caption reminds us that the photo was taken at Sud-Aviation in Nantes, the first factory that was occupied'. Given the prominence of the sign in the image, this is stretching credibility. Furthermore, the very presence of the workers establishes a sense of dominance, drawing parallels with the coverage of *La Vie Ouvrière*. However, she sees the photographs as 'symptomatic of the ... all-embracing iconography which excluded workers demonstrating'. Acknowledging their pose expresses control of the factory, 'Nevertheless, they seem static, in contrast to the students, who appear militant.'<sup>115</sup> Memou mistakes movement for militancy, and sees the images of workers only in relation to the images of students. Whilst this is an important comparison, it glosses over how the repertoire used by workers had its own history and aims.

In fact, this photograph was used to convey a sense of movement. The caption used in *Action* is '*Ils ont montré la voie – première usine occupée de la grève de Mai 68*' (They showed the way - the first occupied factory of the May '68 strike). The effect, coupled with the glance to the right, is to portray the workers looking forwards and fits into an interpretation seeking to define the working class as the movement's vanguard. The worker's posture, perhaps overseeing the movement, echoes the common depiction of union leaders addressing occupations from atop a podium.<sup>116</sup> The accompanying article on events in Nantes roundly contradicts *L'Express*'s interpretation of the provinces, subtitled 'Worker combativity in the occupied factories', it devotes significant coverage to roadblocks and 'self-defence'.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 79; *Action*, 7, 11 June 1968, 4, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2568> (last accessed 23/08/19); There are other examples: workers are visible in a second photo from May 17<sup>th</sup> in issue 3, no.6 shows workers and peasants demonstrating in Nantes, and the page before in no.7 shows workers listening to a student speaker during the combat at Flins; *Action*, 3, 21 May 1968, 4; *Action*, 6, 10 June 1968, 4; *Action*, 7, 11 June 1968, 2.

<sup>115</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 79.

<sup>116</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 20-23.

<sup>117</sup> *Action*, 7, (11 June 1968), 4.

Unlike at Berliet, where the CGT ran the occupation with ‘quasi-military organisation’, Sud-Aviation was a notable site of contact between students and workers.<sup>118</sup> On 14 May, students brought money and blankets, and stayed to talk to the workers, who despite an awareness of ideological differences, warmly received them.<sup>119</sup>

The most iconic factory in France – Renault at Boulogne-Billancourt - also had a unique entrance, which took on its own iconographic significance. Located on the Île Seguin, Billancourt’s bridge became a ubiquitous presence in images of the factory, and this extended to times of contestation. Photographs of crowds streaming across in 1968, are almost identical to David Seymour’s from 1936.<sup>120</sup> The bridge is prominent in several other photographs from the Popular Front, which all focus on crowds of workers, often with raised fists.<sup>121</sup> There are further continuities in post-war images of crowds of workers, and writing on walls during strikes in 1950 and 51.<sup>122</sup> In 1968, crowds are pictured outside during the strike in a candid manner, large numbers of people milling around and talking, but without the dynamism of a demonstration, or deliberate gaze of a staged photograph.<sup>123</sup> In another example, discussions are happening across the gate, while passers-by look on.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Porhel and Ochandiano, *Lyon 68*.

<sup>119</sup> Vigna and Zancarini-Fournel, ‘Les rencontres improbables dans « les années 68 »’

<sup>120</sup> Bruno Barbey, Boulogne Billancourt. Strike at the Renault factory. Meeting of the CGT, 17 May 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDKPBR8.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19); Ouvriers en grève aux Usines Renault : [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90282498.r=agence%20meurisse%201936renault%20renault?rk=42918;4>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>121</sup> Photo 12/Alamy, ‘Strike at the Renault factory in France after the rise to power of the Popular Front. June 19, 1936’, <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-strike-at-the-renault-factory-in-france-after-the-rise-to-power-of-113149526.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018); BnF, ‘Les ouvriers de l’Usine Renault en grève, sont massés sur le pont Seguin’, [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028243s.r=agence%20meurisse%201936renault%20renault?rk=21459;2>, (last accessed 20/06/2018); BnF, ‘Les ouvriers de l’Usine Renault en grève, sont massés sur le pont Seguin’, [photographie de presse] / Agence Meurisse, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9028245m.r=agence%20meurisse%201936renault%20renault?rk=64378;0>; <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-geographytravel-france-politics-strike-pickets-in-front-of-the-renault-10872642.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>122</sup> [Workers of the Renault company vote the strike, on June 9, 1951 at the plant of Boulogne-Billancourt, France, AFP/Getty Images, https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/859746092](https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/859746092); Billancourt. General Strike At Renault Factories On February 1950, Keystone-France/Gamma, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/107420346>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>123</sup> Richard Phelps, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/952125888>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>124</sup> Aimé Dartus / INA via Getty Images, <https://www.gettyimages.ae/license/600214983>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

Billancourt, like Berliet, demonstrates how these images were historically rooted in past struggles and their aesthetic conventions. Their depictions evoked a whole complex of struggles, but the location is also a reference for broader social changes. The car industry had long used photographs for their own purposes, and these had a strong influence on the presentation of the factory itself.<sup>125</sup> Robert Doisneau's pictures of chassis rolling in over the bridge and of cars coming out use identical framing to the strike images.<sup>126</sup> The factory is also the setting for René-Jacques's sleek, stylised images of car production, visually excluding workers from the frame in favour of the seemingly autonomous commodities.<sup>127</sup> There is a sharp contrast with the wrecked forms of overturned cars which proliferated in press coverage following the night of the barricades, and police photography which also centred on property damage.<sup>128</sup> Outside factories too, Magnum Photographer Bruno Barbey photographed barricades made of wrecked car parts at Flins-sur-Seine on the 7 June.<sup>129</sup> These ubiquitous tokens of France's modernisation become targets for rioters and photographers, who capture evidence of the scope and violence of the barricades, and if not a direct critique of consumerism, hostility to its immediate manifestations.

Whilst these are telling visual references to icons of France's post-war consumer society, Jackie Clarke explored how French modernisation had a longer and more complex history stretching back to the interwar era.<sup>130</sup> Iconic factories, especially, can trace part of their notoriety back to this period. Billancourt's place as France's largest factory and key in the process of Fordist modernisation made it synecdoche for the whole of the country's

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<sup>125</sup> Pierre Lannoy. 'L'usine, la photographie et la nation. L'entreprise automobile fordiste et la production des photographes industriels', *Genèses*, 3, (2010), 114-135.

<sup>126</sup> France, Billancourt, Renault Factory, 1945, [Getty Images](https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/121510912), <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/121510912>; Bridge Over The Seine, Renault Central, Ile Seguin, Boulogne-Billancourt, 1951, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/121509741>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>127</sup> Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the reordering of French culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996), 15-19.

<sup>128</sup> Archives de Préfecture de police de Paris, Le Pré Saint-Gervais, FB art 6, *Événements de Mai 68*, bât P

<sup>129</sup> Bruno Barbey, Yvelines department. Flins-sur-Seine. Barricade near Renault car factory. 7 June 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDIU7FY2.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>130</sup> Jackie Clarke, 'Engineering a New Order in the 1930s: The Case of Jean Coutrot', *French Historical Studies*, 24, 1 (2001), 63-86.



industry. Also significant was its place at the heart of prior labour struggles, earning the name ‘*la bagné de Renault*’ - Renault’s prison. Again, the parallels between representations of factory and prison are visible.<sup>131</sup> The monumental architecture of the factory also played into another name, with the power dynamics reversed, that of the ‘Workers fortress’.<sup>132</sup>

This metaphor is found in Gérald Bloncourt’s photographs, published in *La Vie Ouvrière* and *L’Humanité*.<sup>133</sup> He had previously photographed Thorez, and visited the USSR, and during May ‘68 was based at Billancourt for 33 days and nights. However, he also went out to see the barricades and took the photo that would be on the cover of *Nouvel Observateur*.<sup>134</sup> His photographs of Billancourt in ‘68 show oceanic crowd shots, barricades on the doors, workers relaxing, making banners, and using bikes to communicate across occupied factory. Significantly, Bloncourt also explored transnationalism through his work, deliberately highlighting the presence of migrant workers during the occupation, and depicting a sign in Spanish inviting immigrant workers to general assembly.<sup>135</sup> This work was intimately connected with his work in the factories, in an interview Bloncourt explained that when photographing migrant shantytowns, he was mistaken for a police officer, and only when one of the inhabitants turned out to know him from Billancourt was he allowed to continue.<sup>136</sup>

In the *L’Humanité* collection, it is Billancourt which hosted the CGT’s set piece speeches, where union figures are shot in close-up, with the crowd and the factory deployed

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<sup>131</sup> Farocki, ‘Workers Leaving the Factory’.

<sup>132</sup> Matt Perry, ‘Bombing Billancourt: Labour Agency and the Limitations of the Public Opinion Model of Wartime France’, *Labour history Review*, 77, 1, (2012), 49-74, 67.

<sup>133</sup> Bloncourt was a Haitian immigrant and prolific photojournalist with close ties to the PCF (see Chapter 5).

<sup>134</sup> Gérald Bloncourt and Johann Petitjean, ‘L’œil, le monde et la colère: Gérald Bloncourt en ses images. Propos recueillis par Johann Petitjean et transcrits avec l’aide de Christophe Keroslian’, *Cahiers d’histoire. Revue d’histoire critique* 132 (2016), 157-184.

<sup>135</sup> Gérald Bloncourt, La Fortresse Ouvrière, <http://bloncourtblog.net/2015/11/renault-la-forteresse-ouvriere.html> this was part of a much broader theme for Bloncourt as, beginning in the 1950s, he photographed Portuguese immigrant families in the Bidonvilles around Paris. In the 1960s, he moved with them to the factories and retraced their journeys, photographing Portuguese workers at Citroen, clandestinely photographing in Portugal, and was finally present for the Carnation Revolution in 1974. <http://bloncourtblog.net/2014/07/l-immigration-portugaise.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>136</sup> Bloncourt and Petitjean, ‘L’œil, le monde et la colère: Gérald Bloncourt en ses images’.



as background.<sup>137</sup> These photographs knowingly deploy the resonances of Billancourt's reputation, while reducing the occupying workers to a passive mass, while the speaker is in focus, speaking for the workers.<sup>138</sup> Others invoked this status as well, particularly those visiting the factory as means of 'going to the people'. This encompassed intellectuals such as Simone Weil, but had parallels in the worker-priests, who expanded catholic influence, but also increasingly supported labour struggles in the 1960s.<sup>139</sup> There is almost an entire genre devoted to what Kristin Ross refers to as 'any number of famous photos of Sartre at the factory gate'.<sup>140</sup> In fact, when referring to this episode, it is the photographs, rather than the events, which are the referent, confirming Sartre as a 'committed' intellectual, speaking directly to 'the people'.<sup>141</sup> Sartre was not just an example of this trend, he became identified with its propagation: according to Tony Judt, he coined the line '*Il ne faut pas désespérer Billancourt*' (One must not disappoint Billancourt).<sup>142</sup> Ian Birchall has contested this, but it demonstrates that regardless of the facts, and probably in part due to the preponderance of photographs, Sartre is associated with the factory.<sup>143</sup>

In 1968, these factors combined to facilitate the 'Improbable meeting' of 17 May, where student activists led a march to Billancourt.<sup>144</sup> Workers and students were often separated during May itself, as protest in central Paris drew students from the suburbs closet to industry (for example in Nanterre, where the university closed) into the centre of the city.<sup>145</sup> However, this generalisation does not reflect the symbolic power of brief encounters, such as at Sud-Aviation and Billancourt, to fuel an aspiration for 'social de-compartmentalisation'.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> ADSSD, AD 93, 97 Fi/680182; *L'Humanité*, 28 May 1968, front cover.

<sup>138</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 20-23.

<sup>139</sup> Xavier Vigna and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, 'Les rencontres improbables dans « les années 68 »', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 101, 1, (2009), 163-177.

<sup>140</sup> Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, 17.

<sup>141</sup> Christine Daigle, *Jean-Paul Sartre*, (London and New York, 2010), 7.

<sup>142</sup> Tony Judt, *Past imperfect: French intellectuals, 1944-1956*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 211.

<sup>143</sup> Ian H. Birchall, *Sartre against Stalinism*, (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004), 2-3.

<sup>144</sup> Vigna and Zancarini-Fournel, 'Les rencontres improbables dans « les années 68 »'.

<sup>145</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Long '68: Radical Protest and Its Enemies*, (London: Allen Lane, 2018), 141.

<sup>146</sup> Vigna and Zancarini-Fournel, 'Les rencontres improbables dans « les années 68 »'.

Furthermore, some militants took inspiration from such meetings to go and then work and organise in the factories in the years following 1968, in the practice of *Etablissement*.<sup>147</sup>

Depictions of the march to Billancourt illustrate how representations of workers intersects with the iconography of May as a youth revolt. The cover image of the third issue of *Action* depicts the march, but represents only the demonstration itself.<sup>148</sup> The only evidence of its exceptional nature is the industrial backdrop. According to Antigoni Memou, this is typical of the activist press's failure to represent the student/worker alliance, which was called for in the movement's rhetoric.<sup>149</sup> For Memou, iconography reflects the wider difficulties of collaboration. As in her analysis of Caron's image, students are presented as young, mobile and 'impulsive', whereas workers are static and tied to their posts. In Memou's argument, this static posture is opposed to the 'militancy' of the students. However, these images signify militancy though a different iconographic repertoire, emphasising control and resolve.

However, the gap in representation is undeniable. It may be the result of deliberate efforts by unions to prevent radicals contacting the occupied factories. Brinton offers a transcript of a CGT Poster 'placarded all over Boulogne-Billancourt' he saw on the 13 May warning 'Workers Beware!' Amid accusations that dangerous radicals tear down CGT posters, are protected by police, and distribute misleading literature with 'weird and tempting' titles, there is an explicit call to defend the space of the occupation: 'It is therefore important not to allow these people to come to the gates of our factory, to sully our trade-union

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<sup>147</sup> Donald Reid, 'Etablissement: working in the factory to make revolution in France', *Radical History Review* 88, 1 (2004), 83-111.

<sup>148</sup> *Action*, 3, (21 May 1968), <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2548>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>149</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 77-81.

organisation and our CGT militants'.<sup>150</sup> On 18 May, following the visit of student demonstrators, pickets and banners at the gates are depicted much the same as before.<sup>151</sup>

Other photographs from the 17 May march by Parisian photographer Elie Kagan, Magnum photojournalist Guy Le Querrec and student activist Gérard-Aimé all echo this separation in the framing of their photographs. Kagan's pictures depict workers arrayed on the walls, president of the National Union of Students of France (*Union nationale des étudiants de France* or UNEF) Jacques Sauvageot speaking into a loudhailer, and a small group of immigrant workers (Figure 2.11.). However, all three are pictured separately.<sup>152</sup> The workers line the wall, barely more than silhouettes. The immigrant workers are at ground level, and part of the crowd. However, when contrasted with Sauvageot's obvious act of speaking, they are passively observing. One of Querrec's images does capture both groups in the same frame, but perspective again reinforces the distance between them. Querrec pictures Sauvageot again on the podium with megaphone, the workers as silhouettes above his left shoulder. Significantly, though the crowd faces the factory, this means those on the platform all have their backs to it.<sup>153</sup> In Gérard-Aimé's image, participants in the demonstration discuss with one another, the podium is out of focus in the background, and the factory further behind still. The workers on the walls are visible, but so blurred as to become a single shape.<sup>154</sup> The mediatisation of this event is evident in a colour press image, which omits the workers entirely, focusing on the podium, but also catches another photographer at work, and the presence of a television crew.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Brinton, 'Paris: May 1968'.

<sup>151</sup> Picket Fences In Front Of The Renault Factories At Boulogne-Billancourt In 1968, Keystone-France/[Getty Images](https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/105218093), <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/105218093>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>152</sup> Elie Kagan, *Mai 68 D'un Photographe*, (Paris, 2008), 130-131.

<sup>153</sup> Guy Le Querrec, Boulogne-Billancourt. Place Jules Guesde. Meeting between students and workers during the strike at the Renault factory. Friday, May 17th 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDKCIYW0.html> ; <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDKCZT0F.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>154</sup> Students In Front Of The Renault Factory, Gérard Aimé/[Getty Images](https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/453483527), <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/453483527>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>155</sup> May 1968 General Strike In France, Rolls Press/Popperphoto, [Getty Images](https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/596078455), <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/596078455>, (last accessed 20/06/2018). TV footage was shot but never

As part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1968, Audrey Leblanc and Dominique Versavel examined how the most frequently re-used images of May have taken on an iconic status, removing them from their initial contexts. However, the alternative visual repertoire is under-explored by Leblanc and Versavel, as there is only limited space given to non-professional photography, and the focus remains firmly centred on the capital.<sup>156</sup> In particular, strike photographs have remained either in archives, personal collections, or have simply never been re-published beyond their original publication. Indeed, given the ready availability of personal cameras in the 1960s, there are likely to be large numbers of photographs in personal possession, which though difficult to reach, could offer an extremely rich source. The worker/student separation seen in these image is therefore not just a product of choices made during events themselves, but is further replicated and reinforced by the structures in which the photographs are collected, archived and reproduced. In light of this, the photos of the Billancourt march are all the more distinctive. With minor changes in framing, images of the Billancourt march produced by activists shifted the focus and emphasised solidarity.

An *Atelier Populaire* poster used an image of students outside Billancourt, looking up to silhouettes on the walls with the slogan ‘victory belongs to the workers’.<sup>157</sup> Unlike Sauvageot looking towards the crowd, these figures looked up to the workers with raised fists, embodying a desire for unity and the hope of decisive intervention, as if pleading with the workers to come down from the factory and into the streets. Issue 3 of *Action* contained a similar photograph, but this time shot from within the demonstrating crowd. A raised fist frames the workers on the walls, and links the two formations within the image.<sup>158</sup> The poster used a distinct style, rather than straight presentation of a single photo either surrounded or

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aired during May itself, though is often used retrospectively Vigna and Zancarini-Fournel, ‘Les rencontres improbables dans « les années 68 »’.

<sup>156</sup> Audrey Leblanc and Dominique Versavel, (eds.),  *Icônes de Mai 68: Les images ont une histoire*, (Paris: BnF, 2018).

<sup>157</sup> BnF, [Mai 1968]. ‘La Victoire appartient aux travailleurs’, [affiche] / [non identifié], <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9014050q?rk=922751:2>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>158</sup> *Action*, 3, (21 May 1968), 4.

captioned with a single slogan (sometimes unaltered, sometimes in graphic outline or blocks of colour). Here the message is central and surrounded by a series of prints of sections of the same image. It is doctored by being mirrored, drawn over or given drastically different shading to produce an aesthetic distinct from other images of May. The simplified outlines are a commonality with the posters that famously made use of a stylised image of the factory, but here there is still a strong relationship to the original photograph.<sup>159</sup>

Several lesser-known posters also re-use photographs of occupations. The slogan ‘Around the proletarian resistance in the occupied factory, towards the victory of the people’ accompanies a group of workers with raised fists.<sup>160</sup> Barbey’s image of workers streaming across Billancourt’s bridge is captioned ‘All comrades united until victory’.<sup>161</sup> Another group of workers at the gates holding a sign stating ‘Renault-Billancourt Self-Defence’.<sup>162</sup> It is unclear if the text is part of the photograph highlighted, or has been added in the process of making the poster. A poster depicts workers on a balcony above a crowd with the slogan ‘Hold fast comrades, our weapon is the strike’.<sup>163</sup> It is ambiguous whether the caption is passing the exhortation of those depicted to the audience, or directed at the pictured workers themselves. These posters make strong claims for unity, but also present the occupying workers as firmly in the vanguard of the movement. Photographs also provide evidence for the reception of messages from the student occupations in the factories. One image captures a whole series of signs at Billancourt. The closest, potentially referencing the *Atelier Populaire* poster, reads ‘production progresses, profiteers benefit, we want progress to benefit young

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<sup>159</sup> Johan Kugelberg and Philippe Vermès, (eds.) *Beauty is in the street: a visual record of the May'68 Paris uprising*, (2011), 5, 8,30, 33, 53, 55-59.

<sup>160</sup> BnF, [Mai 1968]. ‘Autour de la résistance prolétarienne dans l'usine occupée . . .’ [affiche] / [non identifié], <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90180284?rk=3519330;4>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>161</sup> BnF, [Mai 1968], ‘Tous unis camarades jusqu'à la victoire, Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux arts’ [affiche] / [non identifié], <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9018301h?rk=5214618;0>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>162</sup> BnF, [Mai 1968], ‘Renault-Billancourt. Auto-Défense. Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts’, [affiche] / [non identifié] <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9018103n?rk=21459;2>, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90181027?rk=42918;4>, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9018101t?rk=5128780;4>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>163</sup> BnF, [Mai 1968], ‘Tenez bon camarades, notre arme c'est la grève’, [affiche] / [non identifié], <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9018316z.r=greve%201968?rk=85837;2>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

people as well'.<sup>164</sup> Those visible behind it state the facts of production '12 vehicles per worker, 5800 million turnover'. There is both an awareness of the large movement, but the issues are also rooted in the local situation.

Sometimes student-worker unity is represented in a manner that does not suggest the breakdown of barriers, but parallel struggles. Alongside '*usine occupée*' [occupied factory] graffiti on the gate of the Compagnie Générale Radiologie reads '*Les Fac aux Etudiants, Les Usines aux Ouvriers!*' [The faculty to the students, The Factories to the workers]<sup>165</sup> This solidarity recognises a common struggle for self-management (as a vague goal rather than specific practice), but in distinct spaces. Brinton recalls these slogans from the march to Billancourt, '*Les usines aux ouvriers*' [the factories to the workers], chanted by the visiting crowd, according to him 3000 strong, and '*La Sorbonne aux Etudiants*' [The Sorbonne to the Students] shouted back from the walls. However, he also adds an addendum not present in the graffiti: 'There is then a moment of silence. Everyone thinks the exchange has come to an end. However, one of the demonstrators starts chanting '*La Sorbonne aux ouvriers*' [The Sorbonne to the workers]. Amid general laughter, everyone joins in.'<sup>166</sup> This humorous juxtaposition, at once undercuts the separatism of the preceding slogans, but also opens up an entirely new set of possibilities.

## Visualising Autogestion

These examples raise the question of how worker self-management is visualised. This is absent in 1936, where the photography pointedly focuses on the absence of work and leisure is represented as its opposite. In 1968, Autogestion appears as a slogan, a potential

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<sup>164</sup> Bruno Barbey, Boulogne Billancourt. Strike at the Renault factory. Strikers's revendications at Renault Industry's entrance. 17 May 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDWJWY4A.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>165</sup> ADSSD, AD93, 83 Fi/174 268.

<sup>166</sup> Brinton, 'Paris: May 1968'.

demand but not directly represented. The 1940s offer a possible point of reference, but it is striking how little photographic record there is of workers control of factories during 1944-45. The Liberation is instead dominated by a highly stereotyped photographic repertoire of shaven headed women, the uprising in Paris (where street fighting can be represented in a ‘revolutionary’ style) and the entrance of De Gaulle into the city.<sup>167</sup> This goes hand in hand with the re-invention of several Popular Front photographers like Capa. The representation of the period obscures the revolutionary changes in industry as owners like Renault and Berliet were removed as collaborators and their factories run under worker-management.

For examples of Autogestion in practice, the experiments at Besançon at the Lip watch factory in the 1970s produced photographs of both the movement and a few glimpses into the working life of the factory. Part of the longer contestation of the ‘68 years’, Lip came to represent the exemplary case of workers after 1968 taking control of the production at a plant threatened with closure. Photographs included watch sales at the plant, a banner reading ‘It is possible. We produce, we sell, we pay ourselves’, and the pay commission counting piles of cash on the floor for payments. They also depicted the movement supporting the project with images typical of demonstrations of the period, including crowds, mass union meetings and leader Charles Piaget speaking through a megaphone.<sup>168</sup> Magnum photographer Marc Riboud also depicted Lip.<sup>169</sup> One of his images shows a female worker making a watch, while staring directly into the camera.<sup>170</sup> This was used as a 1974 CEH advertisement with the tagline: ‘nothing is done without passion’, but also formed the cover of *Lip au féminin* with the

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<sup>167</sup> Catherine E. Clark. ‘Capturing the moment, picturing history: photographs of the liberation of Paris’, *The American Historical Review*, 121, 3 (2016): 824-860; Susan Keith, ‘Collective memory and the End of occupation: Remembering (and forgetting) the liberation of Paris in images’, *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 17, 3 (2010), 134-146.

<sup>168</sup> Donald Reid, *Opening the Gates: the LIP Affair 1968-1981*, (London: Verso, 2018), central section.

<sup>169</sup> Marc Riboud, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Catalogue/Marc-Riboud/1974/FRA-Besan%C3%A7on-Usine-LIP-Industrie-horlog%C3%A8re-NN126835.html>.

<sup>170</sup> Marc Riboud, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/image/NN11517450.html>.

response ‘our passion is the fight’.<sup>171</sup> This final example hints at the difficulties in presenting self-management as distinct from capitalist labour, relying on the captions to provide context.

## Conclusion

Factory gate images relate the disputes to their geographical, but also historical context, evoking specific images of industrial France, industrial relations and past disputes. These images were an opportunity for participants to deploy a visual repertoire of protest, which was captured by photographers within a series of conventions to produce a coherent tradition. However, it is important to recognise that these photographs are not an unmediated ‘authentic’ expression of participants’ will. They are subject to systematic framing, both at the level of photographer, and of their subsequent publications. In cases such as the manipulation of photographs within posters, this is overt, but it also takes place in the selection of subjects and themes. This can be seen in the choice of the trade unions to promote a vision of the dispute in line with their strategic aims. Photography could reflect both sides of the worker-student encounter, and the location of the factory gates plays a key role. On the one hand, ‘instrumentalised’ images dramatised the division through the closed ‘worker’s fortress’ looking down on an isolated podium.<sup>172</sup> On the other, however brief and partial these meetings were, their presence in images and slogans testifies to the power of the aspiration to unity. The photography of striking workers illustrates how the labour dimension of 1968 was visualised in an often markedly distinct manner. This process could leave workers isolated, but it also shows how the broader movement drew on repertoires from the past and brought these into the dynamic context of 1968. It is also an excellent example of how the visualisation of an industrial dispute can utilise framing and the setting to produce specific meanings often lost in the broader discourse on May. The processes of de-industrialisation

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<sup>171</sup> Reid, *Opening the Gates*.

<sup>172</sup> Vigna and Zancarini-Fournel, ‘Les rencontres improbables dans « les années 68 »’.



and the narrow focus of commemoration deprive these images of the context that made these meanings intelligible.

### Chapter 3. Photographers' Trajectories

Moving on from the concrete examples of conflict and factories, this chapter will begin to examine longer trends, zooming out to survey how moments of contestation fit within the trajectories of the photographers who documented them. Thus, we can start making links not just between the examples of 1936 and 1968, but also develop a wider context. This chapter will seek to map out a sample of trajectories for the photographers who documented the strike movements. It illustrates the factors which have shaped the framing and reception of their work in order to establish why they presented the strikes in the manner they did, and how this has affected the photographic afterlives of the movements. In 1986, Guy Hocquenghem polemicized that intellectual itineraries following '68 constituted the journey 'from the Mao collar to the rotary club'<sup>1</sup>. Those trajectories that have assumed much greater retrospective prominence reflect how commemorations construct canonical figures out of activists, and this chapter will also introduce considerations of photographic afterlives, how retrospective framings have affected the reception of the photographic record. The subsequent careers of photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Bruno Barbey formed a dominant canon around both 1936 and 1968, and as their work moved from newspapers into museums, it became increasingly depoliticised and commercialised, as the function of the images morphs from conveying information to that of a commodity.

One model for mapping out the careers of a group of contemporaries is collective biography.<sup>2</sup> In her account of French writers' responses to World War Two, Gisèle Sapiro traces the responses of multiple actors across the political spectrum to their rapidly shifting

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<sup>1</sup> Guy Hocquenghem, 'Open letter to those who have gone from the Mao collar to the Rotary Club', 1986.

<sup>2</sup> Cowman, Krista, 'Collective biography', in Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (eds.), *Research methods for history* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012): 83-101; Davies, Bronwyn, and Susanne Gannon. "Collective biography and the entangled enlivening of being." *International Review of Qualitative Research* 5, no. 4 (2013): 357-376; *Doing collective biography: Investigating the production of subjectivity*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2006.

circumstances.<sup>3</sup> Drastic changes in working conditions called into question not just the political and professional positions of the writers, but also how these linked positionings determined the writer's social significance.<sup>4</sup> In the case of moments of contestation, charting photographers stances allows us to contextualise how the photographic record privileges particular positions.

This relationship between political and professional concerns and social engagement is present at times of endemic social contestation, such as the general strikes. Shapiro drew on Pierre Bourdieu's approach to collective biography to demonstrate how writers experienced these factors as deeply linked in their responses to crisis. This approach defines a 'field' of relationships within which actors position themselves in relation to their political and social context. For Bourdieu the 'social trajectory' of cultural producers shapes their dispositions ('*habitus*') and thus how they position themselves within their field.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Bourdieu highlighted how artistic avant-gardes formed not simply in relation to commercial success, but in terms of a set of rules determined by their peers.

One important axis on which photographers must position themselves is the degree to which their work is politically engaged. This spectrum of engagement has purely aesthetic concerns at one end and, at the other, blunt propaganda which is concerned only with the political. Benjamin argued that the culmination of '*l'art pour l'art*' was a nihilistic exaltation of the aesthetic value of war seen in Marinetti's futurism.<sup>6</sup> Certainly, the former can never be entirely isolated from some form of social context, and the latter must be shaped by the conventions defining the limits of what counts as cultural production. How this spectrum of

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<sup>3</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, *The French Writers' War: 1940-1953*, Translated by Vanessa Doriott Anderson and Dorrit Cohn (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), originally published as *La guerre des écrivains*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Sapiro, *The French Writers' War*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'The field of cultural production, or: The economic world reversed', *Poetics*, 12, 4-5 (1983) 311-356, 311.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, Thomas Y. Levin (eds.), Edmund Jephcott (trans.), (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 41-42.

engagement responds in circumstances produces typologies. For example, the activist who photographs in an amateur capacity, the professionalised activist photographer, and the professional social documentarist or photojournalist. Charting this process over time and how it reacts to waves of contestation and moments of acute social struggle gives context to the trajectories of individual photographers, but also puts them in relation to each other and the broader field their work constitutes.

Regarding the issue of engagement, modernist photography up to the 1930s can be framed as a struggle over photography's relationship to reality. The dominant theories of photography from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the 1920s characterised the medium as either an 'objective' empirical witness, or a 'fetishistic' transcendence of reality.<sup>7</sup> These two positions constitute the poles of the field of engagement at the outset of the period we are considering. Photographers are not tied to one position on the spectrum. They move across it throughout their career, and the field itself is shifted by the positions taken within it.

The strike movements themselves mark high points of these waves of contestation, where the politicisation of the social field was at its maximum. At such moments, the order governing production and its social relations is exposed to questioning. In Bourdieu's fields of cultural production, the fields themselves suggest a 'space of possibles' defined by the dominant references and problems at any given time.<sup>8</sup> These moments of social contestation create a vast widening of the field of possibilities in several ways. New ideas become part of the 'system of common reference', old limits and restrictions are revealed to lack the disciplinary force previously assigned to them, mass participation opens up the field to new actors, and anti-hierarchical ideals allow those whose participation in the field had been limited by their positioning within organisational structures to transcend them. Whatever the

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<sup>7</sup> Steve Giles, 'Making visible, making strange: Photography and representation in Kracauer, Brecht and Benjamin' *New Formations*, 61, (2007), 64.

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'Principles for a Sociology of Cultural Works', in *the Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson, (Cambridge: Polity, 1993), 176.

practicalities of achieving meaningful changes, the field of the potential is enlarged, and it becomes possible to envision radically different worlds.

In addition to these two moments and their broader contexts, the intervening span also affected the later careers of Popular Front photographers. The Second World War marks a major caesura, but more specifically in the case of France, the experience of the Liberation is particularly relevant when considering waves of contestation. Some remember the uprising in Paris, prior to the arrival of allied forces, as a moment of revolutionary potential, and Catherine Clark argues photographers deliberately drew on Paris's revolutionary history in their depiction of events.<sup>9</sup> Several photographers considered here, such as Capa and Cartier-Bresson, were prominent at the Liberation, either as residents in Paris, or attached to American units.<sup>10</sup> The work they did was not just a significant marker in their own trajectories, but also captured the process of France envisioning and mythologizing its liberation. Like the strike movements, those who experienced the subsequent return to normality often felt their hopes betrayed by it.

Photography is also particularly suited to analysing the conception of new social possibilities. It displays the process of society being envisioned. In addition to rendering new possibilities of social organisation more tangible, photography can also perform a critical role, revealing unseen facts about current society. By making visible the invisible structures of power, what had once seemed natural and inevitable is revealed to be malleable, as Mark Fisher argued: 'emancipatory politics must always destroy the appearance of a 'natural order', must reveal what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be a mere contingency'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Catherine E. Clark, 'Capturing the moment, picturing history: photographs of the liberation of Paris', *The American Historical Review* 121, 3, (2016), 824-860.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, 'Feature – Liberation of Paris, 1944', <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=29YL53592929>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>11</sup> Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?*, (Zero Books, 2009), 17.

## Popular Front Trajectories

In 1936, a series of photographers, including Robert Capa, David Seymour, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Willy Ronis were especially prominent. Through the explosion in photomagazines, especially *Vu* and *Regards*, their work reached a large contemporary audience, and their photographs have defined the subsequent depictions of the period, filling books and exhibitions.<sup>12</sup> Their photographs of the Popular Front built their reputations, and have later been interpreted in certain ways because of those reputations. These photographers share a trajectory moving from politically engaged documentary photography through to post-war humanism, and this humanist turn is especially relevant in assessing not only their canonisation, but also their changing approach to politics and its relationship to art. The Popular Front was also documented by an older generation of émigré photographers, among them Brassai, Germaine Krull, André Kertész and François Kollar who drew on surrealism to reimagine the Parisian landscape.<sup>13</sup> They were not as explicitly political as the younger photographers, but documented Paris through the 1930s including the Popular Front period.

The photographers active in 1936 were not a homogenous group. Ian Jeffries divides the documentarists and street-photographers of 1930s Paris into either Soviet-influenced ‘collectivists’ or individualists championed by Lucien Vogel.<sup>14</sup> Vogel established *VU* in 1928, advocating photojournalism’s ability to document contemporary life in a way that ‘expresses the speeded-up rhythm of present-day life’.<sup>15</sup> Yet, it was not until the post-war period, and the appearance of *Paris-Match*, that French photo-magazines adopted the style pioneered by the American *Life* magazine, which itself was heavily influenced by German exiles.<sup>16</sup> Instead, the

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<sup>12</sup> 1936: *Le Front Populaire en Photographe: 19/05/2016- 23/05/2016, Exposition à L’Hôtel de Ville, Dossier De Presse*, (Mairie de Paris, 2016); Françoise Denoyelle, François Cuel, Jean-Louis Viber-Guige, *Le Front Populaire: des Photographes*, (Paris: Editions Terrebleu, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Sarah Kennel, ‘Fantasies of the Street: Émigré photography in interwar Paris’, *History of Photography*, 29, 3, (2005), 287-300.

<sup>14</sup> Ian Jeffries, ‘The Way Life Goes: Suffering and Hope’ in Michel Frizot, (ed.) *A new history of photography*, (Köln: Konemann, 1998), 519-520.

<sup>15</sup> *Vu*, 21 March 1928, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Pierre Bacot, ‘La naissance du photojournalisme: le passage d’un modèle européen de magazine illustré à un modèle américain’, *Réseaux*, 151, (2008), 9-36; Patrick Roessler, ‘Global players, émigrés, and zeitgeist:

French magazines used a concept of reportage distinct from American photojournalism's direct identification with key figures, instead aiming to articulate the 'rhythm of events'.<sup>17</sup> Photographers also took on larger projects, not dictated by events, but depicting broader social patterns. François Kollar's *La France Travaille* took an approach closer to August Sander's portraits of social types, documenting miners, mariners, steelworkers and other workers in a survey intended to run to 1,200 images.<sup>18</sup>

The Popular Front attracted many non-French photographers. Many were refugees from eastern and central Europe, attracted to Paris both as a centre of cultural industries, but also fleeing the increasingly repressive regimes of their homelands.<sup>19</sup> Jewish heritage was also well represented. Polish Jew David Seymour, or Chim, derived his nickname from the pronunciation of his Polish name, Syzmin. Boris Lipnitzki had been born in Odessa, and moved to Paris in 1921, where he set up a studio popular with Russian exiles and artists.<sup>20</sup> The son of a Rabbi, Fred Stein had been born in Dresden, and trained as a lawyer at Leipzig University. As both a Jew and an early anti-Nazi activist, he was denied access to the bar for 'racial and political reasons', and fled to Paris in 1933.<sup>21</sup> Hungarian émigré photographers were particularly significant, including Capa (born Andre Friedmann), André Kertész (Kertész Andor), François Kollar (Ferenc Kollár), and Brassai (Gyula Halász). Kollar, Kertész and Brassai belonged to an older generation than Capa and the Magnum founders, born between the 1890s and early 1910s. They brought with them the influence of László Moholy-

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Magazine design and the interrelation between the United States and Germany', *Journalism Studies*, 8, 4 (2007), 566-583.

<sup>17</sup> Fred Ritchin, 'Close Witness: The involvement of the photojournalist', in Michel Frizot, (ed.) *A new history of photography*, (Köln: Konemann, 1998), 590-611.

<sup>18</sup> François Kollar, Anne-Claude Lelieur and Raymond Bachollet. *La France travaille: regard sur le monde du travail à la veille du front populaire*. (Paris: Chêne, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Annette Vowinckel, 'German (Jewish) photojournalists in exile: a story of networks and success', *German History*, 31, 4 (2013), 473-496.

<sup>20</sup> Boris Lipnitzki, Roger-Viollet Archive, [https://www.roger-viollet.fr/fr/sws-RV\\_COLLECTIONS/117-1129385-boris-lipnitzki/page/1/part/collections/enlargeCollect/1#nb-result](https://www.roger-viollet.fr/fr/sws-RV_COLLECTIONS/117-1129385-boris-lipnitzki/page/1/part/collections/enlargeCollect/1#nb-result), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>21</sup> *Le Front Populaire en Photographie: Dossier de Presse*, 21; <http://www.fredstein.com/biography/>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

Nagy's *New Vision* of photography, which had taken hold in the cities of central Europe.<sup>22</sup>

They are also less focused on explicitly documentary photography, and several were strongly influenced by the possibilities of Surrealism.<sup>23</sup> Walter Benjamin observed that Surrealist photography created an 'estrangement between man and his surroundings', which opened a space for political interpretation, blurring the lines between documentary photography and a more pictorialist approach.<sup>24</sup>

Sara Kennel argues these exiled photographers embraced a nostalgic vision of Paris, employing dreamlike depictions of fog and artificial light to cast it as the eternal city.<sup>25</sup> This complex imagination drew heavily on Surrealism and Poetic Realist cinema to cast the images as metaphors (synecdoche) for a more universal and yet simultaneously inaccessible place.<sup>26</sup> Deeply indebted to the alienation of the immigrant experience and the loss of a homeland, this universalism prefigures that taken in the humanist turn, but is distinct in several key aspects. Its tone is that of nostalgia and loss, and it is deeply rooted within the specific location of Paris.<sup>27</sup> Its emblematic figure, rather than the child, is the *clochard*, the romanticised vagrants prominent in interwar Parisian culture. Referring back to the *flâneur* of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, these figures are seen as poetic vagabonds, whose marginal existence stands for liberation from the structures of society.<sup>28</sup> Within Krull's and Kertész's photography, though, the 'exile

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<sup>22</sup> Sarah Kennel, 'Fantasies of the Street: Émigré photography in interwar Paris', *History of Photography*, 29, 3, (2005), 287-300.

<sup>23</sup> Despite work by Benjamin and André Bazin, Surrealist photography was little studied until the 1980s, but the medium's re-evaluation as a major facet of Surrealism also prompted a re-examination of Surrealist influences on documentary photography of the 1930s. Rosalind Krauss's poststructuralist analysis was then challenged by John Roberts, reasserting the relationship between surrealist photographers and their social and political context. Rosalind Krauss, 'The photographic conditions of surrealism', *October*, 19, (1981), 3-34; Rosalind E. Krauss, Jane Livingston, and Dawn Ades. *L'amour fou: photography & surrealism*, (New York, Abbeville Press, 1985); John Roberts, *The art of interruption: realism, photography, and the everyday*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998); Steven Harris, 'Surrealism and Photography', *History of Photography*, 29, 4, (2005), 383-385.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Little History of Photography', 286.

<sup>25</sup> Kennel, 'Fantasies of the Street'.

<sup>26</sup> Rémi Fournier Lanzoni, *French cinema: from its beginnings to the present*. (New York, London: Continuum, 2005), 74.

<sup>27</sup> Ian Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary in Interwar Paris*, (Manchester, New York, Manchester University Press, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> There is a substantial literature on the figure of the *flâneur*, which Benjamin saw as emerging with the alienated perspective of Baudelaire's poetry, and leading into the new identity of the consumer. Dadaists and



alienation and dispossession' of the homeless cannot be disguised, and the contrast between the realities of Parisian street life and its popular mythologization is fully exploited.<sup>29</sup>

As well as nostalgia, the experience of exile and fascism gave the Popular Front's anti-fascism a central importance to these photographers. André Kertész's 1935 photographs of a rally at Buffalo Stadium in Montrouge are early examples of the defining images of the Front (Figure 3.1).<sup>30</sup> They depict women marching with raised fists and determined expressions. Shot from a low angle, their arms are silhouetted against the sky.<sup>31</sup> These prefigure many of the tropes associated with later rallies, protests, and the strikes of the following year. Another earlier example, from 1931 to 1934 Kollar worked on a collection published as *La France Travaille*, documenting labour across France, making work and workers an increasingly visible presence in public life.<sup>32</sup> The cultural policies of the Front are prominent in their work and Kollar also photographed the *Universal Exhibition* of 1937.<sup>33</sup> Boris Lipnitzki was initially interested in music halls and captured popular entertainers of the era.<sup>34</sup> He also photographed 'Naissance d'une Cité', the 'utopian mass spectacle' by Jean-Richard Bloch.<sup>35</sup> This play had the ambitious aim of creating theatre by and for the masses, integrating the worker into society and politics.<sup>36</sup>

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Surrealists incorporated 'excursions' into their practice, and Debord developed the concept of alienated *flânerie* into the *dérive*, a means of mapping the 'psychogeography' of the city. Walter Benjamin, 'Paris: Capital of the nineteenth century', in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 104-106; Marc Vachon, 'From flâneur to arpenteur', *Prairie Perspectives: Geographical Essays* 7 (2004): 44-56; Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983, first published Paris: Editions Buchet-Chastel, 1967); Chris Jenks, 'The history and practice of the flâneur' in Chris Jenks, (ed.) *Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 142-160.

<sup>29</sup> Kennel, 'Fantasies of the Street', 295-298.

<sup>30</sup> Simon Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front: the masses and the media in interwar France*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 36.

<sup>31</sup> Denoyelle, Cuel, Vibert-Guige, *Le Front Populaire*, 52, 54.

<sup>32</sup> François Kollar, *La France Travaille*, 1931-1934, Paris, Bibliothèque Forney/Roger-Viollet Archive, [https://www.roger-viollet.fr/fr/sws-RV\\_COLLECTIONS/113-1110130-francois-kollar/page/1/part/collections/enlargeCollect/1#nb-result](https://www.roger-viollet.fr/fr/sws-RV_COLLECTIONS/113-1110130-francois-kollar/page/1/part/collections/enlargeCollect/1#nb-result), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>33</sup> Denoyelle, Cuel, Vibert-Guige, *Le Front Populaire*, 170-176.

<sup>34</sup> Denoyelle, Cuel, Vibert-Guige, *Le Front Populaire*, 140, 143, 145.

<sup>35</sup> Boris Lipnitzki, Roger-Viollet Archive, [https://www.roger-viollet.fr/fr/sws-RV\\_COLLECTIONS/117-1129385-boris-lipnitzki/page/1/part/collections/enlargeCollect/1#nb-result](https://www.roger-viollet.fr/fr/sws-RV_COLLECTIONS/117-1129385-boris-lipnitzki/page/1/part/collections/enlargeCollect/1#nb-result), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>36</sup> Wardhaugh, *In pursuit of the people*, 151.

Most of these photographers had fled France by the time war broke out. Some left to pursue more lucrative careers, Kertész having left for America as early as September 1936.<sup>37</sup> Yet others hung on to the bitter end, and Fred Stein left Marseille in 1941 on one of the last boats to leave for New York.<sup>38</sup> This is one contributing factor as to why there is little overlap in the work of the photographers who documented both the Popular Front and the events of May '68. Though the 32 year gap between them is conceivably within the time frame of one career, and though there was a significant number of younger photographers' active in 1936, few reprised their role.<sup>39</sup> As well as emigration, the premature deaths of some, such as Capa, killed covering the Indochina War, reduced their number.

In the post-war period, a clear canon of French humanist photographers developed, which includes many of those who covered the Popular Front.<sup>40</sup> In his survey of French humanism, Peter Hamilton argues that the majority of his sample of photographers share a social, rather than political agenda.<sup>41</sup> This list overlaps with Popular Front photographers, including Doisneau, Ronis, Cartier-Bresson, and Kertész. Yet this position partly derives from this later position of humanism, built around a notion of 'culture' which avoids the political implications of depicting society.

Post-war humanism in photography became a transnational phenomenon. French photographers dominated Edward Steichen's 1955 *Family of Man* exhibition, contributing 31 images, almost a third of the European content.<sup>42</sup> In 1954, Steichen had organised an

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<sup>37</sup> Denoyelle, Cuel, Vibert-Guige, *Le Front Populaire*, 54.

<sup>38</sup> Mairie de Paris, *Le Front Populaire en Photographie: Dossier de Presse*.

<sup>39</sup> Capa, Chim, and Doisneau were all under 25, Ronis was 26 and the older figure of Cartier-Bresson was still only 28.

<sup>40</sup> Jean-Claude Gautrand, 'Looking at Others: Humanism and neo-realism', in Michel Frizot, (ed.) *A new history of photography*, (Köln: Konemann, 1998), 612-632.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Hamilton 'Representing the Social: France and Frenchness in Post-War humanist photography', in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall, ed. (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1997), 77.

<sup>42</sup> Its place in the history of photography defined as much by influential critiques by Barthes and Sekula as the exhibition itself. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, (1957); Alan Sekula, 'The Traffic in Photographs', *Art Journal*, 41,1, (1981), 15-25; Kristen Gresh, 'The European roots of The Family of Man', *History of Photography*, 29, 4, (2005) 331-343, 335.

exhibition at the MoMA entitled *Five French Photographers: Brassai, Cartier-Bresson, Doisneau, Ronis, Izis* and held French photography as uniquely embodying the values he was seeking.<sup>43</sup> Given that both Brassai and Izis were eastern European immigrants, the designation of French photographer has less to do with nationality than the Parisian habitus within which they worked. Steichen finds in *Five French Photographers* ‘a deep undercurrent of unity in their photography with its forthright emphasis on the human aspect ... a tender simplicity, a sly humour, a warm earthiness, the "everydayness" of the familiar’.<sup>44</sup> Deliberately leaving behind the photographic conventions of the 1930s, Steichen declared that documentary photographs, such as those of the Dustbowl, had ‘had their place’.<sup>45</sup> In this context, Steichen’s embrace of the ‘French Photographers’, clearly shows how their international success and canonisation parallels a de-politicisation. Whilst still retaining a national framing, the actual context of French political and social life is stripped away. Alan Sekula criticised *The Family of Man* as a smokescreen for American cold-war foreign policy.<sup>46</sup> For Peter Hamilton, it was in this post-war period that the humanist focus on individual ‘ordinary people’ came to dominate press reportage, as opposed to the collective of ‘the people’ depicted in the 1930s.<sup>47</sup>

By implication, the prior focus in the 1930s, despite its mass diffusion in the illustrated press, was an exceptional event. The eruption of ‘the people’ into public and political life was one of the era’s great challenges and Jessica Wardhaugh characterises this process as a ‘battle for representation’ where politically polarised politicians competed to

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<sup>43</sup> Given that both Brassai and Izis were eastern European immigrants, the designation of French photographer has less to do with nationality than the Parisian milieu within which they worked. Gresh, ‘The European roots of The Family of Man’, 333-335.

<sup>44</sup> Museum of Modern Art, Press release, ‘Journalist Photography from France to be shown in “Five French Photographers”’, 1951, [https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTgyMSJdXQ.pdf?sha=54da0a7759cbfe46](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTgyMSJdXQ.pdf?sha=54da0a7759cbfe46), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>45</sup> Gresh, ‘The European roots of The Family of Man’, 341.

<sup>46</sup> Sekula, ‘The Traffic in Photographs’, 19.

<sup>47</sup> Hamilton ‘Representing the Social’, 75-150.

define their constituencies, create identities and claim legitimacy.<sup>48</sup> This directly paralleled the contemporaneous growth in the illustrated press. For example, the launch of PCF-sponsored *Regards* in 1932 corresponded to the party's shift from a 'class-against-class' line towards a popular front.<sup>49</sup> Photojournalism was actively engaged in political combat, whereas in the post-war moment, having attained hegemonic status, it appears as non-political, or associated only with the broad ideal of democracy in a Cold War context. Humanist photography championed 'ordinary people', but at the level of day to day existence. It moved away from visions of 'the people' as a collective political subject capable of acting in public life and asserting itself on a national stage.

## 1968 Trajectories

In 1968, as in 1936, photojournalists such as Bruno Barbey, Marc Riboud, or Gilles Caron are central to the photographic record of the movement.<sup>50</sup> Like those photojournalists from the 1930s who moved from politically engaged work to more abstract idealism as they became celebrated figures, these journalists also epitomise the subsequent shift to enshrining May as a singular historical moment through its reification and commodification as they later established their professional relationships. Other photographers, such as Elie Kagan, Gérard-Aimé or Janine Niépce, link May to wider timelines of contentious politics. However, they are

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<sup>48</sup> Jessica Wardhaugh, *In pursuit of the people: political culture in France, 1934-39*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 17-21.

<sup>49</sup> Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front*, 31-32; Danielle Leenaerts identified the difficulties in assessing the growing influence of the illustrated press in her history of *Vu*, which she argues has previously been seen in terms of its proprietor, Lucien Vogel's, career. For Simon Dell, there is an overreliance on a technological determinism emphasising the improvements in rotary presses, the process of heliogravure, and the 35mm Leica. This does not account for the creation of a demand for these papers, which grew as radio and cinema increased their reach, creating a public with ready access to information and crucially, entertainment. This prompted a re-ordering of priorities in the press, and the mix of entertainment and information offered by illustration fulfilled this need. Danielle Leenaerts, *Petite histoire du magazine Vu (1928-1940): entre photographie d'information et photographie d'art*, (Brussels, Peter Lang, 2010), 13; Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front*, 32-36.

<sup>50</sup> Antigoni Memou, 'Photography and Memory: Rethinking May '68', *Philosophy of Photography*, 3, (2011), 83-96; *Photography and Social Movements: From the Globalisation of the Movement to the Movement Against Globalisation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

also subjected to hegemonic discourses creating a canon of participants authorised to pass on their version of May's memory.

French photojournalist Bruno Barbey had just joined the Magnum agency in 1968. During May, Barbey collaborated with Jean-Luc Godard, Chris Marker, Alan Resnais and others to produce *cinétracts*.<sup>51</sup> These films were two or three minutes long, and were designed to be sent to factories across France to show what was happening in Paris.<sup>52</sup> They primarily used photographic material, intercut or overlaid with text, in a style reminiscent of both Marker's 'essay films', and his nearly motionless *La Jetée*.<sup>53</sup> Originally produced anonymously, the films are uncredited, and while the style of Marker and Godard is visible and photographs are shown whose authors are known, it is only retrospectively that their authorship has been determined. They illustrate how collective anonymous labour with a strategic purpose contributed to the diffusion of images of May and were only one part of a larger milieu of radical filmmaking collectives.<sup>54</sup> There are parallels with the work of agit-prop groups such as the Groupe Octobre in 1936.<sup>55</sup>

Barbey's work became prominent in retrospective exhibitions. The Galerie Beaubourg hosted a small exhibition of his work for the thirtieth anniversary, and in 2008, for the fortieth, the Hayward Gallery juxtaposed Barbey's photographs with the posters produced by the *Atelier Populaire*.<sup>56</sup> Another exhibition that year granted him authorial status: 'May '68 by Bruno Barbey' toured Paris, Clermont Ferrand, Istanbul and Prague as part of Magnum's extensive 1968 commemorations. Barbey's exhibitions fall into a tradition of romantic

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Douglas Grant, *Cinéma Militant: Political Filmmaking and May 1968*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

<sup>52</sup> Russell Miller, *Magnum: Fifty Years at the Front Line of History*, (London, Seker and Warburg, 1997), 232.

<sup>53</sup> BFI archive, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/4ce2b76c937c4> compilation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m12TB0cICec>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>54</sup> Grant, *Cinéma Militant*, 29.

<sup>55</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'Théâtre d'agitation: Le Groupe "Octobre".' *Le Mouvement Social*, 91, (1975), 109-119.

<sup>56</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 111-112; Bruno Barbey, *Mai 68 ou l'imagination au pouvoir: trente-huit photographies de Bruno Barbey*, (La Différence, 1998).

individualism, contributing to the erasure of the movement's political dimensions.<sup>57</sup> Memou argues the photographs used privilege the image of lone male demonstrators, picking individuals out from the crowds (Figure 3.2). Drawing on Ross, she sees the exhibitions as contributing to narratives claiming May as the herald of individualistic consumer society.<sup>58</sup>

In 2015, Barbey's involvement in a promotional campaign selling Clark's shoes clearly demonstrated this commercialism. Alongside pieces similarly commercialising the countercultures of the Mods and Reggae, it portrays Clarks boots as the 'uniform and symbol of rebellion'. The campaign claimed Barbey's images of May came to 'define a nation's restlessness and encapsulate the spirit of rebellious youth'. While the campaign makes references to youth revolt and characterization of May as a cultural movement, it also highlights Barbey as a privileged figure 'at the centre' of events, lauding his photographs as 'the most iconic', and playing into a further valorization of authorship, at odds with the anonymous collective work Barbey was involved in during May itself.<sup>59</sup> The campaign format, using the messaging app Whatsapp to send images, playlists, videos and messages to subscribers, further frames Barbey as an individual gatekeeper of the memory of May.<sup>60</sup> The conceit of 'connecting' consumers to key figures presents subsequently successful individuals' ownership of the movement's memory. Further retrospective press coverage framed Barbey as one of these figures, and coverage in the *Guardian* demonstrated May's central place in his own narrative of his career.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 112-117.

<sup>58</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 112-117.

<sup>59</sup> 'From Rats to Rudeboys - Bruno Barbey & Paris '68', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O82eNRXYtsQ>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>60</sup> Caroline Baldwin, 'Clarks uses WhatsApp to tell the story of its Desert Boot', *Retail Week*, 30 March 2015, <https://www.retail-week.com/technology/clarks-uses-whatsapp-to-tell-the-story-of-its-desert-boot/5073428.article>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>61</sup> Karin Andreasson, 'Bruno Barbey's best photograph: the Paris protests of 1968', *The Guardian*, 21 August 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/aug/21/bruno-barbey-best-photograph-paris-1968-protests>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

In an article for the Magnum agency, (in which Cartier-Bresson, Capa, and Seymour were founding members, and which Barbey later joined) Maisie Skidmore condenses the work of internationalist photographers into a broader genre of international protest photography.<sup>62</sup> The article focuses on significant dates and events that have become a synecdoche for wider protest movements. Within this context, photographs are framed as signifiers for dates that serve as metonyms for broader social movements. Within this chain of signification, context is lost and prior knowledge presumed. The presentation of a variety of these moments alongside each other further adds to the confusion. While the scope of article is broad, too much material is pushed into the category of iconic 1960s protest. It then jumps swiftly to 1989, covering uprisings in Tiananmen Square and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Skidmore characterises the 1960s through opposition to the Vietnam war, using Marc Riboud's image of a girl inserting a flower into the rifle of a national guardsman.<sup>63</sup> Another one of Riboud's photographs used depicts Chinese anti-Vietnam war protest in 1965, a year prior to the Cultural revolution, with massive banners of Ho Chi Minh and Mao.<sup>64</sup> Mai 68 is shown via Barbey's images of students.<sup>65</sup> Josef Koudelka's images of the Prague Spring, and Bruce Davidson's 1963 photograph of the arrest of a civil rights protest in Birmingham, Alabama complete the selection.<sup>66</sup> The specific contexts of these images are not explored, and the article only briefly acknowledges them, merely noting that anti-Vietnam War protests were not the only subject of photographers seeking out 'social resistance and fights for freedom of expression' worldwide.

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<sup>62</sup> Maisie Skidmore, *On Protest Photography*, [www.magnumphotos.com/theory-and-practice/magnum-photographers-on-protest-photography/](http://www.magnumphotos.com/theory-and-practice/magnum-photographers-on-protest-photography/), (last accessed 23/08/19).

<sup>63</sup> Marc Riboud, *Jan Rose Casimir confronts the American National Guard outside the Pentagon*, Washington DC, 1967.

<sup>64</sup> Marc Riboud, *Demonstration to Protest against the US Military intervention in North Vietnam*, China, 1965.

<sup>65</sup> Bruno Barbey, *Students hurling Projectiles against the Police*, 6<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement, Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1968.

<sup>66</sup> Josef Koudelka, *Invasion by Warsaw Pact Troops by the Radio Headquarters*, Prague, August 1968; Bruce Davidson, *Arrest of a demonstrator "Damn the Defiant!"*, Birmingham, Alabama, 1963.

The presentation of diverse protest movements as the ‘fight for freedom of expression’ clearly echoes Michel De Certeau’s interpretations of May as primarily about the seizure of speech.<sup>67</sup> The article’s abrupt shift to a discussion of photographs from 1989 amplifies this teleological 1980s discourse. Both Stuart Franklin’s *Tank Man* and Raymond Depardon’s image of a lone young man sitting astride the Berlin Wall, depict isolated individuals juxtaposed with the faceless instruments of totalitarianism.<sup>68</sup> The trope of the ‘heroic individual’ also appears in the Riboud, Koudelka and Davidson images used by the article, just as it had dominated in Barbey’s. In this way the collective dimension of struggles for social change is obliterated, as sympathy displaces solidarity. The continuing representations of dissent promoting individualism cross political lines, ignoring the anti-capitalism of the 1960s, and characterising the anti-totalitarianism of the later images as a demand for freedom of speech and expression. Coincidentally this privileges the photojournalist, who strives for the clear communication of events. Skidmore characterises Franklin’s *Tank Man* as a ‘monument to the freedom of expression’, not just because of its content, but also due to the difficulties in getting negatives out of China.<sup>69</sup> In epitomising the struggle for free expression, the photographer himself usurps the heroic individual role from those he is depicting. There are also strong parallels here with the mythologization of Capa, who has become lauded for his ‘passionate commitment, readiness to take sides, [and] a willingness to share the hardships of the people he photographed’.<sup>70</sup>

Memou also highlights how the focus on individuals is a widely used photojournalistic convention, and not necessarily a choice specific to protest photography. By highlighting an

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<sup>67</sup> Michel De Certeau, *The capture of speech and other political writings*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

<sup>68</sup> Raymond Depardon, *A young man sits on the Berlin Wall between the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdammer Platz*, West Berlin, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1989; Depardon also photographed May ‘68, see Raymond Depardon, *1968*, (Paris: Éditions Points, 2008); Stuart Franklin, ‘*The Tank Man*’ *stopping the column of T59 tanks*, Tienanmen Square, Beijing, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1989.

<sup>69</sup> Skidmore, *On Protest Photography*.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Whelan, ‘Robert Capa and the Spanish Civil War: Courage, Loyalty and Empathy’ In Lisa DeLisle, (ed.), *Profiles in Journalistic Courage*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 37-44.



empathetic figure, the images of a single person's experience provide a point of entry into a wider journalistic story, which can then explore its collective dimensions. However, as these images have been reproduced for secondary purposes, the accompanying text and news stories have been left behind, leaving the individual figures dominant.<sup>71</sup> That is not to argue that the individual figure was not a significant presence within the original photojournalism, but that the photograph's transfer into the realm of book collections and art galleries in the process of memorialisation accentuated this phenomenon. Post-war humanism also recurrently invokes this process. Editors and photographers began to see the photographic image as able to 'speak for itself', as a new vision of the image as a 'universal language' displaced the documentary form. Hamilton claims this happened in the 1950s in France, at the same time as the urban communities it documented moved into private spaces as modernisation took hold.<sup>72</sup> This was the universalism Steichen invoked in *The Family of Man*.

The movement to the museum especially affected professional photojournalists, but it also affected other photographers, even those working in the activist press. 20 years old in 1968, Gérard-Aimé (real name Gérard Bois) was a member of the *Mouvement du 22 Mars*, initially covering the events at Nanterre, then demonstrations, police brutality and attempts by students to visit Billancourt (Figure 3.3).<sup>73</sup> Patrick Filloud's account of agitation at Nanterre in 1968, *Le Roman Vrai de Mai 68*, prominently features Gérard-Aimé's images.<sup>74</sup> Filloud also describes how Bois was the only photographer tolerated at certain meetings, due to his engagement with the movement.<sup>75</sup> Barbey's claim that it became increasingly difficult to work as the police began to use photographs to identify protestors further underlines the importance of Aimé's insider perspective. Initially neither party minded being pictured, but as

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<sup>71</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 115-116.

<sup>72</sup> Hamilton, 'Representing the Social', 143.

<sup>73</sup> Gérard-Aimé, Gamma-Rapho, *May '68 Pictures and Photos: Getty Images* <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/photos/gerard-aime?phrase=Gerard-Aime>, (last accessed 23/08/19).

<sup>74</sup> Patrick Filloud, *Le Roman Vrai de Mai 68, Avec les photographies de Gérard-Aimé*, (Paris: Lemieux-Éditeur, 2016).

<sup>75</sup> Filloud, *Le Roman Vrai de Mai 68*, 139.

images of the CRS brutality appeared in the mainstream press, the police too also obstructed photographers.<sup>76</sup> Bois became personally acquainted with police methods, when he was arrested and interrogated about the Nanterre occupation. A police search of his home for negatives proved fruitless.<sup>77</sup>

Yet Filloud is again guilty of reducing May's participants down to a clique of protagonists. It includes an extensive biographical dictionary, and follows in the vein of Hamon and Rotman's *Génération* in rendering May the property of a small number of individuals.<sup>78</sup> Like Georges Melet's depiction of May's 'pre-history at Nanterre', Bois follows a distinct cast of participants through events.<sup>79</sup> Filloud himself, a journalist by trade, was a *Lycéen* militant in '68, participating in the *Comité d'action Lycéens* which produced *Les lycéens gardent la parole*.<sup>80</sup> After May, Bois continued to work for the militant press, but also *Le Magazine Littéraire* and *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*.<sup>81</sup> He became a professional photojournalist, then he later moved to the daily *Libération*. He was the founder and director for its photo agency *Fotolib*.<sup>82</sup> *Libération* itself, whilst initially a radical experiment in collective management and a haven for militants, became ever more mainstream and bourgeois.<sup>83</sup> For the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of May '68 Gérard-Aimé was also the subject of a retrospective exhibition.<sup>84</sup>

A counter-example to this de-politicising trajectory is Elie Kagan. Kagan was the son of Jewish immigrants from Russia and Poland, and he had spent the Second World War in

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<sup>76</sup> Miller, *Magnum*, 232.

<sup>77</sup> Filloud, *Le Roman Vrai de Mai 68*, 161.

<sup>78</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 199-205.

<sup>79</sup> Georges Melet, *Daniel Cohn Bendit, Leader of the Student Movement*, Paris March Archive, <http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/photos/georges-melet-may-68>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

The pictures increasingly become narrowly focused on Cohn-Bendit during May itself.

<sup>80</sup> *Les lycéens gardent la parole*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1968).

<sup>81</sup> Filloud, *Le Roman Vrai de Mai 68*, 290.

<sup>82</sup> Filloud, *Le Roman Vrai de Mai 68*, 290.

<sup>83</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 114-116.

<sup>84</sup> 'Sous les pavés, la plage', 2 May - 28 June 2008, Bibliothèque Elsa-Triolet, Pantin.

hiding.<sup>85</sup> He nevertheless already embodied the non-conformism associated with the likes of the *Mouvement du 22 Mars* two decades prior. Though sympathetic to the Communists, he rebelled against the discipline of the PCF, achieving some notoriety by throwing contraceptives at Maurice Thorez in 1948. Kagan became a photographer in the 1950s, documenting student and anti-De Gaulle protests, published by Louis Aragon, in *Les Lettres Francaises*.<sup>86</sup> Not affiliated with any particular agency and reportedly difficult to work with, Kagan published in a variety of press, mostly leftist, but also Christian and Jewish.<sup>87</sup> This alignment between leftist and religious press reflected a rise in left-wing Catholicism epitomised by the ‘worker-priests’.<sup>88</sup>

Kagan is now commemorated chiefly for his photographs of the Paris Massacre of October 17<sup>th</sup> 1961. He captured definitive evidence of the police’s brutality towards Algerian demonstrators during a violently repressed demonstration where police killed upwards of 100 Algerians. Kagan had been the only photographer whose film was not confiscated by police (he hid his camera in a pile of rubbish and returned to it later).<sup>89</sup> They were published in *France Observateur* and *Témoignage Chrétien*, which both held anti-colonialist positions, the Communist daily *France Nouvelle*, a Communist student paper, *Le Clarté*, and *L’Express*.<sup>90</sup> However, other attempts at publication met with difficulty. Initially, publisher François Maspero attempted to use Kagan’s work to refute the police’s version of events in a book which was never published due to the confiscation of the material.<sup>91</sup> 40 years later, the trial of ex-Police Prefect Maurice Papon for crimes under Vichy, and the opening of the Algerian war

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<sup>85</sup> Douglas Johnson, ‘Obituary: Elie Kagan’, *The Independent*, Tuesday 16 February 1999, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-elie-kagan-1071155.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>86</sup> Johnson, ‘Obituary: Elie Kagan’.

<sup>87</sup> *La Vie Ouvriere*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Temoignage Chretien* and *La Tribune Juive*.

<sup>88</sup> Oscar L. Arnal, ‘A Missionary "Main Tendue" toward French Communists: The "Témoignages" of the Worker-Priests, 1943-1954’, *French Historical Studies* (1984): 529-556.

<sup>89</sup> David Gelber, ‘Elie Kagan: Massacre in the city’, *Index on Censorship*, 30, 1, (2001), 80-86.

<sup>90</sup> Andrew L. Hansen, ‘And Paris Saw Them: An Examination of Elie Kagan's Photographs of the Paris Massacre of October 17, 1961’, (Miami University, 2005).

<sup>91</sup> Johnson, ‘Obituary: Elie Kagan’.

archives gave investigations into the massacre a renewed prominence, consequently Kagan's photographs became much more widely known. As late as 1996, customs officers in Lyons seized copies of the Algerian daily *Liberté* carrying the pictures, and in 1999 *Index on Censorship*'s attempts to include them in a history of censored images were met with the response 'There's no such thing'.<sup>92</sup> The journal published them in 2001, and they are now held at the *Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine*. It is clear why these images in particular constitute an important historical record, and the attention they have received is entirely justified. Kagan's work shows that retrospective canonisation of photographs does not always entail de-politicisation.

His work on May '68 was widely distributed, both during May and afterwards. Kagan's image of Police at the Sorbonne was on the first issue of *Action*'s cover, and continued to appear throughout the paper's run (Figure 3.4).<sup>93</sup> His photographs also appeared in *L'événement*.<sup>94</sup> In 1989, Jean Pierre Krief made a film, *Les Années Kagan*, for local television. Kagan himself collaborated in partnership with Patrick Rotman, co-author of *Génération* to produce a biographical piece which framed his career as an explicitly activist photographer.<sup>95</sup> Though much of Kagan's archived material is un-categorised, the BDIC digitised some May '68 material for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>96</sup> A book was produced the same year with a foreword by Daniel Bensaïd.<sup>97</sup> After May '68, Kagan continued to focus on protest in the Parisian region. His archive of up to 300, 000 images, contact sheets and negatives contains much material devoted to smaller strikes and protest from 1960 to the mid-1970s.<sup>98</sup> He was also involved in the prison reform campaigns of the 1970s, and his images of

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<sup>92</sup> 'Massacre in the city', 81.

<sup>93</sup> *Action*, 1, 13 May 1968, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2534>, (Last accessed 23/08/2019).

<sup>94</sup> *L'événement*, Issue no.29, June 1968.

<sup>95</sup> Jean Pierre Krief, *Les Années Kagan*, 1989; Élie Kagan, Patrick Rotman, *Le Reporter engagé : trente ans d'instantanés* (Paris: Métailié, 1989).

<sup>96</sup> BDIC archive, KAG/n/, KAG/t/.

<sup>97</sup> Daniel Bensaïd, 'Preface', in Elie Kagan, *Mai '68 D'un Photographe*, (Paris: Editions du Layeur, 2008).

<sup>98</sup> BDIC archive, KAG D/T BO1, BO8.

Foucault, Sartre and the *Groupe d'information des prisons* (GIP) are not focused on notable personalities as much as the events of a demonstration. They 'disclose relations of power rather than personalities'.<sup>99</sup> Kagan's work situates May within *Les années 68*, a long process of social discontent, rather than as an isolated event.<sup>100</sup>

Janine Niépce was another photographer whose career illustrates *Les années 68*, but also how society adapted to these waves of contestation. She demonstrates the lasting influence of humanism, but as a departure point rather than the conclusion of a career. Born in 1921, Niépce was older than May's student generation. She spoke of having attended Steichen's exhibition three times and being deeply 'marked by it'. As well as inculcating a humanist viewpoint it showed Niépce the possibilities of the exhibition format, which, free from the editorial constraints of an assignment, allowed a more personal mode of expression. This humanism was already evident in her account of the Liberation, promising a better future that was 'not just our hope, but our project'.<sup>101</sup>

Niépce's subject matter during May was socially broad, including students and workers, but mainly focused on major street demonstrations.<sup>102</sup> Her images of workers at Billancourt follow familiar tropes – demonstrating on the bridge, a crowd on the shop floor seen from above, a close up of workers looking up and listening (one distinctly bearded and Guevara-like) and taking a break, lying in the factory.<sup>103</sup> These standard images of Billancourt re-occur almost identically in other photographers work (Barbey, Seymour, Henri Cartier-

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<sup>99</sup> Nancy Luxon, 'The Disordering of Discourse: Voice and Authority in the GIP', in *Active Intolerance: Michel Foucault, the Prisons Information Group, and the Future of Abolition*, Andrew Dilts, Perry Zurn (eds.), (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 203-221; Judith Revel, 'Sartre-Foucault: On change d'intellectuel', in *68, Une Histoire Collective: 1962-1981*, Phillippe Artières, Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, (eds.), (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2008), 626-633.

<sup>100</sup> Artières, Zancarini-Fournel *68, Une Histoire Collective*.

<sup>101</sup> Biographie, [http://www.janineniepce.com/janine\\_niepce.html](http://www.janineniepce.com/janine_niepce.html), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>102</sup> Bibliothèque nationale de France, Richelieu, Estampes et photographie, Niépce, Janine (1921-2007), EP-29 (2)-FOL.

<sup>103</sup> EP-29 (2)-FOL.

Bresson), and directly echo those of 1936.<sup>104</sup> In the street scenes, Niépce reflects the tradition of street photography, with a wry eye for humour and juxtapositions: the alteration of signage from the ‘Faculty of Arts and Humanities’ (*faculté des lettres et sciences humaines*), to the ‘Faculty of illiteracy and inhuman sciences’ (*faculté des illettres et sciences inhumaines*), a young student under a huge poster of Mao wearing an identical cap and a pair of elderly women posing in front of a barricade.<sup>105</sup> In an autobiographical reflection, she likened the crowds of May to ‘medieval tournaments’, each tendency with their own banner: ‘black for the Anarchists, blue, white, and red for the Gaullists, and red for the Communists’.<sup>106</sup>

Niépce photographed women occupying the Galeries Lafayette, and in her later photographs, feminism and women dominate her photography of political movements (Figure 3.5).<sup>107</sup> She also photographed protest movements after 1968. An image of children and mothers on a picket line in the 1970s gives a much broader view of political participants.<sup>108</sup> In an interview in 1976, Niépce noted that whereas male photographers tended to focus on the female body, she focused on their ‘trajectory’ from children to old age and in all settings.<sup>109</sup> She photographed the *Mouvement de libération des femmes* (MLF) and Simone de Beauvoir, as well as broader feminist activism from family planning clinics and sex education lessons to pro-choice demonstrations (abortion was legalised in France in 1974).<sup>110</sup> Niépce also documented women within traditional labour movements, selling *La Vie ouvrière*, protesting

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<sup>104</sup> Bruno Barbey, Boulogne Billancourt. Strike at the Renault factory. Meeting of the CGT, 17 May 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZO6A2S07DM&SMLS=1&RW=1529&RH=970>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>105</sup> EP-29 (2)-FOL; Politique, [http://www.janineniepce.com/janine\\_niepce.html](http://www.janineniepce.com/janine_niepce.html), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>106</sup> Interestingly despite the ‘historic scenes demanding’ to be shot in colour, and the colour images available online, the BnF archive of Niépce’s images is monochrome. Biographie, [http://www.janineniepce.com/janine\\_niepce.html](http://www.janineniepce.com/janine_niepce.html); EP-29 (2)-FOL.

<sup>107</sup> Janine Niépce, Événements de mai-juin 68. Grève, occupation des Galeries Lafayette, <http://janineniepce.com/2018/03/28/evenements-de-mai-juin-68-greve-occupation-des-galeries-lafayette/> (Last accessed 23/08/2019).

<sup>108</sup> [http://www.janineniepce.com/janine\\_niepce.html](http://www.janineniepce.com/janine_niepce.html), enfants, 94; femmes, 164

<sup>109</sup> Aline Dallier and Janine Niépce, ‘Extraits d’une conversation avec Janine Niépce, reporter-photographe’, *Les Cahiers du GRIF*, 11, 1, (1976), 69-70.

<sup>110</sup> [http://www.janineniepce.com/janine\\_niepce.html](http://www.janineniepce.com/janine_niepce.html), Femmes

for retirement at 55, taking part in student and anti-unemployment protests.<sup>111</sup> Later on she created numerous portraits of female public figures, artists and women's rights campaigners such as Yvette Roudy and Élisabeth Badinter.<sup>112</sup> The depictions of female politicians reflect how these women had moved into the political establishment, but also exemplify how the demand for recognition of women's rights moved from the street into the domain of orthodox political institutions.

These four career paths show three different trajectories leading from May '68. Barbey demonstrates that of an internationally successful photojournalist, assimilated into a canon of 'iconic' images. Gérard-Aimé's career followed the path of those who present themselves as the 'generation of '68', moving from militancy to a more conventional career. Both these photographers have benefited from the increased commercialisation of their work, but its political content has been either lost or side-lined. Kagan and Niépce's trajectories however, highlight continuities of political engagement by photographers. Kagan's experiences show a commitment to activist photography which preserved an extensive record of protest within a geographically small region. Niépce's reflect the emergence of women's activism within French society, increasingly visible in street protest during the 1970s, but later becoming institutionalised. Through their incorporation into archives and books, they have all been canonised to a certain degree, but have not been decontextualized or commodified to the same extent as Barbey's work. Likewise, the idea of the photographers as political actors is evident, even if, in the case of Bois, it is identified with an exclusive narrative which has distorted it. This is in contrast to the two photographers who were significant figures photographing the strike movements in both 1936 and 1968: Cartier-Bresson and Robert Doisneau, for whom apolitical aspects of their career have often overshadowed political elements.

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<sup>111</sup> [http://www.janineniepce.com/janine\\_niepce.html](http://www.janineniepce.com/janine_niepce.html), Femmes, 33, 36, 123, 155,167.

<sup>112</sup> [http://www.janineniepce.com/janine\\_niepce.html](http://www.janineniepce.com/janine_niepce.html), Femmes

## Shared Trajectories

Two significant photographers from the Popular Front period were still professionally active in 1968: Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Robert Doisneau. Both demonstrate common elements with those trajectories identified above, moving from documentary and street photography through identification with postwar humanism and the consolidation of their professional standing. Yet both also retain elements of political content, even through idealised, potentially sentimental, framings. They illustrate continuity and overlap in the photographic records.

Doisneau had worked as a publicity photographer for Renault in the late 30s, fusing Impressionism (Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*) and the Popular Front (*congés payés*) into his famous 1936 advert, but also documenting the factory at Billancourt.<sup>113</sup> It was not until 1939, after being fired from Renault for persistent lateness, that he would become a street photographer with the Rapho agency and was still active in 1968. Nina Vestberg observes how Doisneau's oeuvre is habitually reduced to the *Kiss at the Hôtel de Ville*, taken in 1950 for *Life Magazine*.<sup>114</sup> The success of the photobook *Instantanés de Paris*, (1955), according to Jean-François Chevrier, encouraged a 'certain stylised charm' in Doisneau's work. Chevrier links Doisneau to a 'melancholic, interiorised' perspective drawing on nineteenth-century photographers such as Charles Nègre. This genealogy explicitly contrasts with Cartier-Bresson and the street-photography tradition which locates its origin in the work of Eugène

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<sup>113</sup> Robert Doisneau, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (photo publicitaire Renault), 1936,

<http://www.robert-doisneau.com/en/portfolios/1483,automobiles-renault.htm>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>114</sup> Nina Lager Vestberg. 'Robert Doisneau and the Making of a Universal Cliché', *History of Photography* 35, 2, (2011), 157-165.



Atget, but has contemporary parallels with ‘Kertész or Robert Frank’.<sup>115</sup> Doisneau himself states he ‘had seen some of Brassai’s work, but had never heard of Kertész or Atget’.<sup>116</sup>

His photographs are less concerned with ‘decisive moment’ than with *mise en scene*. *Kiss at the Hôtel de Ville* uses actors (a couple he met on the street and asked to pose for the camera). A better comparison is to Brassai’s dark, hazy evocations of interwar Paris, whose claim to documentary status is ambiguous, especially given the bulky camera and flash the photographer required.<sup>117</sup> Doisneau explains they were models, or real couples he had asked to recreate a spontaneous kiss, and therefore playing for the camera. Unconcerned with any controversy, he dismisses the idea that the lens can be objective or show ‘things as they “really” are’. Instead, Doisneau was seeking to present an idealised world as ‘a proof that such a world could exist’.<sup>118</sup> This fits perfectly within Bill Jay’s definition of the humanist photograph as ‘not concerned with *what is*, but with *what could or should be*’.<sup>119</sup> Such approaches were utterly antithetical to Cartier-Bresson, for whom the camera was an instrument for seizing images from reality. Given this approach, Doisneau is clearly not a street photographer in the strictest sense of the term. Neither is his work confined by the parameters of documentary, though that is a key component function. Instead, as Kennel argues, it is a broad attempt to create an idealised world, similar in some ways to earlier inter-war photographers’ characterisation of Paris as a nostalgic meeting site between past and present.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Natalie Adamson, ‘André Kertész and Robert Doisneau: From Craft to Art’, *History of Photography*, 36, 1, (2012), 121-123.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Frank Horvat, Paris, November 1987, Translated into English by Julia McLaren in Frank Horvat, *Entre vues*, (Nathan, 1990)

<sup>117</sup> Brassai, *Paris de Nuit*, (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1932); *The Secret Paris of the 1930s* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976, first published Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

<sup>118</sup> Horvat, *Entre vues*.

<sup>119</sup> Bill Jay, ‘The Romantic Machine: Towards a Definition of Humanism in Photography’, *The Massachusetts Review*, 19, 4, (Winter, 1978), 647-662.

<sup>120</sup> Kennel, ‘Fantasies of the Street’.

Yet Doisneau also roots his work within the working-class communities surrounding him and seeks to retain a sense of authenticity. A 2010 exhibition at the Fondation Cartier-Bresson (and the accompanying book) tried to challenge the idealised reading of these photographs, insisting he ‘punctures, rather than confirms the myth of a romantic, picturesque Paris’.<sup>121</sup> Doisneau documented the difficulties of rebuilding France in the second half of the 1940s, and poverty is a backdrop to many of his images.<sup>122</sup> Images of children at play are standard humanist images, but derive much of their impact from the juxtaposition of the children with their environment of rubble and burned out cars.<sup>123</sup> His work also features *clochards*, humanised by his straightforward, direct framing. Though their material conditions are honestly displayed, in ramshackle shelters, sleeping on the street, or collecting cigarette butts, there is still an element of romanticisation, especially a sequence on the ‘king and queen of *cloches*’.<sup>124</sup> Clive Scott has argued that the figure of the *clochard* in street-photography implies a more temporary poverty, sidestepping the portrayal of homelessness as an enduring social problem in documentary photography, though Giuseppe Scandurra argues photography offers a means of portraying both the individuality of the homeless and the wider social structures that cause it.<sup>125</sup>

Doisneau’s focus on industrial Parisian suburbs was a common concern of communist photography; they are the dominant setting of much of *L’Humanité*’s images.<sup>126</sup> Yet Doisneau’s humanism distinguishes much of its work through both the celebration of the everyday, and his conscious attempts to empathise with his subjects. Interviewed by Frank

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<sup>121</sup> Natalie Adamson, ‘Andre Kertesz’ and review of ‘Robert Doisneau: From Craft to Art’, *History of Photography*, 36, 1, (2012) 121-123. An exhibition of the same name has toured Europe since 2015.

<sup>122</sup> ‘A humanist behind the lens: Robert Doisneau, shy street photographer’, *The Economist*, 17 January 2017, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2017/01/humanist-behind-lens>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>123</sup> Robert Doisneau, *La voiture fondue*, 1944, <https://www.robert-doisneau.com/en/portfolios/474,enfants.htm>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>124</sup> Robert Doisneau, *Clochards*, <https://www.robert-doisneau.com/en/portfolios/1784,clochards.htm>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>125</sup> Clive Scott, *Street Photography: From Atget to Cartier-Bresson*. (London, New York: IB Tauris, 2013), 7; Giuseppe Scandurra, ‘Photography and Urban Marginality’, *Visual Anthropology* 30, 3 (2017), 261-274.

<sup>126</sup> *Mai '68: Instantes de L’Humanité*; Archives Departementales de la Seine St Denis.

Horvat in 1987, Doisneau remarked ‘All my photographs are self-portraits in the sense that I always show people living in the same absurd surroundings as myself’.<sup>127</sup> This melding of humanist empathy with a consistent study of social realities is the defining feature of Doisneau’s Paris. He produced *La Banlieue de Paris* in 1949 with the modernist poet Blaise Cendrars, mixing older and newer photographs.<sup>128</sup> Whilst the misanthropic captions Cendrars contributed were sometimes at odds with Doisneau’s humanism, he drew on the heritage of the *zone* as a metaphor for social unity, where ‘we have too much in common not to cross paths more than once in these maze-like suburbs’.<sup>129</sup> An image of a CGT peace demonstration in Montrouge in 1949, for *Regards*, and later reproduced in *La Banlieue de Paris*, is used by Hamilton to show these ambiguities.<sup>130</sup> Juxtaposing the crowd with a lone man digging his garden, Doisneau captures both the quotidian and the political.

Doisneau’s depictions of Billancourt prefigure the hyper-stylised car fetishisations of René-Jacques<sup>131</sup>, in that their emphasis on the monumentality of the machinery and the factory environment (*Renault Billancourt circa 1935, Les Presses du Renault, 1936*) do not totally erase the workers, and in some cases actively celebrate them.<sup>132</sup> The example of *La Pause* (1938) showing workers reclining and smoking, is right at home with much strike photography: humanising the worker, showing his evident enjoyment at not working, and doing so within the workplace, which is seen not as a site of production, but as where these men spend their time.<sup>133</sup> This sentiment can also be seen in film, in the work of Jacques

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<sup>127</sup> Horvat, *Entre vues*.

<sup>128</sup> Blaise Cendrars, *La Banlieue de Paris: 130 Photographes de Robert Doisneau*, (Paris: Seghers, 1949).

<sup>129</sup> James Cannon, *The Paris Zone: A Cultural History 1840-1944*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 206-207; Cendrars, *La Banlieue de Paris*, 143

<sup>130</sup> Hamilton, ‘Representing the Social’, 104-107

<sup>131</sup> Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonisation and the Reordering of French Culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press, 1996), 20.

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.robert-doisneau.com/fr/portfolios/1483,automobiles-renault.htm>

<sup>133</sup> Robert Doisneau, ‘La Pause’, 1938, <http://www.robert-doisneau.com/fr/portfolios/1483,automobiles-renault.htm>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

Prévert, and Rene Clair's film *À nous la liberté*, which champion workers but celebrate leisure and challenge the idea of work as a liberating force.<sup>134</sup>

Doisneau explains his own relationship to the labour relations in his own career to Horvat, since, unlike photographers freed from commercial constraints, he must negotiate the demands of assignments. While Doisneau appears unconcerned with the commercial nature of his photographs, presenting commercially lucrative 'little "Parisian" scenes' that he acknowledges sold well. He is happy to have his images cropped to fit pages, and deliberately selects obvious motifs to 'be kind' to a popular audience who did not know how to 'read' photographs.<sup>135</sup> Vestberg notes how images such as *Le Regard oblique*, shot from within a shop window, function as a metaphor for Doisneau's photographic production. The 'virtual assembly-line' of his images laid out like a contact sheet on the pages of French weekly *Point de Vue* only furthers this impression.<sup>136</sup> Yet unlike Horvat, who uses the term 'client', Doisneau explicitly characterises the relation as that of an 'employer' and employee. He talks of a 'game' played with working-hours, and that the best photographs are inevitably 'the ones you stole from his [the employers] time'.

Doisneau also retained a political commitment to the Communist Party. His photographs of communist demonstrations are often neglected by retrospectives.<sup>137</sup> His work had been used as the basis for PCF posters in 1945.<sup>138</sup> Doisneau's 1945 image of the *Fête de l'Humanité* directly echoes the tropes of 1936: the newspaper hats of the picnic mimic Capa's of the *Galleries Lafayette* strike in 1936, and the picnic references both Doisneau's Renault work and images of the *congés payés* (Figure 3.6).<sup>139</sup> Considering that Doisneau, though

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<sup>134</sup> *À nous la liberté*, Rene Clair (dir), 1931.

<sup>135</sup> Horvat, *Entre vues*.

<sup>136</sup> Lager Vestberg. 'Robert Doisneau and the Making of a Universal Cliché', 162-163.

<sup>137</sup> [www.robert-doisneau.com/en/portfolios/2010,politique.htm](http://www.robert-doisneau.com/en/portfolios/2010,politique.htm);

<sup>138</sup> Parti communiste français, *la France a besoin d'une jeunesse robuste, garante d'une puissante armée... pour la Fran*, Archives Départemental du Val de Marne, 29FI 3, 1945

<sup>139</sup> Robert Doisneau, *Fête de l'Humanité* (1945) [www.robert-doisneau.com/en/portfolios/2010,politique.htm](http://www.robert-doisneau.com/en/portfolios/2010,politique.htm), (Last accessed 23/08/2019); Robert Capa, *Paris. June 1936. Employees of the Galleries Lafayette department*

clearly influenced by the visual vocabulary of the Popular Front, did not photograph its major manifestations (occupations, demonstrations, rallies) it is striking how his images of May '68 pick up on precisely those elements which most resemble those of 1936.<sup>140</sup> The occupation of the *Printemps* department store echoes that of the *Galeries Lafayette* captured by Capa.<sup>141</sup> The mass rally at Charletty stadium was perhaps the closest '68 came to a re-run of the Popular Front rallies. Doisneau pictures crowds, red flags and raised fists. His use of colour in the 1960s marks a sharp break with his earlier work. On assignment for *Fortune* magazine in 1960, Doisneau had shot Palm Springs in vibrant colour, in a clear break with his monochrome Parisian work.<sup>142</sup> In May '68, Doisneau's use of colour is much more subdued, mostly defined by the grey of the paving slabs, but this highlights the occasional bright red flag.

The other scenes which Doisneau photographed were the aftermath of barricade fighting, and show elderly and well-dressed Parisians picking their way over rubble, or surveying the scene.<sup>143</sup> Comparable to police images of the aftermath, they convey a sense of bewilderment and disruption of routine, but offer no evidence of the events that actually took place.<sup>144</sup> These choices perhaps reflect his continuing affiliation to the PCF, which sought to marginalise *gauchiste* radicalism and portray it as disorderly. Instead the tropes of the Popular Front are re-used, promoting workplace occupation, and mass organised rallies and demonstrations.

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*store on the rooftop terrace, during a sit-in strike* (June 1936), <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDIHWFOS.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>140</sup> Gamma-Legends,

<http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/search/photographer?&family=editorial&page=1&phrase=may%201968&photographer=robert%20doisneau&sort=oldest%20-%20license>

<sup>141</sup> Capa, *June 1936. Employees of the Galeries Lafayette department store on the rooftop terrace, during a sit-in strike.*

<sup>142</sup> Gamma- Legends, <http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/photos/doisneau-palm-springs?excludenudity=true&family=editorial&page=1&phrase=doisneau%20palm%20springs&sort=mostpopular#license>, published in *Robert Doisneau: Palm Springs 1960*, Introduction by Jean-Paul Dubois, (Flammarion, 2010).

<sup>143</sup> Robert Doisneau, *After A Demonstration, Damages On The Pavement*, May 1968, Getty Images

<sup>144</sup> Les archives de la préfecture de police, *Evenements de Mai 68*, FB art. 6

Doisneau's more overtly political work is largely absent from most retrospective exhibitions. His photographs for the Communist daily *Action* in the immediate post-war period, briefly appeared in the *From Craft to Art* exhibition, but did not make it into the accompanying book. There were no photos displayed from after 1966, and the exhibition focused overwhelmingly on 1944-1954. By this time, he was working at *La Vie Ouvriere*, having briefly worked for *Vogue*, but repudiated this as an 'error of judgement and a class betrayal', being preoccupied with taking 'photos of baronesses'.<sup>145</sup> In 1967 he travelled to the Soviet Union to report on the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution for *La Vie Ouvriere*.<sup>146</sup> Perhaps due to its more explicitly sectarian political affiliations, Doisneau's post 1960 oeuvre does not have the 'critical weight' of Cartier-Bresson or Kertész, who continued to gain status, even as the post-war humanist paradigm became an artefact of its time.<sup>147</sup> These examples show Doisneau as a photographer who produced commercially viable work within the humanist tradition, but also retained a sense of the French working class as a political subject. His own political perspective remained tied to the PCF, which would frame his depictions of May '68.

Unlike Doisneau, by 1968, Henri Cartier-Bresson had re-framed his career as that of a singular artist, rather than as a journalist merely supplying illustrations for the press.<sup>148</sup> He moved between a conception of photography as art, or as a profession producing image material, before dismissing the entire debate as 'purely academic' in the 1980s.<sup>149</sup> In 1952 he characterised the role as that of an 'artisan' producing 'raw-material' for the press industry.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Lara Marlowe, 'Robert Doisneau: the humanist photographer who loved Paris', *Irish Times*, 31 March 2018, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/art-and-design/visual-art/robert-doisneau-the-humanist-photographer-who-loved-paris-1.3444436>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>146</sup> *Robert Doisneau – Photographs, From Craft to Art* Press release, (Berlin: Martin-Gropius-Bau, 2016).

<sup>147</sup> Adamson, review of 'Robert Doisneau'.

<sup>148</sup> Nadya Bair, 'The Decisive Network: Producing Henri Cartier-Bresson at Mid-Century', *History of Photography*, 40, 2, (2016), 146-166.

<sup>149</sup> Claude Cookman, 'Henri Cartier-Bresson Reinterprets his Career', *History of Photography*, 32, 1, (2008), 59-73, 62.

<sup>150</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, 'The Decisive Moment', in *The Mind's Eye: Writings on Photography and Photographers*, (Aperture, 2004), 20-44, 40.

Despite this, the book underlined Cartier-Bresson's status as an artist. Initially conceived of as a book with contributions on the nature of photography from various authors, for which Cartier-Bresson would provide the illustrations, it morphed into a monograph. With the addition of a cover by Matisse, a display at MOMA, and a marketing push, the book was re-framed as the work of a photographer accepted into the pantheon of French artists. Cartier-Bresson's own insistence that photojournalism was capable of incorporating artistic qualities (recognising a significant event in a way that communicates it via formal organisation) was interpreted as elevating him to the level of artist.<sup>151</sup>

Nadya Bair critiques the mythologisation of Cartier-Bresson as a singular figure, stressing the collaborative nature of the work. Benjamin argues this awareness of the author's 'position in the process of production' displaces claims to a spiritual, or auratic, value in the work.<sup>152</sup> Bair highlights how editorial assignments shape the content of photojournalism, directing the photographer to particular subjects, be it people, places or scenarios.<sup>153</sup> May '68 was an exemplary 'scenario' for photojournalists. The chief of Magnum's Paris Bureau, Russell Melcher, described the events as 'a wonderful story for photographers', stressing that with television on strike, and radio reporters with their equipment confining them to their cars, 'the only kind of mobile medium that was really any good was the good old Leica'.<sup>154</sup> Paris held a photographic mythology of its own - the beguiling erotic possibilities of the *flâneur* and the surrealists, the nostalgic layering of a present past, the down to earth banlieue, and of course the occupied factories of '36.<sup>155</sup> Juxtaposed were the participants who could be cast in the appropriate role: attractive young Mariannes, student firebrands laughing at

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<sup>151</sup> Bair, 'The Decisive Network', 155-160.

<sup>152</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer', 93.

<sup>153</sup> Bair, 'The Decisive Network', 146-166.

<sup>154</sup> Miller, *Magnum*, 232-233.

<sup>155</sup> Catherine E. Clark, *Paris and the Cliché of History: The City and Photographs, 1860-1970*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Kennel, 'Fantasies of the Street', 298-290; Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, 30-31.

policemen, and the menacing masked CRS themselves. This proved to be an irresistible mix for photojournalists and their editors (see Chapter 4).

By the 1960s, Cartier-Bresson was actively resisting commercial pressures on his work, as he felt that the rise of consumerism threatened the craft of photojournalism. Disapproving of the advertising and fashion assignments of Magnum colleagues, he warned them of surrendering their independence, and re-iterated the agency's purpose as 'to bring testimony on our world'. In 1966, he could no longer fight the trend, and resigned as a shareholder.<sup>156</sup> During this period he was also significant in furthering the careers of younger contemporaries such as Marc Riboud, and his advice to Riboud also betrays a broad sense of his political commitment: 'keep left'.<sup>157</sup> This shows a clear sense of self-awareness of the pressures which shape trajectories.

Cartier-Bresson's continued protests against consumer culture chimed with the zeitgeist of 1968, and he enthusiastically embraced May '68: 'The important thing was to be there, to comprehend with one's own eyes ... If it should begin again, I would jump again at the chance. I am sure I would need to do it'.<sup>158</sup> He photographed the movement extensively, capturing demonstrations, barricades and occupations at both the Sorbonne and Billancourt.<sup>159</sup> Whilst workers are not absent, he pays significant attention to the aspects of May '68 more focused on artistic expression. Amongst his images of May '68, the work of the *Atelier Populaire* features prominently, as does graffiti and the other posters (Figure 3.7).<sup>160</sup> The sleeping figures evoke Seymour's images of workers sleeping during the occupation of 1936

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<sup>156</sup> Cookman, 'Henri Cartier-Bresson Reinterprets his Career', 64-66

<sup>157</sup> Miller, *Magnum*, 111.

<sup>158</sup> Cookman, 'Henri Cartier-Bresson Reinterprets his Career', 66 – quoting 'Comme a vingt ans' *Photo* 128, (May 1978).

<sup>159</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, Portfolio,

[http://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=MAGO31\\_10\\_VForm&ERID=24KL53ZMYN](http://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=MAGO31_10_VForm&ERID=24KL53ZMYN), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>160</sup> Henri Cartier Bresson, Paris. 6th arrondissement. The Ecole des Beaux-Arts (Fine Arts School). May 1968, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDI7G8V9.html> (Last accessed 23/08/2019).



(see Chapter 2.)<sup>161</sup> He photographed an occupation of the Théâtre de l'Épée-de-Bois.<sup>162</sup> His photographs also evoke generational conflict. Whereas Bruno Barbey's images of the Gaullist demonstration of May 30<sup>th</sup> are indistinguishable from student protests, Cartier-Bresson deliberately highlights the stern faces of elderly and military participants.<sup>163</sup> Many of these images are now part of the standard photographic repertoire of those used to depict May, and as such, they do not challenge the hegemonic clichés.

## Conclusion

In John Berger's obituary of Cartier-Bresson, he notes that the photographer could always photograph the apparently unseen, hidden behind what is readily apparent.<sup>164</sup> In 1968 he was able to pick out the observers and the work that went into making the visual repertoire of the protestors. We must try to use Cartier-Bresson's approach on a different aspect of the photographic record, in order to see the influence of previous waves of social contestation on the photographic record. To do this we also have to negotiate the trajectories and afterlives of

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<sup>161</sup> David Seymour, Parisian suburbs. National strike for the 40 hour week, paid holidays and collective agreements. Workers during a sit-in at their factory. June 1936, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYB8D97.html>, (Last accessed 23/08/2019).

<sup>162</sup> Henri Cartier Bresson, 5<sup>e</sup> arrondissement. Rue Mouffetard. Théâtre de l'Épée-de-Bois, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDZNV6SZ.html>, (Last accessed 23/08/2019).

<sup>163</sup> Henri Cartier Bresson, 8<sup>e</sup> arrondissement. Avenue des Champs Élysées. Demonstration supporting the President, General de Gaulle. May 30, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDWWNYWQ.html>, (Last accessed 23/08/2019).

<sup>164</sup> John Berger, 'John Berger pays tribute to his good friend', *The Guardian*, Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/aug/08/photography.henricartierbresson>, (Last accessed 23/08/2019).

the photographers themselves. Not looking past them, but analysing how their professional trajectories have shaped the reception of their photographs.

The number and diversity of photographers working to cover the movements of 1936 and 1968 means projecting any single trajectory onto them can only be reductive. However, by comparing multiple examples common factors emerge. Professionalisation, and the creation of an institutional canon is one. In the case of Popular Front photography, these include how postwar humanism created a set of preoccupations which were retrospectively applied to the 1930s. Following 1968, professional photojournalists have incorporated May into a foundational narrative of their own careers. But the trajectories also demonstrate how the representation of the strike movements is enmeshed in wider cultural and social trends, from the lingering influence of the Surrealists to the long duration of the 68 years. As this chapter has shown, the institutional display and framing of photographs is crucial to how photographers are positioned and the message they convey. The next chapter will examine how one such framing, that of a 'generation', has profoundly shaped the reception of the photographic record.

## Chapter 4. Generation

Generation has been a major theme in the commemoration and historiography of May '68. It has both used photographs and shaped the most emphasised aspects of the photographic record. As such, it is a key indicator of photography's involvement in the developing discourses around May. Though it is not present to the same degree in 1936, there are common themes of youth, and studying the two movements together illustrates how generational readings of social contestation are visualised.

Partly developed during the events themselves, a reading of 1968 as a generational conflict put the student movement front and centre. Edgar Morin and Raymond Aron both saw events through the prism of youth, though what for Morin was joyful exuberance, for Aron crossed the line into pathological 'delirium'.<sup>1</sup> This framework only intensified in the following decades, as anniversary commemorations followed the '68 generation through their subsequent political commitments and career trajectories. Of these trajectories, one in particular dominated, focusing on those whose paths took them from the Sorbonne into positions of power in the media and cultural industries. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello argued that this coincided with the emergence of a new form of networked capitalism, both reacting against the anti-capitalism of '1968', whilst absorbing an individualist 'networked' ethos from the counterculture.<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Gilbert identifies an anglophone strain of the narrative which places '68' as the start of a consumer culture.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the most significant text in this regard was Hamon and Rotman's *Génération*, which firmly established the locus of May's

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Aron, *La Revolution Introuvable. Reflexions sur la Revolution de Mai* (Paris: Fayard, 1968); Edgar Morin, Claude Lefort, and Jean-Marc Coudray, *Mai 1968: la Breche. Premieres reflexions sur les evenements*, (Paris: Fayard, 1968); Aristide R. Zolberg, 'Moments of madness' *Politics & Society*, 2, 2, (1972), 183-207.

<sup>2</sup> Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott. (London: Verso, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Gilbert, 'After '68: narratives of the new capitalism', *New Formations*, 65, (2008), 35; Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, (New York, W.N. Norton, 1979).

memory within a group of high-profile former activists, now with media dominance.<sup>4</sup> Kristin Ross critiqued how this was central in building a depoliticised ‘consensus’ around May’s memory, but many of the generational framings of May persist.<sup>5</sup>

There have been fewer polemic invocations of the ’68 generation in scholarship that uses generation as a framework for oral histories and transnational comparisons, and the concept of generation has had substantial influence in historical research.<sup>6</sup> Generational theories of history developed in the 1920s and 30s, under the influence of thinkers such as François Mentré and José Ortega y Gasset.<sup>7</sup> Karl Mannheim’s sociological analysis was particularly influential in providing a framework that was applicable in varying situations. Mannheim’s approach made a distinction between biological generations, and generations as a social grouping or ‘cohort’ defined by common identity and formative events.<sup>8</sup> Others have subsequently refined and built on Mannheim’s work.<sup>9</sup> Yet, concerning ‘68, Maud Anne Bracke argued that there is a need to move beyond generation and analyse how new forms of collective identity, especially gender, were conceptualised in 1968.<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, the role of generation in constructing an ‘iconic’ photographic record of 1968 is an important one.

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<sup>4</sup> Hervé Hamon and Patric Rotman, *Génération vol. 1: Les Années de rêve, vol. 2: Les Années de poudre*, (Paris: Seuil, 1987 and 1988).

See also Hervé Hamon, ‘68 the rise and fall of a Generation’ in David Hanley and Pat Kerr, eds. *May ‘68: Coming of Age*, (Springer, 1989), 10-23.

<sup>5</sup> Kristin Ross, *May ‘68 and it’s Afterlives*, (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2002)

<sup>6</sup> Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Annette Waring (eds.), *Europe’s 68: Voices of Revolt*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Anna von der Goltz, (ed.), *‘Talkin’ ‘bout my generation’: Conflicts of generation building and Europe’s ‘1968’*, (Gottingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011)

<sup>7</sup> François Mentré, *Les Générations Sociales*, (Paris, 1920); José Ortega y Gasset, *The Modern Theme* (New York, 1961); *Man and Crisis* (New York, 1958).

<sup>8</sup> Karl Mannheim, ‘The problem of generations’, *Psychoanalytic review* 57, 3 (1970): 378-404, first published 1928.

<sup>9</sup> Alan B. Spitzer, ‘The historical problem of generations’, *The American Historical Review* 78, 5 (1973): 1353-1385; David I. Kertzer, ‘Generation as a sociological problem’, *Annual review of sociology* 9, 1, (1983), 125-149.

<sup>10</sup> Maud Anne Bracke, ‘One-dimensional Conflict? Recent Scholarship on 1968 and the Limitations of the Generation Concept’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, 3 (2012), 638-646.

Regarding 1936, the idea of a particular 'generation' as driving events is absent. However, in elements of the photography of the Popular Front, images focused on youth as a category emerge. The self-confidence of their subjects is also notable. As in 1968, they link to broader narratives seeking to characterise the strikes. Rather than put them in terms of generational conflict, they return to the themes of harmony, with both pedagogical and utopian overtones.

### **The '68 Generation**

Much analysis of the global wave of protest in the late 1960s drew on these generational frameworks.<sup>11</sup> France is just one prominent example that builds on the depiction of May as a student movement rather than a strike wave.<sup>12</sup> International comparison foreground this particular lens, as the student movement is something France had in common with Germany and the US (and elsewhere), whereas, as Daniel Bensaïd identified, the strike wave was unique.<sup>13</sup> Other participants repudiated the generational interpretation as part of the revisionist May that emerged in the 1980s. Guy Hocquenghem both rejected his personal place within what he called a 'coagulated bloc of disappointments and old-boy networks', but claimed that it was a specifically retrospective production and that it 'only congeals at the moment of the great betrayal of maturity. A generation only takes shape when it retreats into its shell like a snail, or into its cell like penitent'.<sup>14</sup> Photography is a core component of this process, and the understandings associated with the concept of generation have helped build the particular memory of May which Hocquenghem is so critical of.

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<sup>11</sup> Anthony Esler ed. *The Youth Revolution: The Conflict of Generations in Modern History*, (DC Heath and Company, 1974),

<sup>12</sup> Barbara and John Ehrenreich, 'A Radical Analysis: The May Days in Paris', in Anthony Esler ed. *The Youth Revolution: The Conflict of Generations in Modern History*, (DC Heath and Company, 1974), 119-140

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Bensaïd, and Henri Weber. *Mai 1968: Une répétition générale*. (F. Maspero: Paris, 1968).

<sup>14</sup> Guy Hocquenghem, *Lettre ouvert a ceux qui sont passés de col Mao au Rotary*, Albin Michel, 1986.

In 1988, West German activist Sylvia Bovenschen conceded that ‘in ’68 we were not yet ‘68ers’, only becoming ‘68ers’ as activist’s individual experiences were amalgamated or homogenised into a ‘we’ of a singular movement, and they became ‘the generation that guards the event.’<sup>15</sup> Bernard Kouchner, who ran the strike committee at the Sorbonne’s medical faculty, subsequently founded *Médecins Sans Frontières* and then became a minister in both Socialist and right wing governments, claimed ‘we didn’t know then what we know now’.<sup>16</sup> Where Kouchner finds a constant ‘we’, Ross sees a ‘congealed and cumbersome’ construct of a generation, moving from the same assumed positions of ignorance and naïveté to experiencing the same political awakening, and for whom Kouchner can claim to speak.<sup>17</sup>

This singular focus collapses varied post-war militant trajectories. Rather than a fixed cohort, other historical inquiries use generation more loosely. Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Annette Waring’s *Europe’s 68* takes an otherwise diverse activist cohort born throughout the 1930s-50s and groups them by a series of shared experiences.<sup>18</sup> Anna von der Goltz has argued there is a continuous ‘element of fiction’ involved in claiming membership of a generation, which she characterises as a ‘narrative strategy’.<sup>19</sup> Von der Goltz contends that the act of constructing a generation reveals how participants subsequently understood their experiences of 1968.<sup>20</sup> In this context, photographs provide reference points around which such generational narratives can coalesce.

The most significant photographs that visually construct a ‘68 generation’ are probably the portraits of famous faces; Daniel Cohn-Bendit first among them. Above all

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<sup>15</sup> Anna von der Goltz, ‘Introduction: Generational belonging and the ‘68ers in Europe’, in Anna von der Goltz, (ed.), *Talkin’ ‘bout my generation’: Conflicts of generation building and Europe’s ‘1968’*, (Gottingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011), 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Libération*, Nov. 24, 1983.

<sup>17</sup> Ross, *May ‘68 and its Afterlives*, 158.

<sup>18</sup> Gildea, Mark, and Waring, *Europe’s 68*.

<sup>19</sup> Anna von der Goltz, ‘Introduction: Generational belonging and the ‘68ers in Europe’, in Anna von der Goltz, (ed.), *Talkin’ ‘bout my generation’: Conflicts of generation building and Europe’s ‘1968’*, (Gottingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011), 16.

<sup>20</sup> Von der Goltz, ‘Generational belonging and the ‘68ers in Europe’, 16.

others, Gilles Caron's photograph of Cohn-Bendit laughing in the face of police has become a synecdoche of May '68 (Figure 4.1).<sup>21</sup> The photojournalist christened it "'the" photograph of May', but it is through the process of endless subsequent reproduction that it has gained this quality.<sup>22</sup>

Keith Reader's review of 1988 anniversary publications, (including *Génération*) uses the image to illustrate those retrospectives' reliance on a cast of notable ex-68ers.<sup>23</sup> In a 2018 article Chris Reynolds highlighted the contradiction between the egalitarian ethos of May and how those like Cohn-Bendit had 'become the faces of 1968'.<sup>24</sup> Cohn-Bendit himself picked out this singular image: 'Many such photographs were taken, but this one is symbolic. I think that the symbol it represented in these demonstrations was above all the symbol of this smile, a smile which associated liberty with pleasure.'<sup>25</sup> Julian Jackson argues the image epitomises Pierre Bourdieu's concept of '*le rire de mai*' (the laughter of May), and plays a decisive role in defining a certain vision of 1968. It locates May within a Parisian student milieu; it 'expresses a springtime mood of youthful irreverence, of teasing defiance mixed with good humour'.<sup>26</sup> In this sense, the image corresponds with the concept of 'individuated aggregate' and describes how 'iconic' photography uses individuals as placeholders for collectives or broader concepts.<sup>27</sup>

Caron's is only one of several images of this encounter. A remarkably similar colour photograph by Georges Melet documents the same event from a slightly different angle,

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<sup>21</sup> Gilles Caron, *Daniel Cohn-Bendit face à un CRS devant la Sorbonne*, 6 May 1968, Fondation Gilles Caron.

<sup>22</sup> Audrey Leblanc. 'Gilles Caron LE photographe de Mai 68, l'oeuvre d'une politique culturelle?', in Gil Bartholeyns, (ed.) *Politiques visuelles*, (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2016), Audrey Leblanc and Dominic Versavel, *Icônes de Mai 68: Les Images ont une histoire*, (Paris: BnF Éditions, 2018), 48-61.

<sup>23</sup> Keith Reader, 'The Anniversary Industry', *Screen*, 29, 3 (1988), 122-127.

<sup>24</sup> Chris Reynolds, 'Misremembering May '68', *Spiked*, 30 May 2018, <http://www.spiked-online.com/spiked-review/article/misremembering-mai-68/21437#.WxEIRIeos8R>

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Cohn-Bendit *Forget '68*, (Paris: Editions de l'Aube, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Julian Jackson, "Rethinking May '68." *May '68*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011) 3.

<sup>27</sup> John Louis Lucaites and Robert Hariman. 'Visual rhetoric, photojournalism, and democratic public culture', *Rhetoric Review* 20, 1/2, (2001), 37-42.

though without direct eye contact.<sup>28</sup> Melet's version appeared in *Paris Match* on the 18 May under the heading 'le lundi terrible' (the terrible Monday).<sup>29</sup> *L'Express* carried a third version of the photograph by Jacques Haillot.<sup>30</sup> Haillot's photograph forms the basis of the 'nous sommes tous indésirables' (we are all undesirable) Atelier Populaire poster, and another poster where it is placed alongside the portrait of Che Guevara (Figure 4.2).<sup>31</sup> Caron's image's relative commonality compared to Melet and Haillot's pictures demonstrates that such notoriety is not a result of any innate property of the photograph, but its replication and diffusion. It is also possible that the other photos, particularly in the poster format, are entangled with the memory of the Caron image, as his name became prominently attached to the image of Cohn-Bendit laughing, beyond any individual photograph.

Even outside professional photojournalism, the narrow, novelistic vision of the generation expounded by Hamon and Rotman has shaped how photographs are presented. It is also visible in Patrick Fillioud's *Roman vrai de mai 68*, which makes prominent use of Gérard-Aimé's photographs of Nanterre in March and April 1968.<sup>32</sup> Aimé's photographs assume a privileged insider status, and as a long-time militant, he was permitted to photograph meetings when others were not and managed to preserve negatives despite police raids. The university contextualises the photographs within the discourse of a 'crisis of the university'.<sup>33</sup> In this restriction of the setting, the slide into associating the movement with a

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<sup>28</sup> Georges Melet, 6 May 1968, Paris Match Archive, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/events-of-may-1968-in-paris-may-6th-le-6-mai-1968-journée-news-photo/162760735>; Melet also photographed Cohn-Bendit throughout May, in an absurd variety of situations, many of which have very little to do with his role as an activist. He is photographed at home in his apartment, posing on his bed and with a book, shaving, with family, in exile in Berlin, and in a few cases addressing protestors; Paris Match Archive, Getty images.

<sup>29</sup> *Paris Match*, 997, 18 May 1968, 63.

<sup>30</sup> *L'Express*, 882, 13 May 1968, 57.

<sup>31</sup> Johan Kugelberg and Philippe Vermés, (eds.), *Beauty Is in the Street: A Visual Record of the May '68 Uprising*, (Four Corners Books, 2011), 91, 260.

<sup>32</sup> Patrick Fillioud's 'Roman vrai de Mai 68, Avec les photographies de Gérard-Aimé', (Paris: Lemieux Éditeur, 2016)

<sup>33</sup> Hans N. Weiler, 'The Politics of Reform and Nonreform in French Education', *Comparative Education Review*, 32, 3 (1988), 251-265; Sidney Tarrow, 'Social protest and policy reform: May 1968 and the Loi d'orientation in France', *Comparative Political Studies*, 25, 4 (1993), 579-607.



small clique of protagonists begins. The book follows much the same course as *Génération*, devoting its second half to ‘what have they become’, and 50 pages of biographical sketches of former activists. Aimé’s subsequent trajectory follows that of his contemporaries. From an amateur photographer, he moved to a professional photographer and then to the founding photo editor at *Libération*. This also highlights the extent of control that those depicted had in the construction of their own ‘generational’ myth. Luisa Passerini recalls of her own reminisces of 1968 that ‘it would be necessary to wrest this memory from its own protagonists’.<sup>34</sup>

The other key image in the construction of a ’68 generation, according to Audrey Leblanc, is that of the ‘Marianne de Mai’.<sup>35</sup> The trope of ‘Marianne’ was widespread in contemporary media coverage, but retrospectives have collapsed the variety of images into the singular figure of Jean-Pierre Rey’s 13 May photograph of Caroline De Bendern, who becomes the singular ‘Marianne de Mai’ (Figure 4.3).<sup>36</sup> According to *L’Express*, which published the image in a 1988 anniversary issue, Rey’s image had the same relationship to 68 as Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* does to 1830, assimilating the events into the national imagination.<sup>37</sup> Photographs of figures riding shoulders alongside flags also evoke the images of children from the Popular Front (see below). Leblanc shows how the image is cropped from a much wider shot in order to achieve this direct reference to the painting, and notes how journalists are drawn to already existing imagery. Women on barricades had been depicted by photographers at the Liberation in an invocation of Delacroix.<sup>38</sup> Alongside the

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<sup>34</sup> Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy, 1968*, translated by Lisa Edelberg, (Hannover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 2

<sup>35</sup> Audrey Leblanc. ‘Devenir la “Marianne de Mai 68”’. *Processus d’iconisation et histoire par le photojournalisme*, in Christine Pina, Erice Savarese (ed.). *La politique par l’image. Iconographie politique et sciences sociales*, (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2017), 145-167; Leblanc and Versavel, *Icônes de Mai 68*.

<sup>36</sup> Jean-Pierre Rey, *La Marianne de mai*, 13 May 1968.

<sup>37</sup> *L’Express*, issue 1918, 8 April 1988.

<sup>38</sup> Catherine E. Clark, ‘Capturing the moment, picturing history: photographs of the liberation of Paris’, *The American Historical Review* 121, 3, (2016), 836-837, 840-841.

*Femmes Tondues*, publicly shaven for accusations of collaboration (usually sleeping with the enemy), these images formed two sides of a gendered image of the nation.<sup>39</sup>

A 2008 initiative of CODHOS (Collectif des centres de documentation en histoire ouvrière et sociale) digitised a collection of Rey's images, which included several variations on the image, including other figures.<sup>40</sup> Alternate versions include wide shots, some more prominently featuring the man on whose shoulders De Bendern sits, and group portraits.<sup>41</sup> Several images include a different woman in the same pose, but with the anarchist black flag, titled by Rey, '*La Marianne au drapeau noir*'.<sup>42</sup> The same woman is featured in another Barbey photograph immediately behind UNEF leader Jacques Sauvageot.<sup>43</sup> Barbey also repeatedly used this framing for both worker and student demonstrations, and the pro-Gaullist mobilisation of 30<sup>th</sup> May.<sup>44</sup>

Rey's own blog catalogues the publication of his photographs.<sup>45</sup> The 'Marianne de Mai' photograph first appears as part of a montage in *Life* magazine on the 24 May,

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<sup>39</sup> Alison M. Moore, 'History, Memory and Trauma in Photography of the Tondues: Visuality of the Vichy past through the Silent Image of Women', *Gender & History*, 17, 3 (2005), 659-660.

<sup>40</sup> [http://www.mai-68.fr/dossiers/dossiers.php?val=29\\_jean-pierre+rey+regard+sur+mai+68](http://www.mai-68.fr/dossiers/dossiers.php?val=29_jean-pierre+rey+regard+sur+mai+68), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>41</sup> Jean-Pierre Rey, *J.-J. Lebel, C. de Bendern*, 13 May 1968, [http://www.mai-68.fr/galerie/oeuvre.php?val=439\\_0\\_13+mai+1968++j-j-lebel+c+bendern&PHPSESSID=82375ec18d9ed193ffc0981e2398c9d8](http://www.mai-68.fr/galerie/oeuvre.php?val=439_0_13+mai+1968++j-j-lebel+c+bendern&PHPSESSID=82375ec18d9ed193ffc0981e2398c9d8); *Jean-Jacques Lebel, Caroline de Bendern, Pascal Aubier, Olivier Mosset* [http://www.mai-68.fr/galerie/oeuvre.php?val=440\\_0\\_13+mai+1968++portrait+groupe#img440](http://www.mai-68.fr/galerie/oeuvre.php?val=440_0_13+mai+1968++portrait+groupe#img440), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>42</sup> Jean-Pierre Rey, *La Marianne au drapeau noir*, 13 May 1968, [http://www.mai-68.fr/galerie/oeuvre.php?val=443\\_0\\_13+mai+1968++marianne+drapeau+noir#img443](http://www.mai-68.fr/galerie/oeuvre.php?val=443_0_13+mai+1968++marianne+drapeau+noir#img443), (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>43</sup> Bruno Barbey, Boulevard Raspail. Demonstration. In the center one of the student leaders Jacques Sauvageot. On their way to the meeting at Charlety stadium. 27 May 1968. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYCKA1M.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>44</sup> Bruno Barbey, 13th arrondissement. 81 boulevard Kellerman. Meeting of workers and students at Charlety stadium. 27 May 1968. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDIU8W2R.html>; Bruno Barbey, Champs Elysees. During the pro-gaullist demonstration, a girl is seen holding the last edition of the newspaper France-Soir. The headlines in bold letters read: "I stay". "I keep Pompidou". May 30th, 1968. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD405SB.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>45</sup> [http://jeanpierre-rey.over-blog.com/pages/La\\_Marianne\\_de\\_Mai\\_68\\_Publications-433238.html](http://jeanpierre-rey.over-blog.com/pages/La_Marianne_de_Mai_68_Publications-433238.html)

surrounded by various images of police brutality.<sup>46</sup> It was featured again, alongside *La Marianne au drapeau noir*, in the June 15th issue of *Paris-Match* (the first since strikes disrupted the magazine's publication) as part of a montage featuring other women photographed in the same frame.<sup>47</sup> *Le Nouvel Observateur's* 22 May issue uses a version of the '*Marianne au drapeau noir*' image.<sup>48</sup>

Leblanc traces the reproduction of Rey's image in the decennial anniversary press, arguing that publication and repetition reduced down these diverse images into the singular example of De Bendern.<sup>49</sup> This reproduction was extensive: Patrick Poivre d'Arvor's tenth anniversary volume of Gamma photographs, *Mai 68, Mai 78*, used the photograph on its cover.<sup>50</sup> Both *Le Nouvel Observateur* and *Paris Match* use the image in their anniversary issues.<sup>51</sup> *Le Matin* magazine used it as a cover image in 1982, and it also featured on the cover of *Paris Match's* 1988 anniversary edition.<sup>52</sup> That same year *L'Express* used a contemporary image of a woman in the same pose, juxtaposed with an inset of the 1968 photograph.<sup>53</sup> The image was now iconic enough for the magazine to refer to it via imitation, as well as to be used itself as illustration without further commentary.

By 1998, the focus shifted slightly, as De Bendern herself became the story. *Paris Match* interviewed her and alongside the original picture, the now middle-aged De Bendern was pictured with the 1988 edition of the magazine.<sup>54</sup> An English aristocrat and socialite, at one point associated with Andy Warhol, she claimed to have been disinherited because of her

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<sup>46</sup> *Life*, 24 May 1968.

<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=D1UEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>47</sup> *Paris-Match*, 998, 15 June 1968.

<sup>48</sup> *Le Nouvel Observateur*, n° 184, 22 May 1968, 6-7.

<sup>49</sup> Audrey Leblanc. 'Devenir la "Marianne de Mai 68".'

<sup>50</sup> Patrick Poivre d'Arvor. *Mai 68, mai 78*. FeniXX, 1978.

<sup>51</sup> *Le Nouvel Observateur*. 703, April 29, 1978, 80-81; *Paris Match*. 1511, May 12, 1978.

<sup>52</sup> *Le Matin Magazine*, May 1982; *Paris Match*, special issue 2036, May 1988.

<sup>53</sup> *L'Express*, issue 1918, 8 April 1988.

<sup>54</sup> *Paris Match*, 2553, April 30, 1998, 74-75.

appearance in the photograph. She had sued Rey in 1978 and again in 1988 and 1998 in order to gain rights to the photograph, but she had failed when the courts decreed the image was of historical relevance.<sup>55</sup> By 2008, the photographs themselves had become objects of commemoration. *Paris Match* ran a series picturing the subjects of 1968 photographs alongside the photographs of them from 40 years previously. This included both De Bendern and Marie-Françoise Lemansu, the *Marianne au drapeau noir*.<sup>56</sup> This collection is inevitably a series of portraits of comfortable looking middle-aged people. In a self-referential loop, De Bendern is alongside, not the original photograph, but the 1988 issue of *Paris-Match*. Rey is not credited.

The entire photographic record is also sharply gendered. Memou asserts that the women depicted in 1968 are either entirely passive, or else framed as Marianne in Delacroix's *Liberty leading the people*.<sup>57</sup> There are some exceptions to this. Janine Niépce uses the Marianne motif, but also photographs women occupying the Galeries Lafayette.<sup>58</sup> Though often referred to as a starting point for the feminist movement of the following decade, gender relations during 1968 itself were still confined to relatively conventional roles.<sup>59</sup>

Male protestors, conversely, are framed as 'street-fighting men', pictured in combat with police or building barricades. This motif also takes the subjects out of the collective, and

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<sup>55</sup> Droit à l'image et illustration d'événements historiques: Cour d'appel, Versailles, 1<sup>re</sup> ch. sect. A, 7 décembre 2000, Caroline de Bendern c/ Agence de presse Gamma », *Légipresse*, 179, (2001), 35-36.

<sup>56</sup> *Paris Match*, 3076, April 30, 2008, 84-85.

<sup>57</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*, 115-116.

<sup>58</sup> Janine Niépce, Jeune fille au drapeau <http://janineniepce.com/2018/03/28/jeune-fille-au-drapeau/>; Janine Niépce, Événements de mai-juin 68. Grève, occupation des Galeries Lafayette, <http://janineniepce.com/2018/03/28/evenements-de-mai-juin-68-greve-occupation-des-galeries-lafayette/> (Last accessed 23/08/2019).

<sup>59</sup> Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, "Genre et politique: les années 1968." *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* 3 (2002): 133-143; Vincent Porhel and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel. "68', révolutions dans le genre?." *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 29 (2009): 7-15; Sara M. Evans, 'Sons, daughters, and patriarchy: Gender and the 1968 generation', *The American Historical Review* 114, 2, (2009), 331-347; Kristina Schulz, 'Remembering 1968: feminist perspectives' In Sarah Colvin, Katharina Karcher, (eds.) *Women, Global Protest Movements, and Political Agency: Rethinking the Legacy of 1968*, (London: Routledge, 2018), 29-42.

returns the focus to individual agents.<sup>60</sup> Images draw on the masculinist iconography of Che Guevara and *Guerrilla Heroico* and there is a poster incorporating both Che and Cohn-Bendit.<sup>61</sup> In images of the *Katangais*, armed non-student militants in the Sorbonne occupation (named after a breakaway Congolese province), the use of homemade armour and helmets exaggerates their youth, in a carnivalesque rendering of young conscripts that also serves as an allusion to Vietnam imagery. Christian Joubert's cover image of 14 June's *Paris Jour*, which has 'all the photos' of the *Katangais* expelled from the occupation, shows them casually lined up, laughing as they face a figure on the edge of the frame with a rifle on his back.<sup>62</sup> This pastiche of military iconography, while comic, helps build the links between youth and militancy in visual rhetoric.

Photographs by Gökşin Sipahioğlu, founder of the SIPA agency, are potentially an exception to this dichotomy. One image of a girl with the *Katangais* in the occupied Sorbonne shows her looking directly into the camera, accompanied by two male militants. Another by Sipahioğlu shows a woman confidently striding over barricade rubble, making eye contact with one of several police officers who surround her. (Figure 4.4).<sup>63</sup> A third shows a woman reclining on a stretcher as if posing for a fashion shoot.<sup>64</sup> Compared to the active male demonstrators, there is less deliberate agency displayed, and the photographs foreground the uncertain relationships between the police and female protestors, building on a juxtaposition between femininity and militancy. This focus on young women in militant positions is a common thread in Sipahioğlu's work, such as his photograph of an armed woman protecting a

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<sup>60</sup> Antigoni Memou, *Photography and Social Movements: From the globalisation of the movement (1968) to the movement against globalisation (2001)*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 114-117.

<sup>61</sup> Beaux Arts Hors-Serie, *Mai 68: La Révolution des Images de A à Z*, (Paris: Beaux-Arts, 2018), 64.

<sup>62</sup> Sipahioğlu/SIPA in Beaux-Arts, *Mai 68: La Révolution des Images de A à Z*, 132-133; *Paris Jour*, 14 June 1968.

<sup>63</sup> Sipahioğlu/SIPA in Beaux-Arts, *Mai 68: La Révolution des Images de A à Z*, 42.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/paris-may-1968-view-barricades-slideshow-wp-210640791.html> "May '68, photographs by Gökşin Sipahioğlu" on view at Galerie Basia Embiricos and Photo 12 Galerie in Paris, May 2018, curated by Ferit Duzyol in collaboration with Sipa Press.

bank in Havana during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.<sup>65</sup> Other May '68 images involved a young woman putting flowers in the hat of a wary police officer, and a woman surrounded by tear-gas on the Place Mabillon while challenging police.

These images, relying on the potential disconnect between the women, their poses and the environment are part of a broader lineage in late-60s photojournalism, which uses women's fashion as a marker of revolutionary change. The *Atelier Populaire* poster *Beauté est dans la rue* (*Beauty is in the street*), is an oft referenced example of this genre. It too, draws on photography, copying a photograph which originally appears in the JCR magazine *Avant Garde*.<sup>66</sup> In the process, the poster feminises the originally androgynous figure, as the indistinct clothing becomes a dress, and the hair is more clearly defined. The title supplies the remaining contextual information. These gendered images also serve to visualise the young as the protagonists of May, ignoring the older participants of the strike movement. This then provided another resource for the 'generation' of 68 to draw on in their own self-mythologization.

## **Generational Divides**

This linkage between youth and protest is apparent in slogans linking pleasure with direct participation in the streets - 'beach beneath the streets' is a non-sexual variant, but the graffiti 'pleasure (*jouissance*) without limits' has sexual connotations. Cartier-Bresson's image of an older suited man is looking at the graffiti one example of a recurring theme in his

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<sup>65</sup> Phil Davison, 'Goksin Sipahioglu: Acclaimed photojournalist who went on to found the Sipa agency', *The Independent*, 8 October 2011, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/goksin-sipahioglu-acclaimed-photojournalist-who-went-on-to-found-the-sipa-agency-2367401.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>66</sup> *Avant Garde*, 13, 18 May, 5, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2692>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

coverage of May, which often focused on older reactions to the events.<sup>67</sup> Outside of depictions of occupied factories (see Chapter 2), older figures are often depicted reacting to elements of May. In another Cartier-Bresson image, a couple is photographing the riots, perched on a fallen tree, with expressions not unlike Grant Wood's *American Gothic*.<sup>68</sup> Cartier-Bresson photographed several Gaullist counter-demonstrators with a particular eye to emphasise their age. There are protestors waving flags, two women making V-signs, while gurning a little.<sup>69</sup> Participants are overburdened with medals and carrying flags, one has a cane.<sup>70</sup> A woman in a hat, gloves, and a leopard-print coat clutches her hand to her breast (Figure 4.5).<sup>71</sup> There is a gendered element here too, as women predominate in coverage, potentially drawing an implicit parallel to the *Mariannes* of the earlier demonstrations. The invocation of Gaullist resistance myth is clear in the military regalia, and v-signs, but the evident self-importance of the counter-protestors undercuts this, and makes them appear pompous.

The anniversary volume *Magnum Throughout The world* uses other Cartier-Bresson images to illustrate generational shifts, immediately preceding the coverage of May.<sup>72</sup> The section begins with a portrait of Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp at Man Ray's home in Paris, with the two surrealists as a pair of old men playing draughts and smoking cigars. Juxtaposed

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<sup>67</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris. Rue de Vaugirard, 1968, Wall inscription: Jouissez sans entraves ("Pleasure without limits"), <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD1GVHAY.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>68</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris. Watching the riots. 1968. <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYY33LL.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>69</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris. 8th arrondissement. Avenue des Champs Elysées. Demonstration supporting the President, General de Gaulle. 30 May 1968, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDWWNYWQ.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>70</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris. May 1968 Events. Jeanne Matthey, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDZSY8BC.html>; Paris. May 1968 Events. <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDW83CQ4.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>71</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris. Champs-Élysées. March in support of French President Charles DE GAULLE, from the Place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe. 30 May 1968. <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDZQJM9U.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>72</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Marc Weizmann, *1968 Magnum throughout the world*, (Paris: Éditions Hazan, 1998).

on the following page are a young couple kissing in public and an old woman looking disapprovingly at a miniskirt, placed alongside the famous *Le Monde* article ‘When France is bored’.<sup>73</sup> The selection of such images builds the idea that Cartier-Bresson was attuned to the atmosphere of generational conflict of the late 1960s. It certainly emerges as a preoccupation of his oeuvre at this time, as he gave up photography for a state of semi-retirement.

However, older figures present in the coverage of factories are depicted in a different manner, even by the same photographer. Cartier-Bresson’s images of Billancourt emphasise a sober determination, hard stares and pursed mouths.<sup>74</sup> Barbey’s photographs display the same look.<sup>75</sup> It evokes an uncertain anxiety and potential conflict. These men are working class and in the middle of their working lives, rather than the faintly ridiculous elderly Gaullists. There is a clear distinction from the crowd scenes where a union official addresses a homogenous crowd. Here, the men are all identifiable individuals, but with their similar expression, they appear in perfect unison. These older figures also point to longer continuities between the ‘68 generation’ and the longer history of the labour movement. Some of them may even have been young workers at the time of the Popular Front.

### **A ‘36 Generation?’**

The trope of generation is much less prominent in retrospective coverage of the Popular Front. Though a few examples exist, the photography of the Popular Front instead creates an implicit generational framing in its representation of children. One of the few uses of the term generation in association with this period is Dan S. White’s category of ‘the Front

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<sup>73</sup> Pierre Viansson-Ponté, ‘*Quand la France s’ennuie...*’ *Le Monde*, 15 March 1968.

<sup>74</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, Boulogne-Billancourt. Strike at the Renault car plant. 1968. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD1Q6NR.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>75</sup> Bruno Barbey, Boulogne Billancourt. Strikers at the Renault factory listening the report of the Grenelle Agreements (accords de Grenelle). Meeting of the CGT, (French trade union). 27 May 1968, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD4K7DU.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).



generation' which links a group of European socialists with common war experience who faced their failure to revitalise their respective political parties in the 1920s and went on to take extreme positions in the 1930s.<sup>76</sup> White's collective biography uses the 'Front' as a reference to the experience of trenches in WW1, a brutalised masculine arena, set apart from 'everyday life'. Rather than those who took part in Popular Front politics, White is chiefly concerned with those dissenting from the policy. The experience of the war, the 1920s and the collaboration/resistance dilemma are the primary touchstones. The French example, Marcel Déat, is explicitly opposed to Blum, who finds his rhetoric 'frightening'. Déat embraced authoritarianism and eventually collaboration. White omits those Socialists who shifted to the Communist Party in the 1920s, and then to the Popular Front.<sup>77</sup>

The cultural output of the 1930s demonstrates the ongoing impact of this cohort. Using an explicitly generational framing, Andrew and Ungar identify Malraux and Céline as representatives of a shift in the field of the novel, but also referring to all areas of culture. They identify a new perspective of looking to history as a lived, not merely watched experience, which 'forceful action' could change.<sup>78</sup> These rebels - unlike the Dadaists and the early Surrealists of the preceding decade - who were still looking back to the horrors of World War One, looked forwards, not to 'an adolescent rebellion in their father's decaying grand château, but the complete takeover of a decaying estate'.<sup>79</sup> This development cut across political lines, and was as much a facet of the extreme right as it was a challenge from the left. The charge of 'decadence' could cut both ways. The turn to dynamism was part of broader shifts in the conceptualisation of culture, influenced by cinema and newspapers. Photography

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<sup>76</sup> Dan S. White. 'Reconsidering European Socialism in the 1920s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 16, 2 (1981), 251-272; Dan S. White, *Lost Comrades: Socialists of the Front Generation, 1918-1945*, (1992).

<sup>77</sup> Joel Colton, 'Review of Dan S. White, *Lost Comrades : Socialists of the Front Generation, 1918-1945*', *The American Historical Review*, 99, 2 (1994), 547-548.

<sup>78</sup> Andrew and Ungar, *Popular Front Paris and the Poetics of Culture*, 107-108.

<sup>79</sup> Andrew and Ungar, *Popular Front Paris and the Poetics of Culture*, 113.

was deeply embedded in these shifts in cultural production. The burgeoning photo-magazine industry was faced with the contradiction between the mounting atmosphere of crisis and their dependence on that same constant stream of information.<sup>80</sup> The new demand for photographs led to the emergence of a new cohort of documentary photographers, as was covered in the chapter on photographers' trajectories.

Andrew and Ungar refer to the formation of the Popular Front as a moment when the conscious attempts of older writers associated with the *Nouvelle Revue Française* to reach a younger audience bore fruit. Andrew and Ungar link this to the PCF overcoming its isolation from, and hostility to, other left-wing parties.<sup>81</sup> The Party and Third International abandoned its 'class against class' ultra-leftism in favour of a cross-class alliance in the Popular Front.<sup>82</sup> This occurred in an international context, but the developments in Paris in 1934 preceded the reversal of Comintern's policy which took place in August 1935.<sup>83</sup> Whilst these earlier generations may have been influential in the formation and outlook of the Popular Front's cultural production, they do not have a clear place in its photographic record. Instead, this record looks towards a growing, future generation.

In contrast with the generational differences highlighted in the 1960s, many images from the Popular Front stress themes of generational harmony. Photographs show families supporting strikers and bringing children to visit the occupation.<sup>84</sup> Children are particularly important in this depiction of harmony. In the late 1930s, the focus on youth was 'intense, but

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<sup>80</sup> Michèle Martin, 'La guerre dans l'avant-guerre: les photo magazines des années 1930', in Karine Taveaux-Grandpierre and Joëlle Beurrier (eds.), *Le Photojournalisme des années 1930 à nos jours: Structures, culture et public*, (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014), 21-37.

<sup>81</sup> Dudley Andrew and Steven Ungar, *Popular Front Paris and the Poetics of Culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 63-64.

<sup>82</sup> William A. Hoisington, 'Class Against Class: The French Communist Party and the Comintern: A Study of Election Tactics in 1928', *International Review of Social History* 15, 1 (1970), 19-42.

<sup>83</sup> James R. Barrett, 'Rethinking the Popular Front' *Rethinking Marxism*, 21, 4, (2009), 533.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Capa, St Ouen, near Paris. May-June, 1936. Sit-in strikers at the Lavalette Construction Company plant, sat on the surrounding walls in order to see their friends and families, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYFTH0.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

fragmented', dominated by non-state actors such as the PCF and Catholic Church.<sup>85</sup> Laura Lee Downs' work on Ivry-Sur-Seine and *Colonies de vacances* highlights how conceptualising a new generation was important to Communist pedagogy.<sup>86</sup> This pedagogy used growing self-governance within the *colonie* to model a Marxist ideal of emancipation onto generational development. The children thus became the first members of a potential new society, which 'across the lifespan of a single generation' would move from 'the image of a mass of exploited slaves to that of proud heirs to a world transformed'..<sup>87</sup> Susan Whitney argues that 1936 is also the period that the PCF moves away from revolutionary engagement of young women and into the patriarchal natalist politics of the Popular Front.<sup>88</sup> The focus on children fits into a longer history of using images of the child to make points about the good of the nation. First World War natalism was promoted through postcards framing children as symbolic repositories of patriotic values.<sup>89</sup> Photographically, children repeatedly signify both the inclusive, pacific nature of demonstrations, and as personifications of this potential new society. This idealised image is in sharp contrast to the brutal view of childhood depicted in Jean Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite*, referenced in François Truffaut's *400 Blows*.<sup>90</sup>

The images of children on their father's shoulders at demonstrations recur throughout 1936. The prominence of these children is notable when seen alongside similar images emanating from coverage of Spanish refugees. A chronological search through the tag 'Child being carried' on the Magnum digitised archive shows Capa and Seymour producing similar

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<sup>85</sup> Susan Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>86</sup> Laura Lee Downs. *Childhood in the promised land: Working-class movements and the colonies de vacances in France, 1880–1960*. Duke University Press, 2002.

<sup>87</sup> Laura Lee Downs, 'Municipal communism and the politics of childhood: Ivry-sur-Seine 1925-1960', *Past & Present* 166 (2000), 232-233.

<sup>88</sup> Susan B. Whitney, 'Embracing the Status Quo: French Communists, Young Women and the Popular Front', *Journal of Social History*, 30, 1, (1996), 29-53.

<sup>89</sup> Marie-Monique Huss, 'Pronatalism and the popular ideology of the child in wartime France: The evidence of the picture postcard', in Richard Wall, Jay Winter eds. *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work, and Welfare in Europe, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 329-369.

<sup>90</sup> Jean Vigo, Jean Dasté, Robert Le Flon, and Du Verron. *Zéro de conduite*, (Nounez/Gaumont, 1933).

images in both France and Spain at the same time. The emphasis varies, from determination and composure in the French examples, often with the child fully on the parent's shoulders and featuring raised fists, whereas pity drives those from Spain, but the child's role as signifier of future potential is the common element.<sup>91</sup> Capa uses the same frame in a slightly different context in an image of a swaddled child being passed up to its father, a striking worker on the walls of the Lavalette Construction Company plant in St Ouen.<sup>92</sup> The cover of *Vu* on 10 June also featured a child kissed through the bars of an occupied factory (Figure 4.6).<sup>93</sup> In these photographs, the child takes on the symbolic figure of the future being passed onwards, precariously in the hands of the worker.

In France, major holidays are a recurrent setting for images of children: Capa on May Day and Bastille Day; Seymour on a march commemorating the Commune, and a Pacifist rally.<sup>94</sup> These visualisations are thus inexorably linked to the republican tradition, as with the tricolor in Capa's Bastille Day image (Figure 4.7).<sup>95</sup> Willy Ronis's photograph from the same day features a child in the same pose with a Phrygian cap, held alongside the flag.<sup>96</sup> Yet in this picture nationalist imagery mixes with a transnationalist orientation. Another photograph from the 14<sup>th</sup> July shows a 'delegation of North Africans' in exactly the same framing, this

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<sup>91</sup> Magnum, 'Child being carried', <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZO4XDWOHF1#/SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZO4XDW82B9>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>92</sup> Robert Capa, St Ouen, near Paris. May-June, 1936. Sit-in strikers at the Lavalette Construction Company plant, sat on the surrounding walls in order to see their friends and families. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYFTH0.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>93</sup> *VU*, 10 June 1936, Collections Musée de l'Histoire Vivante.

Une gréviste embrasse son enfant à travers les grilles de son usine.

<sup>94</sup> Robert Capa, Paris.. May Day celebrations, 1 May 1937, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDW45K4R.html>; Paris. Place de la Bastille. Popular Front demonstration on July 14th 1936, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD1POPOP.html> ; David Seymour, Paris. 20th arrondissement. Pere Lachaise cemetery. Demonstration in memory of those who were killed during the 1871 Paris Commune at the "Mur des Federes". 24 May 1936. <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDITV25L.html>; Saint-Cloud. August 9, 1936. Pacifist meeting for the disarmament of nations <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDZ7T1FI.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19)

<sup>95</sup> Robert Capa, Paris. Place de la Bastille. Popular Front demonstration on July 14th 1936, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD1POPOP.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19)

<sup>96</sup> Willy Ronis, Rue Saint-Antoine, Paris, 14 July 1936.

time with a child wearing a Fez.<sup>97</sup> In these images, the child is often stony faced, staring into the middle distance. The juxtaposition of youth in a position of dependency with a sense of serious resolve conjures a sense of determination in the face of the future. Seymour's image from the pacifist rally frames two children raising fists on the shoulders of men also making the same gesture, under a banner of a stylised muscled man shattering a rifle on his knee.<sup>98</sup> This looming photograph adds to the atmosphere of purpose. An anonymous image from Saint-Cloud on the 12<sup>th</sup> June using the same form identifies the Internationale being sung. The caption in a 2016 commemorative collection notes 'this theme will be repeated in May '68'.<sup>99</sup> The theme referred to is likely that of the *Mariannes de Mai*, but there are clearly key differences. While the framing and republican references are consistent, the shift from child to young woman produces drastic shifts in meaning. The future-oriented, but vulnerable and dependent child symbolises a rejuvenated republic to be nurtured and protected, whereas the *Mariannes*, like Delacroix, present a revolutionary demand for recognition in the present.

In sharp contrast to the control conveyed by the photographs of children in France, the use of the trope in photographs of Spanish refugees emphasises a similar sense of an uncertain future, but from a vastly more precarious position. The children are often swaddled and held in mothers' arms rather than on fathers' shoulders and the humanitarian purpose of the images is clear.<sup>100</sup> Yet at this point, these images also include less abject variations. David Seymour's nursing mother parallels Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother*, and uniquely does not feature

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<sup>97</sup>Francois Denoyelle, Francois Cuel, Jean-Louis Vibert-Guigue, (eds.) *Le Front Populaire des Photographes*, (Dijon: Éditions Terre-Bleu, 2006), 87.

<sup>98</sup> David Seymour, Saint-Cloud. 9 August 1936. Pacifist meeting for the disarmament of nations <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDZ7T1FI.html> (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>99</sup> Denoyelle, Cuel, Vibert-Guigue, (eds.) *Le Front Populaire des Photographes*, 85.

<sup>100</sup> Robert Capa, Andalucia. September 5th, 1936. Cerro Muriano, Cordoba front. Civilians fleeing. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYJR7ZH.html>; September, 1936. Woman with child fleeing Nationalist bombings near Cerro Muriano on the Cordoba front., <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYSYIIL.html>; Andalucia. September 5th, 1936. Cerro Muriano, Cordoba front. Civilians fleeing. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDWCK9CH.html>; <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD17FDSB.html> (last accessed 30/08/19).

fleeing figures, but a weathered woman surrounded by children at a land reform meeting.<sup>101</sup>

Both Capa and Seymour photograph fathers kissing children goodbye as they leave to go fight for the republic, and these more closely follow the themes of determination found in the French images, albeit with a more militant edge.<sup>102</sup> Yet this set of variations on a theme would begin to be more narrowly codified in the coming years, losing many of the more radical associations in the process.

Capa reprised this frame in 1944, showing a man and child listening to DeGaulle's speech following the Liberation.<sup>103</sup> Another image features a child held by a nun directly under DeGaulle's podium as he announces the liberation of Chartres.<sup>104</sup> More children crowd the foreground, including an older boy with the tricolour. The carried child is raising its arm, but in a wave, not a fist. These photographs demonstrate the remarkable versatility of the framing, which retains its core elements of futurity and republicanism, even as other political signifiers shift from left to right. However, after that, Magnum's archive shifts to a consistent depiction of displaced refugee children. Particularly notable here are David Seymour's images of child Holocaust survivors.<sup>105</sup> Yet in this progression we can see that the powerful tropes of 'children as the future', which would come to completely dominate post-war humanist photography, were already present in 1936.

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<sup>101</sup> David Seymour, Extremadura. Woman nursing a baby at a land reform meeting near Badajoz. 1936. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYPKKDD.html> (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>102</sup> David Seymour, Region of Extremadura. Militiaman or Republican Army soldier. 1936, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDY6ZIBF.html>; Robert Capa, Spain. Barcelona. August 1936. Bidding farewell before the departure of a military train directed to the Aragon front., <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD1SYXOC.html> (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>103</sup> Robert Capa, Chartres. August 1944. Listening to General De Gaulle's speech after the liberation of the city, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDIIVSP8.html> (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>104</sup> Robert Capa, Chartres. 23 August 1944. General De Gaulle proclaiming of the liberation of the town, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDIS1PLM.html> (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>105</sup> David Seymour, 'Children of Europe', <https://www.magnumphotos.com/newsroom/society/david-seymour-children-of-europe/>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

## Conclusion

Capturing both movements at a specific moment in time can obscure longer term shifts in trajectories by framing a temporary conjunction and presenting it as a fixed, 'iconic' vision. The framing of generations has certainly followed this process, particularly in the case of May '68. The concept of trajectories is a more contingent term than the idea of a fixed 'generation', which allows the photographs of protest movements to be seen in the light of longer historical patterns. However, this chapter has demonstrated that generational framing is not entirely a production of the movement's memorialisation. Both in 1968 and 1936, photographers were focusing on images of youth and dynamism, though for different reasons. In 1968, these produced photographs which would go on to have substantial afterlives, but photographs also captured the responses of other generations, though they used these to further the impressions of generational division. By contrast, the photographic record of 1936 shows a far greater degree of generational harmony, though it relies on a formulaic representation of children to do so. These generational depictions are one way that the photographic record of these movements helped to characterise and situate them in narratives of historic change. This is one facet of a larger process that will be examined in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5. Wider resonances: Transnational Photography and Revolutionary Pasts

This chapter engages with two significant historiographical developments regarding the ‘’68 years’. It demonstrates how photography is shaped by transnational influences and connected to networks of activism and explores how the medium interacts with a broadened chronology, even going beyond the long ’68 in its repertoire of visual references, to include that of the Popular Front and the revolutionary heritage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. These wider influences demonstrate the range of historical meanings the photography of social contestation draws upon, and show that these ideas shape how photographers interact with protest.

Several French historians have sought to place 1968 in a wider context, using the rubric of ‘*Les années 68*’.<sup>1</sup> This *longue durée* perspective stretches the frame of reference, usually examining the effects of the uprisings of 1968 and the ongoing contestation left in their wake. It also serves to contextualise their outbreak in the late 1960s, stressing that May did not appear as a fully formed phenomenon with events at Nanterre or the Sorbonne, but was shaped by post-Algerian war society. This establishes a cycle of contestation that, according to Phillippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel lasted from the end of the Algerian War in 1962 to the election of François Mitterand in 1981.<sup>2</sup> Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy dated the neoliberal counter-revolution to the ‘coup’ of 1979.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, Robert Frank, Marie-Françoise Lévy and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, (eds.) *Les années 68: le temps de la contestation*, (Bruxelles: Complexe, 2000); Phillippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, (eds.) *68, une histoire collective (1962-1981)*. (La Découverte, 2008); Xavier, Vigna. *L’Insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68: essai d’histoire politique des usines*. (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Phillippe Artières, Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, (eds.), *68: une Histoire Collective 1962-1981*, (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, ‘The neoliberal (counter-) revolution’ in, v Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston, (eds.), *Neoliberalism: A critical reader* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 9-19.



Other historiographies have placed 1968 in a broader geographical context, both within France and outside it.<sup>4</sup> Daniel Gordon has examined the participation of immigrants within France.<sup>5</sup> Others have examined the influence of the movement in a ‘globalizing’ long ‘68.<sup>6</sup> Richard Vinen evaluates ‘the 68 years’ and the transnational turn in scholarship, but offers a justification for return to ‘conventional’ nationally framed approaches.<sup>7</sup> He focuses on protest in selected western democracies as a specific phenomenon informed by third-world struggle, but discrete from it. In his examination of France, Vinen retains a focus on the exceptional ‘spectacular eruption’ of May in Paris, and use transnational comparison to set peculiarities in context.<sup>8</sup> This approach works where the historiographical developments inform and contextualise the history, but risks losing sight of the broader influences and returning to a narrow narrative. Given the impact of transnationalism within both labour history and the history of France, it seems notable that these accounts focus less on the strike than student protest.<sup>9</sup> Vinen notes that it is analysis of workers movements that have most strongly embraced a ‘long’ ‘68.<sup>10</sup> This chapter takes two approaches in its examination of transnationalism. Following the transnational lives and careers of photographers who documented the movements illustrates how both strikes were part of transnational photographic repertoires and engaged photographers sought to politically instrumentalise their cameras. Examining how relevant photography from around the world was presented during

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<sup>4</sup> Michelle Zancarini-Fournel. ‘The Local, Regional and National in May–June 1968.’ In Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne, James S. Williams, (eds.), *May ’68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011), 178-187.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel A. Gordon, ‘Reaching Out to Immigrants in May ‘68: Specific or Universal Appeals?’ In Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne, James S. Williams, (eds.), *May ’68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011), 93-108; *Immigrants and Intellectuals: May ‘68 and the Rise of Anti-Racism in France*. (Pontypool: Merlin Press, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Andrés Payà Rico, José Luis Hernández Huerta, Antonella Cagnolati, Sara González Gómez, and Sergio Valero, (eds.) *Globalizing the student rebellion in the long ‘68*, (Salamanca: Fahren House, 2018)

<sup>7</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Long ‘68: Radical Protest and Its Enemies*. (London: Allen Lane, 2018), 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Vinen, *The Long ‘68*, 115-161.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia Clavin, ‘Defining Transnationalism’, *Contemporary European History*, 14, (2005), 421-439; Neville Kirk, Donald MacRaild, and Melanie Nolan, ‘Introduction: transnational ideas, activities, and organizations in labour history 1860s to 1920s’ *Labour history review* 74, 3 (2009), 221-232; Marcel Van der Linden, ‘The Promise and Challenges of Global Labor History’, *International Labor and Working-Class History* 82 (2012), 57-76; Stovall, Tyler. *Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Vinen, *The Long ‘68*, 122.

the strikes establishes how participants oriented themselves within transnational waves of opposition.

This chapter also examines how photographs represented the waves of contestation within a broader temporal as well as geographical context. It is possible to make links and comparisons between waves of social conflict, just as this thesis explores the links between the '68 years, and the Popular Front. This is not merely a retrospective process, as movements refer to previous moments of revolutionary social change and use their invocation to negotiate contemporary concerns. The photographic record condenses meanings through recognisable iconography, allowing for their recontextualisation and reinterpretation. A thread of iconography can be traced through photographs of both 1936 and 1968, that looks back to France's revolutionary heritage.

### **The Transnational Photography of May '68**

1968 is remembered as a year of international revolt, not just due to the protests across the world, but because transnational entanglements energised these movements. In France, with the memories of decolonisation and the Algerian War still raw, a new wave of 'Third-worldism' mixed anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism, linking resistance in the metropole to that of global revolutionary struggles.<sup>11</sup>

Central to the international outlook of the New Left was opposition to the Vietnam War.<sup>12</sup> This was evident during the May 1<sup>st</sup> protests in France (the first in 14 years),

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<sup>11</sup> Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 23-25; Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Niek Pas. 'European Radicals and the 'Third World' Imagined Solidarities and Radical Networks, 1958-73' *Cultural and Social History* 8, 4 (2011), 449-471; Kim Christiaens, 'Europe at the crossroads of three worlds: alternative histories and connections of European solidarity with the Third World, 1950s-80s', *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 24, 6 (2017), 932-954; Eleanor Davey, *Idealism beyond Borders: The French Revolutionary Left and the Rise of Humanitarianism, 1954-1988*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Salar Mohandesi, 'Bringing Vietnam Home: The Vietnam War, Internationalism, and May '68', *French Historical Studies*, 41, 2, (2018), 219-251.

immediately preceding the ‘events’, where the war provoked slogans such as ‘Johnson, assassin!’, ‘*Halte à l’agression américaine!*’<sup>13</sup> The photographs of the demonstration clearly show Vietnam as a prominent theme for banners. The trajectories of French photojournalists illustrate longer links to the region, through the Indochina War. The death of Capa in the region, grimly reprised by Gilles Caron, cemented the image of photographers as deeply committed to their profession, with both taking on an almost martyr-like status in the eyes of their fellow photographers.<sup>14</sup>

Marc Riboud’s trajectory exemplifies this internationalist sensibility. In addition to photographing the events of May and June in Paris, Riboud had prior experience covering the international concerns of the New Left. A former member of the French resistance who joined Magnum in 1953, he was there in Algeria at moment of liberation in 1962.<sup>15</sup> Riboud visited China in 1965 and 1971, where he documented the beginnings of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>16</sup> His 1967 image of 17-year-old high school student Jan Rose Kasmir at an anti-war demonstration in Washington has become a key reference point for the era.<sup>17</sup> Largely on the fame of this photograph, Riboud obtained a visa to work in Vietnam in Autumn 1968.<sup>18</sup> However, he was one of the only photojournalists to document the conflict from the perspective of North Vietnam, showing the effects of saturation bombing. Riboud’s reportage, published in *Look*, humanised the ‘cocky and patriotic’ North Vietnamese, emphasising that despite the bombing, the North had both the morale and the materiel to continue the war (Figure 5.1).<sup>19</sup> As opposed to the ‘generalised indictments of war’ often seen in atrocity

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<sup>13</sup> Joanne Roy, ‘PARIS : plusieurs dizaines de milliers de manifestants ont défilé de la République à la Bastille à l’appel de la C.G.T. et du parti communiste’, *Le Monde*, 3 May 1968. (The youth of the protestors was also remarked upon)

<sup>14</sup> Horst Faas; Tim Page, *Requiem: By the Photographers Who Died in Vietnam and Indochina*, (Random House 1997), 64-71, 263

<sup>15</sup> Marc Riboud, *Jeune Afrique*, 19, 16-22 July 1962.

<sup>16</sup> ‘China’, *Camera*, 3, March 1967; ‘Red China’, *Look*, November 1965; ‘La Chine a l’heure de défi’, *Univers Match*, 1965.

<sup>17</sup> Marc Riboud, An American young girl, Jan Rose Kasmir, confronts the American National Guard outside the Pentagon during the 1967 anti-Vietnam march, Washington DC, 21 October 1967.

<sup>18</sup> Martine Joly, ‘Information and argument in press photographs’, *Visual Studies*, 8, 1, (1993), 16-22.

<sup>19</sup> *Look*, 21 January 1969, <http://marcriboud.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/riboud-hochimin-look.pdf>

photography, Riboud's images offer specific testimony about the course of the war in the wake of Operation Rolling Thunder, the Tet Offensive and changes in public opinion.<sup>20</sup>

The designation of war photographer dates back to Roger Fenton's World War One photographs, but was firmly established by photographers such as Capa during Spanish Civil War.<sup>21</sup> It was the first conflict where small portable cameras such as the Leica, and faster film were available to photographers, allowing them to get closer to combat.<sup>22</sup> Sontag used Virginia Woolf's reflections on Spanish Civil War photographs to begin her analysis of atrocity photography.<sup>23</sup> Like in Vietnam, photographers produced a series of images which, through their iconic status, came to define an era.<sup>24</sup> Both these wars were documented by the some of the same photographers who had photographed the strikes in France, and the 'era-defining' qualities in their work cemented their reputations.

Elements of Gilles Caron's career have been explored in Chapter 1, but it is worth returning to him here in the context of international photojournalism. Caron's photographs were highly visible in press coverage, and the events of May and June prominent in his career.<sup>25</sup> Yet, although he was less famous outside France, Caron was a global journalist, working on events all over the world throughout 1967-70. These included the 6-day war in Israel (1967), the Vietnam war (1967), Biafra (April, July, and November 1968), the shooting of demonstrators prior to the Olympics in Mexico (Sept 1968), the Derry riots in Northern Ireland (1969), the first anniversary of the end of the Prague spring in Czechoslovakia (1969), and civil war in Chad (1970).<sup>26</sup> He disappeared in 1970, travelling in an area of Cambodia

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<sup>20</sup> Claude H. Cookman, 'Marc Riboud in North Vietnam: Seeing the war from the other side' *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 7, 1, (2000), 3-14.

<sup>21</sup> Haim Bresheeth, 'Projecting trauma: War photography and the public sphere', *Third Text*, 20, 1 (2006), 57-71.

<sup>22</sup> Fred Ritchin, 'Close Witness: The involvement of the photojournalist', in Michel Frizot, (ed.) *A new history of photography*, (Köln: Konemann, 1998), 591-594.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2003), 3-6.

<sup>24</sup> Hagopian, Patrick. 'Vietnam war photography as a locus of memory', in Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister, (Eds.) *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*, (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2006), 201-222.

<sup>25</sup> Gaëlle Morel, 'Gilles Caron, auteur photographe dans les années 1960?', *Revue de l'art* 175 (2012): 59-66; Audrey Leblanc, 'Gilles Caron LE photographe de Mai 68, l'oeuvre d'une politique culturelle?', in Gil Bartholeyns, (ed) *Politiques visuelles*, (Les presses du reel, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Jeu De Paume, Dossier Documentaire, *Gilles Caron: Le Conflit Intérieur*, 21/06 – 02/11/2014, 9.

under the control of the Khmer Rouge. Caron's interest in Cambodia also anticipates that of the New Philosophers who travelled the route of Third-Worldism with Caron.<sup>27</sup>

Caron epitomises the transnational moment of the late 1960s-early 1970s. Caron's images of Biafra were published in *Paris Match* on May 4 1968, the first images of the conflict in the western press.<sup>28</sup> They documented both civilian suffering and military violence, and helped to build a humanitarian consciousness of the war. Claude Cookman locates them in the tradition of 'Témoignages de notre temps' (Testimonies of our times) established by Lucien Vogel in *Vu*, that gives a moral imperative to the act of documenting.<sup>29</sup>

Yet what David Perlmutter termed 'icons of outrage' have defined photography's relationship to the Vietnam War.<sup>30</sup> These photographs, such as South Vietnamese General Loan's summary execution of a suspected Viet Cong during the Tet offensive in February 1968, and later Nick Ut's 1972 Napalm drenched girl, monopolise attention.<sup>31</sup> Press photography is often accused of flattening geopolitical conflict into 'atrocious images'.<sup>32</sup> Just as with the photography of May '68, approaching this photography solely from the perspective of 'iconic' images not only relies on a very small proportion of the images produced, it removes them from any contemporary context. Perlmutter is sceptical of the world-changing power of these 'icons'. He argues their reputation derives from their emotional effect on 'discourse elites' in politics, academia and the media, which proclaim their universal affect.<sup>33</sup>

It is also important to examine the reproduction and reception of images of international struggles within the specific context of the French left in 1968. According to

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<sup>27</sup> Alberto Toscano, 'Mao and Manichaeism: An Episode in the Politics of Purity', *Parallax*, 17, 2, (2011), 49-58; Davey, *Idealism beyond Borders*, 165-167, 175.

<sup>28</sup> Claude Cookman, 'Gilles Caron's Coverage of the Crisis in Biafra' *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 15, 4, (2008), 226-242

<sup>29</sup> Cookman, 'Gilles Caron's Coverage of the Crisis in Biafra', 240.

<sup>30</sup> David D. Perlmutter, *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy: Icons of Outrage in International Crises*, (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> Eddie Adams, *Saigon Execution*, Saigon, Feb. 1, 1968; Nick Ut, *The Terror of War*, Trang Bang, June 8, 1972.

<sup>32</sup> Marta Zarzycka, 'Madonnas of Warfare, Angels of Poverty: Cutting through press photographs', *Photographies* 5, 1, (2012), 71-85.

<sup>33</sup> Perlmutter, *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy*, xiv.

Werner and Zimmermann, the ‘cultural transfers’ model is part of ‘a family of “relational” approaches’.<sup>34</sup> Werner and Zimmermann propose *Histoire Croisée* as a reflexive approach, analysing transfers as part of ongoing and complex entanglements, seen from multiple viewpoints. In the case of photography, this can involve taking the visual metaphor literally, and studying how images ‘framed’ the events they depicted, tying them to wider discourses. The construction and framing of objects of study is also a key concern within Social Movement Theory. ‘Collective action frames’ or ‘framing processes’ are analytical tools for explaining the (not always straightforward) relationship between grievance and mobilisation by looking at how events are reported, defined, or constructed in order to encourage protest.<sup>35</sup> Gilcher-Holtey argued the ‘cognitive orientation’ of protestors towards the ‘third world’ was an important component in determining actions.<sup>36</sup> Combining these approaches, and analysing the framing of cultural transfers offers a practical means of exploring how the transfer of photographs constructed frames to mobilise protest. Given the importance of context when analysing photographs, framing theory explicitly links this context to patterns of social contestation.<sup>37</sup>

Framing theory can also express how these photographs are divorced from initial contexts and re-formulated in new places, rather than the notion of the ‘iconic’, which is a retrospective designation.<sup>38</sup> It also depends on the indexicality of photographs, which are taken to be metonymic of a situation, to have ‘said it all’.<sup>39</sup> The subsequent canonisation of these photographs created by constant reference to them by media professionals parallels the dominance of a select few photographs in the commemoration of May.

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity,” *History and Theory* 45 (2006), 31.

<sup>35</sup> Hank Johnstone and John A. Noakes, *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*, (Lanham, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, ‘The Dynamic of Protest: May 1968 in France’, *Critique*, 36, 2, 201-218, (2008).

<sup>37</sup> Terry Barrett, ‘Photographs and Contexts’, *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 19, 3 (1985), 51-64.

<sup>38</sup> Kevin DeLuca, ‘The Speed of Immanent Images’, in Diane Hope, (ed.), *Visual Communication: Perception, Rhetoric, and Technology*, (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2006), 76–90.

<sup>39</sup> Perlmutter, *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy*, 3-5, 17.

## **Transnational Press: The example of *Action***

The activist press also deployed photographs to situate their ideologies within an international context. Photojournalism was thus a means of building Third Worldist solidarity. Beyond simply disseminating images, publications within France incorporated them into political narratives. Images of international struggles were a mainstay of the activist press, including images of student protest from Brazil, Germany, Japan, and the US as well as coverage of the Prague Spring and protests in Poland. These photographs can show how participants in May '68 envisioned their protest in global terms, both as a response to and participation in a transnational pattern of contestation. Police beating protestors became a conventional visual frame, harking back to the images of the CRS, which were instrumental in these newspapers (particularly *Action*'s) coverage of the initial contestation of the nights of the barricades (see Chapter 1).<sup>40</sup>

*Action* ran features throughout its publication focusing on the photography of international demonstrators. Issue no. 17 documents police repression against students protesting against the dictatorship and for university reform in Rio de Janeiro. These photographs follow the same format as those covering France, of protestors gathering in the street, opposite other pictures of small groups of helmeted, baton-wielding police. The headline highlights the images' (distributed by the Gamma agency) novelty, claiming they are the 'First Photos' from Brazil. The positioning of photographs on the page puts protestors and police facing each other on the page creates the idea of a confrontation, which is resolved in a final image, a near identical echo of the coverage of French police brutality, in which two officers with batons chase a man to the ground. As seen in Chapter 1, the term *matraquage*

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<sup>40</sup> *Action* 3, 21 May 1968; *Action* 8, 12 June 1968; *Action* 9, 13 June; *Action* 10, 14 June 1968; *Action* 12, 18 June 1968; *Action* 13 19 June 1968; *Action* 14, 20 June 1968; *Action* 22, 18 July 1968.

was communicated through visualisation. However, in these examples, that visualisation went beyond a Francophone context, and acquired transcultural significance (Figure 5.2).<sup>41</sup>

Two issues later, photos of Japanese student demonstrators again focus on violence between students and police, using the same visual forms.<sup>42</sup> Both stories primarily use images to convey their argument, filling the page and relegating text to a subsidiary role.<sup>43</sup> The features on *Zengakuren* and Brazil are formatted as photo-stories, using small text and several large pictures. The movement in Japan continued to interest the French press, as Bruno Barbey photographed a feature on *Zengakuren* in October 1968.<sup>44</sup> Within the *Action* article, visual references emphasise the idea of self-defense. These draw on and invert representations of riot police. Again, the helmets and sticks of protestors mirror the Japanese police, but also reflect the ubiquitous masks characterising depictions of the CRS.

The concept of ‘visual injustice symbols’ explains how images can transcend national, and crucially, linguistic boundaries by replicating these injustice frames internationally. In doing so they may lose the ‘thickness’ and nuance of relevance in local circumstances, but this is balanced by the opportunity to gain re-interpretation in light of the receiving culture’s filters.<sup>45</sup> This coverage continued into later issues following the May/June period. *Action* no. 24 accompanied its coverage of the lead up to the US elections with a photograph of US demonstrators holding a sign protesting against ‘pigs in the streets’, again raising the spectre of police brutality, which peaked at the Democratic Convention of August. The article makes explicit reference to the ‘counterpart’ of the movement in France and calls for collaboration.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Action*, 17, 25 June, 4, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2606> (last accessed 04/07/17).

<sup>42</sup> *Action*, 19, 28 June, 4, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2614>, (last accessed 04/07/17).

<sup>43</sup> *Action*, 19, 28 June, 4, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2614>, (last accessed 04/07/17).

<sup>44</sup> Bruno Barbey, Feature - Japan. 1968-1971, <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=2TYRYDMD2HVR>, (last accessed 26/08/19).

<sup>45</sup> Olesen ‘“We are all Khaled Said”’: Visual Injustice Symbols in the Egyptian Revolution, 2010-2011’, in Nicole Doerr, Alice Mattoni, Simon Teune, (eds.), *Advances in the Visual Analysis of Social Movements*, (Bradford : Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2013), 18-19.

<sup>46</sup> *Action*, 24, 4 September 1968, 2, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2656>, (accessed 04/07/17)



The same issue also covers Prague, documenting the Warsaw Pact invasion in August, in response to the liberalising reforms of the ‘Prague Spring’.<sup>47</sup> Its photographic coverage of helmeted soldiers framed by the wreckage of burned out cars, is more evocative of war photography, than images of demonstrations.<sup>48</sup> The caption on the photo: ‘*Would they go to Vietnam?*’ draws an explicit parallel between Soviet and American imperialism. Again, the helmet motif is present, drawing attention to the parallels between the military and paramilitary police.

Similar internationalist themes are common across the groups of the New Left. There were particularly strong German links in the Trotskyist *Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire* (JCR), and the *Mouvement 22 Mars*. Alain Krivine and others were pictured in Berlin in February on an anti-Vietnam war demonstration.<sup>49</sup> Events such as the response to Cohn-Bendit’s exile, and the contemporary slogan ‘we are all German Jews’, demonstrate this international perspective, which is visually evident in the *Atelier Populaire* poster, drawn from the photograph of Cohn-Bendit laughing in the face of the police.<sup>50</sup>

In the May issue of *Avant Garde*, the magazine of the JCR, particular attention is given to the German student movement. There are articles, a cartoon about Rudi Dutschke, as well as pictures of the burning of Axel Springer papers, and French graffiti and marches in solidarity with Dutschke and the German student movement. The headline echoes Ché Guevara, calling to ‘Create two, three Berlins’.<sup>51</sup> Gordon has demonstrated that radicals had extensive links with Germany, as activists moved back and forth.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Günter Bischof, Stefan Karner, and Peter Ruggenthaler, (eds.) *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> *Action*, 24, 4, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2656>, (accessed 04/07/17).

<sup>49</sup> Daniel A. Gordon, *Immigrants & Intellectuals: May ‘68 and the rise of Anti-Racism in France*, (Pontypool: Merlin Press, 2012), 85.

<sup>50</sup> Johan Kugelberg, Phillip Vermès (eds.), *Beauty is in the street: a visual record of the May ‘68 Paris uprising*, (Four Corners Books, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> *Avant Garde*, 12, May 1968, 2-6, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2668>, (accessed 10/07/17)

<sup>52</sup> Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*.

The following pages deal with Brazil, accompanied by photographs of police violence similar to the example above, Polish students demonstrating, the assassination of Martin Luther King (illustrated with a tight close up photograph of King's face during a speech, superimposed with crosshairs), and inevitably, Vietnam.<sup>53</sup> This photographic sequence contextualised the experience of May within a larger New-Left struggle, encompassing a common cause of anti-capitalism and anti-Stalinism, unified by the common experience of repression and state violence.<sup>54</sup> Yet subsequently for JCR founder Daniel Bensaïd, this tendency to focus on the non-unique, global aspects of May did not give attention to the general strike, which marked France's experience of '68 out from other 'youth revolts'.<sup>55</sup> At the time, that focus served a purpose of legitimising protest by linking it to other struggles. Certainly, May is just one part of a 'global 68' brand, perhaps best exemplified from a photographic perspective by the Magnum agency's commemorative books and exhibitions.<sup>56</sup>

### **Transnational Subjects: Photographing Migrant Workers**

Photography of May '68 did highlight the general strike, particularly within the Communist press. *L'Humanité*, *La Vie Ouvrière* and *L'Humanité au Dimanche* represented May very differently from that which focused on the students, and was at times openly hostile to student 'adventurists'.<sup>57</sup> The overwhelming representation was of occupied factories and organised mass demonstrations, the visual references were to 1936, not the transnational struggles of 1968.

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<sup>53</sup> *Avant Garde*, 12, May 1968, 7-10, 12-19.

<sup>54</sup> Arif Dirlik, 'Introduction: The Third World in 1968' in Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett (eds.), *The Third World in the Global 1960s*, (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2013), 9

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Bensaïd, 'preface' in Kagan, *Mai '68 D'un Photographe*, 10.

<sup>56</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Marc Weitzmann, *1968: Magnum throughout the World*, (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 1998).

<sup>57</sup> *L'Humanité*, 6 May 1968.

Yet even within the press photography of the PCF, transnational resonances emerge, albeit within a Cold War framework oriented to the Soviet Bloc. Gerald Bloncourt worked as a photographer for the PCF and CGT, photographing Maurice Thorez and visiting the USSR, publishing in *La Vie Ouvrière* and *L'Humanité*. Based at Renault for 33 days and nights during May '68, he also went out and took the photo of the barricades of Rue Gay-Lussac that would be on the cover of *Nouvel Observateur*.<sup>58</sup> His photographs of Billancourt in May show oceanic crowd shots, barricades on the doors, workers relaxing, making banners, and using bikes to communicate across the occupied factory. Significantly, Bloncourt also explored transnationalism beyond this Cold War repertoire, deliberately highlighting the presence of migrant workers, and depicting a sign in Spanish inviting immigrant workers to general assembly (Figure 5.3).<sup>59</sup>

Focusing on migrant workers harks back to the emergence of the term 'transnationalism', as used by Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Christina Szanton Blanc, which establishes the idea of the transnational as the perspective of immigrants maintaining links to home country and thus living across borders, and chronicling the emergence of social fields across boundaries.<sup>60</sup> These postcolonial trajectories also applied to Bloncourt himself, born in Haiti. Bloncourt had been involved in revolutionary action in Haiti in 1946, founding the newspaper *La Ruche*, and helping lead the movement of the *Cinque Glorieux*, that ousted repressive president Élie Lescot.<sup>61</sup> He gained a reputation for radicalism with both US and Haitian officials. US civil attaché Jack West referred to Bloncourt as 'the principal leader of the strike which overthrew Lescot', who 'possesses extremely radical tendencies'.<sup>62</sup> Forced to

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<sup>58</sup> Gérald Bloncourt, and Johann Petitjean. 'L'œil, le monde et la colère: Gérald Bloncourt en ses images. Propos recueillis par Johann Petitjean et transcrits avec l'aide de Christophe Keroslian', *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique*, 132, (2016), 157-184.

<sup>59</sup> Gérald Bloncourt, *La Fortresse Ouvrière*, <http://bloncourtblog.net/2015/11/renault-la-fortresse-ouvriere.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>60</sup> Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Christina Szanton Blanc, eds. *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states*, (Routledge, 2005).

<sup>61</sup> Matthew J. Smith, *Red & Black in Haiti: Radicalism, Conflict, and Political Change, 1934-1957*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 74-83.

<sup>62</sup> Smith, *Red & Black in Haiti*, 83.

flee into the countryside after inciting further protests against the military executive, Bloncourt then administered the Haitian Communist Party's newspaper *Combat*, but was caught and exiled to Paris.<sup>63</sup>

His photography of May '68 contributes to his longer thematic of migrant workers. Beginning in the 1950s, Bloncourt photographed Portuguese immigrant families in the *Bidonvilles* around Paris. In the 1960s, he increasingly pictures immigrant workers within same shantytown conditions, moving with them to the factories.<sup>64</sup> He photographed Portuguese workers at Citroen, where Maoists claimed immigrant involvement proved the movement's revolutionary character, although Gordon has since shown this is somewhat of an exaggeration. Though immigrant workers participated, they were not the instigators of the strike.<sup>65</sup> Bloncourt was one of very few photographers not to render May as an exclusively white affair, symptomatic of a student lens on events. Bruno Barbey also photographed a few non-white workers at Billancourt, but Bloncourt foregrounds these immigrants.<sup>66</sup>

Bloncourt also followed the migrant journeys, clandestinely photographing in Portugal, and finally was present for the Carnation Revolution in 1974. José Vieira's film *La Photo déchirée - Chronique d'une émigration clandestine* illustrates photography's entanglement in this migration. It is centred on the image of migrants tearing a photo and leaving half behind. They then send their half back to families on arrival so the smugglers can receive full payment (paid half up front, half once families know their relatives have safely arrived).<sup>67</sup> Concern with southern Europe is also visible in a Kagan photograph of poster at

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, *Red & Black in Haiti*, 83-85.

<sup>64</sup> Gérald Bloncourt, L'Immigration Portugaise, <http://bloncourtblog.net/2014/07/1-immigration-portugaise.html>, (last accessed 20/06/2018).

<sup>65</sup> Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 58.

<sup>66</sup> Bruno Barbey, Boulogne Billancourt. Strike at the Renault factory. Meeting of the CGT, 27 May 1968. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2TYRYDKMLFCJ.html> (last accessed 30/08/2019).

<sup>67</sup> José Vieira, *La Photo déchirée - Chronique d'une émigration clandestine*, 2001.

Nanterre which reads 'Luttes Contre le Fascisme: En Grece, En Espagne, Au Portugal' from 2 May *Journée anti-impérialiste* called by the Movement 22 March.<sup>68</sup>

The presence of transnational references in the photography of The Popular Front and May '68 have served various purposes. In the case of both movements, the international careers of photojournalists have assimilated the photographic record into a global context, though at the same time this process has increased the celebrity of well-funded professional photojournalists. The prominence of photographs from Vietnam in the 1960s and Spain in the 1930s show that these were eras where solidarity across borders became a defining feature of political movements, and photographs were a means of communicating this. Photographs from the activist press in 1968 show this solidarity was wide ranging and made direct links between oppression in France and abroad. Finally, the overlooked presence of migrant workers in photographs of occupations demonstrates their participation in the movement. But as well as situating the strikes in relation to their global context, photographs also constructed a specific temporal context, which linked both movements together.

### **Revolutionary Pasts: Historic Symbolism**

The unrest that rocked France in 1968 has had a contested legacy. For some May and June 1968 was a re-imagining of the spirit of revolt for the modern era, for others merely a spectacle of revolution, empty of political content. Michael Seidman describes it as an 'imaginary revolution'.<sup>69</sup> However, to imagine this revolution, activists and photographers drew on a repertoire of symbols also present in 1936 that evoke the revolutionary heritage of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>68</sup> Elie Kagan, *Mai 68 D'un Photographe*, (Paris: Editions Du Layeur/BDIC, 2008), 31.

<sup>69</sup> Michael Seidman, *The imaginary revolution*.

Linking cycles of contention via a common visual repertoire is a pronounced trend in French history. Andrew Smith argued that during the 2018/19 Gilets Jaunes protests, ‘Commentary on French protests ... quickly become a search for historical comparisons, feeding a narrative of repetitive crises.’<sup>70</sup> For Pierre Laborie, this attitude to history in France is expressed through ‘a series of images they create of themselves and in which they believe they recognise themselves’.<sup>71</sup> This particular focus on images lends itself to the appropriation of visual motifs, present in photographs, but stretching back through paintings (for example Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People*), sculptures, and a broader field of visual culture.

Commentators on May have often drawn on different references to France’s past revolutions to suit their analysis of May. In Erik Neveu’s analysis of May’s memory, he describes the international synchronisation of struggle as ‘comparable only to 1848’<sup>72</sup> and Raymond Aron’s vision of ‘delirium’ draws on Tocqueville’s experiences in February 1848. Whereas Edgar Morin’s concept of a ‘great festival’ channels Henri Lefèbvre’s analysis of the commune of 1871.<sup>73</sup> Walter Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History* talks of how revolutionaries self-consciously borrow from the past in a process of ‘citation’, giving as an example Robespierre’s classicism, which ‘exploded’ Roman antiquity from ‘the continuum of history’.<sup>74</sup> Just as the French revolution appropriated classical iconography, it was itself appropriated, and in May there is highly visible visual reference to a tradition stretching back through the nineteenth century to 1789. Though Adorno called barricades ‘ridiculous against those who administer the bomb’, the invocation of a 19<sup>th</sup> century revolutionary tradition follows Benjamin’s model of a leap into the past.<sup>75</sup> Marx’s 18<sup>th</sup> Brumaire makes a similar

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<sup>70</sup> Andrew W.M. Smith, ‘The Gilets Jaunes Protest: A Grand Refusal in an Age of Commuter Democracy’, *Age of Revolutions*, December 13, 2018, <https://ageofrevolutions.com/2018/12/13/the-gilets-jaunes-protest-a-grand-refusal-in-an-age-of-commuter-democracy/>, (last accessed 14/08/19).

<sup>71</sup> Pierre Laborie, *Le chagrin et le venin, Occupation, Résistance, Idées reçues*, (Paris: Bayard, 2011), 1.

<sup>72</sup> Erik Neveu, ‘Memory Battles over Mai 68: Interpretative struggles as a cultural re-play of social movements’ in *Conceptualising culture in Social Movement Research*, Britta Baumgarten, Priska Daphi, and Peter Ullrich, eds. (Springer 2014), 278.

<sup>73</sup> Aristide R. Zolberg, ‘Moments of Madness’, *Politics & Society*, 2, 2 (1972), pp183-207. 184-185

<sup>74</sup> Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*, XIV- XV.

<sup>75</sup> Stuart Jeffries, *Grand Hotel Abyss: The Lives of the Frankfurt School*, (London, New York: Verso, 2016), 5-6.

point, that though historical circumstance may appear to repeat itself, the meanings change, what once was tragedy becomes ‘farce’.<sup>76</sup>

These revolutionary moments also evoke their own specific conception of time and the past. They are freed from the ‘homogenous and empty time’ Benjamin uses to characterise the assumption of gradual and ongoing progress. In the revolutionary moment of the *Jetztzeit* (Now-time) it becomes possible to seize moments from the past, in Benjamin’s view to ‘redeem’ them. This concept of history, in breaking with the continuum of lived time, has strong resonances with photography, which preserves images of individual moments. Benjamin argues this seizure of moments from the past is a revolutionary act, and that ‘to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it “the way it really was”’. It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.<sup>77</sup> This process also alters, re-contextualises such memories and uses them for present purposes. Photography fits neatly into such a model, isolating key moments in recognisable visual repertoires, and allowing them to be communicated in new contexts.

As explored in chapter 4, Jean-Pierre Rey explicitly drew on the iconography of Marianne in his photographs of the demonstrations of the 13<sup>th</sup> May to create what has become one of the most lasting ‘icons’ of May.<sup>78</sup> That chapter explored the subsequent history and influence of the photographs, but it is also necessary to examine why the diachronic references it drew on were so effective. As one of the first moments of unity between students and workers, the 13 May demonstration coincides with an upsurge in mobilisation, a day of general strike and the expansion of the movement. At this moment of mobilisation, an easily recognisable symbol, Marianne, could reach beyond the student milieu, carrying different meanings to different audiences. One of the most recognisable Atelier Populaire posters, titled

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<sup>76</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

<sup>77</sup> Benjamin, *Theses on the Concept of History*.

<sup>78</sup> Jean-Pierre Rey, *13 mai 1968 - La Marianne de mai*.

‘Beauty is in the street’, is based on a photograph that appeared in the Trotskyist magazine *Avant Garde*. (Figure 5.4)<sup>79</sup> The poster provided the cover and title of the 2011 collection of the posters.<sup>80</sup> In a 2012 interview with a magazine, one of the artists behind the posters, Philippe Vermès highlighted the appeal of a woman taking revolutionary action as ‘enticing then because women were seizing control over their bodies, their thinking. Very enticing, even still.’<sup>81</sup> Despite talking of liberation, the language of ‘enticing’ still sees the woman role in terms of her appeal to me, and the poster highlights gendered aspects when compared to the photograph. For example, the figure in the photograph’s jacket appears more like a dress when blocked out in red, and the figure’s hair and facial features are also exaggerated.

Maurice Agulhon’s exploration of the history of Marianne as a symbol, often highlights the different, and contradictory purposes of the analogy for both revolutionary liberty and an embodiment of the republic. Such images can carry mobilising force but can also serve to shift the meaning of protest.<sup>82</sup> Agulhon’s argument was that misunderstandings of the personification of ‘liberty’ create ‘goddesses’ of the republic and these eventually become recognised as the feminine embodiment of the republic, Marianne. This process involved forgetting the origins of the character, and in doing so created new symbols. Reference could be made to the tales of women on the barricades in 1848, and the prominent role played by women in the Paris Commune.<sup>83</sup>

The transmission of such motifs must also be considered, as the re-use of revolutionary symbols shifts and re-contextualises their meanings. As part of a living

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<sup>79</sup> *Avant Garde* 13, 18 May 1968, 5, <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Mai68?Display=2692> (last accessed 23/08/19).

<sup>80</sup> Johan Kugelberg and Philippe Vermès, (eds.), *Beauty Is in the Street: A Visual Record of the May ‘68 Uprising*, (Four Corners Books, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> William Bostwick, *An interview with Philippe Vermès, the Occupy artist of Paris ‘68*, January 23, 2012, <http://www.printmag.com/article/rock-versus-paper/>, (accessed 27/08/2014).

<sup>82</sup> Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican imagery and symbolism in France, 1789-1880*, trans. Janet Lloyd, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); *Marianne au Pouvoir: L’imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1880 à 1914*, (Flammarion, 1989).

<sup>83</sup> Struminger, Laura S. ‘The vésuviennes: Images of women warriors in 1848 and their significance for French history’, *History of European Ideas*, 8, 4-5 (1987), 451-488; Carolyn J. Eichner, *Surmounting the barricades: women in the Paris Commune*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).



tradition, their use is refracted through intervening events. Particularly pertinent here is the strike wave of 1936. Jessica Wardhough has shown how the Front deliberately melded revolutionary and nationalistic iconography to present its vision of ‘The People’, and this heavily affected its appearance in the popular memory.<sup>84</sup> We must consider that as well as the revolutionary connotations of Liberty, and ideals of embodying the nation, images of Marianne and Phrygian caps recall the unity of progressive forces and liberation from work represented by the Popular Front, still well within living memory. For example, in 1936, the photo-magazine *Regards* featured a front cover by Marcel Cerf of a woman dressed as Marianne, and Herrick Chapman argued that the Popular Front revived the festival of Bastille Day, which had previously been associated with the political right.<sup>85</sup>

Simon Dell has explored how these images are less about evoking the autonomy and militancy of the strikes than subsuming those aspects under an ‘official narrative’ primarily focused on festivity – we must ask then how the images of ’68 also might also be contributing to a discourse of festivity over militancy. Militant continuity can be seen in effigies and raised fists. Examples of these photographs are especially prominent on the CGT demonstration of 29<sup>th</sup> May, after the unions’ negotiated settlement at Grenelle had been rejected. National imagery came to the fore as established interests became invested in the movement and these images using pacifying, unifying imagery may represent an attempt to enforcing the same sense of harmony they did in 1936. Janine Niepce’s photographs of the 29 May demonstration feature a figure with a Phrygian cap in a knowing invocation of these republican tropes.<sup>86</sup> Gilles Caron - again on the CGT demonstration- captures another.<sup>87</sup>

However, another key reference recurring in photography, the barricade, reveal a slightly different relationship to revolutionary heritage, both symbolising and physically

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<sup>84</sup> Jessica Wardhough, *In Pursuit of the People*.

<sup>85</sup> *Regards*, 130, 9 July 1936; Herrick Chapman, ‘Revolutionary Commemoration as Contested Terrain from the Popular Front to the Fourth Republic’ *French Politics and Society*, 7, 4, (1989), 33-44.

<sup>86</sup> Janine Niepce, BnF, EP-29 (2)-FOL.

<sup>87</sup> Gilles Caron, BnF, EP-39-BOITE PET FOL.

embodying an act of defiance. Barricades at the sites of their forebears tap into the deep memories of the Parisian landscape, in many cases not just evoking the barricades of 1830, 1848, 1871 and the liberation in 1944, but occupying the same spaces.<sup>88</sup> The barricade was also a territorial demarcation, defining a symbolic as well as a physical space outside of everyday society.<sup>89</sup> While the military potential of May's barricades is doubtful, the symbolic reference to past insurrections is obvious.

Though the barricade has a long history, stretching back to the Middle Ages, its symbolic power is more associated with the period between the Revolution of 1789 and the Commune of 1871.<sup>90</sup> Delacroix's painting dates to 1830. In 1871, it became a major symbol of the Commune, and here we can also see a fascinating entanglement with photography. Group photographs on barricades recall the early photographs of Communards, who also used photography to immortalise their insurrection.<sup>91</sup> Jeannine Przyblyski has written on the photography of the Commune, and highlights the disdain for this photography (and photography more generally) expressed by the bourgeoisie, because of 'confusion of history and play-acting that photography seemed to encourage', a criticism familiar to the commentary on Mai 68.<sup>92</sup> One David Seymour photograph of a demonstration from 1936 captures a placard depicting Louise Michel.<sup>93</sup>

Engels explained barricades as having 'more of a moral than material effect', held to challenge morale of military attackers.<sup>94</sup> Following Haussmann's drastic re-shaping of the

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<sup>88</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays*, (London: Phoenix, 1994), 233; Dennis Bos, 'Building Barricades: the Political Transfer of a Contentious Roadblock', *European Review of History: Revue europeenne d'histoire*, 12, 2, (2005), 346.

<sup>89</sup> Keith Reader, 'The Symbolic Violence of the May 1968 events in France' in *Violence and Conflict in Modern French Culture*, Eds. Renate Günther and Jan Windebank, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 60-61.

<sup>90</sup> Carl Douglas, 'Barricades and boulevards: material transformations of Paris, 1795-1871.', *Interstices: A Journal of Architecture and related Arts*, 8, (2008), 31-42.

<sup>91</sup> Jeannine Przyblyski, 'Revolution at a Standstill: Photography and the Paris Commune of 1871', *Yale French Studies*, 101, (2001).

<sup>92</sup> Przyblyski, 'Revolution at a Standstill', 62.

<sup>93</sup> David Seymour, En hommage aux Morts de la Commune de Paris, un long cortège se dirige vers le mur des Fédérés, monument érigé à l'intérieur du cimetière, 24 May 1936, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDX5HG8.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>94</sup> Benjamin, Arcades Project, 12, Convolutes E1a, 5.

city, the barricade's significance has become more symbolic than practical. It provides enough defence to lay claim to a space and break the hegemony of the state, and this symbolic power then becomes an offensive weapon with which to break or win over troops.

Photography circulates this claim for space and recognition.<sup>95</sup> This corresponds to the latent 'social functions of the barricade' as signifying insurrection, testing support, joining its builders, and allowing order to emerge among revolutionaries. The barricade as an icon creates a 'compression of meaning', which can then be recirculated in photography.<sup>96</sup> In contrast with this static posing, Marc Riboud's images of barricades capture the dynamic collective labour of their construction, people coming together with common purpose.<sup>97</sup> Here the barricade is less of an icon in its own right, but a vehicle for unifying participants. These photos are not merely documenting the invocation of an insurrectionary repertoire, but help to diffuse it.

Yet in the conjunction of barricade and photography, the camera's gaze is also turned back on the forces of order. The actual tactical use of barricades in May against police rather than troops exposed systemic violence without escalating it to lethal levels. Whilst useless against military force, barricade builders in 1968 correctly (or fortunately) calculated that the forces of order would restrain their response for fear of a massacre. The battles with police, not troops, are potentially another reflection of '68 as a play of past revolution with the stakes reduced. The purpose of the initial confrontations centred around getting the police out of the Sorbonne, evidencing a literal, as well as symbolic claim to space. This battle over terrain produced images of police brutality, which function as injustice frame, unveiling the physical violence that underpinned the Gaullist order.

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<sup>95</sup> The opponents of barricades were also keen to use the medium for this purpose. Haussmann's reforms included the creation of new organisations to record the history of the city, including photographic works. See Catherine E. Clark, *Paris and the Cliché of History: The City and Photographs, 1860-1970*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 15-18.

<sup>96</sup> Traugott, Mark. *The Insurgent Barricade*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 179 – 21.

<sup>97</sup> Marc Riboud, May '68, <http://marcriboud.com/en/countries/may68/>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

Yet images of the Gaullist demonstration of 30 May show how Nineteenth Century was not the exclusive domain of the regime's opponents. The tricolour, alongside the cross of Lorraine (with its own revanchist history) became a symbol of defence of the existing order. It is completely ubiquitous in the photography of these protests, most clearly exemplified in Bruno Barbey's images of a sea of flags over the Champs-Élysées and Place de la Concorde.<sup>98</sup> In another well-replicated image of that demonstration, Barbey captures two women held aloft on shoulders.<sup>99</sup> Despite the clear ideological distinctions, and differences even in the women's dress, the presentation of this photograph has assimilated it into the category of the *Mariannes du mai*.<sup>100</sup>

## Conclusion

By their nature, symbols carry contradictory meanings; they function by holding together what might otherwise be mutually exclusive understandings in a single frame of reference.<sup>101</sup> This process is evident in both the transfer of photographs and photographers across geographical boundaries and the importation of historically symbolic imagery into the context of the '68 years'.

Photojournalists were transnational actors, contributing to global media and working across borders, but also exploring transnational themes within their work. Transnational concerns were evident across the photography published during 1968. Opposition to the

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<sup>98</sup> Bruno Barbey, Paris. May 30th 1968. 300.000 supporters of De Gaulle march on The Concorde, place, in the background The Assemblée Nationale. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDYW2KX7.html>; Paris. 8th arrondissement. Avenue des Champs-Élysées. March in support of French President Charles De Gaulle, from the Place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe. May 30th 1968. According to official figures, between 3 - 500,000 people, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDIB1IQ4.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>99</sup> Bruno Barbey, Champs Elysees. During the pro-gaullist demonstration, a girl is seen holding the last edition of the newspaper France-Soir. The headlines in bold letters read : "I stay". "I keep Pompidou". May 30th, 1968. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD405SB.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>100</sup> Memou, Antigoni. 'Photography and Memory: Rethinking May'68', *Philosophy of Photography* 2, 1 (2011), 83-96.

<sup>101</sup> Mari Womack, *Symbols and meaning: A concise introduction*. (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2005), 3.

Vietnam War used photography as an iconic referent, and is also used within photographs to characterise movements of the era more broadly. However, photojournalism also played a key role in articulating specific moments within the course of the war for an international audience. On a smaller scale, transnational photography can also draw attention to the diversity within visualisations of May, and how specific framings were favoured within sections of the press. Periodicals of the New Left used photography to make explicit calls for international solidarity, bypassing issues of translation and contextualising images within common frames of physical oppression by authorities. Concurrently, the communist affiliated press depicted the experience and struggles of migrant labourers. Analysing how the press reproduced transnational references within new local contexts, re-contextualising, juxtaposing, and framing them, can historicise the relationship between mobilisation and its international context.

There is a marked contrast between the contemporary transnational references, and the turn to historic revolutionary iconography. Whereas the former represents a common understanding of protest being developed and articulated through a somewhat coherent visual repertoire, in the case of the latter an older repertoire was being invoked for multiple, contradictory purposes. Yet the same process of transfer applies, using photographs to construct historical references that contribute new meanings and understandings to the contestation they document. These historical references also reveal a reconceptualisation of time and history, following Benjamin's *Jetztzeit*, the revolutionary potential of the past becomes a tool for the struggle in the present. Photographs are the tool that enables this. Whilst the Popular Front remains an undercurrent in images of labour struggle, a revolutionary repertoire was also invoked. Transnational influences in photography allowed unrest in France to be perceived as part of a global wave of contestation, and the historical imagery deployed situated these two strike waves in a longer cycle of contestation stretching back to 1789.



## Chapter 6. Photography and '68 Thought'

Like generation and commemorative practices, the history of ideas helps to explain the afterlives of May '68. The construction of a body of '68 thought' was a retrospective project, drawing together a variety of thinkers with differing relationships and attitudes to the movement into a single category. Projecting this categorisation back onto 1968 itself was part of the commodification and obfuscation of May's legacy.<sup>1</sup> However, the grouping of these thinkers also profoundly affects the way we think about images in general, and photography specifically. Their continued engagement with visual culture, even from diverse perspectives, tended towards a postmodern framing of images as texts, which in turn privileges certain uses and interpretations of strike photography. Therefore, there is a dense entanglement of photography, theory and the afterlife of '68, which needs to be critically unpacked in order to engage with how participants visualised society and their own protest. This chapter will briefly examine the construction of an intellectual tradition supposedly indebted to May, analyse some of the most significant ways it has shaped the theorisation of photography and the implications of this for the study of strike photographs. Finally, it returns to the ideas of Walter Benjamin and John Berger to argue that the approach this thesis has taken, linking photographs to both their social context and disputed afterlives, is a potential alternative with wider applications for the history of social contestation.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Starr, *Logics of Failed Revolt: French Theory after May '68*, (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1995), 114; Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 191 – 195; Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought*, (Montreal & Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

## ‘68 thought’

The category of ‘68 thought’ is most clearly put forth in Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut’s *La Pensée 68*, grouping together the work of Derrida, Lacan, Foucault and Bourdieu under the heading of ‘antihumanism’.<sup>2</sup> Kristin Ross is scathing in her analysis of *La Pensée 68*, which she sees as exemplary of a ‘ventriloquism’ which obscures the class politics of the 1960s in favour of a disavowal of Marxism and a narrow ‘generational’ approach.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, she identifies serious problems in their definition of this intellectual tradition as ‘antihumanist’, and their selection of thinkers. The most glaring issue was that the students supposedly influenced by these ideas had not actually read them. Ross finds a single footnote where Ferry and Renaut quote Daniel Cohn-Bendit, claiming his denial proves the relevance of such thinkers.<sup>4</sup> Yet, according to Cohn-Bendit and Jean-Pierre Duteuil, the students had read ‘Marx, maybe Bakunin ... Althusser, Mao, Guevara, Lefebvre’ and Sartre, though they simultaneously deny the latter any influence, ‘even when he visited the Sorbonne’. The very idea of intellectuals as a guiding force to the movement is dismissed with outright hostility, and Marcuse’s attribution as a ‘mentor’ is a ‘joke’.<sup>5</sup> One *enragé* communique dismisses Lefebvre as a ‘well known agent of recuperation’, showing an early awareness of the potential of theory to undermine revolutionary praxis.<sup>6</sup>

The intellectuals that Ferry and Renaut highlighted had only tangential relations to activism during May itself: Foucault was in North Africa, Derrida was reserved, Bourdieu reportedly did not strike, and Lacan was openly hostile to the movement.<sup>7</sup> The ideological

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<sup>2</sup> Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An essay on Antihumanism*, trans. Mary Schnackenberg Cattani, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990 first published as *La pensée 68: Essai sur l'antihumanisme contemporain*, Editions Gallimard, 1986), xviii.

<sup>3</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 191 – 195.

<sup>4</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 191.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Jean-Pierre Duteuil, *The Student Revolt: The Activists Speak*, (Panther, 1968, First published as *La Révolte Etudiante*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968), 78.

<sup>6</sup> René Viénet, *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68*, (New York: Autonomedia, 1992, Originally published by Éditions Gallimard; Paris, 1968), 125.

<sup>7</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 190-191.



characterisation is also wrong; it highlights the difficulty in bringing together a heterogeneous group of thinkers under such a broad label. But this obfuscation allows Ferry and Renault, and those using the term after them, to essentially define '68 thought' as anything their anti-totalitarian politics wishes to decry.

The rupture between the ideologies of May and later intellectual projects exposes the dangers in conflating postmodernism and the New Left.<sup>8</sup> Both were comprised of many different actors and positions, often with conflicting aims and views, and there is not a direct progression from one to the other. Though the persistence of the women's, gay liberation and environmental movements attests that direct activism continued and in some areas expanded after the end of the sixties, its relationship to the intellectual response to May is complex.<sup>9</sup> For example, in approaching the relationship between feminism, sexual violence and recourse to the punitive power of the law, Julian Bourg traces the conflict between feminist demands for harsher sentencing in rape cases, leftist critiques of the prison system, and particular conceptions of sexual liberation as outside the law.<sup>10</sup> In light of such contradictory elements in May's aftermath, the narrative that produces a single 'legacy' and locates it in a small number of intellectuals appears facile.

In Bourg's view, tracing the changes and continuities of a period of years following May, speaking of May as a singular event with defined aims is too simplistic.<sup>11</sup> Bourg argues that May represented an antinomian *ethos* opposed to the regulation of law, exemplified by the slogan 'it is forbidden to forbid', which in the following two decades returned in a wider 'ethical turn'.<sup>12</sup> For Bourg, movements as diverse as prison reform, anti-psychiatry, feminism and humanitarianism embodied this ethical turn. Bourg's concept of the antinomian is

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<sup>8</sup> Christine Delphy, 'The invention of French feminism: An essential move', *Yale French Studies*, 87, (1995), 190-221.

<sup>9</sup> Julie Stephens, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest: Sixties radicalism and postmodernism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 125-126.

<sup>10</sup> Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 179-227.

<sup>11</sup> Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 41-42.

<sup>12</sup> Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 5.

comparable to Julie Stephens's notion of 'anti-disciplinary protest', which (though her analysis mainly covers the US as opposed to France) equally captures the social influence of the New Left after the apparent failure of the movement to achieve revolutionary change.

This rejection of the 'death of the sixties' narrative also charts how following movements suffered from 'political disenchantment', but nevertheless continued to affect historical processes. By collapsing distinctions between politics and art, culture and everyday life, attention moved to the latter at the expense of the revolutionary aspirations that had defined the New Left.<sup>13</sup> Stephens also argues that the vision of postmodernism as a chronological 'break' has itself come to stand as a justification for disengagement and political quietism.<sup>14</sup> Wider trends in cultural studies also contributed to the turn away from political engagement. Ross's critique of Michel de Certeau argues he has promoted a view taking capitalism for granted as a medium within which action takes place. Resistance is constrained to many small acts of 'tactics', which do not add up to a wider 'strategy' that challenges the system, delaying comprehensive change indefinitely.<sup>15</sup>

Peter Starr argues the turn to theory avoided political commitment through a presupposition of political failure. These 'logics' identify a 'pseudo-opposition' between the forces of the established order and those challenging it, who are complicit in or recuperated by dominant structures, and both are thus dismissed in favour of a 'third-way'.<sup>16</sup> Hegemony is presented as unassailable, capable of endless recuperation, and the concrete successes of the strike are ignored. Whether or not they subverted the political potential of May, or amounted to its betrayal by the hierarchies of the CGT and PCF, the Grenelle Accords established wage rises (particularly in the minimum wage) that persisted until the Mitterrand era.<sup>17</sup> These

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<sup>13</sup> Stephens, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest*, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Stephens, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest*, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Kristin Ross, 'Streetwise: the French invention of everyday life', *Parallax*, 2, 1, (1996), 71.

<sup>16</sup> Starr, *Logics of Failed Revolt*, 114.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the twenty-first century*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts; Harvard University Press, 2014), 289.

negotiated agreements compare to those of Matignon in 1936, despite their limitations, they are remembered as establishing permanent changes in the balance between capital and labour, guaranteed by the state.<sup>18</sup>

The assumption of inevitable commodification is dependent on a monolithic concept of capitalism that sees it as essentially unchallengeable, a reading of counterculture itself as overly naïve and a definition of co-optation as solely top-down. It not only presents the emancipatory aims of the New Left as doomed from the start, but also serves to damn any future revolutionary aspirations.<sup>19</sup>

Yet there are common threads running through French theorists of the 1960s and 70s, and visual theory is a key one. However, the ways in which they conceptualise the visual is starkly at odds with how photography might have been understood by its practitioners during the strike movements. Martin Jay argues 20<sup>th</sup> century French philosophy is consistently anti-visual in its metaphors.<sup>20</sup> Jay admits the centrality of visual culture to their concerns, analysing how Roland Barthes, Christian Metz and the *Cahiers du Cinéma* examined the new technological extensions of vision offered by the camera and cinema.<sup>21</sup> Bourdieu was similarly engaged with, but critical of, television.<sup>22</sup> Nicola Foster highlights this contradiction, arguing that phenomenological philosophers including Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Lacan, chose to refer to paintings when discussing visual experience, despite living in a world increasingly defined by the photographic mediation of images.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, Jay compares Foucault's concern with panoptic surveillance, and Debord's spectacle to show how though fascinated by the visual, these thinkers were deeply sceptical of

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<sup>18</sup> Verity Burgmann, *Globalization and Labour in the Twenty-first Century*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 2.

<sup>19</sup> Stephens, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest*, 94.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Jay. *Downcast eyes: The denigration of vision in twentieth-century French thought*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Jay, "That visual turn." *Journal of visual culture* 1, 1, (2002), 87-92; Ales Erjavec. "The pictorial turn." *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 15, no. 27-28 (2003).

<sup>21</sup> Jay. *Downcast eyes*, 435-493.

<sup>22</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'Television', *European review*, 9, 3 (2001), 245-256.

<sup>23</sup> Nicola Foster, 'Photography and the gaze: The ethics of vision inverted', *parallax* 14, 2, (2008), 78-92.

the visual.<sup>24</sup> This manifested in a hostility to both the effect of consuming visual media and being the object of the gaze itself. Less is said of the potential critical power of observation itself, as in both spectacle and panopticon, the framings are already determined by power relations. The ability to construct new framings, and thus potentially challenge power through the construction of new ‘ways of seeing’ is a privilege granted only to either the commodifying culture industry, or the gaze of the already dominant. Whilst Jay effectively analyses how these two elements of ‘68 thought’ deal with the visual in a general sense, it is worth more thoroughly examining how they affected the analysis of photography, and the development of a sub-discipline of ‘photographic theory’.

### **The Situationists**

The Situationists’ critique of ‘the spectacle’ applies Marxist concepts of commodity fetishism and alienation in relation to the rapidly expanding visual culture of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, and they are often presented as exemplary of May’s ethos. Yet this must be viewed with scepticism, especially in view of Guy Debord’s later self-aggrandising claims to have been the driving force behind the movement. Their notoriety owes more to subsequent attempts to search for an intellectual explanation for spontaneous protest.<sup>25</sup>

However, the issues raised in tracts such as *On the Poverty of Student Life*, undoubtedly affected the initial outbreak of dissent, even if the publication itself did not.<sup>26</sup> Situationist International member René Viénet identifies the early agitation at Nanterre with the Movement 22 March, who had ‘found their way to a theoretical agreement with the platform of the Situationist International’, rather than constituting a specifically situationist

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<sup>24</sup> Jay. *Downcast eyes*, 381-435.

<sup>25</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 193-194.

<sup>26</sup> U.N.E.F. Strasbourg, *On the Poverty of Student Life*, (Strasbourg, 1966)

group.<sup>27</sup> Equally, while drawing attention to their treatment of visual culture, attempts to intellectualise the situationists often collapse them into a prefiguring of an ill-defined postmodernism.<sup>28</sup> For example, Sadie Plant traces a direct line through Dada and surrealism, via the Situationists, to May '68 and then on to 'poststructuralist and desiring philosophies of the 1970s'.<sup>29</sup>

McKenzie Wark argues that though the situationists were vaguely identified with May '68, it was in the 1980s that their work was incorporated into 'official international cultural exchange', via recuperation into the academic domains of art-history, literature, architecture and philosophy.<sup>30</sup> Various seen as prefiguring post-punk or later rave subcultures, Greil Marcus' *Lipstick Traces* placed the situationists into a lineage connecting Dada, Situationists and Punk.<sup>31</sup> Like the category of '68 thought', the influence of situationism on the analysis of visual culture is more a product of the 1980s than 1960s. In this light, strike photographs are more likely to be approached as works of art, than as documentary or a part of the strikes themselves.

Thomas F. McDonough identified the danger of seeing the situationists as 'producers of a singular "theory", rather than cultural producers in their own right'.<sup>32</sup> This production took the form of a focus on *détournement* and the re-use of cultural products. Its influence in May is seen in the re-working of photographs into *Atelier Populaire* posters, and the covers of activist magazines. This approach has a clear heritage in earlier avant-garde uses of found media, especially Dada, Surrealism and experimental Soviet photomontages.<sup>33</sup> However,

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<sup>27</sup> Viénet, *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas F. McDonough, 'Rereading Debord, rereading the situationists', *October*, 79, (1997), 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> Sadie Plant, *The most radical gesture: The Situationist International in a postmodern age*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2002, first published 1992), 111.

<sup>30</sup> McKenzie Wark, *50 years of recuperation of the Situationist International*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008).

<sup>31</sup> Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the 20th Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989).

<sup>32</sup> McDonough, 'Rereading Debord, rereading the situationists', 8.

<sup>33</sup> David Evans, 'The situationist family album', *History of Photography*, 29, 2, (2005), 179,182.

whereas Dada and photomontage show a concern with the final aesthetic effect of accumulating and juxtaposing images, and Surrealism used photography as a means of challenging perception, this situationist use of photographs depended almost entirely on ideological concepts such as ‘the spectacle’.<sup>34</sup> There was ‘no Situationist photography, but a Situationist use of photographic means.’<sup>35</sup>

The visual technologies of modernity, including photography, form a key component of Debord’s concept of ‘spectacle’, but they are not its defining feature. Rather it is the social relations they are enmeshed with, especially those of capitalist production, which form the basis of spectacular society. ‘The spectacle’ refers not only to visual media, but also to the mediation of social relations through images, the flattening of all life into representation, and is deeply indebted to Marx’s writing on commodity fetishism.<sup>36</sup> Debord splits this totalising critique into the concentrated spectacle of totalitarian societies and personality cults, backed by permanent violence, and the diffuse spectacle of consumer capital, defined by the commodity.<sup>37</sup> Commodities become spectacular when their sign-value overtakes their use-value, becoming representative of consumption itself.<sup>38</sup>

The Situationists anticipate postmodernist scepticism about the role of the creator as an independent cultural producer. The use of captions also follows Barthes’s comments on the capacity of text to ‘load’ images, a technique exploited by the Situationists by using quotes to caption, and thus *détourner*, unrelated photographs.<sup>39</sup> Rather than locating meaning in the field of language, situationist practice is concerned with ideology. The recycling of images, captions and text re-enforces the all-consuming nature of the spectacle, all images are part of it, taken from it, or recuperated by it. Disturbing a focus on play as liberating, Wark claims

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<sup>34</sup> Warner Marien, *Photography*, 247-265.

<sup>35</sup> Evans, ‘The situationist family album’, 182.

<sup>36</sup> Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983, first published Paris: Editions Buchet-Chastel, 1967), section 4.

<sup>37</sup> Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, section 64-65.

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Crary, ‘Spectacle, attention, counter-memory’, *October*, 50, (1989)pp 96-107, 99

<sup>39</sup> Barthes, ‘The Photographic Message’, 25-27; Evans, ‘The situationist family album’, 179-181

part of the situationist legacy demonstrates that play ‘contains, rather than escapes, the problem of power’.<sup>40</sup>

The concept of spectacle potentially prefigures certain postmodern readings of society. Baudrillard argues modernity constitutes a progressive destabilisation of signs, from Walter Benjamin’s nineteenth century ‘phantasmagoria of equality’, through ‘the society of the spectacle’, and into fully-fledged ‘hyperreality’, in which reality and simulation are indistinguishable.<sup>41</sup> However, it is important to distinguish spectacle and hyperreality as separate concepts, especially given the spectacle’s concrete intellectual lineage in Marx, Lefebvre, and Lukács’s concept of reification.<sup>42</sup> Also significant is the political distinction between Debord’s political commitment (however theoretical) and Baudrillard’s conscious quietism.<sup>43</sup> Again, the turn to postmodern theory accompanies a loss of active political engagement.

### **Photographic Theory and ‘The Gaze’**

Though not dealing explicitly with photography, Foucault’s critique of panoptic surveillance influenced photographic theorists from the 70s and 80s, who developed these ideas in their study of the camera’s disciplinary power. Foucault’s lasting influence is visible in how theorists studied, attempts at criminal profiling, and the complicity of photography in the racist classification of colonial anthropology.<sup>44</sup> John Tagg wrote on the disciplinary power of photography, tracing the use of photography by police, and the growth of state

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<sup>40</sup> McKenzie Wark, *50 years of recuperation of the Situationist International*. (Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 44.

<sup>41</sup> Crary, ‘Spectacle, attention, counter-memory’, *October*, 98.

<sup>42</sup> McDonough, ‘Rereading Debord, rereading the situationists’, 8.

<sup>43</sup> Kevin Fox Gotham, and Daniel A. Krier, ‘From the culture industry to the society of the spectacle: Critical theory and the situationist international’, *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, 25, (2008), 158.

<sup>44</sup> Paul S. Landau, ‘Empires of the visual: photography and colonial administration in Africa’ in Paul S. Landau and Deborah D. Kaspin (eds.) *Images and empires: visibility in colonial and postcolonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 141-171.

photographic records.<sup>45</sup> Feminist theory in particular built upon this critique of the gaze, via Laura Mulvey's work on cinema.<sup>46</sup> Nicholas Mirzoeff later took this approach even further, developing a critique of 'visuality' as centring the dominant observer.<sup>47</sup>

Yet Majid Yar follows Jay in arguing this concept of panoptic power is reliant on a 'monological' understanding of 'the gaze' as pathological.<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth Edwards also notes that 'Foucault-inspired' analysis of anthropological photography 'over-determined' power relations to such an extent as to create an 'almost nihilistic' reification of the power of the colonial gaze. This absolutist approach both restricted the scope of analysis and contributed to the further silencing of the objects of photographs that these studies had initially set out to valorise.<sup>49</sup> David Bate blends an analysis of Orientalism with Lacanian psychoanalysis to explore European identification with the subjects of such images, with similar results.<sup>50</sup> Whilst colonial anthropology presents an extreme case, it illustrates the limits of seeing photography solely as the product of dominant power.

This emergent body of 'photographic theory' was taking shape in the early 1980s, and one key contribution was the collection *Thinking Photography*. Victor Burgin developed the scope of 'photographic theory', mixing Marxist debates on Althusser with a semiotic definition of the medium: 'photography considered as a practice of *signification*'.<sup>51</sup> In the same volume, John Tagg used Foucault's concept of knowledge as a product of power to argue photographs relied on these 'regimes of truth' and thus their meanings were dependent

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<sup>45</sup> John Tagg, *The burden of representation: Essays on photographs and histories*. Vol. 80. U of Minnesota Press, 1993.

<sup>46</sup> Laura Mulvey, 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema', *Visual and other pleasures*, 14-26. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989).

<sup>47</sup> Nicholas Mirzoeff, 'On Visuality', *Journal of visual culture* 5, no. 1 (2006): 53-79; *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> Majid Yar, "Panoptic Power and the Pathologisation of Vision: Critical Reflections on the Foucauldian Thesis." *Surveillance & Society* 1, 3, (2003), 25.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, *Photography, Anthropology and History: Expanding the Frame*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 3.

<sup>50</sup> David Bate, 'Photography and the colonial vision', *Third Text*, 7, 22, (1993), 81-91.

<sup>51</sup> Victor Burgin, (ed.) *Thinking photography*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan International Higher Education, 1982), 2.



on institutional power. The example given is the role of the US Farm Security Administration supporting documentary photography of the Depression in the 1930s, framing rural poverty as the object of New Deal policy.<sup>52</sup> This rather limited reading of Foucault relies on a rather simple equivalence between power and the production of knowledge (in this case photographs), which leaves little room for either individual agency or the malleability of meanings within photographs.

Benjamin's 'Author as producer' is also prominently featured in Burgin's collection, as the 1980s also co-incided with renewed interest in his work. This only took particular elements from Benjamin though, as his critique of aura and authenticity was used to 'canonise' him as a postmodern thinker. In an incisive essay, Kelly Dennis argues that this ironic 'discursive fetishisation', particularly of the *Little History of Photography* and *The Work of Art in the age of its Technological Reproducibility* betrays a reliance on invoking the aura of Benjamin's work as a readymade signifier for radical criticism.<sup>53</sup> Udi E. Greenberg has made a similar argument that Benjamin's life and work were 'narrated ... in conservative formulas', which turned them into signifiers, not of radicalism, but disengagement and disorientation.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, Dennis argues postmodern critics ignore Benjamin's hopes for an antifascist politicisation of aesthetics, and the attendant work of historicization involved, instead investing in an idealism which somehow sees photography's potential for 'critique, irony and political efficacy' as inherent in the medium.<sup>55</sup> This allowed them to claim a revolutionary politics, whilst failing to engage with the ideological basis of the culture industry of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and the explicitly political protest art of the 1960s. The

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<sup>52</sup> John Tagg, 'The Currency of the Photograph' in Victor Burgin, (ed.) *Thinking photography*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan International Higher Education, 1982), 129-32.

<sup>53</sup> Kelly Dennis, 'Benjamin, Atget and the 'readymade' politics of postmodern photography studies', in J.J. Long, Andrea Noble, Edward Welch, (eds.), *Photography: Theoretical Snapshots*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2009), 124-136.

<sup>54</sup> Udi E. Greenberg, 'The politics of the Walter Benjamin industry', *Theory, culture & society* 25, 3, (2008), 53-70.

<sup>55</sup> Dennis, 'Benjamin, Atget and the 'readymade' politics of postmodern photography studies', 124-136.

privileging of photography as a uniquely postmodern medium was an attempt to ‘have their representational critique, and their essentialised photography too.’<sup>56</sup> In regards to strike photography, this ignores that the photographs political content was dependent on the specific historical context of their production and use as much as the images themselves.

## **Barthes and Photographic Ontology**

An overriding concern with ontology, rather than this historical context is also a product of postmodern and poststructuralist approaches to photography. In this case, the work of Roland Barthes is an illustrative example. Barthes examination of photographs spanned several stages of his career, moving from structuralism and semiotics into a more poststructuralist concern for language. However, the central concern remained the transmission of meaning. In 1957’s *Mythologies*, he explored several photographs, notably the ideological ramifications of a picture of a black soldier in French uniform at the height of the wars of decolonisation, and also covered advertising and publicity images.<sup>57</sup> By the time of *Camera Lucida* in 1980, he moved onto the analysis of photographic ontology, reflecting a move away from political, into philosophical concerns.<sup>58</sup> This shift in the late 1960s exemplifies, and prefigures the broader turn to semiotics and poststructuralism, over a structuralism still linked to Marxism.

Barthes desired to describe the photograph in terms of its essential properties, a theme he would return to at several points. Barthes was publishing some of his most important work during May ‘68, the seminal *Death of the Author* was originally set to appear in May, but was delayed to November, and the essay *S/Z* was also written around this time. Often the

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<sup>56</sup> Dennis, ‘Benjamin, Atget and the ‘readymade’ politics of postmodern photography studies’, 117.

<sup>57</sup> Roland Barthes. *Mythologies*, (London: Vintage, 2009, first printed 1957), 115 -119.

<sup>58</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, (London: Vintage, 2000, first printed Editions du Seuil, 1980).

association of intellectuals with the movement of 1968 relies more on the co-incidence of publishing times more than intellectual connections with the movement itself. Derrida published *Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference* in 1967, and is again a representative chosen by Ferry and Renaut.<sup>59</sup> However, Starr finds both Barthes and Derrida rejecting the idea of political responsibility entirely.<sup>60</sup> Yet in Barthes's case, despite a lack of political engagement, the time around 1968 does mark a shift. Notes on the seminar that *S/Z* is based on from before and after May reveal a move away from purely structuralist analysis, perceived as technocratic, to a more reflexive position.<sup>61</sup>

Barthes attitude to photography shifts from *Mythologies* and the 1961 essay *The Photographic Message* to *Camera Lucida*. *Mythologies* is concerned with images in a wider context of films, magazines, popular books and electoral photographs, more than the process of photography itself. *The Photographic Message* argues photography holds two meanings, that which is signified or connoted in the image, and the 'message without code' which is the direct analogue of what is depicted.<sup>62</sup> Barthes also here asserts the political impotence of photography, since the image can be read in many ways, it is 'powerless to alter political opinions'. Barthes raises the possibility of a photograph to give pure denotation, a meaning without language, and he identifies this with images of trauma, a position later explored by Susan Sontag.<sup>63</sup>

*Camera Lucida* continues to explore the ontology of photography, and its relationship to history through personal experience, rather than wider social meanings. The issue of trauma is again raised, this time through the prism of grief. This contraction of focus implicitly

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<sup>59</sup> Robert Wicks, *Modern French Philosophy: From Existentialism to Postmodernism*, (London: Oneworld, 2013).

<sup>60</sup> Starr, *Logics of Failed Revolt*, 137.

<sup>61</sup> Jon Simons, *Contemporary Critical Theorists: From Lacan to Said*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 74-75.

<sup>62</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Photographic Image', in Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 15-31.

<sup>63</sup> Barthes, 'The Photographic Image', 30.

argues the personal nature of meaning. Barthes refuses to print the 'winter garden' photograph central to his argument, as its meaning is dependent on his memory, and unique to his experience. Conversely, the desire to locate an essential meaning of photography is inherently grounded in universalist claims. This desire to search for photography's 'ontological essence' is dependent on a tradition of French cultural history, especially Descartes, further tying Barthes into an abstract theoretical framework.<sup>64</sup>

Despite reconsidering the meaning of making images, photographers influenced by Barthes did not link this reconsideration to political engagement.<sup>65</sup> Partly this stems from scepticism towards the role of an author as an independent cultural producer, elaborated by Barthes in *Death of the Author* and shared by other key poststructuralists such as Derrida. Derrida links his own earlier prohibition of photographs of himself to such scepticism, alongside the 'death-effect' of the photograph whereby the possibility of a pictured person's death 'haunts' portraits, even of the living.<sup>66</sup> These issues parallel *Camera Lucida's* preoccupation with Barthes grief, but also rest on an approach to photographs which attributes to them specific capabilities, innate to their existence as photographs. *Camera Lucida* thus reflects the changing concerns of postmodernism, moving from society to the individual, and politics to philosophy.

This ontological obsession is perhaps most evident in those who have used the work of Jacques Lacan to interpret photographs. Ruth Iskin highlights Lacan's popularity among those analysing the visual image, arguing that the technological diffusion of images with the advent of television 'imprinted' on Lacan's work, despite the fact he does not directly address it.<sup>67</sup>

When it comes to Lacan's own work, Nicola Foster shows how Lacan used photography as a

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<sup>64</sup> Shawcross, Nancy M., *Roland Barthes on Photography: The Critical Tradition in Perspective*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997), 39.

<sup>65</sup> Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A cultural history*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2002), 422-423

<sup>66</sup> Glendinning, Simon. *Derrida: A very short introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-6.

<sup>67</sup> Ruth E. Iskin, 'In the light of images and the shadow of technology: Lacan, photography and subjectivity', *Discourse* 19, 3, (1997), 59

metaphorical illustration for 'the gaze', but despite a preoccupation with optics and perspective, when discussing images themselves relied on examples drawn from paintings.<sup>68</sup> Again, ontology takes precedence over consideration of the subjects and authors of photographs themselves.

Another shared fundamental in poststructuralist thought is the primacy of text within poststructuralist thought. According to Jonathan Beller, postmodernism was the historical result of a shift from language to image regime.<sup>69</sup> Paradoxically, poststructuralist analysis relies on explaining images, (and everything else) as text. The concern with endlessly flowing, postponed meanings of texts undermines and obscures a way of using photography to fix 'decisive moments', which the activist press and photojournalism then use for the purposes of documentation and juxtaposition. This textual absolutism is incompatible with a primarily visual approach to the world, and specifically in the case of documentary photography, an approach that asserts a direct, explanatory relationship with the world. For John Berger, the meanings contained in and associated with a photograph are both too 'extensive and interwoven' to correspond to written language: 'One cannot take photographs with a dictionary'.<sup>70</sup>

This textual dominance is also enmeshed with the media presentation that produced the category of '68 thought', which fetishised May as a festival of communication and unbound speech, but did not examine the political content of those messages.<sup>71</sup> The presentation of May as a 'seizure of speech/the word' misrepresents the movement, and this seizure fixates on the transitory elements of May, at the expense of analysing power and structural change. There was, then, a decisive shift to semiotic and aesthetic over political

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<sup>68</sup> Nicola Foster, 'Photography and the gaze: The ethics of vision inverted' *parallax*, 14, 2, (2008), 78-92.

<sup>69</sup> Jonathan Beller, *The cinematic mode of production: Attention economy and the society of the spectacle*. (UPNE, 2012), 16,

<sup>70</sup> John Berger, 'Appearances', in *Understanding a Photograph*, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 94.

<sup>71</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 186.

concerns, and this is further seen in the presentation of photographs. Photojournalists increasingly moved to present their work as art, rather than as material designed to be sold to news agencies.<sup>72</sup> Republishing photographs in galleries and books renders the images devoid of their initial purpose and context, and thus de-historicises them. They are then free to be incorporated into ‘narratives’ of May that have been retrospectively created.

### **Bourdieu and Sociology**

The final plank of ‘68 thought’ to influence the study of photography is distinct from the poststructuralist turn analysed above. Though grouped by Ferry and Renaut into their ‘antihumanist’ category, Pierre Bourdieu, as a sociologist, is peripheral to the linguistic turn. However, his trajectory and retrospective association with May parallels that of the post-structuralists and the sociological analysis of photography he developed has some key similarities with their approach to images.

Ferry and Renaut chose Bourdieu as the archetype of ‘French Marxism’, a puzzling choice, given that other figures, particularly Althusser, seem both more orthodoxly Marxist and more relevant to the period. According to Ferry and Renaut, Bourdieu better represents a ‘philosophy of the end of philosophy’, part of a ‘sensibility’ of Marxism that rarely actually references Marx. Somehow this lack of reference proves Bourdieu to be in denial of his theoretical origins and thus exemplary of ‘68 thought’.<sup>73</sup> This is clearly misleading, despite his materialism and extensive use of the vocabulary of Marxism (Capital, class etc.), Bourdieu does not apply these terms in a Marxist sense. ‘Classes’ are not determined by their relationship to the means of production, there is no concept of revolution, and the state exists as one organisation among many. Bourdieu may draw on Marx, but he also draws on others, particularly Durkheim, and it is in this anthropological tradition he is better situated.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Dona Schwartz, ‘On the line: Crossing institutional boundaries between photojournalism and photographic art’, *Visual Studies* 5, 2, (1990), 22-29.

<sup>73</sup> Ferry and Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties*, 153-154.

<sup>74</sup> Paul DiMaggio, ‘Review: On Pierre Bourdieu’, *American journal of Sociology*, 84, 6, (1979), 1469-1470

Concepts of material culture and performance drawn from this lineage have also contributed to more recent theory on photography.<sup>75</sup>

Neither was Bourdieu an active participant during May. Indeed, Christine Delphy, one of the researchers at Bourdieu's *laboratoire* at the CNRS, recalls that she and her colleagues were asked to remain at work, photocopying Bourdieu's work to distribute to protestors.<sup>76</sup> Bourdieu's work refers to May only through the prism of the French educational system, reflecting the narrative confinement of the events to a crisis in the university. He took a position of 'conspicuous' silence in relation to the wider uprising, in contrast to the positions taken by his peers.<sup>77</sup> It was later that Bourdieu shifted to the role of public intellectual, taking on highly visible role during the strikes of winter 1995, himself becoming the focus of media debate as an 'intellectual celebrity'.<sup>78</sup> Bourdieu himself recognised this shift, citing his earlier position as 'victim to that moralism of neutrality, of the non-involvement of the scientist'.<sup>79</sup> While much of his work since the 1960s contains political dimensions, particularly *The State Nobility* (1989), it is largely distinct from his more precise political interventions in the 1990s.<sup>80</sup>

However, Bourdieu's work on photography belongs to his earlier period. While Bourdieu made extensive use of photographs in his Algerian fieldwork, they were largely unpublished until an exhibition in 2006.<sup>81</sup> *Un art moyen*, published in English as *Photography: a middle brow art*, takes an explicitly sociological approach, not primarily

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<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photography and the Material Performance of the Past', *History and Theory* 48, 4, (2009), 130-150.

<sup>76</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 191.

<sup>77</sup> David L. Swartz, 'From Critical Sociology to Public Intellectual: Pierre Bourdieu and Politics', *Theory and Society*, 32, 5/6, *Special Issue on The Sociology of Symbolic Power: A Special Issue in Memory of Pierre Bourdieu* (2003), 792.

<sup>78</sup> Swartz, 'From Critical Sociology to Public Intellectual', 814.

<sup>79</sup> Jeremy F. Lane, *Bourdieu's Politics: Problems and Possibilities*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

<sup>80</sup> Lane, *Bourdieu's Politics*, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Les Back, 'Portrayal and betrayal: Bourdieu, photography and sociological life', *The Sociological Review*, 57, 3, (2009), 473.

concerned with photographs as images, but with the social practice of photography.<sup>82</sup>

Bourdieu seeks to deploy photography to explore how sociology can overcome the ‘false opposition arbitrarily erected by subjectivists and objectivists’, rooting subjective experience in objective analysis.<sup>83</sup>

Franco Ferrarotti has accused sociology as a discipline of relegating photography to a ‘mere illustrative accessory’, but Bourdieu attempts to use the medium to make wider claims.<sup>84</sup> Bourdieu suggests that it is the social conventions surrounding photography that determine its claim to meaning, and argues that photography inherits a claim to represent ‘the real’ not through an intrinsic ontology, but through its adherence to rules inherited from the pictorial tradition. These rules are a product of and replicated by the social uses to which photography is put, and it is these which chiefly concern Bourdieu.<sup>85</sup> Despite the shift away from ontology, the focus on malleable meanings has strong parallels here with the post-structuralist turn outlined above. However, Ferrarotti’s criticism highlights a narrow focus on family photography, which *Un art moyen* exemplifies.<sup>86</sup> This raises the question of whether Bourdieu’s conclusions are applicable outside the specific circumstances he explores.

One of Ross’s central arguments has been a critique of sociological approaches to May. The restriction of the events to a ‘generational’ youth revolt, particularly associated with Raymond Aron, constrains the events to a particular category of student protest. This process of categorisation, which Ross sees as inherent to sociology, runs directly counter to the dissolution of social boundaries seen in May, which were crucial to the aims of its participants, who placed strong emphasis on worker-student cooperation, and the unity of the

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<sup>82</sup> Gonzalez, J. A. ‘A Contemporary Look at Pierre Bourdieu's Photography: a Middle-Brow Art’, *Visual Anthropology Review*, 8, 1, (1992), 126.

<sup>83</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: a Middle Brow Art*, trans. Shaun Whiteside, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990, first published as *Un art moyen*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1965), 2.

<sup>84</sup> Franco Ferrarotti, ‘Culture and photography: Reading sociology through a lens’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 7, 1, (1993), 81.

<sup>85</sup> Bourdieu, *Photography*, 76-77.

<sup>86</sup> Ferrarotti, ‘Culture and photography’, 81.



struggle against capitalism.<sup>87</sup> Ross also remarks upon the tendency of sociology to construct its subjects as objects of study, exterior to the observer, who thereby claims the point of view of a detached, impartial spectator.<sup>88</sup> This process ignores the sociologist's position within the broader social structures. Bourdieu attempts to address this with the idea of 'reflexive sociology', in which he suggests the researcher must 'take as one's object the social work of construction of the pre-constructed object'.<sup>89</sup> It is possible to draw parallels with Foucault's 'regimes of truth', and here there may be a grain of truth in Ferry and Renault's classification of these thinkers as 'antihumanist'. Both of these conceptual frameworks allow little room for agency beyond that of the hegemonic power. In analysing photographs of historical events though, we have to remain aware of the range of historical actors who influence the production of a photographic record.

## **John Berger**

The challenge then is to look for an alternative model for conceptualising how photographers construct meanings that challenge, rather than simply reproduce, power. The work of John Berger serves as a useful signpost. Berger takes a critical approach to art history, stressing materialist concerns, but not without incorporating elements of the new theoretical approaches. *Ways of Seeing* drew extensively on Benjamin, and Barthes is a key reference in *Appearances*.<sup>90</sup> But Berger offers an alternative formulation to Barthes, where (unlike Barthes' mute 'Ça-a-été'), photographs do not offer unmediated access to the past, but are legible – they carry meanings beyond the simple 'this has been'. Berger argues that this meaning is carried in the form of visual 'quotation', taking elements of appearances, and

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<sup>87</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 206-208.

<sup>88</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 111-112.

<sup>89</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc JD Wacquant, *An invitation to reflexive sociology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 229.

<sup>90</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: BBC and Penguin, 1972) and 'Appearances', in *Understanding a Photograph*, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2013).

inserting them into new contexts. This process is one of simplification, but also offers the opportunity to increase the accessibility of meanings conveyed, and possibly create new ones. ‘A photograph quotes from appearances, but in quoting, simplifies them. This simplification can increase their legibility.’<sup>91</sup>

Berger’s concept of quotation allows him to explore how the new context of a photograph shapes and alters its meaning, but he recognises that this past has a form that shaped the photograph. That there must have been an initial context to quote from. Unlike fiction, photography is dependent upon a subject outside itself; all photographs contain a relation between the photographer and the world, and are evidence of a deliberate choice to record a moment in time.

This idea of quotation fits with the aesthetics of captions, juxtaposition and montage that incorporated photography in the politically committed media of the late 1960s and 70s. Berger’s model of photographs as samples, not of time, but of meaning, allows that they can be ambiguous, ‘but the cross-section ... allows us to see the interconnectedness and related coexistence of events’<sup>92</sup> This interconnectedness is further enhanced when the photographs become part of a larger assemblage. This could take the form of a photo-essay, but may also incorporate other media. It was just this kind of assemblage that photographs were part of in the captions of activist press or the montages of *cinétracts*. Berger’s own collaboration with Jean Mohr on 1975’s *A Seventh Man* merged the written investigation into the lives of migrant workers with the format of a photo-essay.<sup>93</sup>

However, Berger goes further in attempting to theorise photographic meaning, reversing the dynamic of poststructuralist reading. In the opening of *Ways of Seeing*, he asserts that ‘Seeing comes before words’, and rather than framing photographs as a text, his

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<sup>91</sup> Berger, ‘Appearances’, 89.

<sup>92</sup> Berger, ‘Appearances’, 90.

<sup>93</sup> John Berger and Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man*, (London: Verso, 2010, first published 1975).

essay 'Stories' is an attempt to theorise narrative through a photographic understanding of the construction of meaning, rather than a linguistic one.<sup>94</sup> We must approach historical photographs as photographs, and remaining aware that though their meanings can be shifted and changed, these changes are the result of historical processes that themselves can be studied.

## **Conclusion**

The approaches developed by social theorists of photography in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century may illuminate images in new ways and enable new forms of analysis. Yet they struggle to put them in an historical perspective. There is a need to examine the historical conditions surrounding the creation and dissemination of photographs, with an awareness of how these meanings are not just malleable, but contingent on specific historical circumstances. Whilst this is still possible in a Foucauldian frame, we should not slip into the fetishisation of an idealised, inherently postmodern, photography with infinite possibilities such as that identified by Dennis.<sup>95</sup> Neither should we see the creation of these meanings as somehow autonomous from the agency of the people who produce, disseminate and re-contextualise the photographs themselves. These decisions are made at particular historical conjunctures, which limits the range of options, but they are still conscious choices. Marx's dictum that 'men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances' applies to the depiction of history as much as history itself.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*; 'Stories', in *Understanding a Photograph*, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 99-105.

<sup>95</sup> Dennis, 'Benjamin, Atget and the 'readymade' politics of postmodern photography studies', 124-136.

<sup>96</sup> Marx, Karl. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, (1852).

That is why tracing the production and use of these strike photographs and their relationship with moments of social contestation is important. As Berger has shown, it is possible to use photography as a means of consciously building new meanings that challenge, as well as replicate, power. If ways of seeing are determined by the historical moment, these moments of contestation that throw open the question of social relations, provide a unique opportunity for photography to capture and document the potential of liberating collective action. Photography is then a part of such moments, not a detached observer of them. Their photographic records must be studied in relation to the social history that produced them.



## Chapter 7. Photography and Commemoration: Anniversary Exhibitions

This chapter will examine how anniversary commemorations, particularly exhibitions, have used the photographic record of the strike movements. Photography gains renewed prominence at these anniversary events, playing an important role in visualising the events, and generating new meanings as it is deployed in new contexts. The intersection of these events with subsequent waves of contestation and the contemporary political context affect the narratives of the events depicted in the photographs. Museum exhibitions provide a good example of the temporal specificity of photography's uses, existing only for a short span in particular conjunctures. A far greater focus on commemoration commonly marks decennial year anniversaries.<sup>1</sup> Part of Pierre Nora's *lieux de memoire*, the maintenance of anniversaries takes deliberate effort, occurring in the absence of 'spontaneous memory'.<sup>2</sup> This chapter explores these issues by comparing how exhibition curators have used photographs of the Popular Front and May '68 over the course of their most recent anniversaries in 2016 and 2018 respectively. It also examines some of the preceding history of the strike's commemoration, particularly concerning the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of May '68, which saw major public debates.<sup>3</sup> These recent anniversaries prominently featured photographic exhibitions, which grants this thesis a unique opportunity to analyse how the subjects raised thus far are represented in contemporary commemoration.

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Keith, 'Forgetting the Last Big War Collective Memory and Liberation Images in an Off-Year Anniversary', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 56, 2, (2012), 204-222; Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'L'événement-mémoire. Quarante ans de commémorations', *Le Débat*, 149, (2008), 4-19; Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'À propos des célébrations décennales du Mai français', *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* (1989), 49-58.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire', *representations*, (1989), 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> Aro Velvet, '40 Years is Enough: Myth and Memory in French Commemorations of May 1968', *Penn Humanities Forum on Connections, 2009-2010*, (2010).

## 2016: Eightieth Anniversary of the Popular Front

Context to anniversary commemorations is crucial, especially with political events. Sometimes this context has led to marginalisation. For the Popular Front's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1976, the *Nouvel Observateur* commemorated the Popular Front only within the arts section.<sup>4</sup> The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary coincided with the return to power of the right, prompting a *Le Monde* editorial to ask 'Whatever happened to '36?'<sup>5</sup> Yet in the summer of 2016, with the context of a Parti Socialiste government embroiled in disputes over labour relations, mass strikes and street demonstrations, the legacy of 1936 resonated and generated much press comment.<sup>6</sup> Journalists drew parallels with the 1930s, citing rising political polarisation, xenophobia and a failure to deal with economic crisis in France, Britain and the United States.<sup>7</sup> *Le Monde's* review of the Hôtel de Ville exhibition champions its contemporary relevance, especially for using the past to analyse the present, but aside from pointing out the coincidence of social movement and strike wave, offers little specific detail.<sup>8</sup>

In previous commemorations, the state of left-wing politics has significantly affected both the interpretations of the Popular Front and the attitude taken. Julian Jackson argues that, in addition to the 'primary school textbook' vision of joyous holidays, three political traditions - *Gauchiste*, Socialist and Communist - dominate the historiography of the Popular Front. The first stresses the failure of a potential revolution; the second, the success of Blum's government; and the third the role of the PCF in the period between 1934 and the election of 1936.<sup>9</sup> At the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, following this second path, François Mitterrand's assertion

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<sup>4</sup> Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-38*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 292.

<sup>5</sup> *Le Monde*, 16/17 March 1986.

<sup>6</sup> *Politis, 1936-2016 / Que reste-t-il du Front populaire ?*, 2 June 2016.

Camille Lestienne, 'Il y a 80 ans, le Front populaire triomphait', *Le Figaro*, 02 May 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Mason, 'Are we living through another 1930s?', *Guardian*, 1 August 2016,

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/01/are-we-living-through-another-1930s-paul-mason>, (last accessed 06/09/2016).

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Pietrapiana, 'Le Front populaire raconté par Capa, Doisneau ou Cartier-Bresson', *Le Monde*, 18 May 2016, [http://www.lemonde.fr/arts/article/2016/05/19/le-front-populaire-raconte-par-capa-doisneau-ou-cartier-bresson\\_4922410\\_1655012.html?xtmc=front\\_populaire&xtcr=98](http://www.lemonde.fr/arts/article/2016/05/19/le-front-populaire-raconte-par-capa-doisneau-ou-cartier-bresson_4922410_1655012.html?xtmc=front_populaire&xtcr=98), (last accessed 06/09/2016).

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, xi-xii

that '1966 will see the revival of 1936' appealed to the principle of unity, attempting to replicate electoral success.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, Daniel Guérin's contemporary *Révolution Manquée* presents a narrative of leftist disappointment rooted in the more revolutionary aspirations of the 1960s. The 1970 edition of the book explicitly compares May '68 in its foreword, and speaks of a 'third time', when French workers will not be fooled.<sup>11</sup> It links 1936 into a cycle that draws on its memory and contemporary militancy to promise future revolution.

80 years largely marks the passing of events from adult living memory. Though in 2006, there were still some participants and witnesses, such as Willy Ronis, alive and willing to comment, the vast majority of those alive in 2016 who remembered 1936 would only have been small children.<sup>12</sup> It was therefore timely to analyse how, in the absence of direct memory, political and historiographical influences shape the remembering of the Popular Front. What Nora identifies as the transition between *milieux* and *lieux de mémoire*.<sup>13</sup> The current historiography has shown a trend towards cultural analysis. Simon Dell, Jessica Wardhaugh, and Dudley Andrew and Steven Unger have all explored the period through its representation.<sup>14</sup> The focus of analysis has shifted towards what the Popular Front represented, in visual terms, and in what it revealed about trends in French society and culture.

Alongside various special editions of magazines, the *Hôtel de Ville* and *Musée de l'Histoire Vivante* both hosted exhibitions exploring the photography of the period, and a

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<sup>10</sup> Goffredo Fofi, 'The Cinema of the Popular Front in France (1934-38)', *Screen*, 13, 4, (1972), 5-57.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Guérin, *Front Populaire Révolution Manquée: Témoignage militant*, (Paris: François Maspero, 1970), 5-6.

<sup>12</sup> Françoise Denoyelle, François Cuel, Jean-Louis Vilbert-Guigue (eds.) *le front populaire: des photographes*, (éditions terrebleue, 2006), 195-203.

<sup>13</sup> Nora, 'Between memory and history', 7.

<sup>14</sup> Simon Dell, 'Festival and Revolution: The Popular Front in France and the Press Coverage of the Strikes of 1936', *Art History*, 23, 4, (2000), 599-621; 'On the metaphor and practice of photography: Socialist realism, the popular front in France and the dynamics of cultural unity', *History of Photography*, 25,1, (2001), 52-60; *The image of the Popular Front: the masses and the media in interwar France*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Jessica Wardhaugh, *In pursuit of the people: political culture in France, 1934-39*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Dudley Andrew and Steven Ungar, *Popular front Paris and the Poetics of Culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008).



series of lectures accompanied the former.<sup>15</sup> François Hollande's government of 2012-2017 also called on the memory of the front. François Hollande went so far as to argue in his Bastille Day address that highly contentious labour law reforms, which had provoked industrial unrest, were 'inscribed in the approach of the Popular Front'.<sup>16</sup> In June, he had directly quoted Thorez's maxim '*Il faut savoir arrêter une grève*' (One must know how to stop a strike), of course omitting '*dès que satisfaction a été obtenue.*' (once satisfaction has been obtained).<sup>17</sup> Mobilising the Popular Front's memory in defence of the current administration links it, along with previous socialist governments, to a continuous tradition. For *Libération* editor Laurent Joffrin, 'As always in the history of the left, as in 1944, as in 1981, as in 2012, it's unity that gives the victory. Yesterday against Fascism, today – this is the first lesson of 1936 – in the face of populist nationalism'.<sup>18</sup>

Linguists developed a variety of terms for the naming of 'event designators', in the case of dates 'hemeronyms'.<sup>19</sup> This practice is evident in the naming of revolutionary moments, and thus the construction of their memory, as French revolutionary history becomes condensed down into a list of dates. The editorial of *Le Monde's* special edition on 1936 uses this formulation, stressing the unity of the left by asserting '*cinq grandes dates: 1789, 1936, 1945, 1968, 1981*'.<sup>20</sup> These would seem to have a more revolutionary dimension than Joffrin's, including the foundational 1789 and the revolt of May '68. The choice illustrates the centrality of electoral politics in this interpretation, promoting 1936 and 1981. If listing

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<sup>15</sup> 'Que reste-t-il du Front populaire?', *Politis, Hors-Série, 64*, June-July 2016; *Le Monde, Hors-Série*, May-July, 2016; '1936: Quand La Gauche Faisait Encore Rêver', *Marianne, Hors-Série*, April 2016.

Reporting on pay inequality, *Libération* titled its 3 May 2016 issue '*L'Affront Populaire*'.

<sup>16</sup> *Charente Libre*, 'Hollande : la loi travail "s'inscrit dans la démarche du Front Populaire"', 14 July 2016. <http://www.charentelibre.fr/2016/07/14/hollande-la-loi-travail-s-inscrit-dans-la-demarche-du-front-populaire,3046319.php>, (last accessed 06/09/2016).

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Liabot, 'Loi Travail : "Ceux qui sont dans la rue en 2016 auraient voté pour le Front populaire en 1936"', *Le Journal du Dimanche*, 7 June 2016, <http://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/Loi-Travail-Ceux-qui-sont-dans-la-rue-en-2016-auraient-vote-pour-le-Front-populaire-en-1936-789387>, (last accessed 12/09/2016).

<sup>18</sup> Laurent Joffrin, 'Il y a 80 ans, le Front populaire : un souvenir lumineux et amer', *Libération*, 2 May 2016. [http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/05/02/il-y-a-80-ans-le-front-populaire-un-souvenir-lumineux-et-amer\\_1450064](http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/05/02/il-y-a-80-ans-le-front-populaire-un-souvenir-lumineux-et-amer_1450064), (last accessed 06/09/2016).

<sup>19</sup> Dominique Kalifa, 'Introduction. Naming the Century: The Nineteenth Century and its 'Chrononyms'', *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, 52, 1, (2016), 9-17.

<sup>20</sup> Michel Lefebvre, '1936, merci pour ce moment', *Le Monde, Hors-Série* May-July 2016, 3.

revolutionary dates, the revolutions of 1830, 1848, and the Paris Commune in 1871 also might be included.

Yet the editorial also claims that, thanks to the ‘magic of commemoration’, a ‘wind of forgetting passes over the processions of the anti-Khomri-Law protestors, over trade union divisions, over the debate on the “destruction of the labour code”, over the invectives against the Hollande government’s social-liberalism’.<sup>21</sup> Passing over unrest seeks to use the Popular Front’s anniversary for present political purposes. The response of the socialist government and its supporters to the anniversary though, has emphasised the Popular Front as an electoral and legislative project. This focus on governmental responsibility stretches through attempts to locate Mitterrand and Hollande within a heritage of 1936, invoked through comparisons with Blum as a socialist president facing difficult compromises. Comparisons of Mitterrand and Blum stress the difficulties for socialists of wielding power in a country enmeshed within a global capitalist economy.<sup>22</sup>

These difficulties have extended to Hollande. Writing in a *Libération* editorial, Joffrin explicitly references the ‘repeated disillusionings of the exercise of power. From Léon Blum to François Hollande.’ He goes on to defend ‘Mitterrand, Jospin, Hollande’ as ‘haunted’ by 1936, fearing the fate of Blum. In Joffrin’s view, though accused of treachery by those to their left, Blum and Hollande both made concrete progress: ‘Between the ideal and the real, they made choices, contested, difficult, sometimes erroneous. But necessary.’<sup>23</sup> This theme of the conflicts facing the left in power was recurrent in coverage by *Libération*. An article quoting minister Stéphane Le Foll again made the comparison to Hollande, announcing that to the left, ‘Blum was also a traitor!’<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> ‘vent d’oubli passe sur les cortèges de manifestants anti-loi Khomri, sur la division syndicale, sur la débat sur la <<destruction du code du travail>>, sur les invectives contre le social-libéralisme du gouvernement Hollande’, Lefebvre, ‘1936, merci pour ce moment’.

<sup>22</sup> Irwin M. Wall, ‘Teaching the French Popular Front’, *The History Teacher*, 20, 3, (1987), 375-376.

<sup>23</sup> Joffrin, ‘Il y a 80 ans, le Front populaire’.

<sup>24</sup> Lilian Alemagna, ‘Hé oh la gauche à Lille : «Blum aussi a été traité de traître !»’, *Libération*, 4 July 2016.

Avoiding mention of the spontaneity and militancy of the strike wave, this approach returns to an emphasis on Blum's government as the central component of the Popular Front.<sup>25</sup> The exhibitions focused on governmental actors, but never to the exclusion of other elements and themes. The Hôtel de Ville has a single section entitled 'Les Grandes Figures', but it covers politicians of all Popular Front parties, trade unionists and intellectuals. While photography of Blum and party leaders is also common in the sections devoted to the successful formation of a government and again at organised rallies, for the most part the exhibitions emphasise the wider movement.

On 6 June 2016, then economy minister, Emmanuel Macron unveiled a stamp celebrating the Front's 'first women in government' in the Communist Party controlled municipality of Montreuil (Figure 7.1).<sup>26</sup> The PCF mayor, Patrick Bessac, refused to welcome Macron, who was greeted with eggs and chants from CGT and PCF members protesting against the new labour law.<sup>27</sup> Although more comprehensive scholarship on the relationship between women and the Popular Front is emerging, the stamp again frames the movement in governmental terms.<sup>28</sup> The stamp itself also highlights the Popular Front's ambiguous relationship to women's rights, considering that despite their presence in the government, women would not get the vote until 1945.<sup>29</sup> Though this reflected the senatorial obstruction, it demonstrates the potential actions of Blum's government were bound by the restraints of the existing political order. Nevertheless, it did promote three women to ministerial posts: Suzanne Lacore, Irène Joliot-Curie and Cécile Brunschvig.<sup>30</sup> Yvette Roudy,

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[http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/07/04/he-oh-la-gauche-a-lille-blum-aussi-a-ete-traite-de-traitre\\_1464061](http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/07/04/he-oh-la-gauche-a-lille-blum-aussi-a-ete-traite-de-traitre_1464061), (last accessed 10/09/2016).

<sup>25</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, xi.

<sup>26</sup> Eric Piermont/AFP, Emmanuel Macron a dévoilé un timbre célébrant le 80e anniversaire du Front populaire.

<sup>27</sup> 'Emmanuel Macron accueilli par des jets d'œuf lors d'une visite dans la Seine-Saint-Denis', *Le Monde*, 6 June 2016, [www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2016/06/06/emmanuel-macron-accueilli-par-des-jets-d-uf-lors-d-une-visite-dans-la-seine-saint-denis\\_4939051\\_3224.html?xtmc=front\\_populaire&xtcr=71](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2016/06/06/emmanuel-macron-accueilli-par-des-jets-d-uf-lors-d-une-visite-dans-la-seine-saint-denis_4939051_3224.html?xtmc=front_populaire&xtcr=71), (last accessed 10/09/2016).

<sup>28</sup> Louis-Pascal Jacquemond, *L'Espoir brisé. 1936, les femmes et le Front populaire*, (Paris: Belin, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> Joan Tumblety, 'Responses to women's enfranchisement in France, 1944–1945', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26, 5, (2003) 483-497.

<sup>30</sup> Siân Reynolds, 'Women and the Popular Front in France: the case of the three women ministers', *French History* 8, 2, (1994), 196-224.

France's first Minister for the Rights of Women under Mitterand, contributed text to the *Musée de l'Histoire Vivante* exhibition, illustrating her contribution with the cover of *Voilà* showing the three female ministers, in series of headshots similar to the stamp (Figure 7.2).<sup>31</sup> Roudy discusses the achievements of the ministers in education and research, as well as their commitment to women's right to work and vote. There was a photograph of Lacore in the *Vivante* exhibit, alongside a letter to her from Blum, enclosing her nomination as under-secretary. This occupies a broader section in the exhibition on women. There are images of the ministers, but also women's organisations and demonstrations for suffrage, pacifism, antifascism and aid to Spain, showing the wider opportunities for engagement and activism the Front offered women.

Bessac, the mayor who had snubbed Macron, was also a contributor to the *Musée de l'Histoire Vivante* exhibition, choosing an image of workers dancing in Bordeaux shipyards to visually represent Popular Front. Again, he recited an anticipatory chronology of revolutions: 'En 1789, on dansait la Carmagnole. En 1936, le tango. Que dansera-t-on demain?' (In 1789, we danced the Carmagnole. In 1936, the tango. What will we dance tomorrow?).<sup>32</sup> The choice of a festive moment also underlines a key theme of the exhibitions. Whilst curators alluded to disappointments that were to follow, celebration and the joyous summer of 1936 form a focal point. This raises the question of whether, according to Jackson, 'the Popular Front's cultural policies contributed to a process of depoliticisation.'<sup>33</sup> Despite some success in rallying people to the defence of the republic from the internal threat of Fascism, the ecumenicalism of the Popular Front undermined further radical political changes to social organisation, and the triumph of leisure undercut Communist and CGT appeals to

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<sup>31</sup> *Voilà*, 273, 13 June 1936, Collections Musée de l'Histoire Vivante.

<sup>32</sup> Musée de l'Histoire Vivante, '1936 : nouvelles images, nouveaux regards sur le Front populaire', 9 April – 31 December 2016, <http://www.museehistoirevivante.fr/expositions/anciennes-expositions/1936-nouvelles-images-nouveaux-regards-sur-le-front-populaire>, (last accessed 29/08/19).

<sup>33</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 282-287.

productivism. Michael Seidman also argued that as fascism became associated with harsh discipline on the shop floor, workers could frame resistance to work as anti-fascist.<sup>34</sup>

Simon Dell moves a step further, arguing that the turn to festive imagery was a deliberate attempt on behalf of the PCF and CGT to curtail the strike's militancy.<sup>35</sup> Though Dell explicitly dealt with the photography of the strike wave, a similar progression is visible in photography of the whole summer, as images of factories cede to those of the countryside. Though Dell does not devote significant attention to the images of summer holidays, they are one of the primary visual signifiers of the era and incorporate the same focus on festivity.<sup>36</sup> The introduction of paid holidays enabled a far greater proportion of the population to leave the cities in the summer of 1936, and contributed to this imagery, which could be framed as the fruits of industrial action. Like the factory occupations, photography conveyed this second 'conquest of space'.<sup>37</sup>

## **The Exhibitions**

At the Hôtel de Ville, a central, radial section focused on festivity, sandwiched in between more linear narrative sections charting the history of the Popular Front. Beginning with the photographic documentation of poverty in the early thirties, it rapidly moved into political concerns, the threat from the right in 1934, the response of intellectuals, the formation of the *Rassemblement Populaire* as a pact between the Radicals, Socialists and PCF and its electoral success. Then the strikes, occupations and Matignon Accords followed. At this point, the exhibition branched out in an explosion of festivity, under an image of children in the sea, a large central hall celebrated the *congés payés*, with radiating sections on the

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Seidman, *Workers against work: Labor in Paris and Barcelona During the Popular Fronts*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 167.

<sup>35</sup> Dell, 'Festival and Revolution', 599.

<sup>36</sup> Nicholas Hewitt, 'The Masses and the Media in Interwar France', (review no. 639) <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/639>, Date accessed: 27 March, 2017.

<sup>37</sup> Rod Kedward, *La Vie en bleu: France and the French since 1900*. (London: Penguin UK, 2006), 191-193.

cultural themes of rallies, song and film (Figure 7.3 and 7.4).<sup>38</sup> Depictions of outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and France's response, especially focused on refugees, soberly returned the display to a linear narrative but rapidly compressed the timeframe.<sup>39</sup> The exhibition ended with Willy Ronis's photograph of Rose Zehner speaking to workers in 1938, briefly returning to themes of militancy in the factory.<sup>40</sup>

In this way, the exhibition structurally imposed a roughly chronological narrative onto otherwise thematic divisions, establishing the centrality of leisure and culture. The cultural focus is re-enforced by the photographic concerns of the exhibitions, which use leisure as a means of appealing to their audience. Images of the signing of the Matignon accords or Blum's formation of a government, wage negotiations, and bargaining policies are present, but form the background for the outburst of festivity. This structure itself carries a possible interpretation of the Popular Front. It conveyed the sense of a moment in time at which possibilities opened up, enabled by both government reforms and grassroots collective action, a range of new ways to see and organise the world that briefly appeared, but were then closed off by war. Here the moment of possibility is located in the summer following the strikes, but the narrative is remarkably similar to the *Gauchiste* interpretation of the strikes themselves as such a moment.

The curation of the exhibitions used similar techniques throughout to present the photographs, and interpretation panels by historians maintain a thematic focus. It is also a very effective way of discussing specific tropes showing the repetition of motifs. Specific

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<sup>38</sup> *Conception Scénographique et graphique*, Sylvie Coutant et Anne Levacher, Mairie de Paris, 2016; *Jeunes gens dans la mer à La Baule en 1937*. Keystone, in Françoise Denoyelle, François Cuel and Jean-Louis Viber-Guige, *Le Front Populaire: des Photographes*, (Editions Terrebleu, 2006), 124-125.

<sup>39</sup> The refugee images highlight a direct contemporary resonance, but one less linked to the historiographical reception of the front in France. Instead they point to wider European phenomena, and show the Front, though skilfully blending socialist internationalism with the symbols of French patriotism, was inextricably linked to European concerns. In 2016 Mauricio Lima, Sergey Ponomarev, Tyler Hicks and Daniel Etter of The New York Times won the Pulitzer Prize for remarkably similar images. <http://www.pulitzer.org/winners/mauricio-lima-sergey-ponomarev-tyler-hicks-and-daniel-etter>, (last accessed 12/09/2016).

<sup>40</sup> Willy Ronis, *Rose Zehner, déléguée CGT, haranguant la foule des grévistes, usines Citroën-Javel, 23 mars 1938*.

themes, and their associated visual tropes are clustered together. These exhibitions also pair the photographs and ephemera with extensive textual explanation. Both used captions to identify photographs (photographer, date, location where known, and short descriptions) and longer pieces introducing event based and thematic sections. The presence of interpretation panels framed the images historically, rather than aesthetically. Though largely presenting photographs, both exhibitions prominently display photo magazines, showing an awareness of the means of their contemporary reproduction and dissemination. The *Musée de l'Histoire Vivante* combines photographs with magazines, posters, photomontages and caricatures, alongside a pillar designed to appear plastered with bulletins, giving a cross-section of the period's visual culture. Though in this exhibition, rather than explore the role of photographers, photography illustrates specific aspects of the Popular Front or historical approaches— memories, occupations, women, the colonial question, peasants, or Spain.

Likewise, there is some acknowledgement of mechanical reproduction at the *Hôtel de Ville* exhibition, where Capa's controversial *The Falling Soldier* was displayed with a swathe of magazines reproducing it (Figure 7.5).<sup>41</sup> A painting of the Fête de la Paix at Saint-Cloud on 9 August is displayed alongside the anonymous photograph it is based on, illustrating its reproducibility in entirely different media. It shows the unfurling of the Spanish Republican flag amidst a crowd, following the same iconography of earlier rallies. The curation shows an awareness of the mediated nature of photography, that it is not isolated from the wider visual culture, but enmeshed with, transferred and reproduced by it.

The translation from photograph to painting illustrates the loss of Benjamin's aura, reinscribing the image within a manually (as opposed to mechanically) reproduced form.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Capa, Córdoba front. Early September, 1936, Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death, Cerro Muriano, 5 September 1936. <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYDO52FJR.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>42</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, Thomas Y. Levin (eds.), Edmund Jephcott (trans.), (Cambridge, Massachusetts :Harvard University Press, 2008), 23-24.

Despite being a medium associated with the presence of ‘aura’, the painting is less striking than the photograph. The alterations, a figure holding the flag and expansion of the crowd to truly oceanic proportions, cannot convey the immediacy of the photograph, and the many foregrounded figures with raised fists lack the impact of the sole figure in the central foreground of the photograph. Yet this does not mean that the aura of uniqueness or authenticity is within the photograph. In fact, it is precisely its stripping away by the mechanical means of reproduction that conveys reality, and thus its immediacy.

As a call to political engagement, this juxtaposition of painting and photograph reveals the relative failure of a crudely figurative ‘Socialist Realism’ compared to the dynamic potential of non-figurative art, which made prominent use of photographs through techniques such as John Heartfield’s photomontage.<sup>43</sup> This reflected growing divides over the political role of art, and what forms it would take.<sup>44</sup> In the context of the cultural politics of the Popular Front, Socialist Realism had defined itself against ‘static’ photography, even as photographers were using the new possibilities of photomagazines such as *Regards* to display multiple photographs in sequence, creating a dynamic illustration of ‘progress’.<sup>45</sup>

In the *Hôtel de Ville* exhibition, the arrangement of photographs also shaped their meaning. Collections of photographs that followed the same theme or subject were grouped together. Often the images are nearly indistinguishable. Smaller, anonymous photographs surround larger images by famous photojournalists so that though the focus remains on well-known figures and particularly iconic images, the exhibition also demonstrates the sheer proliferation of anonymous images. The iconic images appear to emerge from a crowd of alternative versions, inviting the comparison of iconic photojournalism and anonymous

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<sup>43</sup> Michel Frizot, ‘Metamorphoses of the Image: Photo-graphics and the alienation of meaning’ in, Michel Frizot, (ed.) *A new history of photography*, (Köln: Konemann, 1998), 431-455.

<sup>44</sup> Helena Lewis, ‘Surrealists, Stalinists, and Trotskyists: Theories of Art and Revolution in France between the Wars’, *Art Journal* 52, 1 (1993), 61-68.

<sup>45</sup> Simon Dell, ‘On the metaphor and practice of photography: Socialist realism, the popular front in France and the dynamics of cultural unity’, *History of Photography* 25, 1 (2001), 52-60.



photos. This technique allows the exhibition to advertise, and promote itself with iconic photography, whilst still presenting a more rounded approach to the depiction of the front, which encompasses its incorporation of film, music and assorted ephemera (badges, flags, occasionally documents). The exhibition does not set out to elevate anonymous photography, and celebrates, rather than questions, the iconic nature of more widely published work, but the acknowledgement of anonymous work grounds and contextualises it.

Capa's image of a boy at the Place de la Bastille on 14 July, on his father's shoulders and holding a tricolour illustrates how such tropes developed within the media of the time. Lucien Vogel chose it for the cover of the following day's edition of *Vu*.<sup>46</sup> It is followed by four more photos of children on shoulders, all with raised fists, both anonymous and by Willy Ronis, and there is another by Capa, with the child yawning.<sup>47</sup> Also singled out is Gaston Paris's image of a child in front of a banner with fist raised, later used again to close the exhibition (Figure 7.6).<sup>48</sup>

Daniele Tartakowsky interprets Capa's first image as 'emblematic' of Popular Front photography in choosing to represent the multitude, not through crowd shots, but by focusing on individuals of popular origin. The contrast between the boy and his father's flat caps and the hat of the man just visible behind symbolise the union of the working-class and bourgeoisie within the Front. Tartakowsky argues that the photograph sets up a new image of the 'people en marche', in contrast to the Barricade imagery of Delacroix and the communards. Its orientation is vertical, rather than horizontal; rather than charging to the future, it is rooted in the present. Yet the child represents a potential future, and the flag and bastille column transmit revolutionary heritage tied to the symbolically charged location.

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<sup>46</sup> *VU*, 15 July 1936.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Capa, Place de la Bastille, 14 July 1936, Magnum Photos, <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2S5RYD1POPOP.html>, (last accessed 30/08/19).

<sup>48</sup> Gaston Paris, *Enfant devant une bâche sur laquelle figure un dessin de la sculpture La Marseillaise de Rude au stade vélodrome Buffalo, Montrouge (Seine)*, 14 June 1936.

Looking to both past and future, Capa shows ‘a present that owes its fullness to becoming its own end.’<sup>49</sup>

The images of children also illustrate prominent symbols: children on shoulders with flags, Phrygian caps and fists, in front of banners – they draw extensively on the symbolism of the French revolution.<sup>50</sup> This iconography displays a marked shift from leftist to nationalist, whilst still skilfully blending the two. The unification of symbols of nation and revolution draws on an explicitly revolutionary national myth, tying defence of the republic to a challenge to the old order. Marianne, Phrygian caps and the tricolour alongside coexist with raised fists and red flags. Despite the fists, the children signify a change in tone from the strike photography, a more relaxed, inclusive and less militant atmosphere. Whilst taking some of the poses of strike photography, these photographs move it beyond the confines of the workplace, and back into the street. Yet these are organised rallies, rather than spontaneous occupations, demonstrating the official concern with cultural politics.<sup>51</sup> Wardhaugh explicitly addresses both the move into wider culture, and use of specifically national imagery, situating this in relation to competing right-wing visions of ‘the People’.<sup>52</sup> Here though, when compared to the strike photography, they show a shifting emphasis away from the worker’s movement, whose demands are now seen to have been won, to a celebration of the nation, and through the use of children, a more hopeful perspective looking towards the future. The prominence of children had a French specificity. Responding to the obsession with declining birth rates in the pre-war period, the surge in birth rates following

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<sup>49</sup> Danielle Tartakowsky, ‘Le 14 juillet 1936’, *Histoire par l’image*, accessed 27 March 2017, <http://www.histoire-image.org/etudes/14-juillet-1936>

<sup>50</sup> Maurice Agulhon, and Janet Lloyd. *Marianne into battle: Republican imagery and symbolism in France, 1789-1880*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French revolution*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991)

<sup>51</sup> Pascal Ory, *La Belle Illusion: culture et politique sous le signe du Front Populaire, 1935-1938*, (Paris: Plon, 1994), 19-21.

<sup>52</sup> Wardhaugh, *In pursuit of the people*, 232.

1945 and corresponding decline in child mortality saw children become highly prominent in French culture.<sup>53</sup>

The *Musée de l'Histoire Vivante* exhibition also has a section on such images, accompanied by a framing text entitled 'enfants et poings levés', noting the explicitly 'pacifist' character of rallies and the heritage of 1789, Phrygian caps, raised fists and red and tricolour flags. Another image of a miner in front of the poster at Buffalo Stadium by Paris from the same day demonstrates the constant repetition as photographers shuffle the combination of tropes. It also joins worker and child in common purpose and cross-generational solidarity. It also shows how the same image specifically constructed with a child takes on new characteristics. Whereas the miner is identified as such in a caption, the connotations of the child, innocence and future generations are immediately visually evident. The contrast between the 'pacifist' child and the screaming face of the banner is heightened, and the militancy of the raised fist is undercut, suggesting purposeful intent, but without violence. The angle of the shot, from below, grants the child stature, and the slight tilt to the right, and eyes looking off-camera hint at forward movement. It manifests the spirit of the Front as both stoically standing in the present, backed by the symbols of the past, and progressively looking towards the future.

Pierre Jamet's image of a girl on the gate of an *Auberge de la Jeunesse* visually connects festive and protest imagery (Figure 7.7). Used in both exhibitions, this photograph transposes the youthful exuberance, and waving of a flag, to the countryside. However, while the stance on the fence conveys some level of disregard for convention (echoing the photography of occupied factory gates), the concrete political elements are beginning to disappear. Jamet was an active participant in the *Auberge de la Jeunesse* movement, committed to the cultural programme of the Front as a member of the *l'AEAR* (Association of

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<sup>53</sup> Hamilton, 'Representing the Social', 115-116.

Revolutionary Artists and Writers) choir, and managed a summer camp on Belle-Île-en-mer throughout the 1930s. Though *Regards* published some of his images, the exhibition categorised Jamet as a non-professional photographer, later becoming a professional singer. His photographic oeuvre covers a wide perspective of the Popular Front, including strikes, demonstrations and documenting the film collective *Ciné Liberté* at work, but the bulk of material is of holidaying youth.<sup>54</sup> Jamet has a section of his own at the *Musée de l'Histoire Vivante*, which characterises him as ‘*un photographe humaniste*’, sympathetic to the ideals of the Front, though without explicitly political elements. The invocation of humanism betrays a retrospective characterisation, a post-war designation which despite involving many photographers active in the 1930s, was increasingly depoliticised by its attempts at universalism.<sup>55</sup> The common focus on children and universalist framing could have been used to explore Jamet as a precursor to the humanist moment. However, rather than a critical analysis of the relationship between the two points in time, the latter is simply used anachronistically to describe the former, replicating the ahistorical framing of humanist photography itself.

As a ‘non-professional’, Jamet shows the curator’s desire to broaden the scope of photography included, but as a named photographer with an archive of his own, he can also be assimilated into the category of figures such as Capa, Ronis, or Cartier Bresson. His inclusion broadens the category of authorship, but does not challenge it, still relying on a sense of ‘aura’, bolstered by the sense of authenticity conveyed by the emotional content of the images. His work covers multiple aspects of the Popular Front, from factory gates to the seaside, but its heart is with the youth on holiday. Politics is not completely absent, but sidelining its harder edges. Nevertheless, Jamet’s bright, sun-drenched images of athletic

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<sup>54</sup> Pierre Jamet and Pierre Borhan, *1936 Au-devant de la vie*, (Bures-sur-Yvette: Editions Taffimai, 2016). <http://www.pierrejamet-photos.com>

<sup>55</sup> Peter Hamilton ‘Representing the Social: France and Frenchness in Post-War humanist photography’, in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall, ed. (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1997).

youth hiking, camping and generally frolicking their way through the countryside convey a sense of liberation, away from routines, families and factories. Jamet's photos sit beside those of Noël Le Boyer and Cartier Bresson, who both also documented the explosion of visitors to the countryside over the summer. Jackson argues that these cultural representations show how, despite political failures, the Popular Front 'briefly and deeply illuminated' its participant's lives, where 'Cartier-Bresson transfigured the *congés payés* into art.'<sup>56</sup> This optimism builds on a narrative of the Popular Front's success, but contextualised by the strike photography preceding it, the inclusion of such images also illustrates material changes in people's lives.<sup>57</sup> It visually dramatises the reduction of working hours and newfound leisure, in a vivid change of setting from the urban strike and demonstration images.

There is also a political dimension to the coverage of leisure. In contrast to the United States, where holidays developed as 'employee benefits', granted by employers, in Europe, especially France, leisure time was secured as a right of citizenship. This rights-based understanding of leisure is a product of its origins in political struggle, and the law of 20 June, which established an annual 15 day paid vacation for all salaried employees and wage earners.<sup>58</sup> Further feeding the politicisation of leisure, holidays promoted by Popular Front organisations were explicitly organised as democratic alternatives to fascist leisure schemes. Laura Lee Downs has shown that though *colonies de vacances* existed from the early 1880s, it was the Popular Front (largely via the PCF) which expanded them and shifted their focus to pedagogy and so became joined to them in popular memory.<sup>59</sup> According to Pascal Ory 'never before had the *colonies de vacances* been so visible in French society'.<sup>60</sup> For Downs, the

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<sup>56</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 287.

<sup>57</sup> A separate exhibition upstairs at the Musée de l'Histoire Vivante, on collection France Demay and sport photography covers similar themes, though separated from the wider exploration of the Front.

<sup>58</sup> Ellen Furlough, 'Making mass vacations: tourism and consumer culture in France, 1930s to 1970s', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40.02 (1998), 247-286.

<sup>59</sup> Laura Lee Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 195.

<sup>60</sup> Ory, *La Belle Illusion*, 68.

‘near-millennarian hopes stirred by Popular Front cultural policies were a vital part of the movement itself’<sup>61</sup>

Yet in contextualising the photography, they also historicise it. Whilst wider optimistic celebration of leisure often subsumes the specific political content, this is also true of the cultural policies of the Popular Front. Nationalist imagery encompasses the ideal of unity, unlike the narratives that focus on the difficult compromises of its implementing policy. As public exhibitions, they do not encompass a full scholarly debate on the cultural policy of the Popular Front but achieve public engagement through the prominent nature of much of the photography displayed. Yet they also touch on its material quality and means of dissemination, which have been more directly addressed in coverage of 1968.

### **Anniversary Exhibitions of May ‘68**

Exhibitions on May ’68 also strongly coincide with decennial anniversaries. Photography is once again prominent. The historiographical debates during these anniversaries affect commemoration. According to Chris Reynolds, the ongoing controversy surrounding May at these ‘traditional’ anniversaries renders its memory ‘iconic’. Reynolds also argues that the dominant generational narratives have emerged around areas of consensus, offering only a limited understanding of May ‘68.<sup>62</sup> In this framework, large, well-financed and successful exhibitions might be expected to reflect those conventional narratives that achieved some measure of consensus. There is also a consistent return to certain photographs invested with the ‘aura’ of art-objects, reflecting a much narrower section of the photographic record.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land*, 226.

<sup>62</sup> Chris Reynolds, ‘May ‘68: A Contested History’, *Sens Public*, (2007).

<sup>63</sup> Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility*.

This set of commemorations took several forms and embraced various degrees of commodification, primarily through changing the form and location of the photographs. They changed from illustrations of activity for mass-market newspapers and magazines, to the historical artefacts of books, exhibitions, and archives. In some cases, the production of signed or limited edition prints completed this commodification.<sup>64</sup> Audrey Leblanc argues that a specific media system of the magazine press produces such photographs (‘historical photographs’, ‘images that made history’, ‘event-images’). As such, editors, journalists and typesetters all produce the image. For Leblanc, this distinguishes photojournalism from ‘photography itself’.<sup>65</sup> Their replication in commemorative books and exhibitions obscures this process and valorises the photographer as an auteur-like artist.

Within this photographic record, specific ‘iconic’ photographs have gained privileged status. Leblanc argues that the cultural legitimacy of these images in the media rests on their historic and aesthetic value, but that they should not be understood as documentary artefacts of May. Instead, they are sources for the subsequent history of photojournalism in France, and they narrate May’s memory and commemoration.<sup>66</sup> These ‘iconic’ images have moved beyond reportage, into a different field, where they are judged by their commemorative and artistic value. Jean Pierre-Rey’s *Marianne du Mai* was judged to be of historic value, during a trial over copyright.<sup>67</sup> The reproduction of these photographs becomes a self-perpetuating, as their prevalence and familiarity re-affirms their status, and so further encourages their use. In an ironic reversal of Benjamin’s theorisation that replicability undermines aura, the repetition affirms their unique value and portrays the photographers as capable of capturing the essential quality of the event.

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<sup>64</sup> <https://shop.magnumphotos.com/collections/iconic-fine-prints/products/paris-riots-may-6th-1968-bruno-barbey?variant=944026371>, at the time of writing a signed print of Barbey’s image is for sale at \$2,300.

<sup>65</sup> Audrey Leblanc, ‘Fixer l’événement’, *Sociétés & Représentations*, 32, (2011), 57-76.

<sup>66</sup> Audrey Leblanc, ‘Gilles Caron, Le photographe de Mai 68 : l’œuvre d’une politique culturelle?’ in Gil Bartholeyns (ed.) *Politiques visuelles*, (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2016), 7.

<sup>67</sup> Droit à l’image et illustration d’événements historiques: Cour d’appel, Versailles, 1<sup>re</sup> ch. sect. A, 7 décembre 2000, Caroline de Bendern c/ Agence de presse Gamma’, *Légipresse*, n° 179, march 2001, 35-36.

Eric Hobsbawm and Marc Weitzmann show the reciprocity between photo-agencies and canonisation, talking of 1968 ‘consecrating’ Magnum.<sup>68</sup> The late 1960s marks the accession of a newer generation of members, many of whom extensively photographed May and other protests round the world. In Paris, Barbey, Riboud, Le Querrec were joined by Cartier-Bresson, linking the generations. The agency has routinely published commemorative material, and in 2008, it assembled an extensive online exhibition.<sup>69</sup> 1968 remains central to the agency’s brand. A recent book of contact sheets illustrates this. Despite covering the agency’s corpus from 1947 to 2010, the cover of the paperback issue depicted Barbey’s contact sheet of students rioting in the Latin Quarter.<sup>70</sup>

Beyond Magnum, Keith Reader highlights not only the continuing proliferation of material on May, but also the role of anniversaries in perpetuating it.<sup>71</sup> The re-issues, re-evaluations and retrospectives provide endless material for the publishing industry. May has become a commodified object of cultural consumption. However, studies of Catholics and Jews, Reader believes, prefigure a critical engagement with aspects of May not present in grand narratives. Reader notes that the growing temporal distance from 1968 facilitates ‘interpretative and analytical history’.<sup>72</sup>

## **2008: Fortieth Anniversary of May ‘68**

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<sup>68</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Marc Weitzmann, *1968: Magnum throughout the World*, (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 1998); Violeau, ‘Artists and Architects on May 1968’.

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.magnum1968.com/exhibition.html> (now defunct).

<sup>70</sup> Kirsten Lubben (ed.), *Magnum Contact Sheets*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2017, first published 2011), Prints of the sheet are available on the website for \$279, <https://shop.magnumphotos.com/collections/contact-sheet-prints/products/contact-sheet-print-student-protests-1968-bruno-barbey?variant=942838719> (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>71</sup> Keith Reader, ‘Joyeux Anniversaire! The May ‘68 Industry’, *Modern and Contemporary France*, 8, 2 (2000), 249-252.

<sup>72</sup> Auron, Y., *Les Juifs d’extrême gauche en mai 68* (Albin Michel, 1998); Barrau, G., *Le Mai 68 des Catholiques* (Éditions de l’Atelier/Éditions Ouvrières, 1998).



The debates on May's heritage for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary began a year early, with Nicholas Sarkozy's call for its 'liquidation'. Whilst the right returned to May as cultural decline, the alter-globalisation movement and renewed academic interest asserted its relevance to contemporary politics.<sup>73</sup> Daniel Gordon notes that the 40-year gap lends itself to memorialisation, drawing parallels with debates on Vichy in the 1980s, and the Algerian war in the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>74</sup> A short enough span that many participants will still be alive, and young enough to be active in public life, yet long enough to establish distance, looking back on careers and trajectories at a moment of retirement. However, this does raise issues. The retrospection prompts an autobiographical approach, which was abundant in 2008.<sup>75</sup> The passage of time privileges those who were young in 1968, further consolidating the grip of their 'generation' on its memory, and whilst they may have been among the more militant advocates of revolution in the past, this militancy had by 2008 been long abandoned.<sup>76</sup>

Nicholas Sarkozy's speech in Bercy on the campaign trail of the 2007 presidential election highlighted the ongoing contestation between those who saw May's heritage as positive or negative.<sup>77</sup> Of increasing importance during this anniversary was the distinct trope that May's legacy was 'dead'. Although Sarkozy's call for 'liquidation' shows the conservative political elite's desire to forget May, the very fact that he made the call, and that it had such impact, betrays May's cultural persistence. This was not restricted to the Gaullists. Even Daniel Cohn-Bendit, argued '68 is finished!' in a book titled *Forget 68*.<sup>78</sup> Others rallied

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<sup>73</sup> Daniel A. Gordon, 'Memories of 1968 in France: Reflections on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary' in Ingo Cornils and Sarah Waters (eds.), *Memories of 1968: International Perspectives*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 54-57.

<sup>74</sup> Gordon, 'Memories of 1968 in France', 77.

<sup>75</sup> Gordon, 'Memories of 1968 in France', 78; Gordon refers to the biographies of Lionel Jospin, Daniel Bensaïd, Benjamin Stora, Alain Krivine, Régis Debray, and Gilles de Staal.

<sup>76</sup> Buton, Philippe. 'Inventing a memory on the Extreme Left: The Example of the Maoists after 1968', in Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne, James S. Williams, (eds.), *May '68: Rethinking France's Last Revolution*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011), 59.

<sup>77</sup> Philippe Marlière, 'Sarkozysm as an ideological theme park. Nicolas Sarkozy and right-wing political thought', *Modern & Contemporary France* 17, 4 (2009), 382-383.

<sup>78</sup> Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *Forget 68*, (Paris: Editions de l'Aube, 2008), 118.

to an initiative called *May '68: It's Still Only the Beginning*, which organised 27 meetings, 20 film showings, and four exhibitions in response to Sarkozy's assault. These celebrations of May's legacy insisted on its relevance to contemporary social issues, fervently denying nostalgic sentimentalisation.<sup>79</sup>

For some years, some social movements have declared May's death to preserve their own dynamism. In 1986, student demonstrators had chanted '68, *c'est vieux!*'<sup>80</sup> In 2008, following the killing of an 18 year-old student by police, Greek anarchists used the slogan 'Fuck May '68, Fight Now!' to express insurrectionist immediacy. In interviews though, they emphasised that May is a heritage that is 'important' and informative to them, but one that they must learn from and which must not constrain them.<sup>81</sup> Related to this morbid trope of 1968, academic analysis frames the events as history, the past and thus implicitly dead. In 1997, Keith Reader observed that it was precisely because May was now 'old', that historians could examine it.<sup>82</sup> Contrasting the active celebration of May as 'living history', it here becomes an 'object' of study.<sup>83</sup> Conversely, Kristin Ross welcomed this as a threshold between disciplines given the capacity of historians to engage with the contingency of May, as opposed to the classifying logic of sociologists. For Ross, what was most remarkable about May was the widespread challenge to authority and 'defined spheres of competence'.<sup>84</sup> In order to reconstruct this element, the categories of analysis constructed around May needed to be unpacked.

The number and geographical range of exhibitions indicated a continued widespread interest in May. However, the sacralisation of images within a gallery or museum context confines May's memory, physically removing it from the streets, thereby losing relevance. In

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<sup>79</sup> Gordon, 'Memories of 68', 56-58.

<sup>80</sup> Reader, 'Joyeux Anniversaire!', 252.

<sup>81</sup> Nicholas Apoifis, *Anarchy in Athens: An ethnography of militancy, emotions and violence*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

<sup>82</sup> Reader, 'Joyeux Anniversaire!', 252.

<sup>83</sup> Gordon, 'Memories of 68', 59.

<sup>84</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 6-7.

this view, the slogan ‘Fuck May 68’ reclaims its memory from the museum, as well as the graffiti directly appropriating from May during such movements. In fact, at the same time graffiti in French and English directly copied from May: ‘*Sous les pavés, La plage*’, ‘*Imagination au pouvoir*’, and ‘Caution. The police are addressing you via the 8 o’clock news’.<sup>85</sup> These not only borrow the phrases of May, indicating their continued relevance, that they remained untranslated assumes a familiarity with the original. Graffiti invoking May in such a transgressive, immediate, and transitory context repudiates the conception of May confined to the museum and uses its memory as a call to arms.

Following 2008, historians re-evaluated the significance of May, moving from a single event to a process of ‘68 years’.<sup>86</sup> They zoomed in from broad scales of the movement as a whole and interrogated the specifics. Awareness of methodological nationalism prompted a geographical reorientation, which increasingly focused on transnational aspects and regional or local studies.<sup>87</sup> Photography also contributed to this wider celebration of 1968. For example, in 2008 photojournalist Raymond Depardon published *1968: A year around the world*, collecting his work from the year.<sup>88</sup> In this chronological account, a trip to the Persian Gulf interrupts the photographs of May and June in Paris. They sit within a collection that, other than August’s protests at the US Democratic Party Convention, focuses on personalities and media spectacle.

As we have already seen in Chapter 3, Bruno Barbey’s exhibition illustrated how clichéd views of the protests persisted.<sup>89</sup> This exhibition paired Barbey’s photographs with the

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<sup>85</sup> Kostis Kornetis, ‘1968–2008: The Inheritance of Utopia’ *Historien*, 9, (2010), 14.

<sup>86</sup> Daniel J. Sherman, Ruud van Dijk, Jasmine Alinder, A. Aneesh, (eds.), *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

<sup>87</sup> Cornils and Waters (eds.), *Memories of 68: International Perspectives*; Klimke and Scharloth, *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977*, (PalgraveMacmillan, 2008); Andrea Mammone, ‘The transnational reaction to 1968: Neo-fascist fronts and political cultures in France and Italy’, *Contemporary European History* 17.02 (2008), 213-236.

<sup>88</sup> Raymond Depardon, *1968*.

<sup>89</sup> Memou, *Photography and Social Movements*; , ‘Photography and Memory: Rethinking May ‘68’, *Philosophy of Photography*, 3, (2011), 83-96; ‘Revolt in Pictures: The French May’68 in the Student and Mainstream Press’

*Atelier Populaire* posters. Memou acknowledges the posters, and their importance as source of the movement's visualisation, but does not explore the implications of their commemorative reproduction. As well as photographs of the Latin Quarter, these posters were the way of seeing May during the anniversary; their reproduction became a reference point itself.<sup>90</sup> Many exhibitions, across France, Germany, the UK and US, either incorporated *Atelier Populaire* posters, or focused solely on them. That many of these displays were in art galleries signals the aestheticisation of May, its persistence in the art world, and the elevation of the bohemian-artistic May.<sup>91</sup>

Art critics and historians have analysed the *Atelier Populaire* posters within the field of artistic production, and its relationship to politics.<sup>92</sup> Their presentation as art complements narratives of May as a moment of creativity, and their initial ephemeral nature re-enforces the vision of May as a transitory moment. There was a ready-made appeal for the artists and curators displaying the posters, who could see their own profession validated. The production of commemorative books and the sale of the posters was the culmination of the logic of commodification.

Conversely, in their initial context, Clifford Deaton argues the posters articulate a democratic commitment, linking a democratic practice with the contemporary historical

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in Kathrin Fahlenbrach, Erling Sivertsen, Rolf Werenskjold, (eds.), *Media and Revolt: Strategies and Performances from the 1960s to the Present*, (Berghahn, 2014), 147-164.

<sup>90</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 29.

<sup>91</sup> 'Affiches Mai 68', Confluences gallery, Paris, 15 April -30 May 2008; 'May '68: Street Posters from the Paris Rebellion', The Hayward Project Space, Southbank Centre, London, 1 May – 1 June 2008; 'Dissent! 1968 and Now', Laband Art Gallery, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, February 10 – March 20, 2008; 'Esprit(s) de mai 68: Tracts, affiches, photographies, journaux', BnF, Paris, 11 July - 7 September 2008, <http://expositions.bnf.fr/mai68/infos/01.htm>; 'Les affiches de Mai 68', Médiathèque de Tulle, Musée des beaux-arts de Dole, 09 May - 31 August 2008, [http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2008/05/07/expositions-dans-l-atelier-revolutionnaire-des-affichistes-de-mai-68\\_1042059\\_3246.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2008/05/07/expositions-dans-l-atelier-revolutionnaire-des-affichistes-de-mai-68_1042059_3246.html); 'Politics, Pop and Afri-Cola. 68 Posters', German Poster Museum, Essen, 12 January– 16 March 2008.

<sup>92</sup> Liam Considine, 'Screen Politics: Pop Art and the Atelier Populaire', *Tate Papers*, no.24, Autumn 2015, <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/24/screen-politics-pop-art-and-the-atelier-populaire>, accessed 15 May 2017; Elodie Antoine, 'Art and Poetics Around May '68', *Critique d'art*, 32, (2008), <http://critiquedart.revues.org/784>.

situation.<sup>93</sup> Others, particularly Gottfried Korff, have pointed to the use of the clenched fist imagery as part of a distinct revolutionary tradition, and the parallels with 1936 are clear.<sup>94</sup> This is a commonly recurring image drawing on photography of picket lines (see chapter 2.) but in the posters, loses the broader context of the setting.<sup>95</sup> Whilst this may make it widely applicable as a symbol, it becomes a referent in its own right, rather than referring to the labour movement. Likewise, the outline of a factory or chimney also signify a now lost world in the context of de-industrialisation.<sup>96</sup>

Using the Beaux-Arts posters, Jean-Louis Violeau argued art in May moved away from a conception of the artist as a producer and art as an object to a focus on ‘the event’ or (following the Situationists) ‘*situations*’ prefiguring the immateriality of conceptual art.<sup>97</sup> If this is so, then 2008 recuperated the *événements* for the world of commodified art. That year, a book of posters from the Hayward exhibition sold in limited edition for £1,200.<sup>98</sup> The subsequent commemorative book in 2011 extended this commodity status to a mass market.<sup>99</sup> Commodification enveloped the posters themselves, and in April 2008, 250 went on sale at the Drouot auction house.<sup>100</sup> The reserved prices were low, starting at 100 euros.<sup>101</sup> This ran explicitly counter to the initial wishes of the collective, who in 1968 had warned in the initial

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<sup>93</sup> Clifford Deaton, "The Memory of May' 68: The Ironic Interruption and Democratic Commitment of the Atelier Populaire." *Design Issues* 29, 2 (2013), 29-41.

<sup>94</sup> Gottfried Korff, 'From Brotherly Handshake to Militant Clenched Fist: On Political Metaphors for the Worker's Hand', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 42, (1992), 70-81; Gottfried Korff and Harry Drost, 'History of Symbols as Social History? Ten preliminary notes on the image and sign systems of social movements in Germany', *International review of social history*, 38, 1 (1993), 105-125; Lincoln Cushing, "A brief history of the "clenched fist" image." *Docs Populi* (2011).

<sup>95</sup> Johan Kugelberg and Philippe Vermés, (eds.), *Beauty Is in the Street: A Visual Record of the May '68 Uprising*, (Four Corners Books, 2011), 23, 30, 116, 125, 130, 135.

<sup>96</sup> Kugelberg and Vermés, *Beauty Is in the Street*, 30, 33, 53, 56, 112.

<sup>97</sup> Jean Louis Violeau, 'Artists and Architects on May 1968: An Aesthetics of Disappearance' in *May '68: MAI '68 Rethinking France's Last Revolution*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011), 263-278

<sup>98</sup> Rlok Ployner, 'Utopian image Politics and Posters', *Design Observer*, 3/10/13

<http://designobserver.com/feature/utopian-image-politics-and-posters/37739>, First published in Adi Martis (ed.), *Stedelijk Collection Reflections: Reflections on the Collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*, (Amsterdam: nai010, 2013).

<sup>99</sup> Kugelberg and Vermés, *Beauty Is in the Street*.

<sup>100</sup> François Lafite, May '68 at Auction, 05 April 08, [https://www.flickr.com/photos/francois\\_lafite/sets/72157604514373639/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/francois_lafite/sets/72157604514373639/), (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>101</sup> Marc Vallen, 'May '68: Posters from the Paris Rebellion', <http://art-for-a-change.com/blog/2008/05/may-68-posters-from-paris-rebellion.html>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

publication of the posters that ‘To use [the posters] for decorative purposes, to display them in bourgeois places of culture or to consider them as objects of aesthetic interest is to impair both their function and their effect.’<sup>102</sup>

During May itself, there was open hostility to the museum as an institution. On 22 May, a group of artists and critics from the Beaux-Arts occupation pasted posters on the *Musée National d'Art Moderne*'s doors declaring it ‘closed down for its uselessness’, and a ‘graveyard of art’.<sup>103 104</sup> According to *Le Monde*, the museum shut because transport strikes meant the security guards could not get to work.<sup>105</sup>

One exhibition in Paris featured unpublished photographs by Alain Quemper, a celebrity portrait specialist.<sup>106</sup> Again, this focus on the famous suggests an individualistic approach via ‘iconic’ characters. More significantly, the exhibition was a chance not just to see pictures of May ‘68, but also to buy them. Deliberately appealing to ‘collectors’, the ‘artist’ signed the limited edition photographs which were sold with a certificate of authentication.<sup>107</sup> Serge Hambourg’s exhibitions in both Paris and Berkeley also re-cast journalism as art.<sup>108</sup> During May, Hambourg photographed for *Nouvel Observateur*, but claimed he was ‘also trying to make memorable images—not only by recounting the event but also by taking a true photograph, which in a separate context, could stand by itself’.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> *Atelier populaire présenté par lui-même, 87 affiches de mai-juin 1968*. (Paris: Usines, Universités, Union, 1968).

<sup>103</sup> *Le Monde*, 23 May 1968.

[http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1968/05/22/artistes-creation-d-un-groupe-d-action-d-art-plastique\\_2503728\\_1819218.html?xtmc=pierre\\_restany&xtcr=1](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1968/05/22/artistes-creation-d-un-groupe-d-action-d-art-plastique_2503728_1819218.html?xtmc=pierre_restany&xtcr=1), (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>104</sup> Violeau, ‘Artists and Architects on May 1968’, 271; *Le Monde*, 23 May 1968.

<sup>105</sup> *Le Monde*, 24 May 1968.

[http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1968/05/24/fermeture-des-musees-nationaux\\_2501771\\_1819218.html?xtmc=musee&xtcr=3](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1968/05/24/fermeture-des-musees-nationaux_2501771_1819218.html?xtmc=musee&xtcr=3), (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>106</sup> ‘Regard sur Mai 68: Photographies d’Alain Quemper’, Dorothy’s Gallery, Paris, 11<sup>th</sup> April – 2nd June, 2008

<sup>107</sup> ‘Une exposition d’Alain Quemper’, <https://www.toutpourlesfemmes.com/archive/une-exposition-dalain-quemper>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>108</sup> [http://www.serge-hambourg.com/?page\\_id=77](http://www.serge-hambourg.com/?page_id=77), ‘Mai 68’, Galerie An. Girard, Paris, 29<sup>th</sup> April – 31 May 2008 <http://www.atelier.angirard.com/expositions/serge-hambourg/>; ‘Protest in Paris 1968’, Berkeley Art Museum, California, March 12–June 02, 2008 <http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu/program/protest-paris-1968-photographs-serge-hambourg>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>109</sup> ‘Protest in Paris 1968: Photographs by Serge Hambourg’, <http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu/program/protest-paris-1968-photographs-serge-hambourg>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

Hambourg sought to blend ‘aesthetic and documentary’, retrospectively reassigning the photography of May to the field of art.

Another mode of memorialisation during 2008 were return encounters between photographers and their subjects. Photographer Gerard-Aimé visited Cohn-Bendit, at his office in the European parliament for a photo-op.<sup>110</sup> Haitian militant and photographer Gerald Bloncourt also re-photographed surviving CGT militants who had occupied Renault-Billancourt, where he was based as a *l’Humanité* photographer in May.<sup>111</sup> These photographers also headlined exhibitions that year: Aimé at the Bibliothèque Elsa-Triolet, and Bloncourt at the Bibliothèque Faidherbe.<sup>112</sup> Significantly, these took place in libraries, not art galleries. The public space of municipal, rather than commercial, venues set limits on commodification, even consciously resisting it. These two photographers are potential exceptions proving the rule. As activist-photographers, their work was not subject to the same commercial forces that confronted photojournalists. However, we should not overstate their independence: Bloncourt was working for a paper (albeit a communist one), and Aimé’s work was widely disseminated. Their trajectories have also not been entirely without ‘recuperation’, as the language of 1968 would put it. Aimé particularly followed the path of the ‘generation’ of iconic *soixant-huitards*. As his meeting with Cohn-Bendit attests, he is part of that milieu. Becoming photo-editor at *Libération*, he participated in the journalistic sphere, but his work was not initially part of the iconic ‘68 canon. However, Gamma’s acquisition of his collection, and the recent publication of it in *Le Roman Vrai de Mai 68*, shows its deferred commodification.<sup>113</sup> As the book’s title suggests, the relative obscurity of Aimé’s work until recently, and his position within the *Mouvement du 22 Mars*, allows claims for the

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<sup>110</sup> <http://www.gamma-rapho.com/fr/feature/75050/gerard-aime-back-to-nanterre/page/1/nobc/1>

<sup>111</sup> ‘Renault, la forteresse ouvrière’, <http://bloncourtblog.net/2015/11/renault-la-forteresse-ouvriere.html>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>112</sup> ‘Sous les pavés, la plage’, Bibliothèque Elsa-Triolet, Pantin, 2 May - 28 June 2008; ‘Oui mai... Un témoignage photographique de Gérard Bloncourt’, Bibliothèque Faidherbe, Paris, 1<sup>st</sup> April - 31 May, 2008

<sup>113</sup> Partick Filloud, *Le Roman Vrai de Mai 68, Avec les photographies de Gérard-Aimé*, (Paris: Lemieux-Éditeur, 2016).

authenticity of his images. Many of his photographs identify the famed activists of Nanterre, allowing a thorough embrace of the generational trope. Yet, it is still a distinct trajectory from the aestheticisation of photojournalism. The assertion of authenticity relies on this difference, promising an as-yet unseen, ‘true’ version of May.

The *L’Humanité* collection at the Archives Départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis also offers an alternate lens on historical events.<sup>114</sup> The collection encompassed both the newspaper’s own photography and that of *correspondants* (non-professional supporters, usually party members, who sent material in to the paper). The images, donated in 1999 by Roland Michel Tartakowsky, a *L’Humanité* journalist and director of the *correspondant* network, had never been publicly displayed before.<sup>115</sup> The selection of images in the exhibition construct an apparent unity of the movement with the traditional republican imagery of Marianne, or Phrygian caps. These references bear a striking resemblance to the imagery of the Popular Front. Workers assembled at factory gates, or under both a red flag and a tricolour evoke the ‘sovereign people’ of the Popular Front, mimicking the exact imagery of 1936. The focus on leisure is ubiquitous, aping the photographs of the weekends and *congés payés*, and as in 1936 these photographs served to establish a ‘festive’, limited conception of the strikes as non-revolutionary. The specific photographs displayed in this exhibition have been discussed alongside the wider archival collection of the ADSSD, but here it is sufficient to note that the exhibition contributed a distinct set of images and an alternate narrative for 1968 in 2008. It did not contribute to the commodification seen elsewhere, but still relied on claims to authenticity derived from the photographs.

In all these exhibitions, particular narratives reinforced the selection and framing of the photographs, whether it be the unity of the left in the case of the Popular Front, a

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<sup>114</sup> ‘Mai 68 Instantanés d’Humanité’, Archives Départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, May 2008 – June 2009.

<sup>115</sup> *Mai 68: Instantanés d’Humanité, Catalogue de l’exposition présentée aux Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, mai 2008-juin 2009*, (Bobigny: Conseil general de la Seine-Saint-Denis, 2008).



‘generation’ in May ’68, or the emphasis on festivity in both. Ongoing historiographical trends surrounding the movements can determine the specific narratives. Photographic commemorations contribute to these broader mnemonic trends, and in turn are shaped by them. These are not though, monolithic. The *L’Humanité* archive shows that different photographic traditions are preserved, and anniversaries can be an opportunity to re-evaluate them. It highlights that there is a much greater photographic record than that which is commonly displayed in public.

### **2018: Fiftieth Anniversary of May ‘68**

Several major exhibitions commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1968, by major state institutions. One explicitly focused on photography, others incorporated it as part of wider audio-visual component, alongside documents and material artefacts. These were part of a wider programme of events, which also included events at Nanterre, the Cinemathèque Française, and elsewhere.<sup>116</sup> An exhibition at the Beaux-Arts de Paris also examined visual culture more broadly. These exhibitions, when taken together, mark a shift in the commemorative practices relating to May and June 1968. They turn to images rather than testimony as the main component of commemorations. Historians of the senses argued that the relative prominence of the senses is historically determined, and here we can see a shift to the visual, as the voices of participants become less dominant, and the photograph becomes a repository for an authentic witnessing.<sup>117</sup> Yet though this shift involves a greater detachment, it still privileges certain viewpoints of May over others.

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<sup>116</sup> *50e Anniversaire de Mai 68, Dossier de Presse*, soixantehuit.fr

<sup>117</sup> David Howes, *Empire of the Senses: the sensual culture reader*, (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2005); David Howes and Constance Classen. *Ways of sensing: Understanding the senses in society*. (London: Routledge, 2013); Robert Jütte, *A History of the Senses: from Antiquity to Cyberspace*. (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

## ***Icônes de Mai 68: Les Images ont une Histoire at the Bibliothèque Nationale Française***

The central purpose of the BnF exhibition was to historicise the ‘iconic’ photographs of May ‘68. As the subtitle announced, ‘images have a history’. It drew on material from BnF collections, magazines, photo-agency material (particularly material from Gamma and the Fondation Gilles Caron), as well as some amateur material from the Paris Photoclub. However, its primary focus was on photographs produced by and for the media, particularly magazines, as it took several of the most well-known photographs of May, and traced the conditions of their production, dissemination and eventual replication. The structure of the exhibition was based around an introductory area, and five main sections. The opening area is the only section in an otherwise non-linear layout. It consisted of a timeline on one wall, stretching from May to the end of the summer. On the opposite side, surrounding a doorway to the rest of the exhibition was a display of several of the most recognisable photographs and introductory text.

Smaller sections were arranged through the doorway. Immediately facing the entrance was the central pavilion, dedicated to Gilles Caron’s single photograph of Daniel Cohn-Bendit laughing in a police officer’s face. The section traced ‘the photograph of May ‘68’, through Caron’s initial contact sheets, its publication in the press, and then retrospective volumes, up to more recent homages to it. Titled ‘*La fabrique de l’icône*’, it illustrated the process of how the singular ‘icon’ has been created, through a repetition which reflexively adds to the significance of the image, and the conscious reference to it as such. Around this pavilion were three distinct sections, with individual themes. To the right, a feature on the ‘night of the barricades’, to the left, on the use of colour and the trope of ‘Marianne de Mai’.

The right section, titled ‘*Absence d’Icône: la nuit des barricades*’, argues that the photography barricades did not produce a singular, lasting icon, which went beyond the initial

coverage of the spectacle. However, that does not recognise how these photographs, particularly the depiction of the CRS, fed into wider iconography. This iconography becomes increasingly evident when compared against a wider visual culture, rather than just published press photography. For example, the helmeted and goggled CRS is a conspicuous element of posters and cartoons, where though subject to repetition and re-interpretation (sometimes re-worked as a skull, sometimes as a SS-officer, sometimes as both) it is always recognisable.<sup>118</sup> Limiting the scope of the exhibition to a specific smaller subset of photography allows greater depth of scrutiny, but also prevents important links being made beyond it. Indeed, transcending and breaking genre boundaries was a marked feature of the visual culture of May.

The section on the 'colour of Mai 68' reprises Leblanc's analysis of *Paris Match*.<sup>119</sup> It covers the unsystematic practice of colour photography in May, distinct from the black and white aesthetic that dominated coverage.<sup>120</sup> There is a copy of the May/June special edition of *Paris Match* for visitors to browse. The section covering *Marianne du Mai* repeated several of the same themes of the Cohn-Bendit portion, analysing how a single photograph came to dominate retrospectives. Here though, the exhibition unearths many contemporary images using the same framing and examines how one among them came to dominate.

The final section at the rear of the exhibition was devoted to photography outside the field of photojournalism. Alongside the wall-mounted images and originals in display cases, it contained a projected slideshow and documents from the Paris Photo Club. This material from the photography club points the way to a wider visualisation of '68, including photographs from new angles, looking down on protestors from upper-floor windows, photographs of

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<sup>118</sup> Kugelberg and Vermés, *Beauty Is in the Street*, 46, 72-75, 90, 98, 136.

<sup>119</sup> Audrey Leblanc, "L'iconographie de Mai 68: un usage intentionnel du photoreportage noir et blanc ou couleur." *Sens Public* (2009); 'The Color of May 1968: Paris Match and the Events of May and June 1968', *Etudes Photographiques*, 26, (2010).

<sup>120</sup> Leblanc and Versavel, 'Histoire visuelle de Mai 68: une construction médiatique et culturelle' in  *Icônes de Mai 68: Les images ont une histoire*, (Paris: BnF, 2018), 13.

cobblestones, and documentation of tear-gas canisters. These images demonstrate a developing aesthetics of revolt also seen in posters and cartoons (privileging the arena of the street, and the power of the *pavé*).<sup>121</sup> The documentation of tear-gas canisters demonstrates how photography was an instrument for recording evidence, not just on the part of police, but also by protestors who feared of the use of military-grade weapons, and were able to use this documentation to draw international links to accounts from Vietnam.<sup>122</sup> The BnF also holds similar material in the École de Vaugirard collection, anonymous photographs taken by students from the film school.<sup>123</sup>

These images neither root a photographic practice in the attention-grabbing newsworthy ‘icons’ of press photography, documentary photography’s attempt to capture a whole narrative within a decisive moment, or the iconography of communists seeking to recreate 1936. Instead, it is a highly fragmentary record of street-level experience, figured through the instrumental recording of individual elements that are highly evocative—tear-gas, cobblestones, fire, and bloodied figures and medics. Collectively, these are a visual record of vivid, often violent experience. However, they also imply political positions, in a critique of state violence that calls upon visceral testimony, but equally justifies an active, sometimes violent response.

Ludivine Bantigny and Boris Gobble deploy the history of emotions in relation to 1968. Their findings stress the importance of the experience of a crisis: a joyful sense of possibilities with ‘propulsive’ anger to enable the ‘protagonists’ to feel they could change society.<sup>124</sup> This parallels the ‘affective turn’ in social movement theory that takes elements

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<sup>121</sup> Kugelberg and Vermés, (eds.), *Beauty Is in the Street*.

<sup>122</sup> Davis, Oliver. ‘Managing (in)security in Paris in Mai ’68’, *Modern and Contemporary France*, 26, 2, (2018).

<sup>123</sup> BnF, École de Vaugirard, EP 5248 Boite Fol.

<sup>124</sup> Ludivine Bantigny and Boris Gobble, ‘The Sensitive Experience of Politics: Protagonism and Antagonism in May-June 1968’, *French Historical Studies*, 41, 2, (2018), 275-303.

from the sociology of emotion to explain how emotions function as a significant factor in mobilisation.<sup>125</sup>

Those images that focus in on the detail of street level confrontation express this mix of anger and joy. Portraying May as a search for emancipatory, transcendent moments in revolutionary action is not new. This forms the positive half of an interpretation that sees May as a unique point of utopian energy and inspiration, but divorced from a longer cycle of contestation, and its flipside is the Tocquevillian fear of irrationality overtaking the streets.<sup>126</sup> However, the capturing of individual fragments within permanent photographs is an attempt to weld these moments into a broader aesthetics, one tied to a praxis of political revolt.

Walter Benjamin invokes the concept of ‘profane illumination’ in his essay *Surrealism: the Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia* as a ‘materialist’ aesthetics, which ‘initiates’ beholders to an ‘image sphere’, in much the same way direct action brings about new perception in its participants, but then passes it on. Such an approach also runs counter to attempts ‘to win the energies of intoxication for the revolution’ in social-democratic ‘optimism’, instead demanding the bearer face up to the weight of opposition.<sup>127</sup> In the context of images of May, profane illumination explains why much of the coverage of the nights of the barricades focused on the police, but was able to use their depiction as a mobilising force. For Benjamin, this illumination is also associated with a loss of individual self, through the language of violence, but with a curative potential, it ‘loosens individuality like a bad tooth’.<sup>128</sup> This has clear parallels with the dissolution of social categories seen on

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<sup>125</sup> Jasper, James M. ‘The emotions of protest: Affective and reactive emotions in and around social movements’, *Sociological forum*, 13, 3, (1998), 397-424; Guobin Yang, ‘Achieving emotions in collective action: Emotional processes and movement mobilization in the 1989 Chinese student movement’, *The Sociological Quarterly* 41, 4, (2000), 593-614; Patricia Ticineto Clough, Jean Halley (eds.), *The affective turn: Theorizing the social.*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007); Robert Seyfert, ‘Beyond personal feelings and collective emotions: Toward a theory of social affect’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 29, 6, (2012), 27-46.

<sup>126</sup> Raymond Aron, *the Elusive Revolution: Anatomy of a Student Revolt*, Trans. Gordon Clough, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969); Aristide R. Zolberg, ‘Moments of Madness’, *Politics & Society*, 2, 2 (1972), 183-207.

<sup>127</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘*Surrealism: the last snapshot of the European intelligentsia*’, *New Left Review*, 108, (1978), 47-56.

<sup>128</sup> Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 188.

the barricades, and the depiction of demonstrators in these photographs is far less concerned with highlighting individuals than the professional photojournalistic work.

Yet despite this new perspective, workers and the plurality of May – even such obvious subjects as provincial France - remain outside the scope of the exhibition. Here a valuable opportunity was lost to expand the horizons of May’s memory. May remains visualised as an entirely white affair, omitting perspectives from the *banlieu*, or postcolonial and transnational viewpoints. Whilst the exhibition did an excellent job of historicising the most replicated images of May, it had little to say about the historical narrative of May itself. The May ‘68 it ultimately presented was still a Parisian, student-centric affair, focused on pivotal demonstrations, rather than a nation-wide mass strike movement. Though it displayed different ways these events were visualised, the hegemonic historical construction of May remained unchallenged. An exclusionary vision of May for affluent and nostalgic Baby-boomers and the Parisian middle-class is reproduced.

### **‘68, *Les Archives Du Pouvoir* at the Archives Nationales**

The *Archives Nationales* presented a more specific perspective in its exhibitions. It focused explicitly on how May ‘68 appears to the state, and how this is then recorded in the archives.<sup>129</sup> In the introductory text, a disclaimer acknowledged the exhibition was not attempting to produce a definitive version of ‘68 but was using a particular source base to show a partial and partisan vision that was hopefully true to how events were seen from the perspective of the authorities themselves. The exhibition specifically used police archive material, alongside that of the *Archives Nationales*.

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<sup>129</sup> Philippe Artières, Emmanuelle Giry, (eds.), *68: Les Archives du pouvoir: Chroniques inédites d'un Etat en crise*, (Paris: L’iconoclaste and les Archive Nationales, 2018).

Furthermore, once the curators acknowledged this partisan stance, critical evaluation becomes more, not less necessary. The sources can speak in their own words, but the exhibition must properly analyse and contextualise them. Even the location of the exhibition was not free from the implications of state authority. Displayed in the palatial Hôtel de Soubise, built for 18<sup>th</sup> century aristocracy, and taken into state ownership by Napoleonic decree in 1808, this site of the National Archives is focal point for the display of the records of the French state. Entering the exhibition hall, the visitor was greeted with bust of Napoleon at the entrance, alongside a display of police photographs and memorabilia, then the names of De Gaulle's ministers along the wall.

There was a relatively conventional chronological narrative to the main exhibition space, from university unrest in February to the *Loi Faure* passing university reform at the end of the year. It again condenses 1968 into a narrative of student revolt. Between these points though, the exhibition focused on the period from May to July, and reveals the broader social impact of events. Alongside information panels, there was a strong visual culture component incorporating footage from contemporary news reports (sourced from INA.fr), photographs and documents themselves, arranged in a central display case. These were suspended vertically and overlapping, making it difficult to read them individually, but giving a sense of their collective form. A side room contained looped footage of De Gaulle's 7 June speech. This room was entirely devoted to the president, incorporating documents (such as the original text of the speech), pro De Gaulle images, and reiterating his centrality even in the inclusion of posters directly attacking him.<sup>130</sup>

Moreover, the exhibition produced a singular perspective of 'the authorities' on '68 that was far more unified than what existed in 1968. Oliver Davis has explored how police tactics led to insubordination from front line police officers, as Maurice Grimaud's tactics of

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<sup>130</sup> Kugelberg and Vermés, *Beauty Is in the Street*, 149.

building up police numbers before attempting a decisive charge often left police facing militant demonstrators awaiting back-up with no orders and little support.<sup>131</sup> Davis also highlights the murky role of the *Service d'action civique* (SAC) as clandestine police auxiliaries and the collapse of public respect for the police. Whilst the exhibition's use of maps of re-enforcements, transport networks and photographs of police call centres and planning rooms presents a state functioning orderly in otherwise tumultuous times, the breakdown in communication and even hierarchy was clearly felt within the state apparatus. Davis's exploration of the SAC also raises the issue of political divisions within the right, too often defined as an amorphous Gaullist bloc. Fundamentally, the exhibition delivered on its aims of conveying the French state's view of 1968. However, by mobilising the archival resources of the state, it necessarily helped establish this vision in the historical record.

### ***Images en Lutte: la culture visuelle de l'extrême gauche en France (1968-1974) at the Beaux-Arts de Paris***

Billing itself as 'not a visual history of politics but a political history of the visual', this exhibition at the *Beaux-Arts de Paris* does not use the work it displays as a means of illustrating history, but takes an art-historical approach.<sup>132</sup> The art gallery setting leads to a conventional exhibition layout, prominently featuring a wall of *Atelier Populaire* posters.<sup>133</sup> The posters, already exhibited in 2008 (See above) feature prominently in the coverage of the exhibition. There are additional photographs of the Atelier at work, and the exhibition includes more posters, then '68-inspired artwork from the following decades.<sup>134</sup> The posters

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<sup>131</sup> Oliver Davis, 'Managing (in)security in Paris in Mai '68', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 26, 2, (2018), 129-143.

<sup>132</sup> *Images en Lutte: la culture visuelle de l'extrême gauche en France (1968-1974)*, Dossier de Presse, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2018.

<sup>133</sup> Jean-Pierre Dalbéra, L'atelier populaire des Beaux-Arts (Paris), 27 April 2018, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dalbera/40027967480/in/photostream/>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>134</sup> *Dossier de Presse*, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2018.



exhibited at the Hayward Gallery in 2008 are now part of the permanent collection of the Lazinc gallery, specialists in 'street art'. They are part of a 'Propaganda Collection' alongside 'Chinese Maoist posters ... , Black Panther posters, Russian Communist Posters from the 1970's and 1980's', and Cuban Revolutionary posters as well as British counter-culture posters from the 1960's to the 1980's. The *Atelier Populaire* were once again exhibited in 2018, with memorabilia and the recreation of an occupied studio.<sup>135</sup> The passage to a permanent collection reflects the aftermath of their commodification, now exemplary *lieux de memoire*, divorced from their original context, a simulacrum of which is constructed around them. However, the commodification itself continued apace, with another auction at Paris-based auction house Artcurial offering 500 lots of the posters. They ranged in estimated price from €50-€8,000, with the highest estimates for works attributed to Situationist Asger Jorn and the *Beauté est dans la Rue* poster.<sup>136</sup>

At the *Beaux-Arts*, there was a particular focus on international events, and the exhibition began with the Vietnam War demonstrations. However, the publicity of the exhibition draws on the anti-totalitarianism of the New Philosophers, with coverage of 'utopianism's exhaustion in terrorism' in the Chinese Cultural Revolution and Khmer Rouge.<sup>137</sup> Whatever French radicals' misconceptions about China and Cambodia, these were not 'massacres committed in their name'. This renunciation of 'utopianism' immediately flows into discussion of the possibility of participation in government, with 1972s Common Programme, as if power depended on a narrowing of horizons. Again, this recalls the debates surrounding the Popular Front, and the analogies made with Mitterand and Hollande in 2016.

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<sup>135</sup> 'Mai 68: Posters from the Revolution', 4-12 May 2016, <https://www.artsy.net/show/lazinc-mai-68-posters-from-the-revolution>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>136</sup> 'Auction of France's May '68 protest posters to mark 50th anniversary', *The Art Newspaper*, 12 March 2018, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/blog/auction-marks-50th-anniversary-of-may-68>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>137</sup> *Dossier de Presse*, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2018; Eleanor Davey, *Idealism beyond Borders: The French Revolutionary Left and the Rise of Humanitarianism, 1954–1988*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

The concept of ‘visual culture’ more broadly allows the inclusion of film, posters, caricature and *bande dessinée* as well as more rarefied ‘fine art’. This shows the power of images and broader aesthetics to cross-pollinate and transcend the specificity of their medium. The combination of caricature, photographs and artwork in magazines build their argumentative force in conjunction with one another, to produce something more than the sum of its parts. This is a marked feature of the period, which also saw a breakdown of medium boundaries within individual pieces of work, for example, those posters drawn from edited or captioned photographs.<sup>138</sup> In film, the incorporation of text, photographs and non-diegetic sound, built on the effects of montage.<sup>139</sup> The work of Chris Marker, who received a retrospective at the *Cinémathèque Française* from May to July 2018, and the collectively produced *Cinétracts* exemplified these techniques.<sup>140</sup> These enabled a wry distance to be drawn, while also retaining the impact and sense of immediacy drawn from the original images. Techniques such as juxtaposition and captioning allowed critical insight by creating distance between the viewer and the image, but also allowing the director or editor to make their argument directly to the audience. Following Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov, montage builds dialectics into the images and allows for purely visual argument.<sup>141</sup> These approaches deliberately avoid naturalism in order to create a self-awareness enabling a Brechtian ‘alienation effect’ to render unquestioned social relations visible.<sup>142</sup> For Benjamin this alienation should be used to build critical skills rather than knowledge. Visitors ‘should leave the exhibition, not more learned but more savvy. The task of real, effective presentation is just this: to liberate knowledge from the bounds of compartmentalised discipline and make

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<sup>138</sup> Kugelberg and Vermés, *Beauty Is in the Street*, 17, 42, 97, 106, 122, 148, 157.

<sup>139</sup> Eisenstein, Sergei M., V. I. Pudovkin, and G. V. Alexandrov. "A statement." *Film sound: Theory and practice* (1985), 83-85.

<sup>140</sup> *50e Anniversaire de Mai 68, Dossier de Presse*, soixantehuit.fr; *Chris Marker, les 7 vies d'un cinéaste*, 3 May – 29 July 2018, <https://www.cinematheque.fr/cycle/chris-marker-les-7-vies-d-un-cineaste-441.html>, (last accessed 28/08/19).

<sup>141</sup> Eisenstein, Sergei. "A dialectic approach to film form." *Film form: Essays in film theory* (1949), 45-63.

<sup>142</sup> Bertolt Brecht and Eric Bentley. "On Chinese Acting." *The Tulane Drama Review* 6, no. 1 (1961), 130-136.

it practical.<sup>143</sup> This reflects the broader categorical breakdown inherent in May Ranciere identified, as the movement began to work across social boundaries, the potential of their dissolution could be envisioned.<sup>144</sup>

## Conclusion

There is no longer a battle over the ‘authentic’ voice of ‘68, as older voices are disappearing. Like 1936, the passage of time has imposed restrictions on the commemorations. Like Nora’s *Lieux de memoire*, there is an increasing reliance on the selective, fixed cultural reference points already established by previous waves of retrospection.<sup>145</sup> The photographic image is increasingly a visual shorthand for received ideas, thereby mediating narratives. This is a dialectical construction of meaning, as opposed to the didactic narration of ‘telling it like it was’, as the viewer brings meanings shaped by prior exposure to the image, which reinforces them upon repeated viewings, creating a kind of confirmation bias. These previous uses might be approached critically, as in the *Icônes de Mai 68* exhibition, but they still dominate the mnemonic practices. What is shown in all examples is the visual transmission or visual mediation of events, whether it be through state archival processes, magazine photography, artwork, or cinema. They are all exhibitions about people presenting a version of ’68. Yet those chosen are the visions of the culturally dominant: the state, the established media and the recuperated avant-garde. Not the trade unions in *L’Humanite*’s photographs, or activists who did not become successful journalists or artists in the capital. The exhibitions are still relentlessly Paris-centric; even the counter-hegemonic voices within BnF exhibition were based in the capital. In the *Archives Nationales*, the rest of

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<sup>143</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘Garlanded Entrance: on the “Sound Nerves” exhibition at the Gesundheitshaus Kreuzberg’, in *The Work of Art in the age of its Technological reproducibility and other writings on media*, trans. Annie Bourneuf, (Cambridge, London: Belknap Press, 2008), 61.

<sup>144</sup> Kristin Ross, ‘Rancière and the Practice of Equality’, *Social Text* (1991), 57-71.

<sup>145</sup> Nora, ‘Between memory and history’.

the country appears in transport maps, as fuel lines and a source of personnel to funnel into Paris. A sympathetic view would be that these exhibitions represent an institutional recognition of the dominating 'icons' and attempt to explain how they acquired this status. More critically, they could be interpreted as further enshrining them within that position. Certainly, the publicity and outward facing images used by the BnF were those of de Beldern and Cohn-Bendit. The shift to a more visually mediated presentation of May does not reproduce the same dominant voices as those of the 2008 anniversary. Instead, it reproduces those who were visually dominant: photojournalists, the state and the *Atelier Populaire*.

## Conclusion

This thesis has argued that studying the photographic records produced by these strike movements alongside one another reveals important parallels in the way protest has been envisioned. However, it has also shown that the subsequent framing and reception of the photographs has been just as important in determining their relationship to the histories of the waves of contestation they document. These photographs cannot be seen in isolation from the social processes that produced them. The links between photography and its social context offer a means of conceptualising not just the photographs themselves but also the social contestation with which they are entangled.

The thesis has identified an important body of source material, spread across multiple archives and collections. It has contextualised and analysed these photographs, their production, reception, and reproduction in order to show photography can be central to historical analysis. It has forged new interdisciplinary links between the fields of Labour history, visual culture, transnational and entangled history and the study of historical memory. It has also expanded upon an under-explored comparison between the Popular Front and 1968, previously only hinted at in Vigna's work, and made it the centre of analysis. This has enabled new insights into the movements, by foregrounding those elements of commonality, returning to the labour dimensions of contestation.

A labour history of the photographic record offers new insight into the historical process of contestation. This is also a novel approach for labour history, using visual sources to explore social contestation. Not only does it expand the range of sources to draw on, using photography can be a way to engage with the lived experiences of those protesting. It can reveal how participants visualised their own protest. Whilst being aware of the role of framing in constructing such images, photographs of occupied workplaces show how participants constructed a coherent visual repertoire of protest which persisted through the mid-20<sup>th</sup>

Century. Photographs were a means of visualising social contestation and representing existing power relations and the challenge to them. They did this through direct means, such as the capture of slogans, banners and graffiti, or more indirect ones such as the significance of locations, crowds and their orientation to the camera, or visual allusions to other repertoires of protest. They also captured direct confrontation with the forces of order and were able to link these images to broader critiques of capital and the state.

As such, the photographic record is both a representation of social contestation, but also part of it. Photographs drew on distinct visual repertoires of protest, and these provide some of the strongest continuities between 1936 and 1968. As we saw in Chapter 2, the example of the factory gates demonstrates the rich interconnections that are lost when such contestation is viewed in isolation. The factory gates represented a space for workers and trade unions to present their own vision of occupations. Furthermore, such an approach links the photographic record with the practices of those involved in contestation. They used photography to explain and contextualise their action, and as tools for mobilisation.<sup>1</sup> John Berger argued, to be free, a class must be able to use the language of images to ‘situate itself in history’.<sup>2</sup> In the photographs explored here, we can see attempts to do just that.

These examples also show how a social history of photography can illustrate the ways in which those visualisations drew on the photographic records of previous waves of contestation. The recurrent images of revolt from the past, in the form of republican and revolutionary symbolism also highlight how participants in these strike movements conceptualised their struggle as linked to longer historical processes. Photographs also made links across national boundaries, connecting domestic struggles into a global framework. Solidarity with Spain in 1936 was mirrored by solidarity with Vietnam in 1968. The

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Olesen, “‘We are all Khaled Said’: Visual Injustice Symbols in the Egyptian Revolution, 2010-2011’, in Nicole Doerr, Alice Mattoni, Simon Teune, (eds.), *Advances in the Visual Analysis of Social Movements*, (Bradford : Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2013), 3-25.

<sup>2</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 33.

production of a photographic record is thus part of the waves of contestation themselves. We return to Berger's desire produce a 'living context' for the re-integration of photography and memory.<sup>3</sup> Recognising the active role played by photography in the moments of discontent they document is an important step in this process. This thesis has set out a methodology which approaches photographs within their historical context, taking into account the complexities of visual culture and its interpretation but also retaining a commitment to recognising the agency of historical actors. Both photographers and their subjects responded to unfolding events and used the medium to shape and respond to the visualisation of such moments.

Examining the photographic record from the perspective of their social context also allows us to tie these histories into wider debates over the afterlives of contestation and the processes of commemoration. It illustrates that ways of seeing these photographic records have changed over time. Photographs are exemplary *lieux de mémoire*.<sup>4</sup> Photographs are a key vector in how historic events enter collective memory, but this process is not straightforward.<sup>5</sup> These photographic records form a dense entanglement of issues, which their 'iconic' presentation either obfuscates or reifies. We can see how photographs are instrumentalised in the construction of particular historical narratives, such as that of a rebellious generation, rather than a longer historical process of labour unrest. This also links the photographic record to the fields of memory and public history.<sup>6</sup> By analysing the deployment of photographs in recent anniversaries, it becomes evident that in the case of both movements, the subsequent success of a minority of photographers has dominated retrospective visualisations. This occurred alongside the removal of photographs from their initial political context. Humanism

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<sup>3</sup> John Berger, 'Uses of Photography', in *About Looking*, (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, 1980), 57.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' *Representations*, 26, *Memory and Counter-Memory* (1989), 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites. 'Public Identity and Collective Memory in US Iconic Photography: The Image of "Accidental Napalm"', *Critical studies in media communication* 20, 1 (2003), 35-66.

<sup>6</sup> David Glassberg, 'Public history and the study of memory', *The Public Historian* 18, 2 (1996), 7-23.

offered a depoliticised reading of images from 1936, and certain photographs from 1968 were used extensively in its re-imagining as a moment of free speech and festivity.<sup>7</sup> The emergence of some of these images as singular ‘icons’ furthered this phenomenon.<sup>8</sup> Their dominance in the photographic record has helped shift focus onto certain ways of perceiving the strike movements, be that a harmonious strike or the relative importance of a small number of key figures.

Viewing these photographs as historical artefacts themselves also illustrates how the photographic record is shaped by processes such as the professionalisation of photojournalism, and open to the influence of editors and typesetters as well as photographers.<sup>9</sup> Incorporating an awareness of the changing technical practice of photography itself contributes to our understanding of the relationship between protest and its photographic record. Benjamin’s ideas on technological reproduction, built on by Berger, demonstrate that the particular form of the photographic record is a result of historical circumstances, but also deeply entwined with the particular ideological outlook of the moment in time that it was produced in.<sup>10</sup>

A history of the photographic record of these protests that used only the approaches of art-history would fail to adequately examine these wider connections. Broadening material beyond the limitations of a ‘canon’ enables us to see that photographs did not just document dissent, but the making and sharing of these pictures was part of a historical process of contestation. Avoiding post-structuralist anachronism, these ways of seeing contestation can then be put in their historical contexts. We can also retain an awareness of the agency of

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<sup>7</sup> Antigoni Memou, ‘Photography and Memory: Rethinking May ‘68’, *Philosophy of Photography*, 3, (2011), 83-96.

<sup>8</sup> André Gunthert, ‘Les Icônes du Photojournalisme: de l’information à la Pop Culture’, Audrey Leblanc and Dominic Versavel, (eds.), *Icônes de Mai 68: Les Images ont une histoire*, (Paris: BnF Éditions, 2018), 19-31.

<sup>9</sup> Audrey Leblanc and Dominic Versavel, (eds.), *Icônes de Mai 68: Les Images ont une histoire*, (Paris: BnF Éditions, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, Thomas Y. Levin (eds.), Edmund Jephcott (trans.), (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008); Berger, *Ways of Seeing*



historical actors, and the choices photographers made in constructing their photographs, and how these fit into broader trajectories responding to social change. Untangling the diverse set of trajectories that photographers followed before and after they documented the strike movements reveals that for some, the strikes formed a key part of their professional portfolio. For others photography was part of activist practice, and other images were produced either collectively or anonymously. We also see the agency of the photographs' subjects, in shaping their repertoire of protest in response to being depicted.

Finally, we can see that moments of social contestation, such as the strikes considered here, produce uniquely significant photographic records. The space opened up for a counter-hegemonic visualisation means that the photographs created in these windows of time reveal ways of seeing society that might otherwise be obscured. A contemporary example demonstrates the ongoing salience of the photographic record of these two particular strikes. At the end of 2018, the *Gilets Jaune* movement mobilised 300,000 people in a cycle of demonstrations and roundabout occupations that began over fuel tax, but rapidly generalised to cover a wide range of grievances.<sup>11</sup> Coverage of the movement has repeatedly used historical comparison.<sup>12</sup> Photographs of demonstrators have repeatedly used the same framings as those of May '68, and even February 1934.<sup>13</sup> This photograph by Thomas Sampson directly re-creates Caron's *pavé* throwing figure.<sup>14</sup> The republican imagery of

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<sup>11</sup> Algan, Yann, Elizabeth Beasley, Daniel Cohen, Martial Foucault, and M. Péron. 'Qui sont les Gilets jaunes et leurs soutiens', *Technical report, CEPREMAP et CEVIPOF*, (2019).

<sup>12</sup> Andrew W.M. Smith, 'The Gilets Jaunes Protest: A Grand Refusal in an Age of Commuter Democracy', *Age of Revolutions*, December 13, 2018, <https://ageofrevolutions.com/2018/12/13/the-gilets-jaunes-protest-a-grand-refusal-in-an-age-of-commuter-democracy/>, (last accessed 14/08/19).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2018/dec/08/gilets-jaunes-protesters-clash-with-police-in-paris-in-pictures>, (last accessed 14/08/19); <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/photos/gilet-jaune?sort=mostpopular&mediatype=photography&phrase=gilet%20jaune>, (last accessed 14/08/19); <https://www.shutterstock.com/search/gilet+jaune>, (last accessed 14/08/19).

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Sampson/AFP/Getty Images, A protester launches a cobble stone at the police line, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2018/dec/08/gilets-jaunes-protesters-clash-with-police-in-paris-in-pictures#img-7>, (last accessed 14/08/19).

tricolours and Phrygian caps are prominent.<sup>15</sup> Protestors pose defiantly on a barricade, alongside photographers.<sup>16</sup>

On one Facebook page of supporters, a meme makes the explicit comparison between 1936, 1968 and the present day, using photographs overlaid with text. (Figure 8.1).<sup>17</sup> The images show demonstrations and a picket line, and in the case of 1936 and 1968, the opposite panels list the gains of both movements, including paid holidays, wage and minimum wage increases, and trade union bargaining rights. Opposite the image from 2018, the final panel shows a 100 Euro note and a mars bar, referencing the dismissive phrase ‘*Cent balles et un Mars*’ (100 Francs and a Mars bar), itself an allusion to a proposed 100 Euro increase to the minimum wage under certain circumstances.<sup>18</sup> This measure was widely decried as ‘crumbs’.<sup>19</sup> The juxtaposition of the gains of the previous movements points to what collective action can accomplish, and makes the concessions offer appear meagre, and the government’s response a callous dismissal.

The choice of photographs is also significant. The images from May ‘68 and 2018 both show demonstrators fighting police. State violence has once again become a major issue for protestors.<sup>20</sup> Photographs of militarised police follow the same conventions as those of the CRS fifty years ago.<sup>21</sup> In this context, understanding how photographs of social contestation operate gives us a critical eye on the present. Photographs are now part of rapidly diffusing

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<sup>15</sup> Kiran Ridley/Getty Images, 2 February 2019, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/1126916627>; 6 January 2019, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/1090416902>, (last accessed 14/08/19).

<sup>16</sup> Bertrand Guay, 24 November 2018, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/1064733956>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/cerveauxnondisponibles/posts/1927363177362558>, 12 December 2018, (last accessed 14/08/19).

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/davidsnug14000/photos/a.608414372542380/2137562976294171/?type=3&theater>, (last accessed 14/08/19); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1PriOI8px4>, (last accessed 14/08/19).

<sup>19</sup> Pauline Bock, ‘Emmanuel Macron’s speech failed to redefine his Presidency’, *New Statesman*, 11 December 2018, <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/2018/12/emmanuel-macron-s-speech-failed-redefine-his-presidency>, (last accessed 14/08/19).

<sup>20</sup> Chayma Drira and Henry Shah, ‘When policing becomes political: lessons from France’s gilets jaunes’, *Open Democracy*, 30 July 2019, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/when-policing-becomes-political-lessons-from-frances-gilets-jaunes/> (last accessed 13/08/19).

<sup>21</sup> Alexandros Michailidis, A Flash-ball being fired by a French policeman during a demonstration of the unions members and the ‘Gilets Jaunes’ movement marking Labor Day in Paris, France, 1 May 2019, [www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/1388435114](http://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/1388435114), (last accessed 14/08/19).

internet culture.<sup>22</sup> Yet in this instance, they are also a link between several different waves of contestation. The image clearly illustrates that the visual resonances of these two strike waves persist in contemporary contestation. However, it also points to the way in which these photographs acquire new meanings through their use in forms of protest, illustrating that we cannot fully grasp their significance without also examining this context.

Finally, this indicates new ways the photographic record is being used and experienced. The possibilities of digital sharing apply to the photographic record of the Popular Front and May '68 just as much as contemporary contestation. These photographic records are now being viewed in new ways. Anonymous image pages collate many of the photographs of May '68 discussed in this thesis, sometimes with attribution and sometimes without.<sup>23</sup> Some of these reify already existing 'iconic' images. Others contain anonymous images, presented alongside the iconic as part of a unifying theme – the images are iconic, not because of their individual status, but because they photograph an iconic event. Yet though the increasing separation of the photograph from an analogue basis has led to increased availability, it has also become subject to the changing nature of intellectual property. Proprietary collection such as Getty Images increasingly consolidated ownership over the photographic collections of older agencies like Gamma and Keystone France.<sup>24</sup> Getty has even acquired other image services such as Corbis.<sup>25</sup> Whilst available to browse, the photograph is increasingly commodified. These changes will affect how the photographic record is used and interpreted in the future.

Ultimately, the central aim of this thesis has been to establish close relationship between photographs of contestation and the social and political context in which they were

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<sup>22</sup> Limor Shifman, 'The cultural logic of photo-based meme genres', *Journal of Visual Culture* 13, 3 (2014), 340-358.

<sup>23</sup> <https://libcom.org/gallery/france-1968-photo-gallery>, <https://fotojournalismus.tumblr.com/tagged/may-68>.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/collections/gamma-keystone>, (last accessed 17/08/19).

<sup>25</sup> 'Bill Gates sells Corbis to Getty via Chinese Consortium', *British Journal of Photography*, 25 January 2016, [www.bjp-online.com/2016/01/bill-gates-sells-corbis-to-getty-via-chinese-consortium/](http://www.bjp-online.com/2016/01/bill-gates-sells-corbis-to-getty-via-chinese-consortium/), (last accessed 17/08/19).

produced. It also has tried to show how subsequent use and reproduction of the photographs has been entangled with the historiography of the strikes. The exhibitions of the past few years have provided a useful lens for analysing the current place of photographs in the historical imagination of these movements, but an example such as this shows their memory is still being mobilised to support and justify collective action. The photographic image remains central and is increasingly itself the focus of critical attention. However, this must consider the full web of influences that shaped the creation and interpretation of the photographic record and the chain of historical processes which has brought them to the present.

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## Appendix A: Selected Photographs



Figure 1.1 - Collection Roger-Viollet, Manifestation du 6 février 1934, à Paris, organisée par les ligues de droite. Affrontements place de la Concorde. RV-48774.



Figure 1.2 - David Seymour, des ouvriers se distraient pendant l'occupation de l'usine.



Figure 1.3 - Grève aux usines Renault, gardes mobiles dans l'usine. Boulogne-Billancourt (Seine puis Hauts-de-Seine), 25 November 1938, Excelsior – L'Equipe/Roger-Viollet, 86619-30.



Figure 1.4 - Gilles Caron, Student riots, Rue Saint Jacques, Paris, France, May 6th.



Figure 1.5 - Life, 24 May 1968, 30-31.



Figure 1.6 - Action, 07/05/1968, 6.





Figure 1.7 - Bruno Barbey, Demonstrators on the day of Gilles Tautin's funeral, 15 June 1968.



Figure 1.8 - Marc Riboud, Students removed cobblestones from a street in Paris.

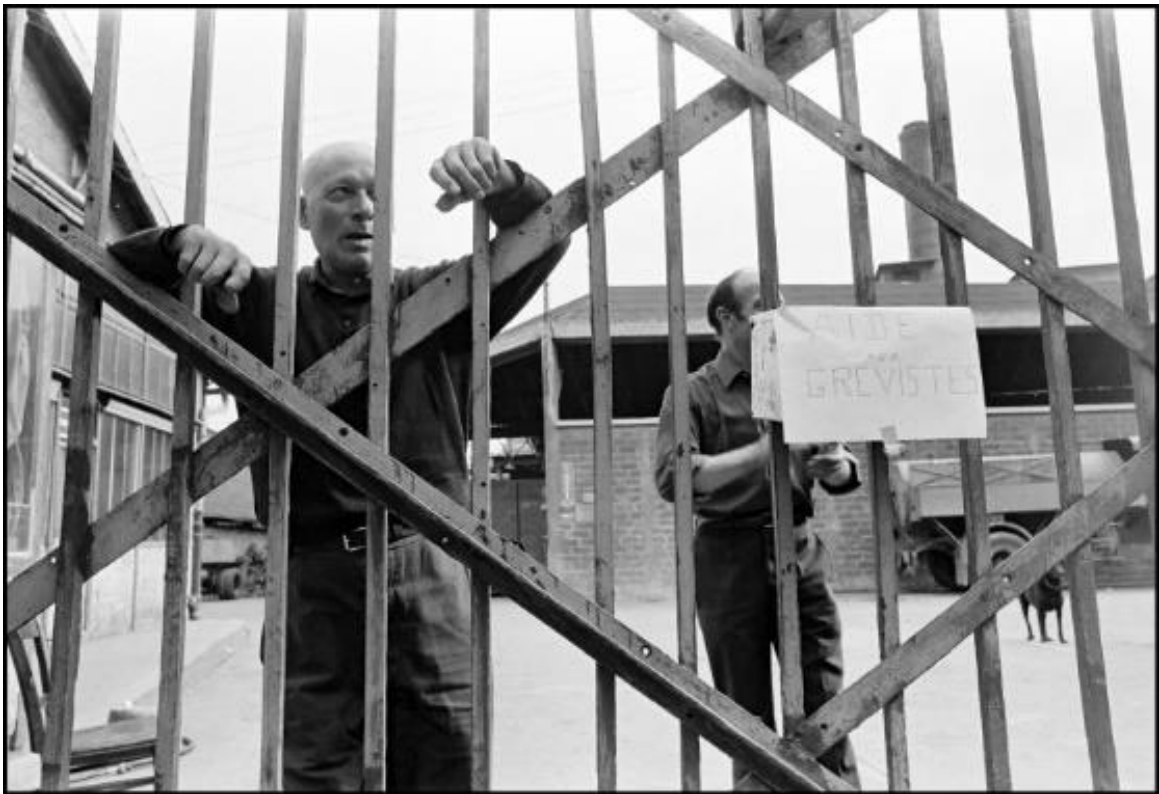


Figure 2.1 - Guy Le Querrec, 13th arrondissement. During strike, workers greet the trade union demonstrating. Friday, 24 May 1968.



Figure 2.2 - Service photographique de l'Humanité, Partie de volley-ball dans la cour de la usine Renault occupée.



Figure 2.3 - Jean-Claude Seine, Piquet de grève. Usine Gobin-Daudé. Asnières. May '68.



Figure 2.4 - David Seymour, Parisian suburbs. National strike for the 40 hour week, paid holidays and collective agreements. Workers during a sit-in at their factory. June 1936.



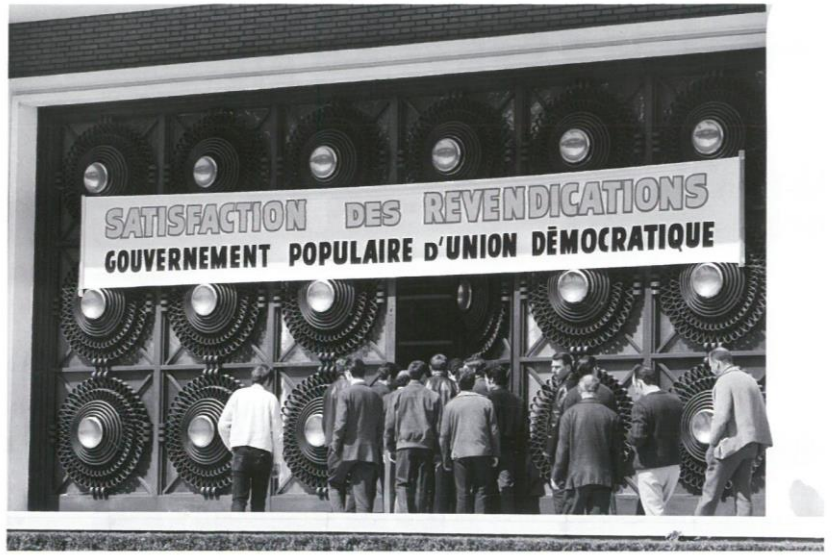
110.



111.



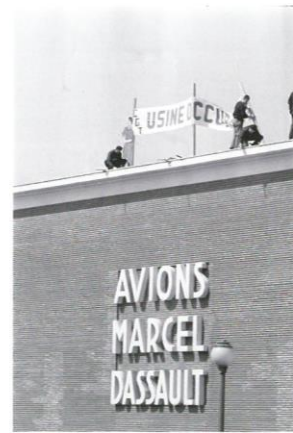
112.



115.



113.



114.

113/114. 2 vues de reprise  
du travail des salariés  
de l'usine Dassault:  
le décrochage de la banderole.  
Saint-Cloud (92), juin 1968.  
Correspondant de l'Humanité.  
Négatif NB, 24 x 36 mm.  
AD93, 97 Fi/680178.

96

Figure 2.5 – 110-112, Reprise du travail des salariés du dépôt d'autobus 'Flandre'. Pantin, 6 June 1968, AD93, 35 Fi/2006; 113-115, Reprise du travail des salariés de l'usine Dassault, Saint-Cloud, June 1968, AD93, 97 Fi/680178, Mai 68: Instantanés d'Humanité, 96.





Figure 2.6 – ADSSD, AD93, 98 Fi/680018, Mai 68: Instantanés d'Humanité, 61.



Figure 2.7 - Guy Le Querrec, Boulogne-Billancourt. During the strike at the Renault factory. Friday, 17 May 1968.





Figure 2.8 - Bruno Barbey, Boulogne-Billancourt. A dummy in the form of a factory boss being hung outside the Renault car factory, which is on strike, 17 May '68.



Figure 2.9 - Berliet-Liberté, Institut d'histoire sociale CGT du Rhône.



Figure 2.10 - Gilles Caron, Action, 7, 11 June 1968, 4.



Figure 2.11 – Elie Kagan, Jacques Sauvageot speaking into a loudhailer, and a small group of immigrant workers.



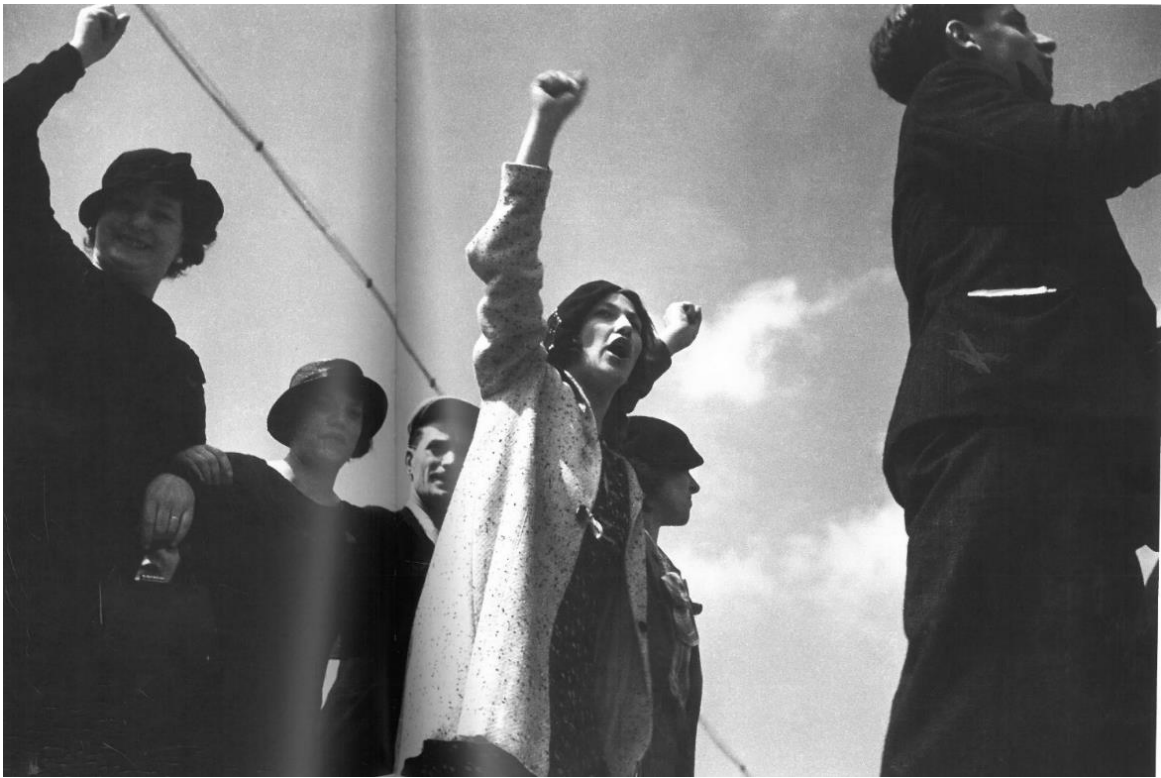


Figure 3.1 - André Kertész, Rally at Buffalo Stadium in Montrouge, 1935.



Figure 3.2 Bruno Barbey, 6th arrondissement. Boulevard Saint Germain. Students hurling projectiles against the police. 6 May 1968.



Figure 3.3 - Gérard-Aimé, March 22 night's at Nanterre college, 22 March, 1968.

**ACTION** 7 MAI 1968 n°1  
Prix minimum: 0,50 F

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**REPRESSION: FAIRE FACE!**

**MERCI ET ADIEU MONSIEUR ROCHE**

Le 3 mai, Jean Roche, recteur de l'Académie de Paris a fait donner les gardes mobiles contre les étudiants. Il a pris ses responsabilités. Page 2 le récit des six heures qui ont ébranlé la Sorbonne.

**CHIENS DE GARDE**

Le mouvement contre la répression a contraint tous les gardiens de l'ordre à se démasquer. Etudiants, vous êtes à la une des journaux. Voyez comment on parle de vous.

Plusieurs centaines de gardes mobiles ont bravé vendredi dernier une poignée d'étudiants qui se firent à un de leur club traditionnel aux alentours de la Sorbonne. « Ces gardes mobiles ne sont pas des chiens de garde de police, ils sont tout de même des privilégiés. Les manifestations de la Sorbonne le leur ont rappelé l'autre jour de la même dr. » Ils à jurer - figure - y a permis son démasquage de - ils à jurer - mais ça n'est rien par rapport à ce qui s'est passé à la Sorbonne. (Paris-Sud)

Une faculté fut brutalement percutée - Sorbonne la Faculté. (Suite page 3)

**Pourquoi nous nous battons :**

La presse et la radio nous ont dit: « Quelques centaines de milliers d'étudiants se sont rassemblés au lycée de l'Université. La presse et la radio nous ont dit: « Ces gens sont des héros. La presse et la radio nous ont dit de que quelques centaines d'étudiants - font

signer la violence au quartier latin, et maintenant nous aux étudiants dévot de travailler en paix. LA PRESSE, LA RADIO VOUS MENTENT. Parlez-le, en maintenant vous mêmes. (Suite page 4)

**Alain Geismar: «Nous ne maintiendrons pas l'ordre»**

Une déclaration du secrétaire général du Syndicat national de l'enseignement supérieur.

« L'Université, berceau de la culture, les professeurs, les jeunes professeurs, il est plus que temps de débarrasser tout cet appareil, ce régime et cette organisation au service du pouvoir. La Sorbonne doit être fondamentalement renouée. Un autre engagement est à prendre. Nous nous y sommes engagés avec un certain succès. (Suite page 3)

**Un bruit court avec persistance: ROCHE voudrait démissionner. Soutenez votre recteur. Téléphones-lui A Odéon 24-13**

« FÊTEZ-VOUS AVEC UN PAIN - COMME A PARIS ? »

Figure 3.4 - Elie Kagan, Police at the Sorbonne Action, 1, 13 May 1968.





Figure 3.5 - Janine Niépce, Événements de mai-juin 68. Grève, occupation des Galeries Lafayette.



Figure 3.6. – Robert Doisneau, Fête de l'Humanité, 1945.



Figure 3.7 – Henri Cartier Bresson, Paris. 6th arrondissement. The Ecole des Beaux-Arts (Fine Arts School). May 1968.

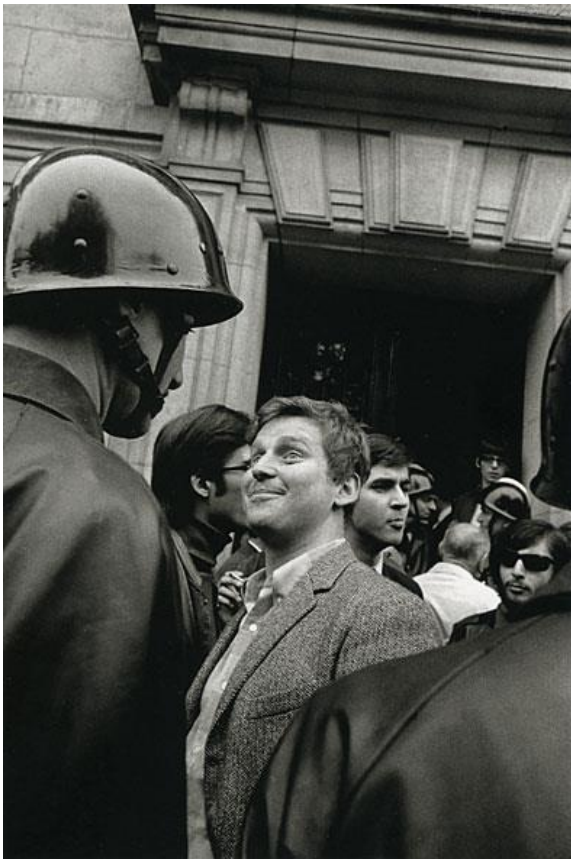


Figure 4.1 Gilles Caron, Daniel Cohn-Bendit face à un CRS devant la Sorbonne, 6 may 1968.



Figure 4.2 - 'Nous sommes tous indésirables' Atelier Populaire poster, based on a photograph by Jacques Haillet.



Figure 4.3 - Jean-Pierre Rey, 13 mai 1968 - La Marianne de mai .



Figure 4.4 – Gökşin Sipahioğlu, ‘in the aftermath of the clashes on rue Gay-Lussac, a girl is released by the police’.





Figure 4.5 – Henri Cartier Bresson, Paris. Champs-Élysées. 30 May 1968. March in support of French President Charles De Gaulle, from the Place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe.

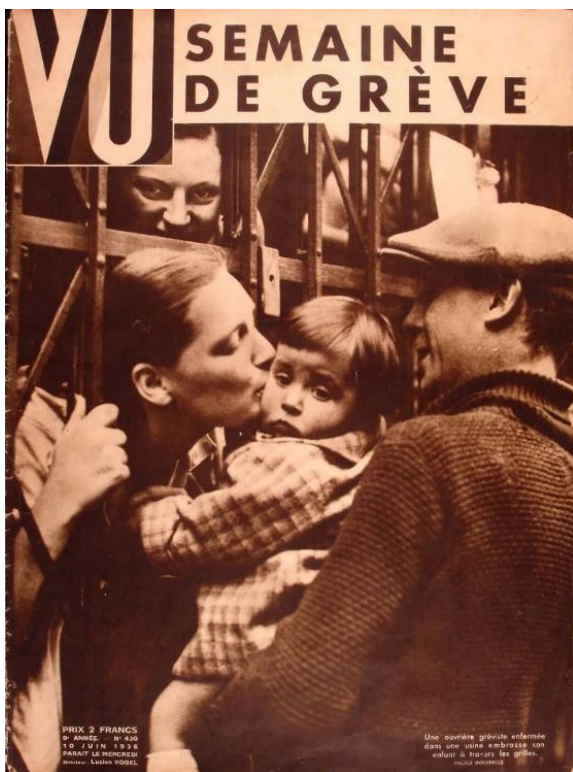


Figure 4.6 - VU, 10 juin 1936, Collections Musée de l’Histoire Vivante. Une gréviste embrasse son enfant à travers les grilles de son usine.



Figure 4.7 – Robert Capa, Paris. Place de la Bastille. Popular Front demonstration on July 14th 1936.



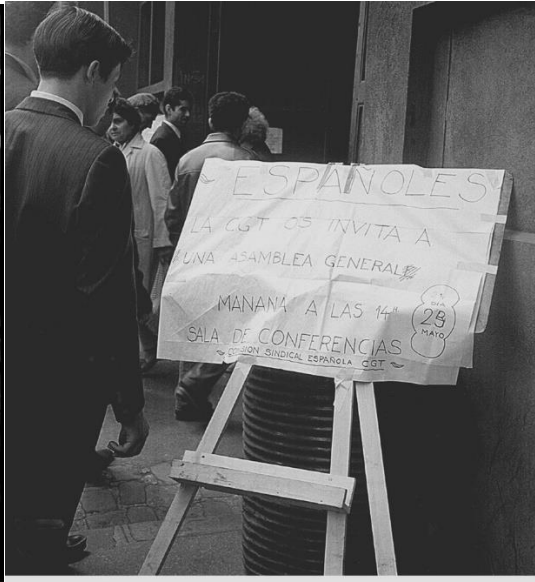
Figure 5.1 - Marc Riboud, North Vietnam, Look, 21 January 1969, 19.



Figure 5.2 - Action, no. 17, 25 June.



Greve Renault-Billancourt - 20 mai 1968 - toutes les nationalités...



0691/1-5- Greve chez Renault Billancourt 19 mai 1968

Figure 5.3 - Gerald Bloncourt, Renault, la forteresse ouvrière.

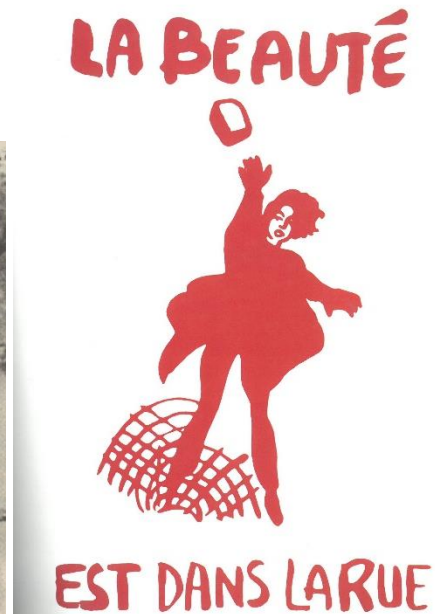
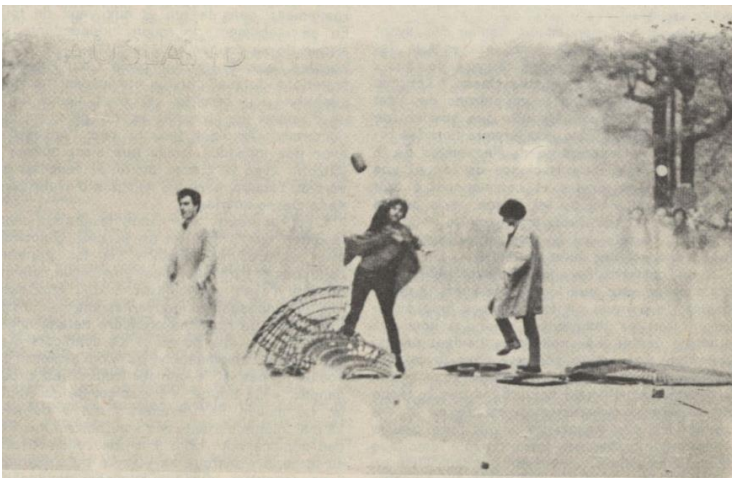


Figure 5.4 - Avant Garde 13, 18 May 1968, 5; Atelier Populaire 'Beauty is in the street'.





Figure 7.1 – Macron unveils the stamp.



Figure 7.2 - Voila, 273, 13 June 1936.



Figure 7.3 - Jeunes gens dans la mer à La Baule en 1937. Keystone

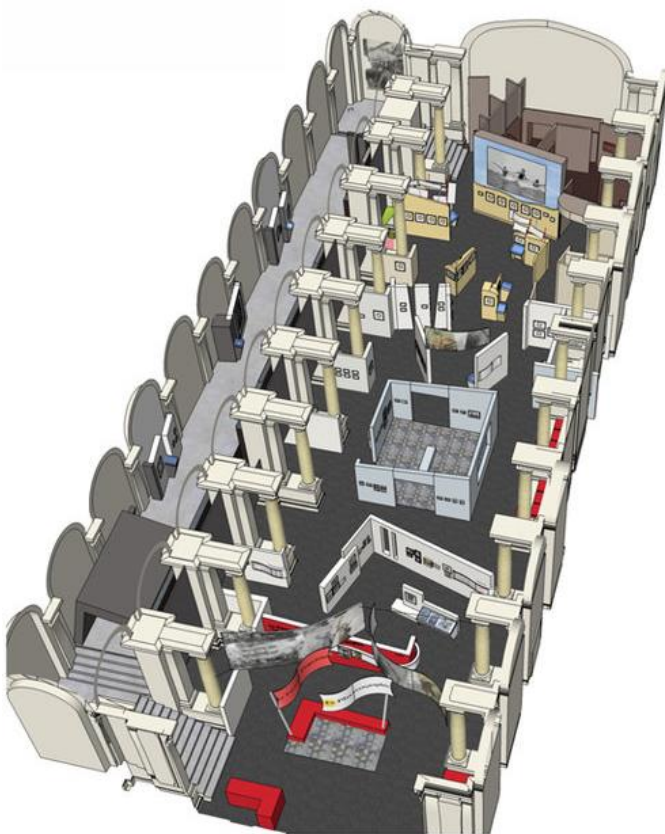


Figure 7.4 - Conception Scénographique et graphique, Sylvie Coutant et Anne Levacher, Mairie de Paris, 2016.





Figure 7.5 - VU, 23 September 1936.



Figure 7.6 - Gaston Paris, Enfant devant une bâche sur laquelle figure un dessin de la sculpture La Marseillaise de Rude au stade vélodrome Buffalo, Montrouge (Seine), 14 June 1936.



Figure 7.7 – Pierre Jamet, Lucienne Joudachkine sur la grille de l’auberge de Villeneuve sur Auvers 1937.

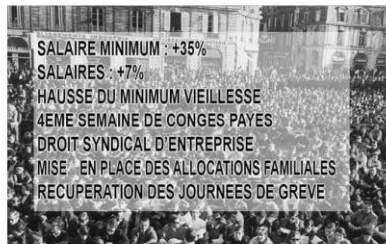
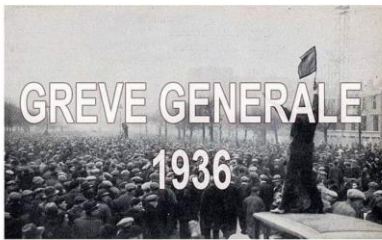


Figure 8.1 – Gilets Jaunes meme.