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A whole new world:
Global revolution and Australian social movements in the long
Sixties

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Abstract

This thesis explores Australian social movements during the long Sixties through a transnational prism, identifying how the flow of people and ideas across borders was central to the growth and development of diverse campaigns for political change. By making use of a variety of sources—from archives and government reports to newspapers, interviews and memoirs—it identifies a broadening of the radical imagination within movements seeking rights for Indigenous Australians, the lifting of censorship, women's liberation, the ending of the war in Vietnam and many others. It locates early global influences, such as the Chinese Revolution and increasing consciousness of anti-racist struggles in South Africa and the American South, and the ways in which ideas from these and other overseas sources became central to the practice of Australian social movements. This was a process aided by activists' travel. Accordingly, this study analyses the diverse motives and experiences of Australian activists who visited revolutionary hotspots from China and Vietnam to Czechoslovakia, Algeria, France and the United States: to protest, to experience or to bring back lessons. While these overseas exploits, breathlessly recounted in articles, interviews and books, were transformative for some, they also exposed the limits of what a transnational politics could achieve in a local setting. Australia also became a destination for the period's radical activists, provoking equally divisive responses. A fearful government controversially barred many international activists, from Marxist economists to Black Power radicals, while those who successfully crossed the border, in particular international student-activists, mobilised Australians to fight repressive governments in their homelands. Through navigating these underexplored areas of the recent past this thesis unearths how and why the idea of global revolution affected a range of activists, and the practice of radical politics, locating Australia as a peripheral yet engaged participant in what historians now call the global Sixties.

Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

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Publications during candidature

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"'Light from the East': Travel to China and the transformation of Australian activism in the long Sixties," *The Sixties: A journal of history, politics and culture* 6, No. 1 (Forthcoming, June 2013).

"A Dangerous Disease to Catch: Overseas Student Activism in Australia during the 1970s." Australian Policy and History. February 2013. Available at http://aph.org.au/a-dangerous-disease-to-catch-overseas-student-activism-in-australia-during-the-1970s

"Travel, Politics and the limits of 'liminality' during 'Australia's Sixties,'" *PORTAL: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 10, No. 1 (January 2013): 1-20.

"'There is no solidarity, peace of friendship with dictatorship': Australians at the World Festival of Youth and Students, 1957-1968," *History Australia* 9, No. 3 (December 2012): 175-194.

"Bacchanalian Carnival or Political Event? Remembering the Sixties in Australia," *Melbourne Historical Journal* 40, No. 1 (2012): 149-167.

"Up the new channels: Student Activism in Brisbane during 'Australia's Sixties,'" *Crossroads* 5, No. 2 (2011): 75-86.

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List of Abbreviations

AAPA	Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association
ACS	Australia-China Society
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ALR	Australian Left Review
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
AUS	Australian Union of Students
BLF	Builders Labourer's Federation
CAP	Congress of African People
CDA	Centre for Democratic Action
Cominform	Communist Information Bureau
Comintern	Communist International
CPA	Communist Party of Australia
CPA (M-L)	Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)
CPC	Communist Party of China
DFPA	Defence Forces Protection Act
FCAATSI	Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders
GPCR	Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
ISSW	International Students Solidarity Week
MLC	Monash Labor Club
NLF	National Liberation Front
NTC	National Tribal Council
NUAUS	National Union of Australian University Students
OPAL	One People of Australia League
OSS	Overseas Student Service
PPTUM	Pan-Pacific Trade Union Movement
PRC	People's Republic of China
SAI	Students for Australian Independence
SDA	Students for Democratic Action
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SNCC	Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee
SOS	Save Our Sons
SRC	Student Representative Council
UAW	Union of Australian Women
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UQ	The University of Queensland
VAAL	Victorian Aborigines Advancement League
VAC	Vietnam Action Committee
WFYS	World Festival of Youth and Students
YCAC	Youth Campaign Against Conscription

Introduction

Between the two departures

Early in 1957, Rex Mortimer, lawyer and self-professed "part-time apparatchik" in the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), travelled behind what was often labelled the 'Bamboo Curtain' into Red China. Like so many others, Mortimer was shocked and dispirited by the revelations of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech and the invasion of Hungary in 1956, and hoped that several months studying in China would constitute "a powerful stimulant for jaded commitment".[1] Yet, first-hand experiences of the Chinese Party's open, democratic practices and their belief that national realities rather than abstract theories should drive political activism saw him only further question the direction of the Australian Party's leadership. Mortimer and other young Party members began to see this leadership through "spectacles supplied by Mao", and would soon use their experiences of China's pre-Great Leap Forward openness to move the Australian Party in a new, more open and questioning direction.[2]

Nearly 20 years later, another young Australian went abroad with a different set of objectives, and encountered a markedly different reception. Arriving in Singapore in December 1974, President-elect of the Australian Union of Students (AUS) Ian Macdonald was arrested by immigration authorities, believing his stated intentions of "doing some shopping", much like the 40,000 other Australians who visited the island state yearly, were less than sincere.[3] Macdonald soon admitted that his real aim was to further connections with militant students in Singapore and Malaysia, who were undergoing repression via draconian laws and kangaroo courts, knowledge he had gained from an increasingly vocal group of South-East Asian radicals on Australian campuses. Given 24 hours to leave the territory, Macdonald told the media upon his return to Australia that his expulsion illustrated how the

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[1] Rex Mortimer, "The Benefits of a Liberal Education," *Meanjin* 35, No. 2 (June 1976): 118
[2] Ibid, 121.
[3] *New Nation* transcript, 13 December 1974 in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

spectre of a transnational student movement was clearly "a dangerous disease…to catch" for beleaguered South-East Asian governments.[4]

If the Sixties were, as Australian historians Robin Gerster and Jan Bassett put it, "a decade of transit and of transition, of comings and goings, of cultural traffic", then these two disparate and seemingly unconnected moments of global engagement encapsulate the rough parameters of what is now called the long Sixties.[5] It was a period of great hopes and dreams sandwiched between the conservatism of the 1950s and the rise of the New Right, and one that was experienced, perhaps more than any before it, as truly global. "Youthful dissidence", an American Central Intelligence Agency report from September 1968 warned, was "a world-wide phenomenon". "The revolution in communication [and] the ease of travel" ensured that "riots in West Berlin, Paris and New York and sit-ins in more than twenty other countries in recent months [have] caught the attention of the whole world", the report ominously warned.[6] Daniel Cohn-Bendit, French student leader and self-professed international revolutionary, perhaps best captured a similar global consciousness when he reminisced: "Paris, New York, Berkeley, Rome, Prague, Rio, Mexico City, Warsaw—those were the places of a revolt that stretched all around the globe and captured the hearts and dreams of a whole generation".[7] Such sentiments were not limited to the student ghettos either. Che Guevara's call for the creation of "two, three, many Vietnams" mirrored the multiplication of anti-colonial struggles across the Third World, while other dispossessed or marginalised groups from Indigenous Australians to women and homosexuals, mobilised these ideas of liberation to their own ends.[8] It was, then, a period in which the utopian idea of a global revolution beyond classes, nations and various other artificial human divisions seemed not only possible but perhaps inevitable.

Activists and governments alike, then, believed that what Simon Price has termed an "imagined community of global revolt" underlay the deep connections and

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[4] Michael Richardson, "Students strain friendship," *The Age*, 17 December 1974, 8.
[5] Robin Gerster and Jan Bassett, *Seizures of Youth: The Sixties and Australia* (South Yarra, Vic: Hyland House, 1991), 103.
[6] Quoted in Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany & The United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1.
[7] Daniel Cohn-Bendit quoted in Klimke, *The Other Alliance,* 2.
[8] On Guevara's call and his relevance to Sixties movements see Jeremy Prestholdt, "Ressurecting Che: radicalism, the transnational imagination and the politics of heroes," *Journal of Global History* 7, No. 3 (November 2012): 506-526.

networks that 'made' the Sixties.[9] Despite the fact that such activists "never know their fellow-members, met them, or even hear of them", to borrow Benedict Anderson's description of imagined national communities, "in the minds of each lives the image of their communion".[10] Or, in the words of University of Queensland lecturer, anti-Vietnam war activist and New Left theorist Dan O'Neill, it was "[a]s if we had all been moles burrowing along in our own different undergrounds, who came out into an open space of emotion and thought blinking at one another". "We discovered, with some interest", O'Neill continued, "that we were probably part of an international 'new left'".[11]

This thesis uncovers the processes whereby social movement activists like Mortimer, Macdonald, O'Neill and many more 'became' transnational during the Sixties. In doing so, it looks deeply into a world now largely condemned to what E.P. Thompson once so aptly labelled "the enormous condescension of posterity".[12] Australia's cultural cringe and a lack of sustained academic engagement have ensured that Sixties dissent in the antipodes have merited only isolated attention. Even the little work that has been undertaken is often dismissive, with Lani Russell bemoaning the "Australian exceptionalism" that presents Australians of the Sixties as deeply conservative.[13] Activism arrived "by airmail subscription", as Gerster and Bassett remind us in their controversial cultural history of the period. Social commentator Hugh Mackay strikes a similarly dismissive tone: channelling Prime Minister Harold Holt's reprimand of his constituents as "a nation of lotus-eaters—hedonistic, materialistic and lazy". Mackay argues that while perhaps "intrigued, saddened, even alarmed" by the global struggles of the era, Australians were "not really engaged"—at

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[9] Simon Prince, "The Global Revolt of 1968 and Northern Ireland," *Historical Journal* 49, No. 3 (2006): 851.

[10] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6. For further examples of historians of the sixties using Anderson theories, see Thomas Ekman Jorgensen, "Utopia and Disillusion: Shattered Hopes of the Copenhagen Counterculture," in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, edited by Axel Schmidt and Detlef Siegfried, 33 (New York: Berghahn Book, 2006) and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the road: internationalism, orientalism and feminism during the Vietnam War* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2013), 2-3.

[11] Dan O'Neill, "The rise and fall of student consciousness," *Semper Floreat,* 20 May 1976, 12.

[12] Edward Palmer Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1963), 8.

[13] Lani Russell, "Today the Students, Tomorrow the Workers! Radical Student Politics and the Australian Labour Movement, 1960-1972" (PhD Thesis, The University of Technology Sydney, 1999), 450.

least until well into the 1970s.[14]

These public memorialisations, as is so often the case, neglect more than they remember. As Kristin Ross notes in her investigation of France's 1968, the period has "been overtaken by its subsequent representations", and the popular image of the Sixties is often framed by the ideological coordinates of the present.[15] Yet, if one relies on the ephemeral tracts, the student and underground newspapers, the organisational minutes and the often overblown reactions of mainstream media and various government agencies then it is possible to break through these misunderstandings, finding "a whole new world of themes and preoccupations," as O'Neill puts it.[16] It is the narratives of the well known as well as ordinary and often overlooked activists—young and old, black and white, women and men—that emerge from these documents, and which form the primary material for this thesis.

Employing a case study approach, this project analyses the expanding global imagination and practice of social movements by drawing together a series of seemingly unconnected personalities and stories. Those like Mortimer who travelled to Red China in the 1950s, for instance, as well as Sydney and Monash University students who created a furore in the mid 1960s by donating funds to the National Liberation Front (NLF), Aboriginal activists who used globally-mobile ideas of Black Power to quicken the pace of change, and overseas students who used Australia as a base to protest crimes in their homelands. A thorough exploration of how this imagination came to be, what it meant for those involved, and the debates it engendered is central to this analysis. The politics of solidarity with overseas struggles as well as the place of global ideas and practices in the radical press of the period will be explored, highlighting an evolving "ethic of solidarity" with overseas movements and the increasing absorption and contestation of overseas ideas and theories. The role that public and private spaces played in radical political and everyday life also cannot be ignored.[17] Analysing the ways in which "activists

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[14] Gerster and Bassett, *Seizures of Youth*, 35; Hugh Mackay, "Australia: A Nation of Lotus-Eaters," in *1968: Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt*, eds. Phillip Gassert and Martin Klimke, 73 (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2009).

[15] Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its afterlives* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 1.

[16] O'Neill, "The Rise and Fall," 12.

[17] For examples of work exploring the role of the radical imaginary, spaces and press in the international sixties literature, see Prince, "The Global Revolt"; Jennifer Roth Hosek, "'Subaltern Nationalism' and the West Berlin Anti-Authoritarians," *German Politics and Society* 26, No. 1 (Spring 2008): 57-81 and John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

mapped characteristics and qualities of themselves onto the city's surfaces" as Belinda Davis explains in her work on West Germany, through imagining and constructing globally attuned locations and spaces of dissent while acting out these ideas in the public domain, is important to contextualising this expanding global imagination and its concrete impacts.[18]

Yet, while an activist could read about and attempt to copy an overseas event or study a foreign theorist, experiencing these ideas first hand meant not only that they could be better understood, but also imbued a returning traveller with a new authority or authenticity. Often denigrated as "revolutionary tourism", this thesis makes the argument that travel by a diverse array of Australian activists to overseas locations like Algeria, China, Cuba, France, Vietnam, Czechoslovakia and of course the United States were more than just fleeting adventures. Travel played a role in the discovery, dissemination and uptake of new ideas about radical politics and culture, and provides historians a window into the dispute and contestation of global ideas in local environments. Arrivals, however, could be just as important as departures. The arrival of people and ideas, whether in the form overseas students, itinerant radicals or 'obscene' protest publications, proved to be just as productive and controversial. Visitors from the second and third words, the America and Europe all applied for, and were often denied, access to Australia. Their experiences provide a view of how activists responded to these border controls and created alliances with those who made it through, as well as how government and security agencies tried to understand these developments. Perceiving this transnational imagination from the perspective of those in power as well as those outside of the national narrative forms an important part of this thesis. Government and security services struggled to understand these new developments within old Cold War frames, while overseas students both challenged home governments and their place in Australian foreign policy through forging a transnational alliance with Australian students.

In arguing for this expanded global imagination, I do not pretend that previous activism avoided international engagement. Indeed, Australian radicalism has always had a global dimension. The laborites, socialists, single taxers and first wave feminists that characterised 1890s social movements existed within "a highly trans-national

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[18] Belinda Davis, "The City as Theater of Protest: West Berlin and West Germany, 1962-1983," in *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics and Everyday Life*, eds. Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse, 247 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).

world of political ideas and cultural cross-fertilisation", taking lessons from the suffragettes, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the often misconstrued ideas of Karl Marx to form their supposedly *sans doctrines* radicalism.[19] By the 1930s, however, the degeneration of the previously inspiring revolution in the Soviet Union saw a closing of this global imagination. What the Communist International (Comintern), and later the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) said was often received as gospel by communists and fellow travellers who viewed global events and political opportunities through a Soviet lens.[20] The Sixties saw not only the multiplication of new groups outside of this orbit, but the Old Left's uneven globalisation as well.

If Australian radicals were heavily blinkered by Moscow, the population in general maintained an equally distorted view of international developments. Examples of global engagement like small-scale activism around work conditions in China during the 1920s, the blocking by wharf unions of pig iron shipments to Japan in the 1930s, and more popular support for the post-World War II Indonesian independence movement stand almost alone against the all-encompassing 'yellow peril', given a red hue after the Chinese revolution and the threat of falling dominos to Australia's immediate north.[21] This political culture was only further stultified by the Cold War and the Australian government's fearful attitude towards decolonisation. The Liberal government of Robert Gordon Menzies and his successors (1949-1972) fostered an attitude of aspirational consumption domestically, while delegitimising dissent towards Australia's increasingly outdated imperial loyalties and its overtly racist, increasingly defunct, White Australia Policy.[22] It was against this closed mind that

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[19] Nick Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and Villains: The Rise and Fall of the early Australian Labor Party* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011), 5. For more on the transnational world of 1890s radicalism see Bruce Scates, *A New Australia: citizenship, radicalism and the First Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[20] For a general history of the Communist Party during this period see Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: the Communist Party of Australia from origins to illegality* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1999), and for a thorough look at the international politics of the CPA up until 1945, see Robert Bozinovski, "The Communist Party of Australia and Proletarian Internationalism, 1928-1945" (PhD Thesis, Victoria University, 2008).

[21] On the pig iron controversy, see Greg Mallory, *Uncharted Waters: Social Responsibility in Australian Trade Unions* (Annerley, QLD: Self Published, 2005); for activism around Chinese labour conditions see Sophie Loy-Wilson, "'Liberating' Asia: Strikes and Protests in Sydney and Shanghai, 1920-1939," *History Workshop Journal* 72, No. 1 (October 2011): 74-102; on protests around Indonesian independence see Heather Goodall, "Port Politics: Indian Seamen, Australian Unions and Indonesian Independence, 1945-47", *Labour History* 94 (May 2008): 43-68.

[22] On Australian society and culture during the Cold War, see Ann Curthoys and John Merritt, eds., *Australia's First Cold War, 1945-1953: Society, communism and culture* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1984) and John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties: private sentiment and political culture in Menzies'*

many individuals and groups sought to rebel from the late 1950s onwards, often by moving beyond the physical and ideological borders of the nation-state.

Travellers, whatever their motivation or (lack of) political inclination, have recently provided scholars with a new way of exploring Australian relations with the outside world, from the bottom rather than the top. Agnieszka Sobocinska's thesis on the people's diplomacy of various Australian students, tourists, soldiers, journalists and businesspeople with Asia in the post-war period has revealed how these travellers developed complex understandings of the region, which often challenged those of the Australian government and broader society.[23] Other work has told of how the personal experiences of Australian soldiers serving in the Pacific War opened minds to the idea of an independent and free Asia.[24] Drawing upon and building on this emerging corpus of work, the current project not only explores how and why Australian activists became intrigued by globally mobile ideas of Sixties revolt, but how transnational networks and the travel of social movement activists brought lessons from these struggles to an increasingly rebellious local environment.

Social Movements

This is a thesis about social movements; but what is a social movement? And what (or when) was Australia's Sixties? More ink has been spilled on the Sixties from all corners of the globe than on any other recent decade. It is a common cultural stereotype and literary allusion, not to mention trope in political discussion and debate, playing the role of either "unfulfilled dream or persistent nightmare".[25] Then-French President Nicholas Sarkozy declared in 2007 that the decade's "toxic" legacy needed to be "liquidated", while questions around who did or smoked what during the decade have framed every American presidential election since Bill Clinton's victory

Australia (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2000). For Australian fear of a newly awoken decolonisation movement, see Jennifer Clark, _Aborigines and activism: race, aborigines and the coming of the sixties to Australia_ (Crawley, WA: UWA Press, 2008), chapters 1-2 and David Walker, "Nervous Outsiders: Australia and the 1955 Africa-Asia Conference in Bandung," _Australian Historical Studies_ 36, No. 125 (2005): 40-59.

[23] Agnieszka Sobocinska, "People's Diplomacy: Australian Travel, Tourism and Relationships with Asia, 1941-2009" (PhD Thesis, The University of Sydney, 2010).

[24] Lachlan Grant, "The Second AIF and the End of Empires: Soldiers' attitudes towards a 'Free Asia,'" _Australian Journal of Politics and History_ 57, No. 4 (December 2011): 479-94.

[25] Timothy S. Brown, "United States of Amnesia? 1968 in the USA," in _Memories of 1968: International Perspectives_, eds. Ingo Cornils and Sarah Waters, 131 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010).

in 1992.[26] Its temporal dimensions are equally divisive. Did the Sixties as a cultural phenomenon or moment start in the United States for instance, with the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955-6, the Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins in 1960, or the foundation of Students for a Democratic Society in 1962? Conversely, did the period end with the Manson murders and SDS's collapse into the Weather Underground, both in 1969, or rather with the Kent State murders and the failed university strike wave of 1970?[27] And even further questions of temporal dimension are posed when one moves away from the 'hot spots' of rebellion. Czechoslovakia had a condensed Sixties, for instance, roughly equivalent with the yearlong 'Prague Spring' of liberalisation, while the high point of Malaysia's student rebellion only came between 1971 and 1974, to give one example of the oft-forgotten Third World. The realities of such geographically and temporally isolated movements sharing similar rationales, tactics and connections has led scholars to postulate a 'long Sixties', one where precursors and after-effects are given greater voice.

Such a view is, however, only now seeping through to the antipodes, with the belief that Australian radicalism was a stilted 1970s rehash of events overseas now holding significant popular sway. The election of Labor's Gough Whitlam in December of 1972 is often pictured as the radical wave finally making landfall, while that government's inglorious dismissal three years later captures the tide's quick retreat.[28] Donald Horne's *Time of Hope* provides a more nuanced reading, positing 1966 as the beginning of a process that precipitated and facilitated Whitlam's election, a time frame he shares with Nathan Hollier's cultural history of the decade.[29] But this categorisation, marked by the end of Menzies' reign, is only one amongst many. Kristy Yeats posits 1964 as seeing "the first stirrings of a new type of activism" around American civil rights, while Barry York and Ann Curthoys, make a case for

[26] For France, see Daniel A. Gordon, "Liquidating May 68: Generational Trajectories of the 2007 Presidential Candidates," *Modern and Contemporary France* 16, No. 2 (May 2008): 143-59; for the role of similar discourses in the USA see Brown, "United States of Amnesia?".

[27] See Andrew Hunt, "'When did the Sixties happen?' Searching for New Directions," *Journal of Social History* 33, No. 1 (Autumn 1999): 147-61 for a look at debates on the periodisation of America's sixties.

[28] A particularly glaring example of this was the ABC's recent documentary, *Whitlam: The Power and the Passion*. Paul Clarke, dir., *Whitlam: The Power and the Passion* (Sydney: ABC1, 2013).

[29] Donald Horne, *Time of Hope: Australia 1966-1972* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1980); Nathan Hollier, "From Hope to Disillusion? A Literary and Cultural History of the Whitlam Period, 1966-1975" (PhD Thesis, Victoria University, 2006).

1965, due to the introduction of conscription and the Freedom Ride.[30]

Jennifer Clark's work *Aborigines and Activism* posits the late 1950s as key, in particular the founding in 1957 of the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement. The March 1960 Sharpeville massacre in South Africa is presented as another marker by Clark, with this global crisis seeing the decade-proper's first large-scale protest troubled birth of a radical constituency.[31] Nick Irving, in his forthcoming thesis on the transnational dimensions of anti-war protests, makes a similar argument for an earlier start to the decade's reverberations, as do Shirleene Robinson and Julie Ustinoff in their edited volume *The 1960s in Australia*.[32] This confusion of dates has led historians like Clark, following from the work of Frederic Jameson, to posit a "60s phenomenon", a conceptual Sixties rather than a specific and confining date range. For while arguments may rage on where and when these events began or ended, "none deny that dramatic and irreversible changes took place somewhere from the late 1950s through to the mid 1970s".[33] It is the role of historians, then, to locate and understand the ideas, debates and passions that fired various historical actors rather than impose a constricting temporal dimension upon them.

This clearly unsettled, if not obfuscating, debate around beginnings and endings becomes yet more problematic when the question of social movements is posed. Such questions do not only arise as a result of the long debate about the exact dividing line between the Old and New Left, or of the "spectre" of student politics Timothy Brown claims to be haunting Sixties history, but rather as a result of the vast array of Sixties movements that transcended these boundaries.[34] While it is relatively easy to cast a

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[30] Kristy Yeats, "Australian New Left Politics, 1956-1972" (PhD Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 2009), 46; Barry York, *Student Revolt: La Trobe University 1967-73* (ACT: Nicholas Press, 1989); Ann Curthoys, *Freedom Ride: A Freedom Rider Remembers* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2002).

[31] Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, 132-4.

[32] Nick Irving, "Global Thought, Local Action: A Transnational Reassessment of the Australian Anti-War Movement, 1959-1972" (PhD Thesis, The University of Sydney/Macquarie University, Forthcoming); Shirleene Robinson and Julie Ustinoff, eds., *The 1960s in Australia: People, Power and Politics* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012).

[33] Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, 1, 12.

[34] Debates and counter debates on what actually constituted the 'old' and 'new', and spillages between them, are voluminous. See Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993) for a traditionalist approach and Allen Smith, "Present at the Creation…and Other Myths: The Port Huron Statement and the the Origins of the New Left," Peace & Change 25, No. 1 (July 2000): 339-362 for a more critical perspective. In Australian terms, such matters are covered amply in Russell, "Today the Students, Tomorrow the Workers!" See Timothy S. Brown, "The Sixties in the City: Avant-gardes and Urban Rebels in New York, London and West Berlin," *Journal of Social History* 46, No. 4 (2013): 817 for the spectre of student politics.

net around one movement, the task is complicated when a number—from anti-Apartheid to women's liberation and Aboriginal rights—are considered. These were, after all, highly specific movements defined more by their increasing internal differences than any collective project. Despite real and multifaceted divergences, however, the connections between these movements cannot be ignored. Sara Evans' work on the relationship between African American civil rights struggles, the student movement and the rise of Second Wave feminism was the first to seek out such fruitful connections, and other cross-movement studies have followed.[35] Many more books on the connections between black and women's politics have appeared, largely in the US, as have others highlighting the interplay between Third World political actors and student, women's, black or gay rights movements, to give but a few examples.[36] Van Gosse has taken such comparative works to a new level, theorising in *Rethinking the New Left* that the social movements that made up the Sixties in America were part of a conceptual 'New Left', a "movement of movements" whose "radical form of democracy…linked them together".[37]

This idea that a shared concern for a particular 'form' of politics, rather than the primacy of 'content', has been carried on in work like Sean Mills' on anti-colonial politics in Sixties Montreal. Mills argues that the array of social movements Canada's then financial capital nurtured during this period, from Old and New Left to feminist and black, all shared a debt to imported anti-colonial texts by Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire and Albert Memmi. These widely read, augmented and appropriated texts allowed the largely Francophone radicals to articulate their sense of being an occupied and colonised First World people.[38] Yet, work on social movements in Australia has generally avoided such comparisons and encounters, focusing instead on one particular movement but rarely what linked them. While a few sentences of any thesis, book or chapter on one social movement acknowledges its debt to cross-

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[35] Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

[36] For example: Anne M. Valk, *Radical Sisters: Second-Wave Feminism and Black Liberation in Washington D.C.* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press: 2010); Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Emily K. Hobson, "Imagining Alliance: Queer Anti-Imperialism and Race in California: 1966-1990" (PhD Thesis, University of South Carolina, 2008); Lindsey Churchill, "Transnational Alliance: Radical US Feminist Solidarity and Contention with Latin America, 1970-1989," *Latin American Perspectives* 36, No. 6 (November 2009): 10-26.

[37] Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretative History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 2.

[38] Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

pollination with various co-thinkers, rarely are such comparisons taken beyond generalities. Connections and shared interests are left largely unexplored. Some exemplary outliers, however, must be noted. Sean Scalmer's sociological work *Dissent Events* achieves the laudable goal of tying together many of the movements to be discussed here around the framework of the 'political gimmick', the importing, translating, diffusion and practicing of a new (largely American) lexicon of media-savvy resistance, work which has had a profound influence on this thesis.[39] Additionally, political scientist Verity Burgmann's work *Power and Protest* explores in a globally-attuned and interlinked manner the various 'new social movements', while several chapters of her and Meredith Burgmann's *Green Bans, Red Union* tie, if only briefly, the student, women's, indigenous and queer rights movements to the famous green bans of the NSW Builders Labourers' Federation.[40] A chapter of Clark's work on Aboriginal activism and the Sixties explores the debt a renewed student movement owed to anti-racist politics, Russell focuses on alliances between students and workers and Yeats explores the connections between the student new left, the counterculture and Second Wave Feminism.[41]

This diversity of movements and timeframes might appear insurmountable. Russell Marks argues that the lack of a book-length study of the Australian social movements during the Sixties arises from the fact that the subject is so diverse "geographically, ideologically and chronologically". "The prospect of gathering all the threads and tying them all together into one reasonably coherent narrative may well appear…daunting, if not futile", he remarks.[42] This thesis does not pretend to have successfully united all these movements, either. While the term social movements is employed throughout, readers will find that my scope is more narrow, focusing on the student, both overseas and domestic, indigenous, socialist and anti-war movements, although an assortment of others make appearances. This narrowing was made necessary by thesis length, chronology and source availability. Also, the

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[39] Sean Scalmer, *Dissent Events: Protest, the Media and the Political Gimmick in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002).
[40] Verity Burgmann, *Power and Protest: Movements for change in Australian society* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993); Meredith Burgmann and Verity Burgmann, *Green Bans, Red Union: Environmental Activism and the New South Wales Builders Labourers' Federation* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1998).
[41] Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, Chapter 6; Russell, "Today the Students, Tomorrow the Workers!"; Yeats, "Australian New Left Politics," Chapters 4-5.
[42] Russell Marks, "Towards an Intellectual History of the Australian New Left: Some Definitional Problems," *Melbourne Journal of Politics* 34 (2009-10): 83.

inclusion of the socialist movement and the Old Left, sometimes not considered social movements *per se*, arises not only from this more established movement's centrality to new forms of political expression, but also because it was transformed by the same global ideas and flows, if only unevenly. Nor does this thesis claim to be a thorough history of Sixties activism in Australia. It instead takes a case study approach to the specific moments when global ideas and trajectories had vital impacts on the specificities of local struggles.

Transnationalism

How are we to understand the globally attuned, yet locally specific, moments that this thesis argues had such an impact on Australia's Sixties? Spread out over time and space, often lacking in shared personnel or even political content, these fragments of global engagement appear as just that, shards of the past that are interesting but lack any real coherence. The rise of the transnational as a line of historical inquiry, however, opens the door to a plethora of new approaches to understanding what is now termed the global Sixties. While described and even denigrated as a 'buzzword', transnationalism's usefulness is nonetheless evident for a study of social movements that imagined and practiced such diverse forms of global connection.[43] It is, however, rare to encounter Australia in the growing body of literature that covers the global Sixties in such a fashion. The cities of revolt surmised by Cohn-Bendit earlier in this introduction are often the limit for those writers engaging in a supposedly global project.[44] Thus, it is common to hear about connections between the USA and West Germany, France and Italy, or even those traversing the 'Iron Curtain' and, much more rarely, the First and Third Worlds, but almost never the antipodes.[45]

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[43] Ian Tyrrell, "Reflections on the transnational turn in United States History: theory and practice," *Journal of Global History* 4, No. 3 (2009): 453. The uses of transnational history in the melding of Australia into global narratives are demonstrated by Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the Question of Racial Equality* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008), Sean Brawley, *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America 1919-1978* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1995) and Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre, *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2007).

[44] For examples of this focus see Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The year that rocked the world* (London: Vintage, 2005) and Gerard DeGroot, *The Sixties Unplugged: A kaleidoscopic history of a disorderly decade* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2008).

[45] For example, see Kostis Kornetis, "'Everything Links?' Temporality, Territoriality and Cultural Transfer in the '68 Protest Movements," *Historein* 9 (2009): 34-45; Fanon Che Wilkins, "The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa before the launching of Black Power, 1960-1965,"

While this exclusion is perhaps understandable for those writing in the USA or Europe, where Australia rarely warrants study, there is a relative lack of scholarship by local historians on the global engagement of local activists. Clark, Scalmer, Ravi de Costa and Kathy Lothian are among the few who have taken seriously the global affinities of Australian social movements, although their focus has almost entirely been on anti-racist movements. The upcoming work of Nick Irving, reconceptualising the anti-war movement in a global frame, promises to broaden this field, though the focus squarely remains on the influences of institutions and groups rather than of ideas and people. This thesis argues that Australia's exclusion from the global narrative springs not from its inactivity in this global upsurge, as some would have it, but rather from a significant scholarly oversight that requires rectification through the lens of a properly transnational approach.

This thesis employs a transnationalism that puts the movement of people and ideas at the centre. Timothy S. Brown's application of such theories to the example of activism across divided Germany, part of a forum on 'The International 1968' in the *American Historical Review*, articulates better than most the uses and pitfalls of this approach. Commenting on the plethora of work in the field, Brown argues that the term transnational all too often really means comparative—with it being treated as "little more than a product of the nation-state multiplied". However, as Brown notes,

> The nation-state cannot function as our primary frame of reference, not only because of the importance of transnational influences in shaping local events, but because of how intimately "1968" was linked to the creation of globalizing imagined communities that cut across national boundaries.[46]

A good deal of popular work on the period, as well as that of a more scholarly nature, has employed such a comparative perspective, drawing out similarities and differences between discrete nation-states. Yet the networks, connections and flows that 'made' the decade continue to be neglected.[47] Brown thus proposed a two-pronged line of enquiry, one "identifying transnational influences, analysing their mode of transmission and exploring how they articulated with local concerns, goals,

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Journal of African American History 92, No. 4 (Fall 2007): 468-91 and Belinda Davis and others, eds., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the US in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

[46] Timothy S. Brown, "'1968' East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History," *American Historical Review* 114, No. 1 (February 2009): 69.

[47] For a popular example, see Kurlansky, *1968*.

traditions, and histories", while additionally inquiring as to "how local actors imagined themselves into the world, creating alternative cognitive maps that corresponded to a new type of politics".[48]

Narratives of the circulation and debate of radical ideas from all over the globe and the travel of social movement actors to other parts of a rebellious world provide an opportunity to globalise the study of Australia's Sixties. The circulation of ideas has been a cornerstone of research into the Sixties since at least George Katsiaficas' 1987 global study of *The Imagination of the New Left*, and scholars have subsequently unearthed how activists in one country "connected with their counterparts abroad, took from their language and imagery and applied these in their own sphere of action".[49] Yet, the importance of travel to the discovery, articulation, dissemination and debate of political ideas has been rarely acknowledged until recently. Richard Jobs describes how the movement of young European protestors across borders during 1968 "became the foundation for a youth identity that emphasized mobility and built a shared political culture across national boundaries".[50] Robert Gildea, James Mark and Niek Pas dub such "revolutionary tourism" to the Third World as seeking "a new and powerful model of revolution for European radical activists" who saw older left traditions as hopelessly bureaucratised.[51]

These 'minor transnationalisms', as opposed to those between countries, leaders and dominant ideologies, "circumvent the major altogether" in the words of Francoise Lionnet and Shu-Mei Shih, and allow us a way of looking at the connections between often marginalised social movement actors across borders.[52] Moreover, these flows were in no way one-directional, with overseas activists attempting to breach the border and engage directly with Australian radicals. Whilst these travels were often blocked by a fearful government, they provided an opportunity for activists to engage

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[48] Brown, "'1968' East and West," 70.

[49] George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston, Mass: South End Press, 1987). For quote, see Manus McGrogan, "Lotta Continua and Vive la Révolution: the circulation of ideas and practices between the left militant worlds of France and Italy following 1968," *Modern and Contemporary France* 18, No. 3 (August 2010): 310.

[50] Richard Ivan Jobs, "Youth Movements: Travel, Protest and Europe in 1968," *American Historical Review* 114, No. 2 (April 2009): 376-7. For another work exploring the importance of travel to social movement activists, see Judy Tzu Chun Wu, "An African-Vietnamese American: Robert S. Browne, the Antiwar Movement, and the Personal/Political Dimensions of Black Internationalism," *Journal of African American History* 92, No. 4 (Fall 2007): 492-515.

[51] 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, No. 4 (2011): 450.

[52] Francoise Lionnet and Shu-Mei Shih, eds., *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2005), 8.

with their overseas co-thinkers, as well as cast the authorities as hopelessly backward. Australia additionally became a site of contestation in the later parts of the decade, with sections of a previously quiet Third World student community seeking to turn the global infatuations and imaginings of Australians into concrete solidarity and cooperation. These temporary transnationals reversed the relationship of solidarity, with Third World students taking the lead and Australians following. This relationship can be seen as a test of the transnational political practice Australian activists had spent the previous decade cultivating, the results of which were contradictory at best.

The transnational approach is, then, far from straightforward. This project, as do all those with a specific national focus, runs the risk of what Quinn Slobodian calls "political drain", tying as it does a multitude of stories from around the world to the perhaps unlikely pole of Australia. All of these narratives, of course, have their own histories, and a cast of characters whose appearance on Australia's stage was brief and decontextualised or who had little if any interest in the Australian travellers who glimpsed, engaged with and reinterpreted their work. As Slobodian asks of his incorporation of the work of a Haitian radical into his history of Third World thought in West Germany: "By using his brief appearance on the West German public stage to legitimize the international claims of the student movement, did I showcase the fruit of a political development while leaving the roots, most of which lay in Haiti, in the dark?"[53] This is an important reminder that, when telling a transnational tale, space must be given to understand the complexities of the relationship. The motivations not only of Australian travellers, but also of their guests and the States and struggles they idealised and visited, must be recognised. Or rather, it is the job of the historia—and the aim of this thesis—to "situat[e] the local within the global while locating the global at work locally", as Brown would have it.[54]

Methodology and Chapter Structure

A project of this nature could easily rely on the memories and recollections of a small group of well-known radicals. However, describing why her work on May '68 in France sought to avoid looking from the 'top down'—through the eyes of media

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[53] Quinn Slobodian, "Jurisdictional Leap, Political Drain and Other Dangers of Transnational History," *New Global Studies* 4, No. 1 (2010): 6.
[54] Brown, "'1968' East and West," 70.

commentators, sociological investigators or self-appointed 'activist' spokespeople—
Kristin Ross provides the following explanation of where a historian working from
the bottom up should begin:

> I have found the filmed documentary footage, small publications, and
> mimeographed pamphlets from all kinds of groups, the ephemeral journals,
> and the interpretations written in the white heat of the moment to be of
> much more interest and value than any of the interpretative
> commentaries.[55]

Ross's focus on the ephemeral, misspelt and poorly printed tracts of the left is well
justified, and was central to the research process for this thesis. It is after all in the
immediacy and topicality of gestetnered pamphlets, leaflets and newssheets that
scholars unearth the everyday life of activism.[56] A focus on these publications can,
however, also blind a reader to the broader world they inhabited: the mainstream
newspapers they responded to, the politicians and commentators who condemned
them, and the security police who watched them.

It is the voluminous files produced by the Australian Security Intelligence
Organisation (ASIO) that proves most controversial. The domestic spy agency was a
thoroughly politicised institution, one which "made little meaningful distinction
between the small handful of 'non-legal' or covert communists who engaged in
espionage…and the thousands of CPA members and 'fellow travellers' who
immersed themselves in daily struggles within trade unions, on local councils and
through 'front' organisations". This focus that saw it cast a careful eye on most any
group that raised a voice against government policy.[57] Indeed, ASIO kept its watchful
eyes on so many individuals during the Sixties—not just CPA affiliates but
representatives of a wide variety of social movements—that the information collected
was often incomplete, misrepresented or incorrect. This makes their use as historical
documents difficult, and not only because of moral concerns surrounding the
collection of information without the individual's consent. Nonetheless, ASIO's
obsession with foreign interference saw them focus in some detail on the overseas

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[55] Ross, *May '68*, 8.

[56] For a thorough exploration of print culture in a particular activist group, see John McMillian, "'Our founder, the mimeograph machine': Participatory Democracy in Students for a Democratic Society's Print Culture," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 2, No. 2 (2009): 85-110.

[57] Phillip Deery, "Remembering ASIO: Phillip Deery on the cold war and its legacy," *Overland* 203 (Winter 2011): 53. For more on ASIO during this period, see David McKnight, *Australian spies and their secrets* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994).

trips and imagination of radicals, and their fetish for collecting now otherwise-unavailable leaflets makes the files of various activists a treasure trove for the historian.

A second methodological issue thrown up by social movement history is that of memoir or oral historical reminiscence. Both are a product of the past in that they are narrated, reflective and often downright dishonest as well as subject to contention. Prominent Sydney anti-Vietnam war campaigner Bob Gould's purchasing of the entire remaining print run of fellow radical Denis Freney's memoir *A Map of Days*, inserting his own 'corrections' and then on selling them from his Newtown bookshop, is perhaps the best example available of how published memoir material is open to contestation.[58] As such, it must be noted that the memoirs and interviews employed in this thesis are written with a purpose: they are engineered with the benefit of hindsight to at least partially absolve or elevate the writer or to incriminate or belittle their adversaries. Oral history holds its own set of dilemmas. To paraphrase Ross, who saw such dangers in oral history as to avoid using these sources altogether, whom would I have interviewed? The former and often repentant activists who now claim their role as custodians of radical memory, the less media-savvy and as such largely forgotten leaders of local struggles, or the everyday activists who made up these movements? "What possible controls", she asks, "could govern my selection of the testimony of participants in a mass movement that extended throughout France"?[59] Accordingly, oral testimony is used only sparingly in this thesis, sticking to that which is already on the public record rather than adding further layers of representation to what is already a highly mythologised historical moment.

Part One of this thesis, "Origins", provides the foreground, the canvas on which later sections paint a more vivid portrait of global engagement. Chapter One explains how a small, yet increasingly powerful group of young leaders in the Communist Party of Australia began to question their Soviet-trained leadership through direct engagement with the then liberal-minded and open policies of the Chinese party. A hundred flowers were blooming, so it was said, and these travellers reaped an unexpected harvest. Chapter Two explores the development of international solidarity in early social movements in Australia. It will look at debates in the activist

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[58] Bob Gould interviewed by Edgar Waters, ORAL TRC 3185, National Library of Australia, Canberra.
[59] Ross, *May 68*, 17. For other studies of Sixties radicalism who have chosen to rely on the archival record, rather than the memory of former activists, see Slobodian, *Foreign Front* and Jobs, "Youth Movements."

and student press about the place of solidarity with movements in far-away locations, culminating in the highly controversial 'Aid the NLF' campaign by Sydney and then Monash University students.

Chapter Three argues that activist understandings of both space and publishing culture underwent significant globalisation during the period under investigation. New social movements across the period established headquarters, bookshops and meeting places within the private urban environment while taking these re-imaginings of space into the public realm, employing a globalised lexicon and practice to mobilise and engage with cities and their inhabitants. The way social movements distributed their message, and often the content of that message, was also altered. Political power grew out of the barrel of a gestetner, as one activist put it, and a plethora of new printed ventures emerged, often aping new styles and forms from around the world.[60] These new publications also introduced the globally mobile vocabulary of the Sixties— decolonisation, black and student power, women's liberation, worker's control and the Third World—and played an important role in their initial dissemination and contention, as well as providing rumours of what prospective travellers might expect.

Part Two, "Comings and Goings", explores how these antecedents influenced and encouraged activist travel practices, as well as setting the stage for a series of activist arrivals. Chapter Four explores the politics of travel. The birth of a mass tourism industry in the 1960s saw movement across borders at a rate never before seen during peacetime, ensuring that many Australians participated (sometimes unintentionally) in the decade's political and social ructions. The often-complex motivations for going abroad are explored, as are the ways in which activists justified their global ambitions and the sometimes-contradictory moment of encounter, asking how and why activists felt that they were having an authentic revolutionary experience. This politics of authenticity raises additional questions regarding the way in which those pilgrims who had been to radical hotspots articulated their ideas and observations upon return, and provided a discourse in which critics could challenge these newly uncovered gospels.

If the Sixties could be found overseas, then it could equally arrive unannounced on these supposedly "unpolluted shores", as one commentator

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[60] Darce Cassidy, "PRINT: Newspaper of Propaganda Sheet?" Albert Langer Papers, Z457, Box 34, Folder marked "Monash Labor Club: Internal". Noel Butlin Archives, Canberra.

quipped.[61] By examining the threatened arrivals of a variety of protest personalities to Australia, Chapter Five considers these moments as part of the walling mentality of the nation state, noted by philosopher Wendy Brown as arising from globalisation and the consequential decline of state sovereignty. These European, African American and Third World activists were painted as heroes by activists, and as part of an outside contagion by a state and security apparatus struggling to understand and control the increasingly globalised nature of radical sentiment. Finally, Chapter Five also examines the arrival of anti war pamphlets during the 1960s and early 1970s, the banning of which made them widely desired objects. The reproduction of these 'obscene' or otherwise criminal publications helped bring the war further into question, but also posed a series of moral and political issues for activists rhetorically employing violent images for political purposes.

Part Three of this thesis, "Possibility and Disillusionment", explores two particular moments of global engagement that, while having perhaps the most concrete local impacts, also best capture some of the inherent contradictions of transnational radicalism. The period's spread of ideas and practices had probably its most pronounced effect on one group of Australians: indigenous peoples. Chapter Six explores how Indigenous Australian activists engaged with and translated anti-colonial and Black Power thought both through the consumption of written texts and images, as well as through travel. It particularly focuses on activists who journeyed to a Black Power conference in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1970 and those of two groups who ventured to 'Red' China in 1972 and 1974. These activists experienced both the ideas and practice of black or Third World liberation struggles, transplanting complex understandings and lessons for the growing land rights and liberation movements, as well as birthing inevitable conflicts and encounters with the limitations of transnational politics.

Southeast Asia has long been a black hole in Sixties studies. However, throughout the early 1970s, Malaysian and Singaporean students rebelled against their autocratic governments, a movement that found its way onto the campuses and streets of Australia. Chapter Seven locates the voices of rebellious Southeast Asian students, living in Australia as either Colombo Plan scholars or private students, within the global imagination and practice of local student activists. Australians had largely

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[61] John Playford, "The Mandel Affair," *Revolution*, July 1970), 8.

ignored overseas students, until several key events saw their movements united and then torn apart. This chapter will additionally explore the cooperation between Southeast Asian governments and Australia in thwarting what was seen as a challenge to bilateral relations as well as how the rise of this movement coincided with what could be problematically termed 'the end of the Sixties' and of the global revolutionary ideal.

This ideal, however, emerged from its Stalinist straightjacket in a number of ways, and one of the most important of these was in the emergence of a new pole of radical attraction in Mao's China.

Part One

Origins

Chapter One

Light from the East: Australian Communism, China and the seeds of a global imagination

On 1 October 1949 Chairman Mao Zedong of the Communist Party of China (CPC) declared the foundation of the People's Republic of China. Forcing the retreat of his Kuomintang rivals to the island of Formosa, Mao set about uniting the nation behind a plan for modernisation, equality and national independence. In Australia, that antipodean outpost of Western values and culture in a decidedly Asian region, news of Mao's victory was received as part of an increasingly hot Cold War. The Soviet blockade of Berlin seemed to promise armed confrontation, while talk of "Iron Curtains" and "spheres of influence" in newly divided Europe kept the idea of a violent, assiduous Communist threat at the forefront of public imagination. For mainstream Australians the fall or loss of China brought such fears home: Communism was no longer a European concern, but one that threatened Australian shores and politics. In that same year the Victorian government launched a Royal Commission into Communist activity, swiftly followed by similar moves federally after the election of bitterly anti-communist Robert Menzies.[1]

Newspaper reports on the Chinese revolution—sandwiched between stories of Soviet crimes in Europe and threatening union militancy at home—spoke of the danger the Soviet Union's new Asian representative posed. Labor Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell enunciated, in typically racialised terms, the threat communist China posed to Australia's place as a "citadel of people of European descent". He warned menacingly that "[o]ur entire heritage will disappear before Asiatic power", and the yellow peril took on a decidedly red tinge.[2] In the pages of the *Tribune*, *Guardian* and the plethora of other union, neighbourhood or 'front'

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[1] On post war anti-communism in Australia, see both volumes of Ann Curthoys and John Merritt, eds., *Australia's First Cold War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994); Lachlan Clohesy, "Australian Cold Warrior: The Anti-Communism of W.C. Wentworth" (PhD Thesis, Victoria University, 2010) and entries in the special issue of *Australian Historical Studies* 44, No. 1 (2013) on the 1951 anti-communist referendum.

[2] "Minister says resurgent Japan, Red China dangers facing Australia," *The Mercury*, 13 October 1949, 11.

periodicals that constituted the Communist Party of Australia's (CPA) life world, news of Mao's victory received a very different analysis. CPA General Secretary Lance Sharkey, then the subject a high profile treason case, described the Chinese revolution as "an event of world importance", while other articles called for the nation's recognition in light of its "determination to work for world peace together with all other peace-loving and democratic nations".[3] China's revolution, however, was not only an inspiring example of a colonised people 'standing up' as Mao put it, and 'leaning to one side' in the Cold War, but also provided a new pole of attraction in a previously united socialist world. Leading communist Eric Aarons described it as "Light from the East", while in the words of party lawyer and functionary Rex Mortimer, "it was vaguely realised in cadre circles that something different from the Soviet model was being fashioned in China".[4] And something different was just what many young CPA members increasingly sought.

The victory of China's revolution was a beginning for the process this thesis describes, the growth of new forms of globally mobile and conscious radicalism out of both a figurative and personal engagement with the diverse array of struggles and causes that characterised the Sixties. It was the beginning of the end for Australian radicalism's myopic hallowing of Russia, which had seen local Communists adopt policies and practices demonstrably out of step with Australian realities. Here, the role China played for the groups of Australian Communists who visited the new nation on training delegations during a period extending from the People's Republic's formation through to the end of the Party's 'liberal' phase will be explored. Such training, which varied in duration from a few months to a several years, was designed to impart Marxist theory and practical knowledge to selected Party leaders and functionaries. Focusing on the variety of often-confused impressions and hopes these travellers took with them, this chapter analyses their experiences of a very different politics behind the 'bamboo curtain'— one that either threatened long-standing orthodoxy or provided a new experience of inspiring ideas to challenge the Australian Party's increasingly obsolete worldview.[5]

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[3] L.L. Sharkey, "Democratic Gov'ment for China will strengthen front of Peace, Democracy," *Tribune*, 24 September 1949, 5; "Australia should recognise new China," *Tribune*, 8 October 1949, 2; "Great victories for peace camp in Berlin, Canton," *Tribune*, 15 October 1949, 5.

[4] Eric Aarons, *What's Left: Memoirs of an Australian Communist* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1993), 87; Rex Mortimer, "The Benefits of a Liberal Education," *Meanjin* 35, No. 2 (June 1976): 118.

[5] Previous work in this area, most notably that by Angus Macintyre, has looked at these trips in an interesting, if sparing and underdeveloped, fashion. Macintyre's work was published in 1978, and he

Pasts and preconceptions

The CPA, like so many similar organisations formed around the world in the years after the Bolshevik Revolution, had a deep connection with the Soviet Union. Bernie Taft, a German émigré, long time Communist and member of the second training delegation in 1955-6, writes in his memoirs how "like the rest of Australian society we, too, were victims of the tyranny of distance", with regular telegrams and cables from Moscow often constituting the limits of Party international relations.[6] Alastair Davidson, one of the earliest writers to take an academic approach to Australian Communism's history, writes how socialists in Australia "supported the Russian revolution because it was supposed to mark the start of a world-wide revolution in which Australia was to take part".

While marked initially by open discussion and debate the CPA, founded in October 1920, underwent forced Stalinisation during the early 1930s. This saw it fashioned in a hierarchical and "bolshevised" manner, "its decisions…made by the Comintern [Communist International] and followed undeviatingly by all Party organs and members".[7] The Party's return to a more open policy of a "united front" with social-democratic forces and taking "local peculiarities" into account in policy and planning in 1935. This policy, which was to see the Party grow exponentially during the next decade, was not the result of local leaders taking the initiative, but of the Soviet leadership announcing that such policies were again relevant and necessary once more. Even after the Comintern's 1943 dissolution, and the CPA's exclusion from the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) in 1947, the Party continued to follow the various turns in Soviet foreign policy.[8]

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had access to little of the material now available, particularly in terms of memoirs. Nor did he discuss motivations for travel, or give much detail on the outcomes of the activists' time in China. Angus Macintyre, "The Training of Australian Communist Cadres in China, 1951-1961," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 6, No. 4 (Winter 1978): 410-423. Time in China is also briefly discussed in Tom O'Lincoln, *Into the Mainstream: The Decline of Australian Communism* (Carlton North, Vic.: Red Rag Publications, 2009), 146-9 and Lachlan Strahan, *Australia's China: Changing perceptions from the 1930s to the 1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 171-4. Mark Aarons provides a solid overview of the time spent in China by his two relatives, Eric and Laurie Aarons, in his recent family biography *The Family File* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2010), 173-85.

[6] Bernie Taft, *Crossing the Party Line: Memoirs of Bernie Taft* (Newham, Vic: Scribe, 1994), 54.

[7] Ibid, 53-4.

[8] Ibid, 72-4; 101-2

Yet, the CPA did not ignore the Asian region in favour of its Russian 'Rome'. Rather, in line with Comintern policy, it sought unity with surrounding Asian peoples through organisations like the Pan Pacific Trade Union Movement (PPTUM). Party members had pushed for and succeeded in having Australian unions back the PPTUM's foundation in the early 1920s, although the conservative government of the day denied their delegates permission to attend its 1927 founding conference in Hankow, China.[9] The threat of renewed inter-imperialist aggression sparked the formation of the Movement Against War and Fascism, again at Comintern direction, in 1933.[10] In 1937, this supposedly non-communist front organisation launched, as a corollary to its campaigns for republican Spain, a wave of activity against the Japanese invasion of China. This went beyond the "paper commitment" represented by groups like the PPTUM to one that was "complemented with action", from hectoring shoppers in Central Business Districts into boycotting Japanese goods to the famous 1938 pig iron disputes whereby communist-led wharf labourers refused to "take the responsibility of sending iron to Japan to be used by that country to destroy defenceless women and children in China".[11]

If these early moments of rhetorical engagement with an imagined China provided the foundation for Party member interest in their northern neighbour, the understandings of those who would soon travel were also framed by access to a variety of written materials emanating from, or about, China and its revolution. Party functionary and leader of the first delegation (1951-4) Eric Aarons remembers how by late 1949 "[s]ome materials from China had…reached us, including Mao Tse-Tung's *On Practice* and *China's New Democracy*, and Lui Shao-chi's *How to be a Good Communist*".[12] Other travellers describe access to similar materials. Taft notes how he had "of course" read works by the famous communist propagandist Anna Louise-Strong, and "the prospect of seeing with my own eyes all I had read and dreamed about was so overwhelming that it seemed almost unreal".[13] Mortimer, on the other hand, explained how his reading of Edgar Snow and Lin Yu-tang had left him with

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[9] Frank Farrell, "The Pan-Pacific Trade Union Movement and Australian labour," *Historical Studies* 17, No. 69 (1977): 441-457.
[10] David Rose, "The Movement Against War and Fascism, 1939-39," *Labour History* 38 (May 1980): 76.
[11] *Maritime Worker*, December 1938, quoted in Greg Mallory, *Uncharted Waters: Social Responsibility in Australian Trade Unions* (Brisbane: Self Published, 2005), xv.
[12] Aarons, *What's Left*, 71.
[13] Taft, *Crossing the Party Line*, 78.

only "scanty knowledge" of what lay in store. It all "added up to a confused kaleidoscope of impressions", as Mortimer put it, "of which the most vivid was the picture of Mao's romantic and ascetic guerrilla army sweeping to power over the crumbling edifice of Chiang's corruption". This was the "powerful stimulant for jaded commitment" he and many other younger members needed.[14]

After experiencing its heyday during World War Two, the CPA was, by 1949, finding many of what were termed its fair weather comrades less than willing to remain involved as the Soviet Union moved from wartime ally to Cold War pariah. Membership, which had peaked at 23,000 in 1944, was falling by thousands every year.[15] Equally, the Party's rigid application of Soviet doctrine was leaving it less than able to cope with changing Australian conditions. A fateful strike in the coal industry that ended with military intervention saw not a flood of militant workers into the CPA, but rather a demoralising defeat.[16] However, in Aarons' words:

> As for the coal strike that had just ended, even if it was not a victory, we believed that overall little had been lost. What did that episode count in the big picture, especially with the Chinese Revolution coming to its successful climax?[17]

China seemingly proved that, despite domestic defeats, the inexorable march of world history was still on socialism's side, affirming Lachlan Strahan's argument that "China served as a screen onto which Australian preoccupations were projected", even for those of a radical persuasion.[18] By the time the second group of travellers was told they were to pack their bags for China in 1955, a different, more critical, set of images were projected. Taft describes how, even before the revelations of Khrushchev's secret speech, he "had realised that something was wrong with the Soviet Union". He had come across a book entitled *Conspiracy of Silence* published in 1952 by Austrian engineer Alexander Weissberg, which condemned Stalin's great purges, describing "these horrific things in sorrow, rather than in anger", making dismissal of his claims as capitalist propaganda difficult. This reading material, coupled with revelations of widespread Soviet anti-Semitism, saw Taft reconsider his

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[14] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 118

[15] For figures on membership decline during this period see Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 120.

[16] See Phillip Deery, "Chifley, the Army and the 1949 Coal Strike," *Labour History* 68 (May 1995): 80-97.

[17] Aarons, *What's Left,* 70.

[18] Strahan, *Australia's China*, 10.

entire life's trajectory. Such thinking was only abated by the euphoric news that he was to be sent to China: "I was at a critical stage in my life", he recalled, "and now, in one fell swoop, it seemed as though it had been decided for me".[19]

Mortimer, who travelled after the new Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev confirmed as irrefutable fact the crimes Taft had suspected, described a similar feeling of escape from troubling realities into the utopian hope China represented.[20] He noted how the February 1956 secret speech, and the climactic invasion of Hungary in November of that year, left in their wake "confusion, disillusionment and recrimination". Many long-standing members left the Party and those who remained, like Mortimer, clung "to shreds of hope that the nightmare would give way to the dawn of a new beginning". When the young lawyer was informed in early 1957 that he would be on the third study delegation to China, he recalls feeling as if "the way out of my political dilemmas had been bestowed upon me…I was to journey to the land of revolutionary heroes".[21] Such an idealised, even messianic, view of China "short-circuit[ed] the powers of critical observation", as Strahan puts it.[22] And despite the differences between the practice of the Chinese and the USSR displayed in the publications these Australians consumed, their image of a unified block of communist opinion—similar to that espoused menacingly by the 'capitalist' press and reactionary government—was not weakened. As Eric Aarons explained, "Most of us had an idealised view of what went on", resulting from the Party's decades-long history of uncritical admiration of the USSR. "[W]hen Mao Tse-tung visited Moscow for the first time in 1950, we had an image in our heads of Stalin, Mao and other expert theoreticians and practitioners of revolution sitting down in harmony to work out strategy".[23] Such notions of Communism's international reach and scope were in fact far from the reality of increasingly tense inter-socialist relations.

Mao and other CPC leaders had their own reasons for supporting and hosting so many foreign students, which might ordinarily not have been a priority for a nation struggling the after-effects of a decades-long war. While Macintyre points out that

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[19] Taft, *Crossing the Party Line*, 78.

[20] For more on the Australian party and 1956 see Rachael Calkin, "'Cracking the Stalinist Crust' – The impact of 1956 on the Communist Party of Australia" (Masters Thesis, Victoria University, 2006) and Phillip Deery and Rachael Calkin, "'We all make mistakes': The Communist Party of Australia and Khrushchev's Secret Speech," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 54, No. 1 (2008): 69-84.

[21] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 117-8.

[22] Strahan, *Australia's China*, 197.

[23] Aarons, *What's Left*, 80.

Australians studying in China "cannot be construed as evidence for a preference of Peking over Moscow", as the two socialist powers made an agreement to divide students on a geographical basis, CCP hierarchs still sought to use such visits to cement international contacts. Perry Johansson argues that it was the aim of the Chinese leadership to "divide and split foreign communist parties" after its own split with the Soviet "revisionists" around Khrushchev in 1957-8.[24] It is clear that, even before this break, cultivating useful connections with foreign communist parties and 'fellow travellers' was considered vital, and those in what was deemed its Asian sphere of influence were of the greatest importance. As Agnieszka Sobocinska notes in her study of left-wing Australian travellers to China, "the belief that a well-treated guest could do more to improve perceptions of China than any amount of traditional propaganda" was central to the management these Australians encountered.[25] While the Chinese often relied on similar ideas to the Soviet Union in nurturing their foreign guests—"lavish banquets, fine wine and VIP treatment"—these politically committed travellers tended to recall more the frugality of their experience, the commitment of Chinese cadres, and the inspiring ideas that were on display.[26]

Thus, a properly transnational relationship developed, with the Australian radicals looking for answers to increasingly troublesome local and international questions, while the Chinese developed what they thought would be firm allies in their eventual conflict with Moscow. The carefully cultivated image of China taking a glorious second step in the path to world socialist revolution, "the greatest and most heroic historical exploit since Russia's 1917 and perhaps its equal", was important to the Australian radicals as they prepared for their trips abroad.[27] Most travellers, of whom there were at least sixty-seven divided into six delegations, were given very little time to prepare, and their plans had to be kept secret, not only due to this prevailing climate of fear, but because Australian passports were not valid for China or North Korea during and after the Korean War.[28] Those involved in these training delegations were instructed not to tell their families or friends of their destination, with Taft recalling that Ted Hill, lawyer and Victorian Party leader, had informed him

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[24] Perry Johansson, "Mao and the Swedish United Front against USA," in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, eds. Zheng Yangwen et al, 220 (Leiden, Boston: BRILL, 2010).
[25] Agnieszka Sobocinska, "Australian Fellow-Travellers to China: devotion and deceit in the People's Republic," *Australian Historical Studies* 32, No. 3 (September 2008): 330.
[26] Johansson, "Mao and the SUF," 227.
[27] Aarons, *What's Left*, 75.
[28] A breakdown of travellers is provided in Macintyre, "Communist Cadres in China," 420-22

that "we want to keep the whole thing completely quiet…[y]ou can tell your wife that the party is sending you overseas to study, but you can't tell her that you're going to China".[29]

It was the spouses of the men—and they overwhelmingly were men—who were sent to China for training that became unintended victims of the Party's increasing international horizons. Taft recalls how his wife, a fellow communist with whom he had two young children, took on the "enormous and almost inhuman burden" of caring for them during his year and a half abroad, and she was almost forgotten by the Party in his absence. Eric Aarons and other travellers reported similar feelings of abandonment by family and spouses, illustrating how political travel came with unintended consequences. Mortimer recalls a highly conspiratorial air around his trip, with Hill only telling him of the Party's decision that he travel—which was unquestioningly followed—on a street outside the branch office, where it was certain "that no ASIO bugging devices could pick up our conversation".[30] ASIO, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, had been formed in 1949 by the Chifley Labor government and was tasked with documenting the activities of any and all Australian communists or those it thought to be fellow travellers. However, the organisation was largely unaware of the activists' destinations. Aarons speculates, though, that this was perhaps not due to the Party's "high class…security work", but rather the new security organisation's incompetence.[31] This secrecy has led to a distinct lack of documentation on these trips, leaving problematic reflections of Party members as the only real source available to historians. And while these recollections were authored by a variety of personalities who were often embittered with the Party, their understandings of how China affected the political trajectories of the organisation are of significant value significant value.

Australian experiences of China and their consequences

Despite having read, often voluminously, of China's revolution and progress, the travellers knew little of what to expect of the nation. Party functionary and member of the first study group, John Sendy, recalls how one fellow Communist, while cheering

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[29] Taft, *Crossing the Party Line*, 78.
[30] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 115.
[31] Aarons, *What's Left*, 107.

on the Chinese army's victories in various strangely named locations like Soochow during 1949, "did not know where any of these places were", having no access to a map of the country.[32] As a consequence of this general lack of knowledge, Sendy was given strict instructions *en route* on how to behave in front of his Asian hosts. "They were Chinese, not Chinamen", the travellers were told by Peking-based Australian Trade Union leader Ernie Thornton, and "Mao rhymed with 'now', it was not May-o as most Australians pronounced it".[33] While, as Aarons put it, the CPA's "instilling into its members of an opposition to racial prejudice and all forms of discrimination" meant that "[w]e never held the stupid but often expressed view that 'they all look the same'", examples like Sendy's indicate that this did not lead to automatic understandings. Indeed, Australians on arrival recorded some distinctly orientalist impressions.[34] As Eric Aarons remembered a decade and a half after his first China trip, what was particularly hard for the Australians to understand was "the 'culture' and its differences from ours", particularly the Chinese focus on "things of the mind and emotions" as compared to the "brashness [and] lack of consideration" of his countrymen.[35]

Mortimer, for his part, noted the "general air of neatness and cleanliness, the industry and pride of the Chinese people" upon his arrival, while Sendy recalls a "dream-like glimpse of the Great Wall" and how the arrival of this all-white delegation "aroused tremendous curiosity" with "[h]undreds of Chinese standing quietly watching our every movement".[36] Such statements carried lingering ideas around racial hierarchy and a distinct sense of culture shock. Taft, having arrived via Hong Kong, writes of feeling "very strange during my first night in Canton. I had a room to myself and, sitting there on my own, with Chinese music being played outside, I felt as though I was at the end of the world". Their meals, either "a Chinese version of Russian food" or then-obscure Asian offerings were "hard for Australians to get used to", Taft remembers, and they certainly failed to assist the travellers in their acclimatisation to this new alien environment. Despite these cultural and culinary difficulties, the Australians recalled being decidedly impressed with the

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[32] John Sendy, *Comrades Come Rally: Recollections of an Australian Communist* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia, 1978), 49.

[33] Ibid, 75.

[34] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978). Strahan discusses the various Orientalist sensibilities of Australian travellers in his work. Strahan, *Australia's China*.

[35] Eric Aarons, "The Sixties as I saw it," *Australian Left Review* 27 (October-November 1970): 60-1.

[36] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 118; Sendy, *Comrades come rally*, 76-7.

conduct of the Chinese they encountered, who were overwhelmingly cadres and officials. They were "characteristically modest, spartan, considerate and hard-working", Mortimer recalls, while "their 'style' was quite unlike anything we had encountered…seeming to combine selfless devotion with an almost elusive individuality, which together were extraordinarily impressive".[37] This proved a stark contrast with Eastern Europe, through which many travellers had to venture *en route* to China. "The enthusiasm and bustle we had expected to see in the early years of a socialist country appeared to be lacking", remarked Sendy of Czechoslovakia in 1950, "we sensed a certain passivity and stodginess among the people".[38] These impressions only furthered the appeal of committed and engaged Chinese cadres and citizens.

School officials and minders ensured that Australians experienced little of the 'real' China, however. The high walls of their compound, supposedly to provide protection from "armed counter-revolutionaries in the hills", also ensured that contact with locals was limited. News from the outside world, of events ranging from the Korean War to Khrushchev's secret speech, was also censored or unavailable.[39] Monday night tours were allowed in the centre of Beijing under careful supervision. Goods could be bought from the state store, draught beer purchased at the Peace Pub, and eventually the Australians were allowed to "move around the city on our own" for brief periods.[40] Such controls even extended to attempted love interests, made difficult by policies of abstinence outside of marriage, constituting "a rather unexpected parallel with the feudal views of the Roman Catholic Church".[41] One successful attempt to take some young Chinese women working at the school to dinner was somewhat clouded when two minders showed up, to ensure propriety was maintained.

The Australians did, however, catch glimpses of everyday life in China, and reported the "genuine mass enthusiasm and revolutionary fervour" of its people. This was understandable given these Australians travelled during the liberal period of democratic experimentation, before China's two disturbing and violent ructions, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. And although they were cut off from much of ordinary life in China, the travellers did live alongside a variety of

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[37] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 118.
[38] Sendy, *Comrades Come Rally*, 73.
[39] Taft, *Crossing the Party Line*, 84.
[40] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 120; Taft, *Crossing the Party Line*, 84.
[41] Aarons, *What's Left*, 91.

communists from different Asian nations who were undertaking similar training. "There were Japanese, Vietnamese, Burmese, Indonesians, Thais and us", dockworker and member of the first delegation Keith McEwan recalls of his stay, and "a warm and friendly atmosphere pervaded among the different racial and national groups". This was, perhaps surprisingly given their geographic proximity and political sympathies, the first sustained contact most of the Australians had with fellow communists from the Asian region. Despite Chinese attempts to "inhibit…those students who could converse with one another from talking too much", important contacts were made that broke through both language barriers and what McEwan described as hatreds towards westerners born of colonial rule.[42]

These personal observations and encounters, while perhaps revealing some of the less savoury aspects of China's revolution, merely complemented what was considered a highly enlightening period of study. Mortimer's group undertook a condensed eighteen-week course traversing the Chinese party's history, philosophy, ideas on mass work and the United National Front. Here, local conditions were presented as paramount, with "the conditions of time and place" taking precedence over what was termed "subjectivism"—preconceptions of static theories that blinded one to realities.[43] Rather than the language of "diamat"—the Soviet Union's crude crystallisation of economic determinism and mechanical theory—the Chinese spoke in terms of remoulding the self and taking one's political line from the people rather than imposing one from outside. They were also anti-bureaucratic, with Mao believing that a privileged class of *apparatchiks* would, like in the Soviet Union, alienate the masses from the Party.[44] Several travellers recall the distinct disillusionment they felt in the turgid, monotone presentations given by Soviet lecturers at the school, invited by the Chinese to make up for shortfalls in such experts, especially when compared to the upbeat and decidedly different ideas of self-criticism and the mass line propounded by their Chinese counterparts. McEwan describes one encounter with a particular dogmatic lecturer in Soviet history:

> Without glancing at us, he would enter the classroom at the appointed
> time. We would be standing. He would march up to the platform, open his

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[42] Keith McEwan, *Once a Jolly Comrade* (Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne: Jacaranda Press, 1966), 37.
[43] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 119.
[44] Rebecca E. Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 91-2.

case, take out his papers and proceed to read word for word, not missing one comma or full stop, from [Stalin's] *The History of the Soviet Union*.[45]

Such encounters only bred further disillusionment, exacerbated by the new and exciting nature of Chinese ideas.

Self-criticism as a part of ideological remoulding, although espoused by Lenin, was employed in a more sustained fashion by the CPC, and proved deeply inspiring to the Australians. This was a process that was never "final or finished", but rather one that "required repeated struggle with one's weaknesses, in which criticism by others was a vital aid".[46] Aarons and other members of his delegation appear to have been subjected to a particularly hard-nosed version of this theory, possibly owing to their being one of the first international delegations to arrive in the People's Republic. "It took us more than a year to adapt", Aarons bemoaned, with students having to "dredge through one's experiences and memories to produce concrete examples of where one had gone wrong in the past, and why one had made those errors". Indeed, the Chinese application of these ideas was so intense as to force one Burmese comrade to insanity, and an Indonesian to suicide, which were condemned as selfish and un-communist actions by their hosts.[47] These excesses horrified the Australians, yet did not overly dampen their enthusiasm. Mortimer's delegation was exposed to a similar, if much less doctrinaire, course of self-criticism that was fascinating to those involved, and "particularly the younger ones":

> The emphasis on personal remoulding came as a revelation to most of us; we had been reared on a more deterministic variant of communism, in which the mastery of theory rather than the attainment of ideological purity was the main concern.[48]

While fascinating to some, older leaders in the Party—products of "the rough-and-tumble depression years, and reared in a tough, rigid and authoritarian Stalinist school in which survival demanded ruthlessness and deviousness"—were less enthused. One particular leader's failure to take these ideas seriously created outraged debate, while a defence that "if he were going to bare his faults, it would be to the higher leaders of the Australian Party to whom he felt himself responsible" seemed

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[45] McEwan, *Once a Jolly Comrade,* 35.
[46] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 119.
[47] Aarons, *What's Left*, 97.
[48] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 119.

only to cement already-circulating critiques of authoritarian leadership styles. As Mortimer noted, "The younger…members of the delegation came to recognise and discuss among themselves, at first guardedly and hesitatingly, and then with increasing cynicism, the ways in which the most senior and high-ranking among us least measured up to the [CPC] criteria for being 'a good communist'". Thus, these emerging party leaders came to see their superiors "through spectacles supplied by Mao", whose talk of the "spiritual qualities" of leadership clashed bitterly with the reality of many leading members.[49] So, while the "dictatorial" reality of Chinese political life brought into question "the 'democratic' nature of the CPA [and] the authoritarian methods frequently adopted by its leadership", as Strahan relates, its exciting ideological innovations also provided travellers with the theoretical ammunition to challenge these practices.[50]

While Taft explained his time in China as "a turning point in my life", few encountered an easy transition back into Australian society after up to three years in a very foreign land. McEwan, for example, "was terribly keyed up" upon his return: "I could not readjust myself to the Australian environment", he bemoaned. Similarly, Aarons noted a distinct culture shock, "I did not know how to converse with the people I met", nor did he understand the massive increase in consumable items brought by the post-war boom.[51] Some, mostly those who had stayed for significantly shorter periods, were less affected. "Arriving back in Melbourne", Mortimer remembers, "my overriding aspiration was…to introduce the more flexible and democratic practices of the Chinese CP" in Australian conditions.[52] Despite the Australian Party's generally favourable attitude towards the Chinese, even to the point where "[t]he writings of Chinese leaders were frequently used in preference to Russian writings" in internal documents and publications, attempts to import Chinese education philosophies were greeted with a mixture of bewilderment and downright hostility.[53] Attempts prior to the study tours to use "what we understood of the Chinese approach" to identify where the Party had gone wrong went awry, mostly due to what Aarons thought was "the inability…to fully comprehend the Chinese Communist Party's remoulding techniques". Yet, when Aarons returned from China

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[49] Ibid, 121.
[50] Strahan, *Australia's China*, 188.
[51] McEwan, *Once a Jolly Comrade*, 52; Aarons, *What's Left*, 108.
[52] Mortimer, "A Liberal Education," 122.
[53] Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 148.

in 1954 with a well-developed, personal knowledge of these techniques, he was "met with opposition by virtually everyone".[54] The Party's long-serving president, Richard Dixon, labelled new Chinese methods "psychology, not politics", while the authoritarian Ted Hill—a strong defender of Mao in his post-Great Leap Forward guise of "anti-revisionist" Stalinist—sought to curb the influence of a growing group of youthful democratic minded members who opposed him.[55]

Taking inspiration from their experience of China's "fundamentally more democratic way of conducting Party…affairs", Taft, Mortimer and others sought to take their Chinese lessons, officially rejected by the hierarchy, in new directions.[56] As well as allowing these activists to gradually abandon Soviet tutelage, as Macintyre argues, many of those involved in the tours also began to take into account a wider array of influences and ideas in the formulation of local practice.[57] As Davidson explains, it was "strangely enough" those "younger cadres who had trained in China" who became "interested in the polycentrist theories of [Italian CP leader Palirmo] Togliatti, the national communism of Yugoslavia and Poland, and the 'liberalising' movement" in the Soviet Union.[58] This was certainly not what the Chinese party educators had expected from their budding Australian protégées, but such examples amply illustrates how political 'pilgrims' cannot be categorised as mere dupes, but rather must be understood as engaging in a transnational dialogue. Despite attempts to stamp out such interest and outside influence through a return to Stalinist organisational practices during the late 1950s, the Australian Party's abandonment of China at the Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1961 saw a chance for these reformists to take on the Victorian 'old guard' increasingly solidifying around Hill. A strong supporter of Stalin, Hill was in one swoop able to support China's 1958 move to "Stalinist policies of thought control at home and adventurism abroad" while remaining distrustful of those who had trained in China and the "new-fangled ideas of bourgeois individualism" they had "picked up" there.[59]

Despite his taking on the mantle of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, Hill was in fact everything the youthful travellers had been taught to challenge by the Chinese. His

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[54] Laurie Aarons quoted in Aarons, *The Family File*, 176.
[55] Aarons, *The Family File*, 175.
[56] McEwan, *Once a Jolly Comrade*, 46.
[57] Macintyre, "Communist Cadres in China," 422-3.
[58] Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 150.
[59] McEwan, *Once a Jolly Comrade*, 98; Taft, *Crossing the Party Line*, 97.

penchant for procedure was well known: "He would decide whether or not a Party Member would cease to be a full-time organiser or would be sent overseas for study…[c]ountless decisions were arrived at in a company director's fashion", McEwan recalls.[60]. An initial attempt by Taft and others to use their experiences of China's revolution to contest Hill's leadership ended in the challenger's "Siberian exile", as he termed it, on another much more disappointing delegation to the Soviet Union.[61] Upon Taft's return, however, he reunited with Mortimer, McEwan and others to "use the Chinese method to confound Hill" once more, displaying the spread and flow of transnational ideas. While the oppositionists, now tacitly allied with the national leadership, sought to take the issues to members at mass meetings, debating and discussing, Hill and his supporters continued to operate the increasingly irrelevant bureaucratic machinery to their advantage.

The travellers eventually prevailed, with Hill's Maoist grouping leaving in 1963 and subsequently forming their own party, the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA (M-L)) in 1964.[62] In 1965 Eric's brother, Laurie Aarons, a member of the second study tour to China and now a firm anti-Stalinist, took the Party leadership from 34-year veteran Lance Sharkey. This leadership transition completed a generational shift that was to see significant change, particularly the abandonment of the Soviet Union in favour of the polycentric international 'New Left', a process to be explored more fully in the remainder of this thesis. Seen by many members as a new lease on life, these leadership changes and splits saw a period of experimentation and liberalisation: victories for which Mortimer thanked his Chinese counterparts.

Conclusion

Defining the 1960s temporally requires the historian to balance a deafening chorus of competing interests, dates and agendas. One thing seems clear, however: that the decade, however defined, was marked by a confluence of turbulent international events with local realities. It is, then, far from a stretch to posit Australia's Sixties as finding some of its key foundational beginnings during the 1950s, when Australian

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[60] McEwan, *Once a Jolly Comrade*, 98.
[61] Taft, *Crossing the Party Line*, 106.
[62] For details of the split, see Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 147-62.

communists experienced a new type of Marxism behind the 'bamboo curtain'. It has been argued here that a small group of Australian communist activists found in Mao's recently formed republic not only the toolkit and vocabulary to break with Russian tutelage, but also discovered the importance of local conditions, and a wider international outlook, to successful revolutionary politics. Despite arriving with a myriad of political concerns and misconceptions, they found what they were looking for in China, even if this was far from what their teachers might have wished. It was not only in China that new ideas and agendas were unearthed and practiced, dissident vocabularies learnt and conceptual horizons broadened. An array of issues linked to (post) colonial exploitation and rebellion soon began to fire passions in Australia itself, as an unlikely cast of characters forged alliances and struck out anew in a type of solidarity-based politics.

Chapter Two

From helpless natives to revolutionary heroes: An evolving ethic of solidarity

The long Sixties were defined, for most of the world, by the struggle for decolonisation, national independence or recognition of racial minorities within existing power structures.[1] Moving from early experiences of direct engagement with the Chinese revolution, this chapter explores Australians' early figurative or impersonal engagements with global politics, particularly through solidarity movements with these struggles. Drawing on social movement theory, a (re)emerging ethic of solidarity is identified, as the idea of a binary Cold War world was slowly rejected by a new cast of characters who became involved in campaigns around South Africa, racial oppression in the USA and, finally, Vietnam, during the early-to-mid 1960s. Such "symbolic demonstrations of solidarity", as Jeremy Prestholdt argues, were "at the core of the new internationalist consciousness" of global revolution.[2] Additionally, this chapter will reveal how other activists and the community at large read such outwardly focused radicalism as productive, misdirected, or downright dangerous. During this time, Australian activists began opening their eyes to a wider world of struggles and concerns, developing new vocabularies of dissent and laying the foundations for a period of complex transnational exchange that will be explored in later chapters.

Solidarity and the Left

Solidarity is a practice with multilayered meanings and histories within left movements. It carries long purchase in the trade unions, for instance, with frequent refrains of "solidarity forever" tying the organised working class together against

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[1] For a recent volume exploring this theme, see Samantha Christiansen and Zachary Scarlett, eds., *The Third World in the Global Sixties* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

[2] Jeremy Prestholdt, "Resurrecting Che: radicalism, the transnational imagination and the politics of heroes," *Journal of Global History* 7, No. 3 (November 2012): 508.

capital, government and (often foreign) 'scabs'.[3] Such national(istic) uses of this term, however, are far from the limit of its rhetorical employment. Indeed, international solidarity became part and parcel of left political practice during the twentieth century, helped along in no uncertain way by the realities of "international" communism and the slow process of decolonisation. As discussed earlier, the Comintern (Communist International) saw what Lenin termed proletarian internationalism as central to global revolutionary strategy, and the CPA waged solidarity campaigns with victims of imperialist aggression in Spain and China as well as the all-important rallying of support of Moscow through groups like Friends of the Soviet Union. Australian involvement in World War II saw an increase in this form of solidarity activism. As Lachlan Grant reveals, personal engagements with Asian peoples by large numbers of Australian soldiers in the Pacific theatre bred a certain degree of support for emerging liberation struggles in Asia. One soldier declared, in relation to Indian independence, "we owe it to the Indian people, and to ourselves, to offer every assistance in their struggle", for "[n]o lasting peace can be established so long as one subject people remains in the world".[4]

Such sentiments soon spread into the well-known campaign in support of Indonesian independence. Riding a wave of postwar enthusiasm for social change, Communist-led waterside unions black banned Dutch ships in August of 1945 in support of Indonesia's declaration of independence, forging alliances both across Australia and internationally, particularly with Indian seamen.[5] These examples point towards a type of solidarity described by Thomas Olesen as "political" or "ideological". Olesen explains that:

> [L]eft-wing internationalism and solidarity was not conceived of as the voluntary actions of individuals and civil society organisations, but was structured from above through national parties and states with socialist governments [and] this old internationalism consequently had an explicitly national dimension.[6]

[3] On the importance of such uses of language in early Labor movement politics see Nick Dyrenfurth, *Heroes & villains: the rise and fall of the early Australian Labour Party* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011).

[4] Citied in Lachlan Grant, "The Second AIF and the End of Empires: Soldier's attitudes towards a "Free Asia", *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 57, No. 4 (December 2011): 489.

[5] Heather Goodall, "Port Politics: Indian Seamen, Australian Unions and Indonesian Independence, 1945-47," *Labour History* No. 94 (May 2008): 43-68.

[6] Thomas Olesen, "Globalising the Zapatistas: From Third World solidarity to global solidarity?" *Third World Quarterly* 25, No. 1 (2004): 257. For further elaboration on these types of solidarity see Thomas Olesen, *International Zapatismo: The Construction of Solidarity in the Age of Globalisation* (London:

This type of solidarity was made possible by the budding enthusiasm of the immediate post-war period. Communist Eric Aarons explained how "many people, having directly experienced the suffering of the depression, were looking forward to the promised New Order", while Australians, particularly ex-service people, began "taking seriously the talk of the war being a fight for democracy and wanting to see more of it at home and in [the] colonies".[7] Such transnational enthusiasm did not last long, as the Cold War soon ensured that acts of solidarity were read as dangerous subversion. The victory of China's revolution transformed the rebellions of colonised peoples in Asia from noble affairs into Communist plots, and those independent Asian states that did emerge seemed threatening. These fears were only compounded by the 1955 Afro-Asian summit in Bandung, which Australia did not attend. While widely neglected or dismissed in the Australian public sphere, Bandung was immensely significant for the decolonised world and is now seen as the political birth of the Third World project.[8] While some Australian progressives did attend the conference, their calls for Australian support for decolonisation fell on deaf ears, even amongst Communists. As Heather Goodall explains, Soviet-aligned organisations like the World Federation of Trade Unions remained more important to Party members than those seeking national independence and freedom from domination.[9]

At home, activism was increasingly marginalised. The Australian Peace Council, formed in 1949 to campaign for disarmament, was one of many groups written off by the ascendant conservative forces as Communist controlled and, as such, not conveying a legitimate message.[10] A 1948 decision by the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) that the organisation would no longer

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Zed Books, 2005), 102-11, and for an in-depth look at the history of solidarity activism see David Featherstone, *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (London: Zed Books, 2012).

[7] Aarons, *What's Left*, 56.

[8] On Australia and the Bandung Conference see David Walker, "Nervous Outsiders: Australia and the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung," *Australian Historical Studies* 36, No. 125 (2005): 40-58 and Christopher Waters, "Lost Opportunity: Australia and the Bandung Conference," in *Bandung 1955: Little Histories*, ed. Derek McDougall and Antonia Finnane, 75-87 (Caulfied, Vic: Monash University Press, 2010).

[9] For Australians in Bandung, see Cecily Burton, "Report on Bandung," *Meanjin* 14, No. 3 (September 1955): 395–9. For lack of Communist interest in Bandung and decolonization outside of the Soviet sphere, see Heather Goodall, "Uneasy Comrades: Tuk Subianko, Eliot V. Elliot and the Cold War," *Indonesian and Malay World* 40, No. 117 (July 2012): 209-30.

[10] The APC was indeed under some level of Communist control, though party members were always in a minority. See John McLaren, "Peace Wars: The 1959 ANZ Peace Conference," *Labour History* 82 (May 2002): 98.

support "any movement or organisation of political or religious tendencies", a retreat from its previous support for Indonesian independence that reflected Cold War fears and saw the union embark on an "apathetic" course throughout the 1950s.[11] Indeed, Jennifer Clark points out how such "apathy" was seen as endemic within student life in the 1950s, unlike the previous decade, which had been marked by intense radicalisation and debates, as well as widespread communist influence in union bodies.[12]

Yet, the domination of such thinking was soon challenged as international events began attracting student ire. An article by W.J. Hudson in the University of Queensland's student newspaper *Semper Floreat* in 1958 denounced the indolence and apathy of Australians. While noting how the "average Australian…would not care about anything bar test cricket or football matches", Hudson spared most of his scorn for the Australian university student, who "almost certainly knows no Asian language, listens to no Asian music [and] even the sight of an Asian is strange to him". This cultural myopia mixed with lax education and geographic isolation to create an intellectual polity that didn't "care greatly about French cabinet shuffles, American presidential nominations or a war in Algeria".[13] Clark describes how 1958 also saw student unions begin to challenge the issues Hudson identified, passing their first political statements in a decade. The University of Sydney's Student Representative Council passed two Extraordinary Resolutions in solidarity with students in Cuba and Spain, both under attack from their US-backed governments, yet informed prospective readers that they were "formed with some care" so as not to "abandon [our] long-term policy of 'A-politicism'".[14]

In the next decade, this policy was to be further challenged by a student body multiplying in numbers and adopting an increasingly radical disposition. The Federal Government's funding of universities in the post-World War Two period and the coming of age of the baby boomers from the early 60s onwards provided both a rising student population and a steadily expanding university sector to accommodate them. New mediums – principally television – also provided timely reportage of overseas

[11] NUAUS constitution quoted in Jennifer Clark, *Aborigines and activism: race, aborigines and the coming of the sixties to Australia* (Crawley, WA: UWA Press, 2008), 145.
[12] Ibid, 123.
[13] W.J. Hudson, "This affects us," *Semper Floreat,* 28 February 1958, 3.
[14] Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, 147.

events in a way previously inconceivable while, as we will see, new cultural forms from overseas expanded their imagination.

Apartheid, Civil rights and the rise of a questioning constituency

This slow renewal of campus activism emerged through the frame of what Olesen labels "rights solidarity":

> [A] form of solidarity concerned with human rights abuses and other forms of human oppression that is a result of the actions of states or extra-legal forces. Rights solidarity work generally aims at putting pressure on human rights abusers. This may be done directly by lobbying the governments of the countries in which the violations take place, but often pressure is exerted through other governments or intergovernmental organisations expected to have a certain influence on the state in which the violations occur.[15]

Appealing to often intractable governments over 'human rights' violations or other moral concerns rather than voicing political support for socialist states or liberation struggles, rights activism informed the discourse of politicising students who began to challenge campus unions that saw international affairs as "not specifically a student matter".[16] This type of framing was indicative of a developing global New Left who, as Van Gosse describes in the American context, began petitioning governments for bans on nuclear testing and a policy of non-intervention in Cuba through organisations like Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy and the Student Peace Union.[17]

A similar New Left soon formed in the antipodes, led in part by on and off-campus intellectuals who had left the Communist Party in 1956 over the revelations of Khrushchev's Secret Speech, the invasion of Hungary and the Australian Party's inability to allow real discussion on these vital matters. *Outlook*, the key publication of this loosely knit community, announced in its first issue that "socialism is once again a live issue in Australia". However, by 1960 the group realised that their "narcissistic concern with world communism" was no longer fruitful, but rather that a

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[15] Olesen, "Globalising the Zapatistas," 257.
[16] Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, 147.
[17] Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretative History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 53-62.

"sympathetic interest in Castro's Cuba, the South-East Asian revolutionary movements, and the liberation movement in South Africa" might provide a more interesting approach.[18] A coming explosion of activism seemed to provide a solid foundation for this new international turn. The April 1960 issue announced that "Public outcry at the South African shootings has dealt a blow to the belief that the conscience of mankind is in the grip of the Great Apathy", and the writer was principally referring to the activities of several thousand Sydney University students, who had organised the first political protest of the 1960s.[19]

On March 21 1960, hundreds of people from the South African township of Sharpeville had gathered outside the local police station as part of a national day of peaceful protest against the pass system that restricted the movement of black South Africans. Police and paramilitaries, anxious over this public display of strength, opened fire on the group, killing 69 and wounding countless more.[20] The Sharpeville massacre proved a salutary shock to students at the University of Sydney, a campus that had not seen significant political activism since the 1940s.[21] While apartheid had been a topic of discussion and debate in Australia throughout the 1950s, it had not previously prompted such a public demonstration.[22] A report on events in *Outlook* noted how this was not "a spur-of-the-moment mass student demonstration" but rather the efforts of "a handful of left-wing students" who organised a front-lawn meeting four days after news from South Africa began flooding newspapers, radio and the relatively new medium of television. The meeting ended up attracting some three thousand students and saw a wide-ranging debate over whether to hold a solidarity protest. Many opposed such an action, with Christians arguing "it would be better to pray for the African dead and imprisoned rather than to march in protest" and the Student Representative Council believing a march would only "turn into yet another student/police brawl". Even the Communist Party, suffering from Cold War fear mongering, told its few student members that "such demonstrations served no useful purpose". It was left to a "motley group" of Australian Labor Party (ALP) club

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[18] Ian Turner, "The long goodbye," *Outlook* 14, No. 6 (December 1970): 3.
[19] "South Africa – Explosion Point," *Outlook* 4, No. 2 (April 1960): 2.
[20] See Tom Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 234-279.
[21] See Alan Barcan, *From New Left to Factional Left: Fifty Years of Student Activism at Sydney University* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011), 23.
[22] For work on previous Australian engagement with Apartheid, see David Tothill, "Trying to Sell Apartheid to 1950s Australia," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, No. 1 (2006): 143-71

members, anarchists, the editor of student newspaper *Honi Soit* and an unnamed Asian student—who "in an impassioned speech said he was supporting the demonstration 'as a member of the human race'"—to ratchet support for a protest in Martin Place.[23]

Students protested on March 25, supported by a smattering of unionists, and were met with the full force of Sydney's police. Thirty officers "ripped down placards and broke up the demonstration within fifteen minutes", arrests were made, two students were charged and reports in the mainstream press condemned this militant turn in campus life.[24] A writer for *Honi* defended the protest against its detractors, arguing that "[r]ather than sit in judgement of South Africa", students had wished to "inform…the South African government that certain of their actions do not go unseen, and that the needless massacre of the Sharpeville natives was not unheeded". These justifications, employing the vernacular of rights solidarity, appeared in the student press alongside reflections on the usefulness of the protest as a local and global manifestation. The students' very public statement was defended in terms of making Australia use its political weight to force South Africa's hand on the issue of race discrimination, a central component of rights activism. "Australia is a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations", and as such "her actions are capable of serious and widespread international implications", one student argued.[25]

Others thought the protest had had little effect internationally, instead seeing it as useful in local terms, particularly in proving that Australian students could, like their international counterparts, act politically. 'G.M.' opined how "Demonstrations thousands of miles away, it is true, do little to help the natives…[b]ut no matter what difference demonstrations in Sydney make overseas, they do make a difference in Sydney". This statement involved an ill-conceived approximation of South Africa's violent racism with Sydney police requiring a permit for demonstrations. Such infringement on rights, the author argued, is "carried out with guns in Cape Town, while elsewhere it includes laws requiring official sanction for public political meetings".[26] Another writer took this one step further, asking of the Martin Place protests, "how many…would arm themselves with rocks and sticks and take part in a

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[23] John Glyde, "Students in Martin Place," *Outlook* 4, No. 3 (June 1960): 14-5.
[24] Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, 132.
[25] "Police give a hand in protest on Sharpeville," *Honi Soit,* 7 April 1960, 1.
[26] G.M., "What was the point?" *Honi Soit*, 7 April 1960, 2.

pitched battle with the police", *a la* the concurrent actions of Japanese students?[27] This level of international comparison should not be surprising, for as Christopher A. Rootes argues, a small number of NUAUS delegates had begun attending international student conferences at the time and were "strongly influenced by international student campaigns against racism and colonialism in Southern Africa". In the opinion of Rootes' unnamed interviewees, these global encounters "led directly to the NUAUS campaign against apartheid and fuelled the concern with both immigration policy and the status of Aborigines".[28]

While the locus of this protest was international, the students' sights were firmly set on Australia, with South Africa serving as a springboard for debates about local dissent. As postcolonial scholar Achille Mbembe argues, "narrative about Africa is always pretext for a comment about something else", a "mediation that enables the West to accede to its own subconsciousness and give a public account of its subjectivity".[29] A writer in *Outlook* saw this clearly, postulating that an upswing in Australian student activism would have to arise from a Sharpeville-type incident in Australian-administered New Guinea that would pose a stark question to students: "are you for colonialism or against it", a question that was in fact to be posed most visibly by Vietnam.[30] The use of terms like "natives" by student protestors also displays one of the limits of rights activism, which sees the oppressed as disempowered objects of charity, rather than as political actors. "The providers [of solidarity] are in one place, mainly Europe and the USA, where there is a generally high degree of stability", Olesen relates in his critique of this form of solidarity, "while the beneficiaries are located in a distant place with severe problems".[31] In centralising the role of Western students, it allowed for oppressed black South Africans to disappear from debates, only appearing in the guise of a helpless, racialised native.

This type of rights focused discourse inflected the continuing, and burgeoning, anti-apartheid movement of the early 1960s, in which students cooperated with trade unionists and other community members in trade boycotts, protests at sporting

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[27] Peter Grose, "The political power of student demonstrations," *Honi Soit,* 4 August 1960, 6.
[28] Christopher A. Rootes, "The Development of Radical Student Movements and their Sequalae," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 34, No. 2 (August 1988): 174.
[29] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Cal: University of California Press, 2001), 3.
[30] K.T. Fowler, "The Incoherent Rebellion," *Outlook* 4, No. 4 (August 1960): 9.
[31] Olesen, "Globalising the Zapatistas," 259.

matches and general information campaigns. A leaflet prepared by Youth Against Apartheid in 1965 argued that:

> The days of the 'sovereign state' are over and totalitarianism anywhere threatens democracy anywhere, so to refuse to interfere in the domestic affairs of South Africa on behalf of, and at the request of the majority of her people is …only cowardly and hypocritical.[32]

This idea of working on "behalf", or even at the "request", of oppressed people, while certainly an improvement of colonialist motifs of the 'native', continued to reinforce the idea of developed world centrality in these movements. Indeed, sometimes the solidarity actions of Australians were unwanted. Indigenous activist and waterside worker Charles Dixon recalls how the South African boycott campaign on the Sydney docks reflected the problems of charity with mute recipients:

> [W]e refused to unload South African cargo. So we were trying to support the workers of South Africa. We were getting, use an example, $100 a week to unload it and they were getting $5 a week for loading it. So we thought we were great and we were going to support them. After a month they got in touch with us. 'Oh, don't refuse to unload it. Better $5 than no dollar'. So that didn't work. So that was a lesson learned.[33]

While Dixon learnt his lesson quickly, when students took on their next major international cause, similar problems emerged.

The Civil Rights Movement in the United States was a hot topic in Australia during the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s. "The bloody images of American desegregation were well known", Clark remarks, and "the images were made more real and intimate through television".[34] Australia had developed a strong cultural and political relationship with America during the 1950s and 1960s. "American mass culture", Sean Scalmer writes in his work on the 'translation' of American protest forms to Australia, "was a dominant influence and inspiration for Australian youth".[35] This interest extended to political culture, with one student opining how "the really

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[32] *Youth Against Apartheid* newsletter, January 1965 in Langer, Albert Volume 1, A6119 3931, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[33] Chicka Dixon interviewed by Gary Foley, 5 and 12 May 1995, ORAL TRC 3282, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

[34] Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, 152.

[35] Sean Scalmer, *Dissent events: protest, the media and the political gimmick in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002), 14.

thrilling part about student politics [is] the feeling of being part of something which links me with students all over Australia and beyond…It is exactly the same kind of feeling that I get from listening to Pete Seger (sic) sing…against racial discrimination in the USA".[36]

In this way, the world and radical politics in general became associated with the United States. The Civil Rights Act, banning overt discrimination against African Americans, was strenuously debated in the US Senate on 6 May 1964 and Australian students decided to add their voices to calls for its passage. Massing in Wynyard Park, close to the United States consulate, the students engaged in a theatrical protest, some dressing as Ku Klux Klan members, burning crosses and all chanting "civil rights now" as part of the University's commemoration day celebrations, traditionally a bawdy day of humorous student-led street processions.[37] Some 40 students were arrested and a new vocabulary of global dissent was used to criticise police violence, with well-known student journalist Peter Steedman commenting in Monash campus paper *Lot's Wife* that "like the students conducting their protests in the Southern States of America, those of Sydney University appear to have received the same treatment from police".[38]

A perhaps unexpected outcome of this well meaning protest was criticism, not only from the usual suspects over riotous affray or damage to respectability, but from those taking the students to task for ignoring discrimination closer to home. This is another issue that arises within rights solidarity action; it relies "on a notion of distance between providers and beneficiaries in the solidarity exchange". The beneficiary cannot be the victim of the privileged benefactor's own (in)action.[39] Anthropologist Bill Stanner bemoaned in the *Sydney Morning Herald* a few days prior to the 1964 ruckus that Australians "are angered only by very distant racial wrongs"—ignoring local injustices against indigenous peoples—and this criticism was reflected in media discourse about what was termed the 'Wynyard Park riot'.[40]

African American Charlie Pyatt II wrote to *Honi Soit* shortly after the protests, thanking the students for helping to provide the "[s]hame at home and abroad" that will "eliminate the racial injustices which have for so long seared our land", while

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[36] Bob McDonald, "Student Politics: by a participant," *Honi Soit*, 19 March 1963, 5.

[37] Scalmer, *Dissent events*, 15.

[38] Pete Steedman quoted in Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, 157.

[39] Olesen, *International Zapatismo*, 109.

[40] Bill Stanner quoted in Ann Curthoys, *Freedom Ride: A Freedom Rider Remembers* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002), 1.

also reprimanding them for failing to protest against outrages like the White Australia Policy and treatment of Aborigines that the US media had highlighted.[41] This was a point made often of globally conscious protest, going back to the 1960 anti-Apartheid action in Martin Place. "Obviously", a protesting student wrote after that protest, "it is realised that in our own backyard exists a racial and differential treatment of an indigenous native race". Forcing Menzies to publically denounce South Africa's actions, in the student's opinion, might ensure "that world opinion and scrutiny could be deflected on to Australia's administration of Papua New Guinea and its attitude toward the aborigine".[42] This time around, however, such realisations saw the birth of a locally attuned, if American inspired, means of solidarity. The now-famous Freedom Rides, attempts to desegregate southern busing networks in America, translated into a survey-cum-protest across rural NSW by Sydney University students in early 1965, involving most of those who had led the way on the Consulate protest under the leadership of Aboriginal students Charles Perkins and Gary Williams.[43]

Vietnam and a new ethic of solidarity

It is clear, then, how a call for international solidarity became one for a localised solidarity with recipients at one's own doorstep. In many ways what was to follow built on this development, exposing a group of activists to charges of treason for supporting those they perceived as the victims not of a foreign government, but of their own. While previous instances of rights-based activism proved that "a small student group with a positive policy can rouse normally indifferent students on an important, specific humanitarian issue", students at Sydney and later Monash universities were to marshal ideas of 'material' aid in a firmly political context.[44] In doing so, they broke directly with the Cold War policies of their government through an active engagement with struggles in the recently 'discovered' Third World, particularly Vietnam.

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[41] Charles Pyatt II, "Negro thanks on protest," *Honi Soit*, 30 June 1964, 2.
[42] "Police give a hand," 1.
[43] See Curthoys, *Freedom Ride* for the key academic account of this protest. For an interesting comment on its transnationality, see Scalmer, *Dissent Events*, 11-30, and for its revealing of the spatial politics of race see Penelope Edmonds, "Unofficial apartheid, convention and country towns: reflections on Australian history and the New South Wales Freedom Rides of 1965," *Postcolonial Studies* 15, No. 2 (2012): 167-90.
[44] Glyde, "Students in Martin Place," 14.

If earlier activism had assisted in breaching it, the war in Indochina was "the fire that burnt down the rotten framework of cold war politics", as Brisbane activist Dan O'Neill put it. "[D]iscussion on the war became…a discussion on capitalism, on economic imperialism, on Australian Foreign Policy, on Australian Society…and so on [to] the point of our own lives within the university and within the society".[45] The war itself began for Australia in July 1962, when advisers were dispatched to train the pro-Western South Vietnamese army in facing a home-grown insurgency supported by a determined Northern adversary. Protest only emerged in 1964 in response to the August Gulf of Tonkin incident, further motivated by the introduction of conscription for overseas service later in that year and the April 1965 announcement that Australian combat troops were to be committed to the conflict. Despite initial popularity with the general public, groups like Save Our Sons (SOS), the Youth Campaign Against Conscription (YCAC) and the Vietnam Action Committee (VAC) took the lead in activism during 1965-6, and pursued a respectable political agenda— not unlike that of previous groups like the Australian Peace Council—of asking the government to negotiate with North Vietnam rather than calling for immediate troop withdrawal. This form of politics was complemented by a respectable protesting style: A leaflet to SOS members read "our most orderly demonstrations have been our most effective", while radicalising youth limited themselves to peaceful sit-down demonstrations.[46]

Such protest began, however, to garner criticism in 1966, particularly after the disastrous ALP election defeat in December of that year, towards the victory of which the "peace movement…had thrown all of its resources…and invested great hopes in the change of policy which would result".[47] This defeat "produced widespread disillusion with both the Labor Party and electoral politics and directly stimulated the turn to direct action" amongst student groups and other radical opponents of the war.[48] Even before this defeat, however, some activists were challenging the movement's limited vision. Hall Greenland, Trotskyist and President of the Sydney University ALP Club, wrote in a March 1966 edition of the group's increasingly

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[45] Dan O'Neill, "The rise and fall of student consciousness," *Semper Floreat,* 20 May 1976, 10.
[46] See both John Murphy, *Harvest of Fear: A history of Australia's Vietnam War* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 140-9 and John Percy, *A History of the Democratic Socialist Party and Resistance, Volume 1: 1965-72, Resistance* (Chippendale, NSW: Resistance Books, 2005), 50-84 for overviews of these developments.
[47] Murphy, *Harvest of Fear*, 159.
[48] Rootes, "Radical Student Movements," 174.

notorious *Wednesday Commentary* that rights-based notions at the centre of the peace movement were ill suited to the realities of the conflict. "It must be obvious even to the most innocent that US policy is aimed at nothing less than total victory", Greenland argued, and to "continue to talk of negotiations when confronted by such a situation is to talk into thin air".[49] The basis of rights activism, the positive role social movements could play in changing government policy like during previous attempts around Apartheid and Civil Rights, was irrelevant in the context of a total colonial war. Other solutions, then, seemed necessary. "One possible response", Greenland proposed, "is to extend practical aid to the Vietnamese", something which was to be achieved via the establishment of two funds—one providing medical aid to "the victims of US intervention in Vietnam" and the other to provide similar aid to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam—Australia's communist enemy in the war. Whilst the first fund achieved fairly wide acceptance, the second raised what Greenland termed "unbelievably violent opposition".[50] Material solidarity, "directed mainly towards victims of disasters and to different forms of underdevelopment" by enlightened, cosmopolitan Westerners, became in this instance a political weapon.[51]

Greenland published an open letter defending the Club's decision to establish these funds—as a part of the British organisation "Medi-Cong"—in *Honi Soit*, where he lauded the Vietnamese, not as victims and beneficiaries of solidarity, but as model revolutionaries worthy of support:

> The grounds for this support of the Vietnamese revolutionaries are numerous...They have earned a reputation for independence and genuine nationalism; by the very nature of the war they fight they need popular support which they have earned carrying through land reform in the countryside; by their belief in planned economic progress and their opposition to parasitic strata who hinder economic development.[52]

The student leader additionally lambasted those who, unlike his group, "oppose the war with gestures and protestations but will not break radically with the Government" of holding a weak notion of solidarity that "is a mere phrase and comes to nothing".[53] Government, for its part, kept track of this new and concerning turn in student

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[49] Hall Greenland, "Medi-Cong," *Wednesday Commentary*, 2 March 1966, 2.
[50] Hall Greenland, "Medical Aid for Vietnam Fund," *Wednesday Commentary,* 20 April 1966, 2.
[51] Olesen, "Globalising the Zapatistas," 258.
[52] Hall Greenland, "Open Letter," *Honi Soit*, 13 July 1966, 4.
[53] Ibid, 4.

politics, seeking to establish whether their actions would fall under the banner of aiding an enemy in times of war. It was, however, found that "before a prosecution could be made…the exact nature of the enemy had to be defined and announced by a government proclamation", something which in the context of an intervention into a civil war had "of course, not been done".[54]

When students at Monash University, taking inspiration from Sydney University's confrontational approach, decided to set up a similar fund in July 1967, though with the important and highly controversial addition of "unspecified" aid, government decided to take action. The Monash Labor Club (MLC) had, up until the end of 1966, been a left-Labor group campaigning for the party's election and holding a social democratic, anti racist politics. Under the tutelage of Albert Langer, a fiery undergraduate who had travelled to China in May of 1966, the club quickly began adopting the more militant, Third World oriented and eventually Maoist approach that was to make it the most infamous of Australia's radical student groups.[55] Student and soon-to-be Maoist Michael Hyde remembers how after arriving on campus for the first time in February of 1967 he was shocked by the Club's approach, "supporting revolutionary movements and National Liberation struggles I'd never heard of".[56] Articulating their reasons for following Sydney University's footsteps, club members described similar feelings of political impotence to Greenland. They wrote that while "the Monash Labor Club, in common with other University Labor Clubs has opposed the Vietnam War", (unlike NUAUS, which continued to not take a position) they were soon "logically forced to move from denouncing the United States as an aggressor to supporting the victims of the aggression—the Vietnamese people led by the National Liberation Front". This was particularly pressing for the Monash radicals who felt that after the failed ALP election bid in 1966, "it seemed that the Vietnam war was rapidly becoming a non-issue", and that while the "war was escalating and leading to more casualties…it seemed as if the peace movement had given up the fight".[57]

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[54] J.V.R Hearder, "Medical aid for Viet Nam," 31 March 1966, in Communism – control of Communist propaganda in Australia – Vietnam War, A1838 563/20 Part 2, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[55] For more on the club's radicalisation see Daniel Robin, "Melbourne's Maoists: The Rise of the Monash University Labor Club, 1965-1967," (BA Honours Thesis, Victoria University, 2005).
[56] Michael Hyde, *All along the watchtower: Memoirs of a sixties revolutionary* (Carlton, Vic: Vulgar Press, 2010), 15
[57] Monash Labor Club Committee for Aid to the National Liberation Front, *Which Way Treason* (Melbourne: Monash Labor Club, 1967), 1-2.

WHICH WAY TREASON?

Ricefields, buffaloes, and children: the perennial image of peace in Viet-Nam.
— A pointed absence of American G.I.'s.

Aid to the N.L.F.-why?..the history

Towards the end of July the Monash Labor Club decided to establish a Committee to raise funds for the South Vietnam National Liberation Front. Since then the Committee has been subjected to a constant barrage of attacks from the press, parliament, etc., and we have not in fact started collecting for the fund. We are issuing this pamphlet to set out what has happened in the last few weeks. what the N.L.F. is, why we support it

For a long time, the Monash Labor Club, in common with other University Labor Clubs has opposed the Vietnam war. We felt that the United States was guilty of aggression and that Australia should not join with them in sending troops to intervene in a civil war. Together with many other sections of the community we fought hard against commitment to the Vietnam war and the sending of conscripts. But we failed and the war still goes on and conscripts are still getting killed.

Gradually we came to realize that it was no use simply condemning the war and demanding that it be stopped. We were logically forced to move from denouncing the United States as an aggressor to supporting the victims of aggression—the Vietnamese people led by

the National Liberation Front. For a long time we have been distributing literature which showed that the war was not "aggression from the North" and that the "Viet Cong" were an indigenous Southern Vietnamese nationalist movement whose main aims were social justice, land reform and an end to foreign domination. We had been pointing out to people that the Americans were the aggressors who had sent half a million troops to occupy another country and who were engaged in indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population. After saying this sort of thing for some time we were led to and acknowledge our actual support for the National Liberation Front. Support for the N.L.F. has been the policy of the Monash Labor Club (and of the Australian Student Labor Federation which represents Labor Clubs at all Australian Universities) for considerable time now but no concrete action was taken to implement it. The Sydney University ALP Club did establish a fund for medical aid to North Vietnam and the N.L.F. more than a year ago. This has been largely ignored since.

Figure 1: *Which way treason?* sought to justify the MLC's decision to aid the NLF. See
http://www.reasoninrevolt.net.au/objects/pdf/d0643.pdf

The Monash students, while expressing similar sentiments to those of Greenland concerning their motivations for providing solidarity with their nation's enemy, took this one step further to an acknowledgment of the importance of the decolonising world as a whole to First World politics. The organisation's "steering committee on

the Question of aid to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam" delivered a report to a club general meeting in July 1967 that elucidated how "it must be accepted that revolution is and will be a part of the political development of the nations in the Third World". This privileging of the Third World as the locus of world revolution posed a choice in the minds of these radicals, for Australia "must now decide for itself whether its destiny is on the side of reaction - as an outpost of American imperialism, living in a hostile environment, or on the side of social change, progress and national independence, as part of the Asian community".[58] As leading club member Martha Campbell argued, "Australia cannot prevent itself from becoming a part of Asia" and for "her own sake, and the sake of the whole of Asia, she must recognise other people as being equal, and having the same rights as their (sic) own".[59]

These students, and increasing sections of the broader protest community, then came to see the Vietnamese and other anti-colonial fighters not as mute recipients of solidarity, but leaders in the struggle for global revolution whose ideas provided new avenues for local struggle. As Karen Steller Bjerregaard argues in her study of similar actions in Denmark, "the Third World, and especially Vietnam, was crucial to the forming of new ways of doing politics and new critical views on western societies within [the] New Left".[60] Thus, liberation struggles in the colonial dependencies of various empires not only freed these states from colonial rule, but also provided new ideas, causes and inspirations for First World radicals increasingly alienated from their societies and the official left. Members of the Australian National University Labor Club, also involved in the collection of aid, argued in 1967 that "[a]ll socialists must reorganize their thinking towards the Third World [for] either he allies himself…with the new and growing revolutionary forces whose outward face is the Algerian, Cuba, the National Liberation front or he sinks first into Communist Party 'accommodation' with capitalism and then into a bourgeois mentality".[61] The ANU students, quoting often laboriously from Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre, were obviously influenced by their progenitors in the political aid movement—French radicals who had to make a similarly confrontational choice over whether to support

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[58] "On Vietnam," *Print*, 27 July 1967, 2.
[59] "On National Liberation," *Lot's Wife*, 8 August 1967, 5.
[60] Karen Steller Bjerregaard, "Guerrillas and Grassroots: Danish Solidarity with the Third World in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960-1980*, Martin Klimke, et al, eds., 213-4 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).
[61] "Labor Club Manifesto: A case for Action-Socialism," *Woroni*, 3 August 1967, 4.

their nation's enemy in Algeria or simply call for negotiations.[62] Indeed, Greenland's membership of the Trotskyist Fourth International, an organisation and an ideology which had a significant impact on student politics in Sydney, and the leader of which had been jailed in Belgium for providing arms to the Algerian resistance. This undoubtedly at the centre of his rationalisations around sending aid to those fighting a similar struggle in Southeast Asia.[63]

Reactions to the rhetoric and action of the Monash students in particular were swift and resounding. Typical amongst these were calls of disloyalty. Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* announced that these actions should meet "the condemnation and disgust of any decent Australian", while government-level action was swiftly taken to curb this "intolerable" development.[64] The *Defence Forces Protection Act* (DFPA) was pushed through parliament to solve the earlier problem of an undefined enemy and provide explicit protection "against the actions of any persons in Australia seeking to send assistance to…enemy forces". This action seemed to have been particularly motivated by Monash student Peter Price's comments that it "would be unfortunate if an Australian conscript was hit by a bullet with Monash University Labor Club written on it, but we don't see that there is any way out of this".[65] The activists did, however, open space for a critical discussion on the politics of opposing the war in Vietnam. Their actions can be seen as working to legitimise more peaceful approaches. Minister for Education John Gorton noted that while anti-war protestors "confined themselves…to exercising the rights guaranteed to Australians by our laws", a completely legitimate pursuit in the Minister's understanding, students who collected funds for what they saw as the Vietnamese revolutionaries "go beyond exercising their right to criticise the Government's actions" to a dangerous gray area of sympathy with an (albeit undeclared) enemy.[66]

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[62] James D. Le Sueur, "Decolonising 'French Universalism': Reconsidering the impact of the Algerian War on French Intellectuals," *The Journal of North African Studies* 6, No. 1 (2001): 167-186.

[63] For more on this and its influence on Australians see Denis Freney, *A Map of Days: Life on the Left* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 152.

[64] "They want to help kill Australians," *Daily Telegraph*, 18 August 1967, 2.

[65] Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (Senate), "Defence Force Protection Bill, Second Reading," 7 September 1967, 513.

[66] Ibid, 513.

"I'm on a Monash scholarship . . ."

Figure 2: *The Sun* took a comedic approach to the issue in this cartoon. *The Sun*, 28 July 1967, 23.

While much commentary was high negative and condemnatory, some was of a more restrained, even supportive nature. The Club received a number of complimentary letters during the campaign. One, from a former soldier, noted that their actions had "done more for re-awakening intelligent discussion than any other civil action to date", noting that "I am proud of your militant attitude as I see it in <u>defence</u> of the boys conscripted to fight there".[67] Criticism of the government's position was also voiced in the mainstream press, in between calls for the students concerned to be sent back to Russia. Writing in the *Sun*, Douglas Wilkie pointed out that Australians had a long history of supporting the enemy in conflicts, focusing particularly on the opposition many Australians expressed to the Boer War, and the active role some played in supporting Boer farmers against British and colonial forces. He pointed out, in a less-than-cloaked analogy to American Strategic Hamlet policies in Vietnam, that the South African war was "only ended when most of the Boer population was herded into the biggest concentration camps the world had yet

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[67] Louis Clark to Michael Hyde, personal communication, undated (c. July-August 1967) in Albert Langer Papers, Z457, Box 36, Folder marked "NLF AID, Correspondence Inward - pro-campaign 1967-1968", Noel Butlin Archives, Canberra.

seen". This highlighting the moral ambiguities of Vietnam, an undeclared war in which amongst "all the humbug and hypocrisy…it will become harder and harder to define the frontiers of 'treason'".[68]

This opening of the debate was the core positive outcome students' saw as arising from their activism—bound up in the realisation that their material solidarity would be insignificant at best. As Labor Club secretary David Nadel noted:

> I don't know how much money we collected, but I'd be surprised if it would have bought more than about three AK-47s and a couple of rounds of ammunition. But that wasn't why we were doing it, we were making a political point. We were saying, there's a war on, its not just that Australia is wrong, but we are actually supporting the wrong side.[69]

The student activists used the unpopularity of their radical actions to "push the debate to the left", particularly in student unions whose trenchant apolitical stances often proved difficult to break. "What happened", he remembered, "is there were general meetings called to condemn us, and they condemned us, but they also passed motions saying, but of course we are opposed to the war, and believe the National Liberation Front should be recognised as a party to negotiations".[70] As Monash student Elliot Gingold recalls, "a lot of students now felt able to publically take what had now become a moderate position of opposing the war", due to the MLC's "left-flank cover".[71] These activists came to see themselves as providing solidarity with the Vietnamese not through calling on the Australian or American government to change their positions, but by returning to an older form of political solidarity. They were building support at home not for a helpless native but rather for a noble ally, a revolutionary hero. However, some saw this in a less rose-tinted fashion. One student asked whether calls for solidarity were based on concern for the suffering Vietnamese masses, or were activists "simply trying to make political capital out of other people's tragedies".[72] Questions of Western centrality were still seemed unavoidable, despite the students' best efforts to put their freedom on the line by challenging a hostile government and society, and such questions did not go away.

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[68] Douglas Wilkie, "Frontiers of Treason," *The Sun*, 28 July 1967, 23.
[69] David Nadel interviewed by Peter Parkhill, 14 December 2001, ORAL TRC 5108, National Library of Australia, Canberra.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Graeme Davison and Kate Murphy, *University Unlimited: The Monash Story* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2012), 125.
[72] Roger Dampney, "Why did the Yanks bomb Hanoi," *Honi Soit,* 20 July 1966, 2.

Conclusion

Michael Hyde travelled to Cambodia in early 1968, en route back to Australia from China, to delivered funds collected in Monash University's now-infamous aid campaign to the NLF's official embassy, housed in a derelict two story building on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. Once Hyde had been able to communicate his intentions using "failed schoolboy French", the NLF representative "leapt to his feet and rushed for the cabinet, pulling out bottles and cigarettes", and members of two geographically separated and very different movements charged their glasses to the NLF and the victory of the recently-launched Tet offensive.[73] This meeting affirms the importance of such activism around Sixties *cause celebres* like apartheid, civil rights and the war in Vietnam to the development of what has been labelled an ethic of solidarity with these movements. This ethic moved those involved from a high minded and colonially inspired sense of charity to a militant identification with their own country's enemy.

The acts of often-small groups of activists ensured that previously overlooked global events became more and more central to student life. They functioned both as a way to talk about previously marginal overseas developments and the changing nature of politics at home. Hyde's action was, after all, far from pure altruism. He imagined that returning with receipts verifying the MLC's donation would force the government's hand in employing the DFPA, which indeed proved in the lexicon of the time to be a paper tiger. And the Vietnamese, for their part, used such activists as a part of their own global offensive to discredit US imperialism and sap Western support for the conflict.[74] Thus, new ways of imagining and engaging in radical activity found their way to Australia, and Chapter Three will take this discussion of precursors into the everyday life, the urban sinews and the written word of Australian radicalism.

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[73] Hyde, *All along the watchtower*, 105.
[74] See Robert K. Brigham, *Guerrilla Diplomacy: The NLF's Foreign Relations and the Viet Nam War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999) for more on how these activists were viewed as essential to the Communists' diplomatic efforts.

Chapter Three

Turning over Marx and Mao and intently lengthening their hair: Writing, debating and living the global

> The Red and Black Bookshop, in Brisbane, when I was nineteen,
> was the place to discover poets.
> 'a corrupting place,' our parents called it
> dubious as Dracula lurking near blameless sellers of batik
> and too many flavours of icecream.
>
> In the dangerous spaces left there by banned Beardsley prints,
> young men who had recently fainted,
> spit-polished and khaki-creased, cradling cadet rifles
> on Anzac Day, were turning over Marx and Mao,
> arguing for anarchy and intently
> lengthening their hair.[1]

Jean Kent penned this reminiscence in 1998, yet behind the clouds of nostalgia, something important becomes visible which helps historians understand how the global and the local were mediated in Australian social movements. An outgrowth of Society for Democratic Action (SDA) at the University of Queensland (UQ), the Red and Black Bookshop stocked everything from New Left writers to National Liberation Front (NLF) badges and character posters of Che Guevara and Chairman Mao, although these could only be obtained from the shop's anarchist manager "under duress".[2] This and other radical bookshops like the Third World in Sydney or Alice's in Melbourne, where the written word and physical space met, were nodes in an unofficial Australia-wide network of places and spaces where individuals were interpolated into the various life worlds of activism. Here, a budding activist might encounter her first radical newspaper or pamphlet, and perhaps participate in the production of one. The importance of this print culture cannot be overstated. As Peter Pierce writes: "The signature tune of this period was the rhythmic thump of

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[1] Jean Kent, "The Red and Black Bookshop," in *Hot Iron Corrugated Sky: 100 Years of Queensland Writing*, eds. Robyn Sheahan-Bright and Stuart Glover, 75 (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2002).

[2] "Red and Black Bookshop: In Solidarity with the Revolutionary People of Cuba" leaflet, in Dan O'Neill Collection, UQFL 132, Folder 5, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.

helicopters in Vietnam, a noise whose eerily similar counterpart was provided by the hundreds of Gestetner machines running off the leaflets of the anti-war protest movement".[3] "Political power", as one wit put it in the Monash Labor Club's (MLC) muck-raking newsletter *Print*, "grew from the barrel of a gestetner", and this plethora of publications was vital to the cultivation of a global radical imagination that extended far beyond a simple aping of American styles.[4]

This chapter takes seriously the everyday life and radical imagination of social movements, so often dismissed by historians and commentators alike as fashionable self-indulgence. Individuals became radicalised through a process of enculturation, of "finding the movement", as one historian has put it, through either its physical spaces or its publications. This chapter will argue that both of these underwent a profound "worlding" during the Sixties.[5] Solidarity movements lay early foundations for this, but their own geographic limits as well as the relatively small number of activists involved curtailed their influence. By definition, a solidarity movement is about something 'over there'. And while Australian activists often used these global issues as a way of discussing local movements, they provided only an untranslated vocabulary rather than a localised practice. This chapter highlights how both the ideas of national liberation and racial equality encountered in Chapter Two, as well as many others, found their way into the repositories and 'toolkits' of local actors.

'Private' locations like the Red and Black provided havens in which global ideas, publically viewed with suspicion, could be encountered, studied and practiced, while activist attempts to make these ideas public took on a number of forms, showing both the promises and limits of localised activism. Few Australian scholars have dealt with this lived aspect of radicalism, with the daily lives of activists rarely discussed at all, outside of theses written by former participants.[6] This chapter, however, explores how their eminently local, spatial and urban politics was central to

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[3] Peter Pierce, "Never glad confident morning again," In *Vietnam: War, Myth and Memory*, eds. Jeffrey Grey and Jeff Doyle, 69 (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1992).

[4] Darce Cassidy, "PRINT – NEWSPAPER OR PROPAGANDA SHEET," Report to the Monash Labor Club's Annual General Meeting 1967, Albert Langer Papers, Z457, Box 34, Folder Marked "MLC – Internal," Noel Butlin Archives, Canberra.

[5] On "Finding the movement" see Anne Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space and Feminist Activism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); on "worlding" see Christopher Leigh Connery, "The World Sixties," *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalisation,* eds. Rob Wilson and Christopher Leigh Connery, 77 (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2007).

[6] Ken Mansell, "The Yeast is Red" (Masters Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 1994) stands out here.

the globalising of activism during the period. Activist writing and rhetoric, on the other hand, is often dismissed as a narcissistic exercise tied irrevocably to American fashions and trends. Writing in 1969, conservative student commentator Gerard Henderson claimed that there was "no authentic equivalent" of the New Left in Australia, but rather that it aped America so thoroughly that "[t]hey even use American terminology and spelling".[7] However, by looking at the publications and ideas consumeded by the movement, the Australian New Left can be viewed as existing within and contributing to what George Katsiaficas has called the "world-historical moment" of the 1960s—revealing its resonance in a far off and generally neglected corner of the world.[8] Finally, while Lani Russell is right to argue that these global ideas and events were usually seen "not in counter-position to understanding local dynamics and specificities but as an adjunct", such ideas could often be the topic of heated debate.[9]

The real war is here in Prahran not in Viet Nam: The urban fabric of revolt

Katherine Brisbane, theatre critic for the *Australian* newspaper, ordered a taxi to Brisbane's Trades Hall in July 1968.[10] An imposing and eminently conservative 1920s Beaux-Arts style four-story construction; the building was the citadel of the city's respectable Old Left. That night, however, it was host to something altogether different. The reviewer had decided to visit the new highlight of Queensland's nighttime entertainment circuit—Foco Club—that had taken over the building's previously disused third floor with a mixture of political discussion, avant-garde film and a rock and roll disco.[11] The venture, organised by SDA and fellow militants, attracted some 3000 members before overcrowding forced organisers to cap this

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[7] Gerald (sic) Henderson, "The Derived Nature of the Australian New Left," *Quadrant* 15, No. 6 (December 1969): 66-7.

[8] George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston, Mass: South End Press, 1987), 3-27.

[9] Lani Russell, "Today the Students, Tomorrow the Workers! Radical Student Politics and the Australian Workers Movement 1960-1972," (PhD Thesis, University of Technology Sydney, 1999), 449-50.

[10] This episode is detailed in Katherine Brisbane, "Guerrillas in Brisbane," *The Australian*, 17 July 1968, in *Not wrong just different: Observations on the rise of contemporary Australian theatre*, ed. Katherine Brisbane, 63-5 (Strawberry Hills, NSW: Currency Press, 2005).

[11] Foco Club and the politics of Brisbane's '1968' have been explored in William Hatherell, *The Third Metropolis: Imagining Brisbane through art and literature, 1940-1970* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2007), 177-87 and Jon Piccini, "'Building their own scene to do their own thing': Imagining and contesting space/s in Brisbane's youth radicalisation," (BA Honours Theisis, The University of Queensland, 2009), 19-41.

number.[12] Foco, meaning 'nucleus' in Spanish, was the title given to Che Guevara's strategy of revolutionary warfare in hostile terrain. The term was popularised by French radical journalist Regis Debrey in his 1967 work *Revolution in the Revolution*, which had been translated into English and soon made its way to Brisbane. Che had died in October 1967, and he swiftly became a global icon of revolt, thanks not only to Debray's work but the circulation of his heroic image on posters around the world. *Revolution in the Revolution's* foreword captured Guevara's increasingly global posthumous existence. "It is not only Latin American revolutionaries who are concerned" with Guevara's ideas, they were of "the utmost relevance to other countries around the world", and Brisbane's political-cultural radicals found in the Foco idea something eminently translatable.[13] As Laver put it, Foco was "our notion of building a guerrilla encampment against bourgeois culture at the top of the Trades Hall".[14]

How and why the ideas of Third World guerrilla revolution were, quite literally, mapped onto the urban fabric of Australian cities is an important question to ask when analysing the impact of the global revolutionary ideal in local settings. Henri Lefebvre argued in his 1971 work *The Production of Space* that urban space is not mere concrete and glass, but the lives and itineraries of those who inhabit and construct their meanings of such landscapes. While dominant social forms rely on what he called "representational space", that which is produced by the powers that be, Lefebvre argued that successful counter-hegemonic politics relies on the creation of "differential space" that allows for the living of challenging lifestyles and experimentation with new political practices.[15] Belinda Davis explains in her work on the West German student movement that activists often "looked 'inside'—behind the scenes—away from public spaces as much as in them, to achieve broad movement visions". Activists both in West Germany and Australia sought to take "advantage of the city's internal spaces, its possibilities for networks…that lay beneath the surface"

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[12] Ibid, 64.

[13] Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?: Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 8.

[14] Brian Laver interviewed by Cecily Cameron, 6 June 1988, Cecily Cameron Papers, UQFL439, Box 10, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.

[15] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991). See articles in Kanishka Goonewarden and others, eds., *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (New York: Routledge, 2008) for useful interrogations of Lefebvre's thought in various contexts.

to articulate their globally inspired politics in a social context framed by a sometimes violent conservatism.[16]

Analysed through the prism of capturing or restructuring urban space to emancipatory ends, the Foco Club and other physical institutions of the 'New Left' begin to appear not as one-off instances, but part of an at least semi-conscious strategy. In 1967 Brisbane's New Left had exploded in significance. From a tiny group of activists in mid 1966, SDA had formed an alliance of groups that mobilised half of the campus population—some 4000 students—in a campaign modelled loosely on the famous Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, California to oppose restrictions on protesting. Brisbane police had used these laws to break up a series of small anti-Vietnam war protests, and this time the students received similar treatment, with over 100 arrested in a mass sit down outside the police station on Roma Street. In between organising such protests, SDA printed a weekly newspaper, held educational sessions, sold books and threw numerous parties and social events at its premises in the inner city suburb of Highgate Hill.[17] Soon, however, these activities began appearing as overly modest. Brian Laver, history student and a leading figure in SDA, recalls that the constant activism of 1967 forced the group's leadership to "find some way to hold together our movement and rest it, have some R&R and at the same time reach out and make links with the...young workers movement".[18] The choice of Trades Hall was then an obvious one. Even before the events of May '68 in Paris raised the notion of a student-worker alliance to global New Left strategy, Laver and other SDA leaders used their relatively friendly relationships with the Communist Party to secure co-operation in the venture. This was despite their concerns that the Party was only involved because the promised youthful festivities would attract "a lot of young suits who might join" the increasingly beleaguered organisation.[19]

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[16] Belinda Davis, "The City as Theater of Protest: West Berlin and West Germany, 1962-1983," in *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics and Everyday Life*, eds. Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse, 264 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[17] Carole Ferrier and Ken Mansell, "Student Revolt, 1960s and 1970s," in *Radical Brisbane: an unruly history*, eds. Carole Ferrier and Raymond Evans, 266-72 (Carlton, Vic: Vulgar Press, 2004), and Jon Piccini, "'Up the new channels' Student Activism in Brisbane during Australia's Sixties," *Crossroads* 5, No. 1 (2011): 75-86.

[18] Brian Laver interviewed by Andrew Stafford, 6 November 2001, Andrew Stafford Collection, UQFL440, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.

[19] Ibid. For more on the relationship between students and workers see Russell, "Today the students, Tomorrow the Workers!; Padraic Gibson, "Breaking down the politics of fear: Radicalism on campus and at work, Australia 1965-75," (BA Honours Thesis, University of Sydney, 2006) and Jon Piccini, "'A group of misguided, way out individuals': The labour movement, the 'Old Left' and student radicals in Brisbane – 1966-70," *Queensland Journal of Labour History* 12 (April 2011): 19-33.

Katherine Brisbane provides a vivid overview of what the radicals did with the Trades Hall venue. Taking inspiration from "all over the world", they imagined and constructed a mélange of experimental cultural forms and radical political content with the intention of "institutionalis[ing] our movement in culture and entertainment" as Laver put it.[20] Upon entering the space, the reviewer became immersed in the globalised life world of Sixties radicalism:

> When the lift door opened we were thrust into a corridor with a hundred or so people all thumbing copies of How Not to Join to the Army, Australian Atrocities in Vietnam, the weekly newspaper of the Cuba [sic] Communist Party...on the walls were posters for the Ninth World Festival [of Youth] in Sofia this month—Solidarite, Pax, Amitie—and others celebrating Che Guevara and demanding the arrest of Jesus Christ as a political agitator.[21]

Moving on from this bookshop annex, she then found her way to the folk room, where a short theatrical performance of a Dadaist extraction was taking place in between the musings of a classical guitar. Next was the hugely popular disco—the venue's main drawcard—where the author found "five or six hundred [people] having their ears pierced in almost total darkness by a pop group called the Coloured Balls". The film room proved a more inspiring experience. Usually reserved for European art house productions, many from the Eastern bloc, today it was displaying an anti-war documentary from America. Though "cracked, blurred at the edges and with the sound-track almost gone, it was still a compulsive piece of film—peace marches in the US, police action, army combat training, and an army funeral in Vietnam". The film room often doubled as a space for discussion, with invited guests ranging from local cultural figures like Thomas Shapcott to Maoist students from the famously radical Monash University and a visiting civil rights worker from the United States providing a controversial mix of topics. As Brisbane explained, "there is nothing quite like it anywhere else in Australia".[22]

For Frederic Jameson, the Foco that Guevara and his companions constructed in Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountain range constituted "emergent revolutionary 'space'—situated outside of the 'real' political, social or geographic world...yet at one and the same time a figure or small scale image and prefiguration of the revolutionary

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[20] Laver interviewed by Stafford, Andrew Stafford Collection, UQFL440.
[21] Brisbane, "Guerrillas in Brisbane."
[22] Ibid.

transformation of that real world...a properly utopian space".[23] And the Foco Club seemed to exist in a similar political-cultural netherworld. Its very mix of politics and youthful culture challenged the flimsy distinctions that existed between the two in Sixties movements, illustrating how "'[s]paces' provided a map along which the disparate elements of activist experience such as chronology, people, style and ideology could be arranged, ordered and digested", as Julianne Furst, Piotr Oseke and Chris Reynolds have put it.[24] Not all greeted this prefigurative revolutionary space with open arms, however. The Club soon came in for intense criticism in Federal Parliament, where Member for Griffith Donald Cameron revealed that it hosted not only a number of speakers from communist-aligned organisations, but also sold marijuana and "badges depicting the head of Mao Tse-tung and allegedly a symbol of North Vietnam" that "the young people are told to wear…on the inside of their coats", undoubtedly to avoid conservative suspicion.[25] To the member of parliament, such guarded (indeed, private) assertions of global solidarity with Australia's threatening 'red' neighbours was "treachery", yet it was following a trend of internal, spatialised dissent that was spreading across Australia's metropolises.

If "[t]he years around…1968 saw a resurgence, renaissance and re-invention of public space, and in particular the street, as a site of protest", then they equally saw the transformation of spaces like the Red and Black bookshop and Foco into internal sites for 'reproducing' various social movements.[26] Groups opposing Australia's war in Vietnam, censorship, illiberal politics or oppression of indigenous peoples, amongst a plethora of other concerns, began to see that "the implications of their actions and thoughts went far wider than they had previously expected", leading such groups to look for a way to ensure they could work together in a shared space. The rationalisation for this spatial turn is outlined in an article in *The Bulletin* on Melbourne Students for a Democratic Society's Centre for Democratic Action (CDA), at 57 Palmerston Street, Carlton. Location was important—only blocks from Melbourne University—yet its existence "grew primarily out of the need for a meeting place and organisational centre" that was separate to "a university meeting-room or student 'digs'". CDA shared with Foco a particularly utopian communality,

[23] Frederic Jameson, "Periodizing the 60s," *Social Text* 9/10 (Spring-Summer 1984): 202.
[24] Juliane Furst, Piotr Oseka and Chris Reynolds, "Breaking the Walls of Privacy: How Rebellion came to the Streets," *Cultural and Social History* 8, No. 4 (December 2011): 494.
[25] Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (House), "Special Adjournment," 12 September 1968, 1058-9.
[26] Furst, Oseka and Reynolds, "Breaking the Walls of Privacy," 495.

with the space's ten residents paying a few dollars rent a week and dividing chores equally, while the realisation that "a revolution also needs an arsenal" saw it host one comprised of "books, pamphlets, mimeograph machines, paper and ink".[27]

Older, established spaces could play a similar role. Women's Liberationist Anne Summers remembers of Max Harris's Mary Martin Bookshop in Adelaide: "Students loved Max Harris's shop, which had the latest European novels and books of philosophy, and the left-wing political and literary journals no self-respecting radical could afford to be seen without".[28] However, another reason for the creation of new bookshops and meeting places was the relative conservatism of many existing left-wing establishments. Ken Mansell, activist and resident at Monash Labor Club off-campus headquarters, the Bakery, asked rhetorically: "who else would cater for the new left, the Underground? Least of all the Communist International Bookshop with its gigantic sales of 'Sputnik', the Soviet Readers' Digest".[29] While there is a degree of overstatement here, with Humphrey McQueen remembering that the manager of Brisbane's People's Bookshop "did everything he could do to broaden the stock of poetry, music and visual arts, as well as the widest range of works from allied publishers in the US and Britain", such spaces often did not share the radicals' taste for provocative ideas.[30] These new spaces soon became frequent destinations for a variety of activists, taking on a symbolic importance. Activist Megan Miller, a member of high school group Students in Dissent, remembers how regularly travelling to the Bakery was "one of the highlights of my week":

> I had a pair of white jeans that were my best jeans. I would make sure they were clean and wear them. I'd catch the train from Blackburn to Richmond station and change trains and go to Prahran. It would take me a long time to get there…You would walk in the front of the shop. There were stairs that went down to a basement and a gestetner and typewriter in there.[31]

The relationship Miller and other activists had with radical spaces provides a vivid window into how, as Kristin Ross has put it, "the geography of vast international and

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[27] Richard Campbell, "The Political Faith Healers," *The Bulletin*, January 25 1969, 34.

[28] Anne Summers, *Ducks on the Pond: An Autobiography, 1945-1976* (Ringwood, Vic: Viking, 1999), 159.

[29] Mansell, "The Yeast is Red," 19.

[30] Humphrey McQueen, "Forward: A chance to stray," in Evans and Ferriers, eds, *Radical Brisbane: an unruly history*, 10.

[31] Megan Miller interviewed by Ken Mansell, October 8 1993, quoted in Mansell, "The Yeast is Red," 79.

distant struggle [became] transposed onto the lived geographies, the daily itineraries, of students and intellectuals" within the global new left.[32] Reports of a raid by Queensland police on a radical household in Cairns in 1972 captured something of this transposition, as well as the concern established authorities expressed about these captures of space. "During the course of the search…it was observed that a 'Vietnam' poster and a poster of Angela Davis occupied prominence in the lounge/dining rooms" while the house's "book case contained literature of a revolutionary nature", including titles from West Germany, the officer commented.[33]

The Third World bookshop in Sydney also achieved this transformation of lived geographies. Occupying a disused boot makers workshop in run down Goulburn Street, the bookshop was run by Trotskyist Bob Gould, functioned as a base for the youth group Resistance and in keeping with its name stocked an array of international literature on struggles from Algeria to Vietnam and the USA. Indeed, indigenous activist Gary Foley recalls how books stolen from the shop's shelves fired the early global imagination of Redfern-based intellectuals like himself, Paul Coe and Gary Williams. The radicals had begun to read texts by Frantz Fanon and American Black Power leaders like Eldridge Cleaver and Stokely Carmichael, and "only one bookshop in Sydney sold the type of material they were after", with Gould eventually agreeing "to provide the group with whatever books they wanted, gratis".[34] And this was not the only movement the space facilitated, with the often risqué and sexualised viewings of the Filmmakers Co-operative Cinema occurring on the shop's upper floor, accessed by three flights of stairs "littered with revolutionary posters and political books". It was here that films openly displaying and discussing homosexuality were shown, drawing an audience from the newly radicalising gay community and creating "a space that celebrated visible sexual difference and rebellion against the strictures of the repressive world outside".[35]

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[32] Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its afterlives* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 82.
[33] L.J.T. Donnelly, Inspector of Police, Cairns to Officer in Charge, Special Branch, Commissioners Office, Brisbane, 21 June 1972, Little Red School Book, A6112 2388, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[34] Gary Foley, "Black Power in Redfern, 1968-1972" (BA Honours Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2001). Available at: http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/essays/essay_1.html, accessed 1 May 2012.
[35] Scott McKinnon, "The activist cinema-goer: Gay liberation at the movies," *History Australia* 10, No. 1 (April 2013): 134-138.
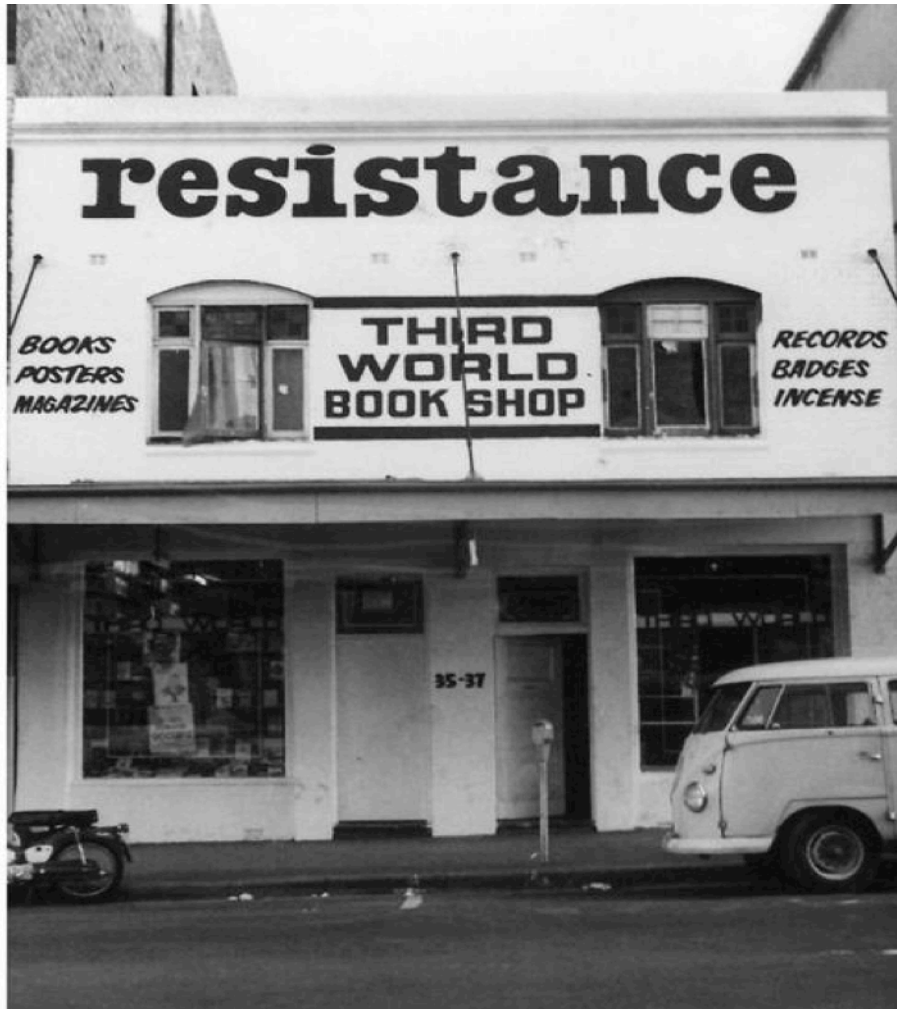
Figure 3: The Third World Bookshop on Sydney's Goulburn Street was just one
of the movement bookstores that thrived during this period. See
http://gallery.rsp.org.au/main.php?g2_itemId=1722

Spaces also served as locations for the politicisation of activists. Indigenous
leader Charles Perkins founded alongside pastor at the Wayside Chapel Ted Noffs the
Aboriginal Affairs Foundation in 1964, and soon rented a building at 810 George
Street in Sydney. This space became a first port of call for many indigenous people
arriving from rural areas and played a truly transformative function, opening "the
door for us to shake off whatever environment has held us down; to have pride in
ourselves and to be able to lift our head when each one of us says, 'I'm an
Aborigine'", as Perkins put it.[36] Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it was at the Foundation's
headquarters that young radicals interested in Black Power ideologies first met, "at a

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[36] Peter Read, *Charles Perkins: A Biography* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1990), 92.

time when there were very few places offering a welcome".[37] Similarly, feminist and author Kate Jennings recalls how she inadvertently moved into 69 Glebe Point Road in Sydney, a "den of Trotskyists" and "meeting place for organising anti-Vietnam war demonstrations", as the result of a brief romantic liaison. Despite initially believing politics to be "below her", Jennings was soon a convert to the nascent women's liberation movement that had begun meeting in the house's front room. Jennings and her fellow activists visited Third World to locate a plethora of overseas texts and "gorge…ourselves on underground rags".[38]

Mainstream media outlets soon began paying attention to these somewhat curious spaces. One report on the Bakery titled "Where the student underground dwells" told how the rooms were menacingly "decorated with posters of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Chairman Mao and Che Guevara" while "Buttons, flags, posters and shopping bags in the colour of the National Liberation Front dot every room".[39] That these spaces also seemed to provide a location for illicit lifestyles was a point often raised. Brisbane's report on Foco highlighted how promiscuity and homosexuality seemed to register no particular alarm from attendees, while the *Sunday Observer* reported that the Bakery provided a communal sleeping space where in "one corner are dumped the belongings of a young girl from Adelaide", tying the radical student movement in with the new moral panic of transient 'drop out' youth.[40] More often than not, however, the spaces come in for mention due to either police raids confiscating anything from a newly banned pamphlet to a pornographic Beardsley print, or the wrath they sometimes incurred from angry citizens. The Bakery had a bomb thrown through its front door, while Denis Freney's Liberation bookstore and meeting place in suburban Manly was targeted several times by rock throwing assailants, one of whom injured a visiting American draft resister.[41]

These incursions of the outer world into such private locations of activism were mirrored by often-frustrated attempts to connect these spaces to the world in which they existed, transposing globally inflected politics onto a very local setting. As Betsy Beasley argues in her work on student protests in Manhattan, "[f]or the radicals

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[37] Ibid, 94. See also Foley, "Black Power in Redfern."
[38] Kate Jennings, *Trouble: Evolution of a Radical, Selected Writings 1970-2010* (Melbourne: Black Inc, 2010), 3.
[39] "Where the Student Underground dwells," *Sunday Observer* (Melbourne), 28 September 1969, 5.
[40] Brisbane, "Guerrillas in Brisbane"; "Where the Student Underground dwells," 5.
[41] Allan Souter, "Alice's Restaurant: You can get anything you want?," *Lot's Wife*, 25 September 1969; Denis Freney, *A Map of Days: Life on the Left* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1991), 254.

involved, the revolution would surely transform the world—but it would transform their urban homes first".[42] When Jill Jolliffe, proprietor of Alice's Restaurant Bookshop on Greville St, Prahran, applied to the US Black Panthers for the new shop to receive "their endorsement as the Afro-American embassy in Australia", she imagined this not in purely global terms, but eminently local ones, primarily as "a symbolic gesture in view of our proximity to the American Consulate in Cimmercial (sic) Rd".[43] An article on the shop in Monash University's *Lot's Wife* also commented on its highly conflictive positioning—with the street also home to Prahran's Town Hall, police station, Liberal Party rooms as well as "a bookshop smelling…suspiciously of the [Croatian fascist] Ustashi".[44] Yet, there was a clear contradiction between the 'inward' focused nature of activist bookshops and meeting places and this desire to connect with the outside world. This is captured well in young worker Rob Lawson's remembrances of first encountering Alice's:

> I walked into the front room one night and Jill and Peter were in the shop getting it ready for the opening day. When I saw what was going on I thought "Christ! I've got to say something". They were putting up red flags and posters of Mao and Fidel. I thought "Jesus! In little downtown Greville Street?" So I raced down and tried to tone things down [and] we put Brigitte Bardot on a motorbike in the front of the shop and they relegated Fidel and Mao to the back.[45]

Swapping militant images of Third World revolt for the (relatively) benign portrait of Bardot shows in many ways the limits of this inwardly focused politics, one that provided spaces away from the fray of the street, yet which offered few possibilities for revolutionising the everyday operations of the city.

Outreach was frequently attempted, however, with activists seeking to claim public space as well as that of a more private nature to articulate new political and cultural philosophies and practices. Particularly important in this breaking down of distinctions between public and private space was the women's movement, which employed confrontational tactics on the terrain of everyday life as a means of

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[42] Betsy A. Beasley, "Fighting for a Radical City: Student Protesters and the Politics of Space in 1960s and 1970s downtown Manhattan," *Urban History Review* 37, No. 2 (Spring 2009): 8.
[43] Jill Jolliffe, mass letter headed "Dear Comrade", Albert Langer Papers, Z457, Box 27, Folder marked "Bakery Publications 1969."
[44] Souter, "Alice's Restaurant." The Ustashi were a Croatian ultra-nationalist group responsible for bombings and other organised criminal activities during the 1960s and 1970s.
[45] Ron Lawson interviewed by Ken Mansell, December 13 1992, quoted in Mansell, "The Yeast is Red," 19.

challenging patriarchal society. The well-known Regatta incident of 1965, for instance, saw two women (both university graduates, yet described in the local *Courier-Mail* as "married…mothers of two") chain themselves to the public bar at the Brisbane institution. This was an entirely transparent yet clearly translatable borrowing from similar techniques used to desegregate white only facilities in America's Deep South.[46] The birth of the Women's Liberation movement in 1969-1970 saw the broadening of creative public protest, with one activist recalling how public gestures like a woman handing the movie usher a couples' ticket, rather than the man, or opening a bottle of wine at a restaurant sparked a considerable degree of confusion and embarrassment amongst a society conditioned to accept female subservience. "These actions, while unimportant in themselves, are part of the breaking down of the male chauvinist stereotype of women as gentle, weak and unable to look after themselves", the male writer explained. These activists "compare the growing 'female power' movement in the United States, Europe and now Australia with the Black Power movement", especially as both imagined themselves as oppressed groups needing to use highly public statements to "build their own self confidence".[47]

These new forms of theatrical protest were one way to claim public space. As Mansell put it, "[o]ccupation took different forms: symbolic, tactical, defensive, theatrical…[a]n occupation of media space, billboard space, gaol [sic] space, the space in the offices of government ministers".[48] The January 1972 establishment of the Tent Embassy outside parliament house in Canberra exemplifies this idea of the symbolic occupation of otherwise restricted space, with one journalist capturing its highly conflictive spatial politics at work. "To stand on the road, with the big White building behind, and the small Black encampment in front, is to stand in a tense middle ground between two worlds of mutual incomprehension", the journalist commented. The article's description of daily activities at the embassy—"tea drinking, guitar playing, planning, debating [and] exchanges with passers-by, leaflets being handed out, or photographers angling for the best frame"—also present it as a space of both politics and a conflictive everyday life in a location usually reserved

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[46] For more on this incident, see Carole Ferrier, "Women's Liberation, 1965," in Evans and Ferrier, eds, *Radical Brisbane: an unruly history,* 254-58. For quote see article "2 Women chained to hotel bar rail," reproduced on 255.
[47] Darce Cassidy, "The Free Woman," *Sunday Observer* (Melbourne), 22 March 1970.
[48] Mansell, "The Yeast is Red," 41.

only for the upper echelons of Australia's political elite.[49] That the impromptu embassy flew both a flag representing Australian Indigenous peoples, and one of international black solidarity, also helps capture its global nature.[50] The undoing of Foco's relationship with the trade unions and the Communist Party came from the use of a different set of confrontational tactics at a May Day march in 1969. Holding red, black and NLF flags—as well as helmets emblazoned with the words VIET CONG— several hundred Foco members marched with militant workers, seeking to seize the international day of workers struggle "symbolically under red and black flags, socialism and freedom".[51]

The conservative *Courier-Mail* described events: "a group of about 250 students and others" intervened, "sat in the streets during the procession, calling out 'Ho Chi Minh' [and] poked the federal ALP leader Mr. Whitlam with red flags".[52] While one radical described it as a "European-style demonstration" seeking to "transform into something effective a Labor Day which had in the past relied upon Punch and Judy shows and ice-cream for its revolutionary content", head of the Trades and Labour Council Jack Egerton thought differently. He described the widely publicised commotion as the work of "scrubby, confused individuals who are unable to differentiate between civil liberties and anarchy".[53] This sort of theatrical, conflictive protest was and continues to be central to Australian social movements. As Sean Scalmer explains, "theatre had an especially strong political resonance" for those involved, and this also took on a spatial nature, with members of Sydney's Students for a Democratic Society adopting American forms of guerrilla theatre, "roam[ing] around the city, dramatising apparent massacres in Vietnam for an audience of office workers, fleeing from police, leaving the Town Hall steps, and re-appearing in Wynyard Park".[54] As the activists reflected on this 'operation': "The

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[49] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 1972, quoted in Kathy Lothian, "Moving Blackwards: Black Power and the Aboriginal Embassy," *Transgressions: critical Australian Indigenous histories*, eds. Ingereth Macfarlane and Mark Hannah, 19 (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2007).

[50] For more on this see Kathy Lothian, "'A Blackward Step is a Forward Step': Australian Aborigines and Black Power, 1969-1972" (Masters Thesis, Monash University, 2002).

[51] Mitch Thompson, "SDA dissolves," Society for Democratic Action Ephemera, FVF381, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.

[52] "Student Radicals 'Never Again' at Labor Day," *Courier-Mail,* 16 May 1969, in Records of the Trades & Labor Council of Queensland, 1894-, UQFL118, Box 357, Fryer Library, the University of Queensland.

[53] Alan Anderson, "The Foco Story," *Tribune*, 8 September 1970; "No union money went to Foco," *Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1969, in Records of the Trades & Labor Council, UQFL118, Box 357.

[54] Sean Scalmer, *Dissent Events: Protest, the media and the political gimmick in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002), 33.

performance of anti-Vietnam war songs and brutality scenes was witnessed by about 700 people who watched in silence, only opening their mouths to take another bite of peanut butter sandwich".[55]

Although this could (and indeed, probably should) be read as an indictment of the "masses" as agents in revolutionary transformation, attempts to connect global struggles with Australians in a local setting were real, if often frustrated. Melbourne students, particularly those influenced by Maoism, were at the forefront of this sort of campaigning. Maoist thought was, after all, supposed be about the flexibility of ideas, of translating theories into a local context rather than imposing an outside dogma. Noting the large number of migrants, elderly and otherwise marginalised peoples who inhabited the Melbourne's inner suburbs, activists sought to connect with existing networks of Communist Party-affiliated migrants and newly politicised locals in a campaign against poverty. "The real war is here in Prahran, and in Richmond, Fitzroy, Collingwood and Sunshine, not in Viet Nam", announced the second issue of *The Prahran Worker*, emblazoned with the Maoist slogan "Serve the People" which for once seemed eminently appropriate.[56]

The Monash Labor Club saw this as an attempt to employ ideas surround the paucity of liberal demands they had learnt in their aid the NLF campaign into a more local context. They informing Melbourne's oppressed (the news sheet was translated into Greek) that this war was "against social inequality", and that it would not be won by "*Herald* Blanket Campaigns, Freedom from Hunger Campaigns or Austcare [which] only work to make poverty an accepted part of Australian life". Instead, only the realisation that "the Australian Govt. is destroying the peasant population of Vietnam at the same times that it starves its old people at home, exploits its people in the factories and denies full citizenship rights to its immigrant population" would produce the "united action" required to force systemic change.[57] This attempt to link the Vietnamese struggle was made yet clearer in the group's "Prahran Manifesto", which articulates how the government "burns people alive in Vietnam, so why not starve them to death here?"[58]

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[55] "Sydney Stirrers," *National U*, 1 October 1968, 3.
[56] "Where is the war?," *The Prahran Worker*, 15 July 1969, available at http://www.reasoninrevolt.net.au/bib/PR0001666.htm, accessed 20 July 2012.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Prahran Workers for a Democratic Society, "Prahran Manifesto," Undated, available at http://www.reasoninrevolt.net.au/bib/PR0001647.htm, accessed 20 July 2012.

This campaign went beyond mere rhetoric, with spaces like the Bakery functioning as drop-in centres for the local community, serving the people with food and assistance on filing tax returns. The campaign climaxed with a 1969 "March against Poverty", which sought to dramatise the clear class distinctions between "the Toorak poodles and the Prahran Pensioners".[59] The Labor Club and its successor organisations like the Worker Student Alliance were to adopt similar programs of intervention in the urban fabric for years to come. They blockaded, alongside members of the Builders Labourer's Federation (BLF), a warehouse construction site in Carlton which residents wished to be a park—a move which saw Maoist Federal BLF boss Norm Gallagher jailed for over a year before the New South Wales branch famously adopted such 'green bans'—while also campaigning against the selling off the Prahran Market to a US company.[60] Dennis Freney embarked on a similarly concrete attempt to involve the local community through his perhaps surprising location of an anti-war centre, Liberation, in the Sydney beachside suburb of Manly. Justifying his choice of suburban location, while other groups headquartered themselves in inner city suburbs, Freney argued that "[t]he youth do not, with a few exceptions, live in the centre of the city" and "to neglect the fact, the elementary fact, that youth live in the suburbs would be the height of folly". Freney's argument for a (sub)urban politics was meshed with an understanding of the importance of new strands in global youth culture to the revolt against Vietnam. NLF flags were hanging from tents at recent pop festivals, he claimed, while "the clenched fist salute was more prevalent than the 'V' sign" at such events, and this was a situation that was mirrored in youth subcultures like "surfies".[61] And this was not all wishful thinking either, for Liberation had attracted dozens of activist youth from the supposedly stultifying suburbs, who became vocal Moratorium supporters as well as campaigners on a variety of other issues.[62]

A similarly dramatic display of globally-conscious urban protest was attempted by Students for a Democratic Society in Melbourne, where the National Gallery had begun to charge a 20-cent entry fee to patrons. Undoubtedly drawing on their namesakes in America, whose ERAP program saw them working alongside

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Russell, "Today the Students, Tomorrow the Workers," 300-301.
[61] Denis Freney, "The Youth Revolt in Suburbia and the Anti-War Movement," in *National Anti-War Conference, Sydney, February 17-21, 1971 – Papers Presented*, np (Sydney: Self-published, 1971).
[62] Freney, *A Map of Days*, 241-243, 253-255.

inner city communities against local injustices,[63] these students "did not believe that the people had been consulted on the question of admission" and decided this to be an issue that could break them out of the student ghetto into the symbolic centre of power the CBD represented.[64] The group collected some 70 metres of signed petitions—around 4500 names—to protest the Gallery's decision, and in a theatrical protest laid them out for a photo op inside the *Herald's* offices, giving spatial form to widely-held opinion.[65] They also held a carnivalesque 'opening', where an SDS member masquerading as "Minister for Charity and Turnstyles" cut a ribbon outside the gallery to cheers from the crowd, and the new admission machine promptly malfunctioned.[66] As one journalist put it, while "their hair was long and some sported fearful attempts at beards…yesterday the students had a lot of people on their side".[67] Other groups and spaces mirrored this ambition to connect with people and urban space. Foco's newsletter expressed a variety of urban concerns. Club members held a mock funeral, replete with coffin and black clothing, on the last day of operation for Brisbane's tram network, while the destruction of iconic terrace houses in Spring Hill was publicly mourned.[68] "The grand old terrace houses have provided a home for countless millions of down & outs, beatniks, hippies, wino's and you give 'em a name for years untold", the newsletter stated, and it thanked all those who inhabited the buildings for "help[ing] to write a chapter in Brisbane's underground history…one soon to be erased from view".[69]

Indeed, even before the Victorian and NSW BLF launched their campaigns of black and green bans to defend urban architecture—most famously in the 1973-4 campaign to save Sydney's Victoria Street—campaigns were waged by New Leftists in defence of this built environment. David Nichols points out in his piece on Australian urban activist film that many activists, much like those Beasley describes as inhabiting run-down parts of Manhattan, "celebrated an inner city that had emerged in the post-war years as a bohemian and multicultural space the more loved by its

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[63] For more on ERAP and the American SDS's community work, see Jennifer Frost, '*An Interracial Movement of the Poor': Community Organizing and the New Left in the 1960s* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).
[64] "Stacking on a 'turn': Students protest at Arts Centre," *The Herald*, 8 January 1969, in Students for a Democratic Society, Volume 1, A6122 2128, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[65] "70 ft. of names on centre's prices," *The Herald*, 6 January 1969, in Students for a Democratic Society, Volume 1, A6122 2128.
[66] "Stacking on a 'turn,'" in Students for a Democratic Society, Volume 1, A6122 2128, NAA.
[67] Max Beattie, "Free Centre campaign by students," *The Age*, 2 January 1969, 2.
[68] *Foco Newsletter,* 16 April 1969, 2.
[69] *Foco Newsletter,* 26 February 1969, 2.

inhabitants for its threatened demolition".[70] Yet, this was not a process without contradiction. As one journalist commented on CDA:

> As yet, the Carlton Centre has not assumed its planned role as a bridge across the gulf separating the youngish radicals, keen to become socially involved, and the work-a-day community around them. In the Housing Commission flats opposite, the CDA people tend to be regarded as long-haired demonstrators whose motives are not altogether clear, and since the local Catholic priest denounced the Centre as a "house of Communists" suspicion has grown.[71]

The author added that attempts to organise local youth, seemingly at least partly successful for Freney' suburban centre, were less so for these enterprising radicals. Weekly film screenings in the centre's shed were "poorly attended by the local teenagers", leading to the suggestion that "the coffee lounge-bookshop planned for the cellar and the front room of the Centre may attract more of the passing radical studentsia [sic] than the permanent Carlton householders".[72] And radicals also had to face the fact that the rent of locations like Third World and Liberation was paid not by the sale of radical literature, but rather by character posters of celebrities and items like incense. The near monopoly these shops held on such 'counter cultural' items can be read as abetting what many commentators call the commoditisation of the period's radical political culture.[73]

The suspicions and concerns of local residents were, retrospectively at least, not entirely misplaced. For while activists had constructed various political spaces within these inner city migrant and working class communities, they also contributed to their gentrification. Suburbs like Carlton, as Beasley describes of New York's Greenwich Village, were transformed in a way that would soon make them unaffordable and alien to an older generation of residents.[74] Yet, despite their contradictory nature, the differential spaces that the New Left produced cannot be easily discounted. Activists like Jean Kent and Kate Jennings found their first taste of activist politics in the "dangerous spaces" of the New Left 'underground', and the

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[70] David Nichols, "Urban Activist Film in Melbourne 1969-1972," *Local-Global* 3 (2007): 113.

[71] Campbel, "The Political Faith Healers," 34.

[72] Ibid, 34.

[73] Freney, *A Map of Days*, 252. On this 'commodifying' see Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[74] Graeme Davison, "Carlton and the Campus: The University and the Gentrification of Inner Melbourne, 1958-75," *Urban Policy and Research* 27, No 3 (2009): 254-5; Beasley, "Fighting for a Radical City," 9-10.

variety of activities these locations facilitated led to the growth and long-term survivability of the movements they housed.[75] Movements from Women's Liberation to Aboriginal rights and many others were born in, or globalised by these reshaped pieces of urbanity. Moreover, the relationship between such private spaces and the public nature of forcing political change was also an intrinsic part of urban activism. Echoing the famous Italian slogan "Vietnam is in our factories", Australian radicals sought to scale down their globally conscious activism into a much smaller frame: imagining the same politics that killed peasants in Vietnam as starving pensioners in Prahran.[76] It was through the written word, however, that the New Left won most of its influence and adherents, as well as 'translated' most of its global ideas.

The barrel of a Gestetner: Global ideas, print culture and Australian social movements.

Students and staff at the University of Queensland embarked on a grand project in the latter months of 1969. Increasingly conscious of the mechanical, undemocratic nature of the 'multiversity', a working group began soliciting contributions from across the institution with the aims of highlighting its various deficiencies and proposing solutions. Though influenced by Theodore Roszak's *The Dissenting Academy*, a 1968 collection of learned articles on the failure of US humanities education to live up to its social responsibilities, those who set about editing *Up the right channels* looked beyond the humanities to everything from accountancy to zoology, and sought contributions not just from well-known academics but students themselves.[77] It also moved beyond a pure critique of the university in society to look at global concerns such as how it facilitated the war in Vietnam or failed to address general Third World suffering.[78]

The self-published piece thus became an example of participatory publishing, with over 100 contributors, illustrations provided by well-known left cartoonist Bruce Petty and an on-campus distribution of over 2000. In this way, the project was both about publishing and politics, particularly in the way its ad hoc selection of

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[75] Kent, "The Red and Black Bookshop," 75.
[76] For "Vietnam is in our factories" see Ross, *May '68*, 80, for "scaling" see Nik Heynen, "Bending the Bars of Empire from Every Ghetto for Survival: The Black Panther Party's Radical Anti-Hunger Politics of Social Reproduction and Scale," *The Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, No. 2 (2009): 415-419.
[77] Theodore Roszak, *The Dissenting Academy* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969).
[78] Dan O'Neill, ed, *Up the right channels* (Brisbane: Bruce Dickson, 1969).

contributions prefigured the New Left's desire for a participatory democracy.[79] Orders flowed in for the volume from various universities, bookshops and, rather strangely, the Department of Labour and National Service.[80] *Up the right channels* is only one example of how ideas and the means of distributing and debating them became more global than ever before during the Sixties. That Debray's book on *Focoismo* could be published, translated and then become available on the other side of the world in such a short period of time is as much indicative of the developing economic and cultural networks of globalisation as it is of the increasing translatability of radical notions or practices. The positive reception of a French book about South American revolutionary warfare also challenges the popular idea that Australia's Sixties was a mere carbon copy of fashions and trends in the USA. For while the Brisbane radicals who edited *Up the right channels* found Roszak's work instructive, other sources from Antonio Gramsci to V.I. Lenin littered the text.

For the remainder of this chapter, questions around these interwoven themes—how a radical print culture emerged that both borrowed from a surge of interest in global revolutionary events and facilitated the *wanderlust* discussed throughout the rest of this thesis—will be central. John McMillian argues that the American SDS's print culture, whereby members could contribute freely and often *ad nauseum* to a plethora of internal publications, not only brought "members into the mainstream of the organisation—into its thoughts and discussions", but also allowed for the spread and digestion of ideas on a wide variety of domestic and foreign policy issues.[81] New types of print media were also able to connect disparate imagined communities of global revolt from around the world, while the increasing ease with which it was possible to produce a radical newsletter saw an explosion in the amount of material available. Writing somewhat satirically in a 1966 edition of *Outlook*, one writer quipped that Australian movements "were suffering a rush of printed material to the head" and proposed that perhaps no future journals or publications should be launched, and this was even before the 'mimeograph revolution' of 1967 and 1968.[82]

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[79] On the New Left and participatory democracy see Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretative History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[80] See Dan O'Neill Collection, UQFL132, Box 3, Folder 1 for records and sale figures.

[81] John McMillan, "'Our Founder, the Mimeograph Machine': Participatory Democracy in Students for a Democratic Society's Print Culture," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 2, No. 2 (2009): 85-110

[82] "Too many words?" *Outlook* 10, No. 4 (August 1966): 13.

Radical writer Frank Moorhouse claimed that by the end of the 1970s "there were about one hundred little magazines in Australia, twice as many as in the sixties", quantifying the extent of this "rebellion of words".[83]

Moorhouse's fellow Sydney Libertarian and *Tharunka* editor Wendy Bacon articulates the extent to which this burgeoning written culture was connected to events overseas:

> we were very inspired by the underground movement overseas, we were inspired by France 1968, we were inspired by what was happening in Chicago, huge demonstrations, all of that is what we read, and…we actually reflected that in what we published.[84]

The case of UQ radicals displays a particularly close relationship between print culture and global ideas. Staff member and activist Dan O'Neill explained that 1966 saw the "usual pervasive apathy" give way, as "a number of independent sources of social criticism emerged on campus". O'Neill demonstrates how some of those involved soon "began to recognise their concerns as very similar to those of other groups, especially in America…in particular they began to read the literature of SDS, notably the newspaper *National Guardian* and began to think beyond Vietnam".[85] This led the young activists "to a critique of the Australian social system in terms of 'participatory democracy', of bringing the social reality of various areas of social life into line with the liberal rhetoric".[86]

Seeking a name for their new organisation, the students crossed the initials of the Vietnam Action Committee (VAC), a group set up that year to begin organising dissent to the escalating conflict, with SDS, leading "to the new name of the group: SDA, or Society for Democratic Action".[87] Radicals like these, who saw the direct applicability of US ideas in an Australian context, drew on the circumstances and experiences the two nations share politically, socially and culturally. Universities had experienced a similar swelling in enrolments, thanks both to the post-war 'boom' and increased government funding, in Australia as they had in the USA, and the failings of these fast-growing institutions to deliver more than a cookie-cutter educational

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[83] Frank Moorhouse, *Days of Wine and Rage* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1980), 5.
[84] Wendy Bacon interviewed in Con Anemogiannis, dir., *The Book that Shook the World* [video-recording] (As It Happened, SBS Australia, 2 November 2007).
[85] Dan O'Neill, "The Growth of the Radical Movement," *Semper Floreat,* 17 March 1969, 9.
[86] Ibid, 9.
[87] Ibid, 9.

experience commingled with shared opposition to racism and the growing war in Southeast Asia to provide fertile ground for cross-continental exchanges.[88]

Both SDS and SDA held initially strong beliefs in liberalism and a rejection of the stultifying old left. The *Port Huron Statement*, SDS's collectively authored manifesto that Brisbane radicals republished in large numbers, mixed existential angst with calls for a functional liberalism. Kirkpatrick Sale describes how it demanded only fairly traditional reforms, like "party realignment, expanded public spending, disarmament [and] civil rights programs" which only exceeded "the traditional mold [sic] of enlightened liberalism" in its radical belief that "all of these problems were *interconnected*".[89] Brisbane New Left activists were born of a similar sense of interconnectedness, as well as a rejection of both Labour politics and the established left. An early SDA leaflet illustrates the organisation's general ambivalence, if not outright hostility towards the far left, exhorting the supposedly free West to "stop the spread of communism by proving democracy is better", forcing society to live up to its liberal pretensions.[90] O'Neill also elaborates on how the newly formed grouping, like their American counterparts, felt an "intensified desire to embrace a whole range of social issues", from Vietnam to education reform, civil liberties, and conscription, and to challenge them with "radical alternatives".[91]

Ralph Summy, a recently arrived migrant from Boston, USA, who had taken up a lectureship in politics at the University of Queensland, was instrumental in this. Jim Prentice, Brisbane New Left activist and historian writes on his important role, noting how Summy's importation of American ideals culminated in "concepts of non-violence, individual liberty from the state [and] concern with disarmament", issues "remarkably similar to the Port Huron text" finding their way into SDA's founding statement in 1966.[92] Seemingly seeing no contradiction between opposing American foreign policy while adopting that nation's forms of youthful militancy, Brisbane activists publicised their relationship with the SDS, happily noting how their ideas

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[88] For a recent history of changes in Australia's higher education sector post WWII, and historical critiques of this by the student left and others, see Hannah Forsyth, "The Ownership of Knowledge in Higher Education in Australia 1939-1996" (PhD Thesis, The University of Sydney, 2012).

[89] Sale, *SDS*, 51.

[90] "Vietnam Protest Week" in Miscellaneous Publications of the Society for Democratic Action Manuscript, F3235, Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

[91] O'Neill, "The Radical Movement," 9.

[92] Prentice, "The New Left," 189.

were firmly rooted in "the American students' concept of 'grass roots democracy'".[93] *Semper Floreat*, the student newspaper, began reflecting a similarly Americanised radical vernacular. Around the same time as SDA's formation, it had begun employing American production values associated with the underground press—a swift abandonment of old, black and white, tabloid styles.

Such imitation extended to rhetoric as well, with the paper's first special issue on Vietnam in July 1966 beginning with a rather literal re-figuring of the *Port Huron Statement's* famous opening lines:

> We, the self-righteous, complacent and comfortable students, who return to warm homes each night, who live in a world of suicidal ignorance while the rest of the world goes by. We, the proud inheritors of this satisfied corner of the world, yet often blind to the realities around us, need to be awoken rudely.[94]

A further demonstration of the direct applicability of US ideas is found in a later issue, focusing on Queensland's approach to civil liberties. The issue's editorial reads:

> Most Australian university students are apathetic, bored, geared to factory education. Yet they are not really happy with their position. But they conform because they feel powerless. The students at Berkeley Campus showed last year in their revolt against factory education and lack of civil liberties, that they were far from impotent. They brought the machine to a halt temporarily and won reforms.[95]

Semper Floreat was captured by the protest movement, like so many other student publications at the time, and these papers soon became the closest thing Australia had to an underground press.

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[93] "Society for Democratic Action," in Miscellaneous Publications of the Society for Democratic Action Manuscript, F3235.
[94] "Students and the dirty little war," *Semper Floreat,* 28 July 1966, 6
[95] "Editorial: A Question of Responsibility," *Semper Floreat,* 15 September 1966, 4.

Figures 4 and 5: The shift from an old, conservative style to that of the underground press is made clear in these two covers of *Semper Floreat*, only a year apart. *Semper Floreat*, 22 July 1965 and 28 July 1966.

These publications shared ideas and articles, a relationship that was formalised in 1971 through an American-style Alternative News Service that provided a fortnightly packet of local and global news articles, analyses, pictures and cartoons to subscribing student editors.[96] The Brisbane movement's mass reproduction of SDS texts like Carl Ogelsby's "Liberalism and the Corporate State" points to other sources of the printed word, as well. The first of the various New Left groups to acquire its own printing press, SDA produced a wide assortment of leaflets, newspapers and other paraphernalia, printing the leaflets and ideas of various activist groups for free and establishing Action Printers to try and tap into the commercial market. They revelled in the democratic power this technology provided, as one 1968 leaflet read: "we don't have the printing resources of the establishment press…but we do have one advantage—no-one can censor our Multilith 1250".[97]

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[96] Alternative News Service was founded in 1971 by Phillip West and funded by the national students union and subscribing publications. See Phillip West, "Submission to editor's conference, May 15/16 1971," Phillip N West Papers, MLMSS 8758, Box 3, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

[97] "The Brisbane Line" in Society for Democratic Action Ephemera, FVF381.

The turn away from this American-centric attitude can equally be captured in the group's printed output. 1968 saw the adoption a more militant, European and Third World influenced attitude. SDA's 1967 newspaper *Impact* was replaced with the much more militant sounding *Student Guerrilla*, while its Orientation Week activities climaxed with a meeting asking "Who is Che Guevara?"[98] O'Neill captured the nature of this shift in an early 1969 issue of *Semper*:

> to study N.LF.'s in Asia and Che in Cuba and Bolivia is not just romanticism but is to examine some of the most advanced thinking about social revolution today. It provides us in Australia with an objective view of our place and role in the world—a minor branch of the vast American economic empire.[99]

In the same article, O'Neill placed the French May Revolution alongside the American Civil Rights movement as equally "significant in determining the methodology of revolution in Australia", while he highlighted German theorist Herbert Marcuse and Italian Antonio Gramsci as new theoretical influences.[100] Keeping with this increasingly European perspective, 1968 also saw the group publish widely on the West German student movement. Several leaflets on Rudi Dutschke and the "Easter Uprising" in West Berlin that accompanied his near-fatal shooting by a right-wing fanatic were distributed.[101] Thus, the move 'from protest to resistance' came, as it did for student groups around the world, through a refocusing of the global scope of these radical publications.[102] SDA's short lived 1969 publication *Third World* vividly expressed refiguring of the organisation's concerns. No longer were American ideas given pride of place. Instead *Student Guerrilla* prominently featured instructions on how to shoot down an American UH-1 helicopter and a theoretical exploration of how Third Worldism was relevant to Australian conditions.[103]

Under the heading of "Internal and External colonisation", SDA member Mitch Thompson introduced *Third World* to the campus community by explaining

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[98] "Who is Che Guevara" leaflet, in Society for Democratic Action Ephemera, FVF 381.

[99] "Dan O'Neill," *Semper Floreat,* 17 March 1969, 4.

[100] Ibid, 4.

[101] "Rudi Dutschke: West German Youth Rebel", "Students and Workers in Germany" and "Analysis of the German Uprising of Easter 1968" in Society for Democratic Action Ephemera, FVF381.

[102] On the global movement "from protest to resistance" in New Left groups see Karen Bauer, "'From Protest to Resistance': Ulrike Meinhof and the Transatlantic Movement of Ideas," in *Changing the world, changing oneself: political protest and collective identities in West Germany and the US in the 1960s and 1970s*, eds. Belinda Davis, et al, 171-188 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

[103] *Student Guerrilla*, 2 April 1969, 1.

how the "exploitation that occurs in the underdeveloped nations by capitalism also occurs within the 'civilised' industrialised countries", including "right here in Australia". He explained how power was no longer the preserve of a "ruling government cabinet oligarchy", but was spread throughout society, in business and civil society. The hegemony of these ideas, a concept borrowed from Grasmci, had "absorbed probably the decisive majority of the people (namely the working class) and integrated it on a rather solid material basis". For Thompson and others, then, the onus of revolution was not only, as it was for those who provided aid to the NLF, in the Third World, but also the "internal colonies" of the West "where people are exploited, enslaved by the jobs and morality that is required from them, and alienated from any source of that power which decides the direction of their lives and the society in which they live".[104]

Thompson's Third Worldism, acquired with more than a tinge of Marcuse, was in keeping with that of the swelling international youth movement. Jennifer Ruth Hosek describes a similar employment of what she terms "subaltern nationalism" within the West German student movement, the anti-authoritarian element of which used the example of the Vietnamese NLF and the Cuban revolution to re-imagine West Berlin as a colonial space in need of liberation.[105] The American SDS followed a similar road, with the organisation captured in late 1969 by a small group of radicals who rejected working with the American masses in favour of armed struggle alongside the Vietnamese and other Third World nations. They would become known as the Weather Underground, firmly abandoning an older form of New Left liberalism in favour of underground resistance.[106] These radicals, in very different fashions, turned away from liberal concerns around winning more freedoms under social democracy to an idolisation of struggles in developing nations, which provided "a new and powerful model of revolution" to those activists who believed the United States to be "replacing European colonial powers as the repressor of movements for national liberation".[107]

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[104] Mitch Thompson, "Internal and External Colonisation," *Student Guerrilla,* 9 April 1969, 1.
[105] Jennifer Ruth Hosek, "'Subaltern Nationalism' and the West Berlin Anti-Authoritarians," *German Politics and Society* 26, No. 1 (Spring 2008): 57-81.
[106] Voluminous literature exists on this, for a particularly able analysis of the Weather Underground and like developments in West Germany see Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley, Cal: University of California Press, 2004).
[107] Robert Gildea, James Mark and Niek Pas, "European Radicals and the 'Third World': Imagined Solidarities and Radical Networks," *Cultural and Social History* 8, No. 4 (December 2011): 450.

Scalmer notes that this fascination with foreign theories and ideas multiplied exponentially across Australian social movements during the late 1960s. References to the applicability of overseas ideas and practices in the Australian context multiplied nearly six fold in the pages of 'New Left' journal *Arena* from 1966 to 1969 while comparisons of Australia with France, Czechoslovakia or the USA were often heard.[108] 1968 seemed to be a tipping point, for events of that year and particularly the French May "gained immediate, unrivalled prestige and authority"—imbuing Australian social movements with a new, international legitimacy. May 1969 mobilisations in solidarity with Clarrie O'Shea, Maoist secretary of the Tramways Union who was facing jail time for refusing to abide restrictive penal clauses targeting trade unions, were classed in the same category of student-worker alliances as the millions-strong strike in France, giving this comparatively much smaller campaign a new importance.[109] Freney described the movement's success as "a suitable way to commemorate the first anniversary of the May revolt in Paris".[110]

It was Vietnam, however, that provided the key discourse around which new and emerging movements sought to articulate their concerns and passions. The NLF's struggle against US imperialism and for "a socialism based on humanity and freedom and thus necessarily opposed to capitalism and the bureaucratic impersonal monolith of the established 'socialist' system" provided inspiration to a plethora of movements who transformed the idea of "liberation" to their own ends.[111] Second Wave Feminism exploded in Australia from 1969 onwards to become what many scholars consider the most pronounced and far reaching of Sixties social movements.[112] As late as 1966, however, radical journalist and writer Sylvia Lawson was able to comment in *Outlook* that Betty Friedan's feminist masterpiece *The Feminine Mystique* spoke as much to exploited men as it did to the oppressed housewives it diagnosed. Recently re-released in Penguin edition, Friedan's work was described as "admirable", yet the writer commented that "that the frustration of the intelligent housewife is, in essence,

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[108] Scalmer, *Dissent Events*, 120-127.
[109] Ibid, 124.
[110] Freney, *A Map of Days*, 239.
[111] Thompson, "Internal and External Colonisation," 1.
[112] On the academic acceptance of this point see Enke, *Finding the Movement*, 2. For further reading on the impacts of second wave feminism on Australia, see Marilyn Lake, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999), particularly chapters 9-10; Gilsea Kaplan, *The Meagre Harvest: The Australian Women's Movement 1950s-1990s* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1996) and the special issue, "Living in the Seventies" of *Australian Feminist Studies* 22, No. 53 (2007).

very likely that of the under-educated man or woman, single or married, whose dull, repetitive, wearying employment doesn't fill their capacities for responsibility and intellectual effort".[113]

Lawson's argument is of a typically New Left persuasion. She argued alongside Marcuse and the early writings of Marx that the alienation and boredom wrought by capitalism were enemies equally of either sex. Sara Evans' groundbreaking research into the foundations of women's liberation in the United States found that the movement owed as much to such borrowing from the New Left and Civil Rights movements as it did to a rejection of their patriarchal and masculine characteristics.[114] While it had made a splash in the Adelaide press, feminist Anne Summers credits male New Left intellectual Warren Osmond with popularising the lessons of the 1968 protests against the Miss America pageant in the USA, by "convinc[ing] us it was part of an emerging new feminism".[115] In his article for student newspaper *On Dit*, Osmond introduced the campus to this new idea of "Women's Liberation", which he argued was just "one stream—amongst many—within the general movement of youth and minority groups to fundamentally change American society".[116]

The new movement's fascination with Vietnam was also pronounced. One of the first pamphlet of Australia's women's liberation movement, entitled *Only the chains have changed*, was distributed at an anti-Vietnam war protest in Sydney on 15 December 1969. Recently-arrived American Martha Ansara prepared the document with several other budding feminists and her activist boyfriend in a house in East Balmain.[117] Alongside its allusion to the *Communist Manifesto*, the pamphlet also drew significant inspiration from the Vietnamese freedom struggle, protesting that "women must fight against the forces of oppression for the right to determine their own lives, just as the Vietnamese are fighting for the right to govern their own country".[118]

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[113] Sylvia Lawson, "'Feminine Mystique' Revisited," *Outlook* 10, No. 1 (January 1966): 20.

[114] Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

[115] Anne Summers, *Ducks on the Pond: An Autobiography 1949-1976* (Ringwood, Vic.: Viking, 1999), 241.

[116] Warren Osmond, "Just about time for a new feminism?" *On Dit*, March 1969, 6-7.

[117] Siobhan McHugh, *Minefields and Miniskirts: Australian Women and the Vietnam War* (Sydney: Doubleday, 1993), 230.

[118] Women's Liberation Group, *Only the Chains have Changed* (Sydney: Women's Liberation Group, 1969), 2.

As Ansara put it, "we were very keen at that point to relate the oppression of women to capitalism", particularly that system's violent manifestation in Vietnam, believing that it was all "part of the same big upsurge of trying to change the world". She recalls the two issues as being so interconnected as to be basically indistinguishable: "we were involved in the anti-war movement and then we started these women's liberation groups. But to me…they both seemed part of the same thing".[119] And it was equally through the frame of Vietnam that the women's movement articulated its increasing disaffection with the sexist attitudes of the male-dominated left. Kate Jennings began her famously brash condemnation of the anti-war movement at the May 1970 Moratorium with a call for solidarity with the "Vietnamese women", and then attacked those in the movement who "can see so clearly the suffering and misery in Vietnam" but scarcely raise a finger over injustices against women at home, from backyard abortions to their continued "conscription into…personalised slave kitchens".[120]

Vietnam provided a lens for new social movements to articulate their particular struggles and causes. Women were oppressed by the same system of male, capitalist thinking that was leading to war and revolution in Southeast Asia. And these discourses of domination were soon projected onto an eminently local setting, critiquing male control over the anti-war movement. Similar processes were at work in other areas, as well. Peter Coleman authored a scare-mongering pamphlet, almost entirely derived from leaked ASIO reports, entitled "School Power in Australia". The pamphlet aimed to terrify parents about their revolutionary offspring, for whom "the school is as much part of the system as the factory, the mine, the police force—or Vietnam", which were seen as "the same struggle". Coleman quoted the menacingly titled high school publication *Student Underground*, which instructing students to "lunge out at society and remember Vietnam as a symbol of what it has done".[121]

A new generation of Aboriginal activists and their distinct Australian articulation of Black Power (which will be discussed more in Chapter Six) had an

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[119] Martha Ansara interviewed by Siobhan McHugh, undated, ORAL TRC 2761/8, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

[120] Kate Jennings, "Moratorium: Front Lawn: 1970," available at http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/jennings-kate/moratorium-front-lawn-1970-0124024, accessed 2 October 2012.

[121] Peter Coleman, *Student Power in Australia* (Moree, NSW: Moree Chronicle, 1970), 7. For the pamphlet's similarities to an ASIO document entitled 'Programme for Revolution in High Schools,' see David McKnight, *Australia's spies and their secrets* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 230-1.

important place for the Vietnamese freedom struggle. Activists cut their political teeth on anti-Vietnam war marches, making contacts and developing ideas, while Victorian leader Bruce McGuinness issued this statement of solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle and its implications for Australia:

> [D]oesn't Vietnam belong to the Vietnamese? Isn't it their country? Aren't we the invaders, the aggressors, the enemy, along with Uncle Sam and his band of merry nephews? I know that Vietnam is not our war. I know further that it is dirty politics that puts us there and continues to leave us there. The same dirty politics that suppresses the Aborigine, the same filthy politics that kept him suppressed for two hundred years, the same politics that will decry Black Power and its advocates.[122]

Perhaps borrowing from Jennings' approach, young indigenous intellectual and activist Paul Coe used the podium at the second Moratorium in Sydney to virulently lambast the white left. As Denis Freney recalled:

> He showed no generosity to the audience. His tone was brutal. You are our oppressors. You worry about Vietnam, about the Black struggle in the USA or South Africa. But what about us here? You raped our women, you stole our land, you massacred our ancestors, you destroyed our culture, and now—when we refused to die out as you expected—you want to kill us with your hypocrisy.[123]

As Coe put it in a later article, the Vietnamese peasants' struggle "for the right to own land and the power to control their own future and that of their children" was:

> [E]xactly the same struggle the Aborigines in Australia…are waging. We too are poor and coloured, exploited and victimised by our white masters…We are on the side of the Vietnamese. We want them to win because we identify very strongly with their struggle. Of course we want the killing and suppression to end in Vietnam but we want the Vietnamese people themselves to be the masters of their own destiny, just as we ourselves would like to be the masters of our own destiny.[124]

So, while Coe's Moratorium speech should be correctly located as an attack on the overriding attention placed on Vietnam by white activists, he and other activists

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[122] Bruce McGuinness, "Aboriginal Black Power," *National U*, 23 March 1970, 7.
[123] Freney, *A Map of Days,* 267.
[124] Paul Coe, "Racism and the anti-war movement," in *National Anti-War Conference, Sydney*, np.

clearly felt a sense of solidarity, an acknowledgment that struggles waged overseas indeed had a local referent, even if many local (white) activists failed to see it.

As Coe pointed out, there were issues with this global infatuation, and they extended beyond the ignorance of local realities in favour of more exciting international events. Even at the height of their popularity, the unadulterated importation of foreign theories was met with a mixture of humour and disdain. The importation of new forms of print culture, in particular the American-style underground press, formed the basis of a dispute in the Brisbane movement around participatory publishing. A newspaper called *The Brisbane Line*, envisaged as a national underground newspaper that would express views "so far presented in Australia almost exclusively by university students", emerged out of Foco Club and sought contributors "opposed to Australia's right wing bourgeois establishment…includ[ing] workers as well as students".[125] This call for a wide variety of contributions and production assistance was, however, never to be met, and the paper folded after only three issues. Dave Nadel, an activist from Monash University who travelled to Brisbane to edit the paper, wrote to subscribers that "the paper was never soundly based" as "there was far too little discussion amongst the people who were to be associated with its production" and the money the club was able to provide dwindled as police and media interest in its supposedly illegal activities increased. The main issue, Nadel believed, was about the paper's form. Not only was a Multilith 1250 unable to produce the desired product, the idea of an underground paper in Australia was "absurd". As he put it:

> American underground newspapers sell mostly to the American Underground Communities and about half their news relates to the Underground Community. There is no such thing as an underground community in Australia, let alone Brisbane.[126]

The problem with trying to construct a participatory media where the culture for one did not exist was laid bare.

This was only one of a plethora of disputes around the applicability of foreign theories and ideas to Australian circumstances. Leading CPA member and anti-war activist Mavis Robertson put it well when, writing for a 1971 Moratorium conference,

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[125] Editorial, *The Brisbane Line*, 22 August 1968, 2.
[126] Dave Nadel to "subscribers," 25 September 1968, in Dan O'Neill Collection, UQFL132, Folder 1, Box 12.

she noted that "[o]verseas influences may help but they are rarely decisive, while ill-considered transplants can lead the movement into sterility". The Moratorium, while itself a foreign import, had been successful because of its local specificities, rather than an aping of US style. The now-famous Australian moratorium symbol became "the best-known of all anti-war symbols", in spite of attempts by some activists to have it mimick America's.[127] One particularly sterile translation, at least in the eyes of its critics, was the employment of Maoist rhetoric by Melbourne students, particularly members of the Monash Labor Club (MLC). Melbourne was the centre of Australian Maoism, with nearly all of those who formed the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA (M-L)) in 1964 residing in that city, and its members holding a number of key union positions.[128] While many amongst this tiny, secretive party embraced Mao's neo-Stalinism against what they saw as the 'capitalist roaders' of the USSR, the CPA (M-L)'s influence on the student movement was of a more romantic persuasion. As Nadel put it, "the Cultural Revolution in 1967 looked like Mao had gone to the masses. Young people were revolutionists, as if the same thing happening in China was happening in the West".[129] Many scholars have previously pointed out that romantic images of youthful Red Guards leading a revolutionary charge against bureaucracy and old cultural forms inspired new and experimental types of radicalism for emerging student radicals in the West.[130] And this was to be the case for the Monash group as well.

The previous chapter noted the importance of young mathematics student Albert Langer, who developed a particularly confrontational and eclectic Maoism that came to guide the MLC's political trajectory.[131] The sort of rhetoric and tactics this

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[127] Mavis Robertson, "Mass Actions: Nationally or Internationally inspired?" in *National Anti-War Conference*, np.

[128] For more on the CPA (M-L) see Nick Knight, "The theory and tactics of the Communist Party of Australia (M-L)," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 28, No. 2 (1998): 233-51 and Justus M van Der Kroef, "Australia's Maoists," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 8, No. 2 (1970): 87-116.

[129] Dave Nadel interviewed by Daniel Robins, 31 August 2005, quoted in Daniel Robins, "Melbourne's Maoists: The Rise of the Monash Labour Club 1965-67" (BA Honours Thesis, Victoria University, 2005), available online at http://www.lastsuperpower.net/Members_/dmelberg/melbmaoists, accessed 15 April 2012.

[130] For literature on the impacts of Maoism on Western student and cultural movements, see Julian Bourg, "The Red Guards of Paris: French Student Maoism in the 1960s," *History of European Ideas* 31, No. 4 (2005): 472-90; Sebastian Gehrig, "(Re-)configuring Mao: Trajectories of a Culturo-Political trend in West Germany," *Transcultural Studies* 2 (2011): 189-231 and Andrew Ross, "Mao Zedong's Impact on Cultural Politics in the West," *Cultural Politics* 1, No. 1 (March 2005): 5-22.

[131] Robins makes this argument, detailing how "Maoist theories of rebellion, confrontation and class struggle came to dominate the activities of the Labor Club by late 1967", Robins, "Melbourne's Maoists."

turn involved is captured well in a leaflet issued by anonymous "Red Guards", held in Langer's archive, that was directed at the ALP and CPA leadership of the Melbourne anti-war movement. Titled "Down with the top party person in authority taking the capitalist road", the leaflet castigated those organising 1967's July 4 demonstration for bureuacratism and timidity. The students protested that "a small clique of bureaucrats are ruthlessly repressing any independent activities" and, in language reminiscent of calls for material aid to the NLF, argued that "Despite all the petitions, posters parades, protest advertisements and peaceful demonstrations the US has continued to escalate the war and obviously intends to keep doing so". They concluded that "[I]t is time the movement stopped kidding itself that it can influence the government and start looking for effective means to make opposition felt", including unspecified "militant activities" and "direct action".[132]

What this meant was crystallised the next year, at the (in)famous July 4 demonstration of 1968, when hundreds of Monash students and militant workers broke off from the main demonstration, fighting police and smashed windows outside the US consulate while attempting to hoist the NLF flag within its confines. Condemned as hooliganism in the mainstream press, this was seen as a clearly globalised expression by those involved, and tied into a *zeitgeist* of increasing, frustrated militancy in the face of seeming wide-scale indifference. Violent actions were being increasingly normalised in the US movement, for instance, while reports of barricades and street fighting in Paris dominated the daily news. *Print*, the Labor Club's newssheet, sought to place the demonstration within a global context:

> Every NLF rocket is worth more than last night's demonstration. The Vietnamese people are bearing the real brunt of this war. They are on the front line but we can back them up. We have a common enemy and we are in a position to fight behind the lines.[133]

A writer for Melbourne University newspaper *Farrago* took such militant grandstanding further, illustrating how such a global infatuation could, as it did elsewhere, drive previously open movements into increasingly sectarian fantasies.

George Coote argued that those who claimed that the "demonstration alienated more people than gathered support" failed to account for the great number of

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[132] "Down with the top party person in authority taking the capitalist road, "undated, in Albert Langer Papers, Z457, Box 43, Folder "MLC – Internal."
[133] *Print*, 5 July 1968, 1.

Australians who "can watch the Vietnam television horror serial in apathy for years". Coote ended his piece with the claim that "[t]he Australian Alfs are beyond redemption", and as such only small groups of militant aligned students and workers posed a real challenge to the system.[134] This pessimism—born of frustration over the seeming ineffectualness of peaceful protest—was, however, attacked by Monash student intellectual Richard Gordon who styled the whole affair as a "mock revolution". He lambasted the "complete bankruptcy" of the ultra-militants, and quoted *Print* to prove the point. Mixing equal parts revolutionary rhetoric and Monash in-jokes, *Print* under the editorship of Darce Cassidy seemed to capture the pulse of the campus.

Yet, Gordon argued that statements like "the grip of the Americans (over colonial Australia)" would only be broken "by help[ing] the Vietnamese in their fight and prepar[ing] for our own war of independence" were nothing short of "hysterical". Grandiose claims that the rally had seen the birth of a July 4 Movement were equally misguided, he argued, drawing as they did on outlandish comparisons with Cuba's July 26 Movement and France's March 22 Movement. Gordon concluded that this would be laughable if those involved were not "so bent on acting upon concepts imported holus-bolus from revolutionary situations elsewhere and in attempting to utilise them here". Scenes like this "illustrate the complete lack of any political philosophy related to the Australian scene", as well as how the cultural cringe—that radicalism from 'over there' would always be more developed and relevant than organic theories—was present in these movements.[135]

In Brisbane, strident attacks on what was seen as the excessive employment of global rhetoric were made. Frank Varghese, member of UQ's New Left Club, attacked what he termed the "left wing infantilism" of the radical groups like the newly born Revolutionary Socialist Students Alliance, which emerged from SDA's wishes to move from "a protest organisation to a radical or revolutionary movement…to challenge the structures of this society".[136] Varghese believed the group's use of imported phrases like Smash US imperialism, "in terms of being

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[134] George Coote, "yummy violence," *Farrago*, 19 July 1968, 2.
[135] Richard Gordon, "The Mock Revolution of July 4," *Farrago,* 12 July 1968, 2.
[136] "SDA Dissolves," Students for Democratic Action Ephemera, FVF381.

adequate to deal with social reality—amount…to meaningless crap".[137] Similar criticisms were made in Adelaide, where one commentator described those who became infatuated with Frankfurt School theorists as "Marcuse's Morons".[138] Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* spoke to the existential angst felt by students and workers seemingly stuck in a world ruled by ossified, impersonal bureaucracies while Gramsci's writings, many of which were translated into English by Australian Alastair Davidson, provided terms like hegemony which allowed for a better understanding of how Western capitalist societies produced consent from their populations.[139] Summers remembers the impacts these writing had, and how she was "easily convinced" by Marcuse's contention that "the working class was no longer the agent of revolution", but that instead "capitalism would be overthrown by cultural forces, by the young and dispossessed, who had no stake in the system".[140] Writing in The University of Adelaide's *On Dit* Allan Patience warned that such theory was producing a student left which "deals in slogans, obtuse language and vulgar anonymity". "How many of the writers of these pamphlets have been down to Bowden or Brompton to look at the poverty problems there?" he rhetorically asked, and "[h]ow many of them have ever had the guts to make a detailed study of the situations they claim to know so well[?]"[141]

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how ideas and practices of global revolution were both utilised and debated by social movement actors during the Long Sixties. Examples from abroad impacted on and were experienced in the spaces, writings and rhetoric of the time. Space "often crystallizes and makes visible the hidden dialogue taking place between different collective and individual historical agencies", and rebellious urban locations—from discos to bookstores and private homes—were "produced", as

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[137] Varghese, Frank, "Left-Wing Infantilism: A Right-Wing Disorder: An open letter to RSSA, published by the Liberal Club in conjunction with the New Left Group," University of Queensland Liberal Club Ephemera, FVF446, Fryer Library, the University of Queensland.

[138] Allan Patience, "Marcuse's Morons," *On Dit*, August 6 1970, 6.

[139] One of the few works which really deals with the impact of these ideas on the Australian New Left is Lewis d'Avigdor, "Pessimism of the Intellect, Optimism of the Will: Reading the Ideas and Ideals of the New Student Left," Unpublished paper, 2010, available at http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/8736/1/BeauchampHistorical2010Lewisd'Avigdor.pdf, accessed 7 August 2012.

[140] Summers, *Ducks on the Pond*, 235.

[141] Patience, "Marcuse's Morons," 7.

Lefebvre would have it, across the landscape of Australia's cities.[142] These provided a private space to encounter and experiment with global ideas and practices while developing new networks and imaginaries of dissent. The contradiction between these inwardly-focused spaces and the radicals' intentions to change the world were reflected in an equally globally inspired use of public space. Borrowing protest styles from Europe and organising strategies from Mao, amongst a plethora of others, protestors took new carnivalesque forms of opposition to the street, while attempting to mobilise and engage local communities using a transnational lexicon. The rhetoric and writing of these activists equally displays their developing global affinities, with new styles of publishing emerging that prefigured the more utopian form of life many activists strove for. The influence of ideas from Vietnam to China to France and Germany not only illustrate the true breadth of the Sixties' imagined community of global revolt, but also how these movements, while clearly influenced by highly mediatised and imitable examples from the United States, found much of use outside of that nexus.

Still, this was not a process lacking in contention, with imported practices and vocabularies often condemned as ill-suited to local conditions or suppressing the development of an local intellectual tradition. As Richard Gordon and Warren Osmond protested in 1970, activists "have largely misunderstood the nature of student revolt overseas, and have developed organisational tactics, ideology and general revolutionary theory out of overseas contexts, rather than allowing their own praxis in Australia to determine the basis of political and social development".[143] This sort of condemnation became increasingly common throughout the period, yet it did not weaken the enthusiasm of Australian activists for overseas ideas. Indeed, the desire to understand them in their "virgin, unshielded radiance", to experience and document the global in order to bring back perhaps more pertinent lessons and practices, motivated the variety of journeys by Australians to all corners of the world that form the subject of the next chapter.

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[142] Furst, Oseke and Reynolds, "Breaking the Walls of Privacy," 495.

[143] Richard Gordon and Warren Osmond, "An Overview of the Australian New Left," in *The Australian New Left: Critical Essays and Strategy,* ed. Richard Gordon, 35 (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1970).

Part Two

Comings and Goings

Chapter Four

Revolutionary Tourists: Australian activists, travel and the 1968 phenomenon

On May 4, 1968, a medical student from Sydney University arrived in Paris. The student, whose report for campus newspaper *Honi Soit* appeared anonymously, expected to find "the intellectual stimulus of the Latin Quarter" but was soon swept up in the throng of radical activism. A trip to the recently occupied Sorbonne revealed a campus so crowded as to "make a Sydney Med. II lecture look like the Sahara Desert after an atomic war", with students "spill[ing] onto the courtyards where they sat in congregations…hurriedly handing out pamphlets demanding freedom and social justice". Two days later, this air of intellectual and political discussion met the truncheons of Parisian riot police. Approaching a roadblock *en route* to dinner, the anonymous student's "curiosity in trying to see what was being cordoned off" soon saw them thrown in jail with a cosmopolitan group of cellmates: Algerians, Trinidadians, Americans, Canadians, Swiss, Germans "and even a Fulbright Scholar". These individuals had been arrested on the most spurious of pretexts to evidence the French government's claim "that the disturbances were provoked and instigated by foreign interests".[1]

Being apprehended by overzealous police and branded a foreign troublemaker was, however, only one of the many ways Australians became personally involved in the global political networks of 1968. Nineteen sixty-eight is increasingly read as a phenomenon, one which has almost become a byword for the whole Sixties global revolutionary experience.[2] The revolt in Paris is just one of the reasons that the year has become known as 'the year of the barricades' and inspired literally hundreds of books and articles exploring its significance.[3] Scholars, however, have only recently

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[1] "Honi reports on 'La Revolte' in Paris," *Honi Soit*, 4 June 1968, 1-2.
[2] Though, as the introduction to this thesis notes, such a fetish for '1968' makes the revolt very much a developed world, indeed trans-Atlantic, affair.
[3] These range from popular texts like Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (London: Vintage, 2005) to those of a scholarly nature like Carole Fink et al, eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its afterlives*

begun to read travel by social movement actors as integral to individual and collective radical identity formation during the rebellious year. Activists were no longer content merely "being inspired by one another" through the mass media or radical publications, "they were actually seeking each other out", as Richard Jobs puts it. The mobility of primarily youthful, middle-class Europeans across borders not only reflected increasing globalisation, but was central to the creation of a "transnational social group" who "built a shared political culture across national boundaries". For the European youths Jobs profiles "[t]he hope was that they could help invigorate each other's local movements through transnational mobility—if not by participating fully, then at least by witnessing and expressing support".[4] Martin Klimke evidences the importance of personal contacts across borders through the formation of what he terms the "other alliance" between American and West German student movements. He asks how "activists from different geographical, economic, political, and cultural frameworks imagined themselves as part of a global revolutionary movement", and locates the exchange of individuals across borders as central. Not only was a member of the West German Socialist Student Union an important co-author of the 1962 *Port Huron Statement*, but the travels of American students to West Germany and vice versa saw the cross pollination of confrontational protest techniques later in the decade.[5]

While illustrative, this approach is perhaps less useful for a study of Australian activists. The 1960s saw rates of overseas departure amongst the 20-24 age group mushroom more than six fold, as passenger airliners, cheaper fares and the post-war boom made travel a realistic prospect rather than a time-consuming, maritime pursuit.[6] Yet, travel was easier for the European youths Jobs explores than it was for many Australians, and institutional contacts between Australian and overseas movements were nowhere near as abundant as those Klimke analyses.[7] In spite of this, and as the example of the anonymous Sydney University student makes clear, the

(Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002) and Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds, *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[4] Richard Ivan Jobs, "Youth Movements: Travel, Protest and Europe in 1968," *American Historical Review* 114, No. 2 (April 2011): 376-377, 384.

[5] Martin Klimke, *The other alliance: student protest in West Germany and the United States in the global sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 2.

[6] Richard White, "Travel, Writing and Australia," *Studies in Travel Writing* 11, No. 1 (2007): 4.

[7] Numbers skyrocketed amongst the 20-24 age group, from 8,976 to 53,683 between the years 1961 and 1971. See Agnieszka Sobocinska, "People's Diplomacy: Australian travel, tourism and relations with Asia, 1941-2009," (PhD Thesis, The University of Sydney, 2010), 196.

developing political and radical networks of 1968 were encountered and extolled, and Australian radicals increasingly wished to find themselves in centres of revolt. A 1969 sociological study of the radical community at the University of Queensland, for instance, revealed that 57% of the over 100 radicals surveyed wished to go abroad in the next year, motivated either by "a wish to broaden one's experience" or "a more negative dissatisfaction with Australia".[8] This chapter will demonstrate how the increasing global mobility of Australian radicals—whom anthropologist Victor Turner would call pilgrims experiencing a utopian moment—was inspired by these and other, more focused, concerns and objectives. Equally, these trips were often supposed to further the development of local protest movements in Australia, which underwent profound growth and change around 1968. And while time spent overseas was seen as a way of contributing to the success of local movements, whether through applied knowledge or greater theoretical understanding, pilgrims did not always receive a welcome homecoming.

Australian activists often did not take the European and trans-Atlantic itineraries favoured by Jobs and Klimke. While neither author denies the importance of Third World ideas and practices from China, Vietnam or Latin America, their focus largely ignores this important source of transnational flows. Robert Gildea, James Mark and Niek Pas argue, however, that Third-Worldism was just as important as connections across First World nations in providing "a new and powerful model of revolution for European radical activists". As the authors point out, the "availability of cheaper flights…enabled eager young activists in Western Europe to make pilgrimages to the showcases of revolution, which now shifted from Moscow to Havana and Peking".[9] Revolutionary states and struggles in Asia also formed an important point of pilgrimage for Australian radicals, a result of geographic proximity and a reaction to dominant Australian fears of the region's teeming masses. White radicals, however, can be seen as inverting these racialised anxieties, indulging in what Judy Tzu-Chun Wu has defined as a "romance" with Asian struggles. If radical radicals, as Wu explains, "sought the 'truth' about the military and political conflicts

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[8] Christopher A. Rootes, "Australian Student Radicals: The Nature and Origins of Dissent," (BA Honours Thesis, The University of Queensland, 1969), 237-8.
[9] 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, No. 4 (2011): 450, 454.

in Southeast Asia, they tended to idealise Ho Chi Minh, the National Liberation Front, and socialist Asia more generally", a radical repositioning of old orientalist frames.[10]

Humphrey McQueen has described his controversial 1970 work *A New Britannia* as "a statement of its time—the late 1960s—when the mood was established by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the May Days in France [and] the Prague Spring".[11] Through an analysis of several dozen Australian radical travellers to these very hotspots of 1968's radicalism—Paris as well as Prague, Beijing and Saigon alongside many other—this chapter adds an Australian perspective to the growing literature on the period's revolutionary tourists. In doing this, it reveals how transnational flows of individuals and ideas across borders both reflected and impacted Australia's multiplying movements for change.

From sympathetic bystanders to active revolutionaries: Justifying and explaining political travel

In mid-1970, the Australia-China Society (ACS) excitedly announced that "[f]or the first time in two years Australians can 'go and see' China for themselves".[12] Owing to the disorganisation wrought by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), no groups had been allowed to visit the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) since early 1968. The ACS, founded in Victoria in 1951 and mainly independent of Communist control, had previously organised dozens of short tours of the PRC. And while Australia's Sinophiles applied in droves, many were to be disappointed this time around. Muriel Underwood, Chairman of the ACS's small Tasmanian branch, wrote an agitated letter to National Secretary Marjorie Waters noting her dismay at being overlooked for the tour in favour of a younger, more activist, cohort. "This branch...is only operating because of my admiration and understanding of the Chinese people", she protested, adding how "it's a pity that the Chinese don't yet understand...that it is

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[10] Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Journeys for Peace and Liberation: Third World Internationalism and Radical Orientalism during the U.S. War in Vietnam," *Pacific Historical Journal* 76, No. 4 (2007): 578.
[11] Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia*, 3rd Edition (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1986): xiii.
[12] Australia-China Society, "China '70 – The Australia-China Society presents: National Day Tour September 23rd – October 23rd 1970," in Australia-China Society Victoria Branch Records, 1952-1982, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 4, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

not the students and workers who run this country".[13] Waters gave her condolences, noting that some 40 others had also been left off from the tour, as "in their present mood, the Chinese feel that it is their beholden task to fire with enthusiasm the young students and workers [and] they were in no way interested in any other type of group". This request—for the first delegation to the People's Republic in over two years to be entirely comprised of militant youth—might now appear curious. But it was in many ways a mark of the times. Young people were rebelling all over the world, from Peking to Paris and Sydney, and despite Waters' understanding that it was the "rather older people who plod away to keep things going" in the ACS, it was the "fickle element" of globally-mobile activist youth who the Chinese assumed would have the most to benefit from seeing socialism in action.[14]

Australian social movement activism exploded during the 1960s from small solidarity movements and campaigns for indigenous rights or against the White Australia Policy to a multiplicity of concerns and inspirations. This was a process fired by the global revolt of 1968, and by decade's end images like that of the heroic Vietnamese guerrilla, barricades in France and Che Guevara's iconic face were being marshalled by new movements—women's liberation, student power, the counterculture—as well as reinvigorating older forms of socialist politics with new icons, concerns and political forms. Those younger people who applied to travel to China were particularly in tune with this new *zeitgeist* of radicalism. There were in fact so many acceptably militant applicants that the ACS "had to refuse even some young people who would have fulfilled [Chinese] requirements", illustrating just how much the desire for radical travel was not only held by a few.[15] The organisation's archives include dozens of applications for this tour, mostly from young workers, students and academics professing a desire to see, understand and learn. Some, like Gwen Sullivan, a clothing trades worker from Victoria, thought that a trip to China would allow her to understand the revolutionary process in its totality. Quoting one of Chairman Mao's lesser-known aphorisms, "whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming into contact with it, that is, by living (practicing) in its environment", she argued that her trip would allow her to "gain genuine

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[13] Muriel Underwood to Marjorie Waters, 17 August 1970, in Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.

[14] Marjorie Waters to Muriel Underwood, 20 August 1970, in Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.

[15] Marjorie Waters to Edith Emery, 20 August 1970, in Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.

knowledge and experience of how the Chinese people live and work armed with Mao Tse Tung thought".[16]

Others noted the educative nature of their trips for those back home. Academic Jonathon King thought that time behind the 'bamboo curtain' would allow him to better "correct the western world's erroneous picture of China". "Travel is education", as King put it, and "[e]very minute would be a never forgotten treasure" which would leave him with "a life long dedication to defending the People's Republic of China with knowledge gained from the trip".[17] The possibility of using knowledge gained to further their individual political maturation and collective political struggles in Australia was, however, the overriding concern of those who applied. Warren Winton, a self-professed "working class" 24-year-old sheet metal worker from Melbourne, noted that experiencing the GPCR, a "tremendous victory for the <u>international working class</u>" first hand would "be a most valuable and worth-while influence on my own political and moral development".[18] Paul Byrne thought that China, having "thrown off the exploiting classes", provided relevant lessons which activists could "adapt and apply to Australian conditions". Byrne, a 26-year-old project engineer, noted that he felt "some confusion as to the way forward" for the Australian anti-imperialist movement, a feeling that was equally potent for Leslie Bowling.[19] A masters student at Adelaide's Flinders University, Bowling admitted that "the experience cannot directly provide answers to problems faced by the revolutionary movement in Australia". However, by informing "fellow students through public lectures etc more people will become aware of, and sympathetic to, revolutionary struggles and ideas", hopefully turning them from "sympathetic bystanders to active revolutionaries".[20]

Employing Victor Turner's work on the social practices of Christianity, it is possible to see these travellers through the frame of the 'pilgrim':

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[16] Gwen Sullivan to Marjorie Waters, Undated, in Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.

[17] Jonathon King to Marjorie Waters, 1 July 1970, in Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.

[18] Warren H Winton to Marjorie Waters, Undated, in Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.

[19] Paul Byrne to Marjorie Waters, 2 August 1970, in Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.

[20] Leslie Roones Bowling to Marjorie Waters, 1 August 1970, in Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.

> one who divests himself of the mundane concomitance of…practice in the local situation—to confront, in a special "far" milieu, the basic elements and structures of his faith in their unshielded, virgin radiance.[21]

While Turner captures the importance of the "unshielded, virgin radiance" that travellers could encounter, the examples detailed above provide a whole constellation of motivations and ideas—rumours that functioned to prepare the traveller for their journeys and justify them to others. They present their experience of local practice as less than "mundane", but rather as a central motivator for wishes to travel. Travel is imagined as educative, inspiring, instructive and transforming, with the applicants displaying a revolutionary zeal that, while perhaps overstated, cannot be easily dismissed. What these examples show is how these and other largely forgotten participants in Australia's Sixties sought to present their overseas travel as a political weapon, using a variety of justifications as to how and why they imagined their overseas trips would contribute to political activism or debate in Australia. They at least attempted to turn what Turner presents as an eminently individualistic pursuit into one veiled, if sometimes only thinly, by desires for contributing to collective change. Those applying for the 1970 China trip, either members or fellow travellers of various Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA (M-L)) front groups like the Worker Student Alliance, expressed these firmly political, collectivist motivations for their travel while some, like the anonymous student whose story opened this chapter, had no idea they were about to be thrown into the midst of a revolutionary transformation. For others, however, motivations were everything, and the very act of travel became a form of dissent.

Peggy Somers, who had staged a public hunger strike on the steps of Melbourne's US Consulate over the escalating war in Vietnam in June 1966, took such protests in a different direction almost a year later. Somers forwarded a short manifesto to various media outlets in March 1967, informing them that she had left Australia *en route* to Hanoi, an act of anti-war protest in direct contravention of laws barring travel to the socialist state. Stating a desire to "put myself in the centre" of the US-led bombing campaign, Somers corresponded to Communist Party of Australia (CPA) journalist Malcolm Salmon that her rather desperate action was the only way

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[21] Victor Turner quoted in Sean Scalmer, "Turner meets Gandhi: Pilgrimage, Ritual and Difussion of Nonviolent Direct Action," in *Victor Turner and Contemporary Cultural Performance*, ed. Graham St John, 245-6 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

she could see to shake Australians out of their "apathy, indolence and indifference" towards the increasingly violent conflict.[22] Whilst her action received little coverage in the Australian press, Somers' motivations for travel provide a viewpoint into the psyche of a political traveller. Her trip to Vietnam, a nation so small that it "had seemed not to exist" before US-led intervention in its civil conflict, sought to ensure that its peoples' nationalistic desires, "the crime of wanting to govern themselves", could be viewed through a different lens to that of monolithic communism: "a lot of mumbo-jumbo about dominoes and Russians and Chinese" as she put it.[23]

This solitary act could be read, similarly to a hunger strike, as a way of overcoming an existential impasse to mount effective protest. "[W]hatever I may do or try to do with my life is over-whelmed by this terrible evil over which I have no control", she wrote, drawing comparisons between her own feelings and those who heard of, yet could do nothing about, the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki some twenty-one years before.[24] While she saw the act of travel, of publically venturing to a nation with whom Australia was engaged in an unofficial war, as a possible way around this impasse, it constituted a fairly ambiguous form of protest. Much as the 'hippies' who trailed through Asia to Europe during the same period sought not to change Western society, but to embrace its polar opposite in the form of an 'authentic' orient, Somers' trip can be read as a way of purging her own soul rather than contributing to local dissent.[25] The travellers recommendations for protestors in Australia to "work harder for peace" by talking "to your neighbour, to people with whom you work and to all with whom you come in contact" were eminently localised, and seemingly in contradiction with her own form of transnational protest.[26] Soon, Somers settled into life in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, living with fellow 'exiled' Australian Wilfred Burchett.[27] Few travellers, however, framed their motives in such an individualistic manner, instead mixing desires for leisure and adventure with more overtly political concerns.

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[22] Peggy Somers to Malcolm Salmon, 8 March 1967 in Salmon Family – Malcolm Salmon – papers 1927-1986, MLMSS 6105, Box 2, Folder 2, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

[23] Media Release from Peggy Somers, 16 March 1967, in Malcolm Salmon Papers, MLMSS 6105, Box 2, Folder 2.

[24] Somers to Salmon, 8 March 1967, in Malcolm Salmon Papers, MLMSS 6105, Box 2, Folder 2.

[25] See Julie Stephens, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest: Sixties Radicalism and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 59-64 for a critical view on those who embarked upon the 'hippie trail'.

[26] Somers, Media Release, 16 March 1967, in Malcolm Salmon Papers, MLMSS 6105, Box 2, Folder 2.

[27] Somers to Salmon, 8 March 1967, in Malcolm Salmon Papers, MLMSS 6105, Box 2, Folder 2.

Denis Freney, whose expulsion from the Communist Party in 1958 saw him join Nick Origlass' long-standing yet perpetually miniscule Trotskyist group, later happily took the moniker of "revolutionary tourist" for his eight-year period of international itinerancy.[28] A twenty-six-year-old schoolteacher, Freney was tasked with attending the Trotskyist Fourth International's conference in West Germany during the first weeks of 1961. Freney recalled a mixed series of emotions around his departure:

> I was excited at the possibility of meeting all these people whose articles I had so avidly read, but I was also keen to do my own little 'grand tour' of Europe, financed by a working holiday in London, as others of my friends were doing.[29]

The 'working holiday' in London, becoming more and more common in the 1950s and 1960s for young Australians, here almost takes precedence over Freney's global revolutionary ambitions. Freney's time overseas, however, was to be far longer than any other travellers', spending most of the 1960s in places as varied as South Africa, Algeria and Finland. Brisbane radical Brian Laver, on the other hand, presents his 1968 grand tour of Europe as entirely political and relevant to prospective action in the local context. Laver was a leader of University of Queensland based group Society for Democratic Action (SDA), which, as discussed in Chapter Three, had by 1968 moved towards Third World and European inspired Marxism.

SDA had originally owed not only its name to American group Students for a Democratic Society, but had also borrowed many of its ideas.[30] The escalation of Vietnam and militant waves of student activism around the world soon caught the organisation's attention. The Tet offensive by National Liberation Front and North Vietnamese forces proved a massive shock to the establishment, and proof in the eyes of many that US imperialism was indeed, as Mao put it, a paper tiger, while revolts in Europe seemed to show that the core was just as prone as the periphery to radical

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[28] Denis Freney, *A Map of Days: Life on the Left* (Port Melbourne, Vic.: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 189.
[29] Ibid, 111-112.
[30] For more on SDA and its US influences see Jon Piccini, "'Australia's most evil and repugnant nightspot': Foco Club and transnational politics in Brisbane's '68,'" *Dialogues E-Journal* 8, No. 1 (2010): 3-8.

change.[31] The 19 March 1968 issue of the group's campus newssheet *Student Guerrilla* announced, "Marx has been found again. Not sitting in the London library among the archives, but in the classrooms of Poland [and] Czechoslovakia", that were rebelling against Soviet authoritarianism.[32] The shooting of Rudi Dutschke only a week after Martin Luther King's assassination saw the distribution of a campus leaflet announcing: "Yesterday King, Today Dutschke, Tomorrow Us", showing the lengths of this imagined communion.[33] A slogan chanted at student rallies—"Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh / We will fight, we will win / Paris, London and Brisbane"—amply displays the radicals' desire to see their isolated metropolis as irrevocably tied to these much better known hotspots of an increasingly global revolution.[34]

This growing fascination drove Laver abroad, to bring back lessons that could, it was hoped, connect SDA with Europe's growing radical *zeitgeist* in a way that following developments in print media and imported radical publications would not allow. This is not to say that prospective radical sojourners always imagined travel to be transformative or constructive of new connections and interpretations. Often it was merely a means of consolidating or reaffirming old connections or recently acquired rumours. Michael Hyde's 1968 trip to China as part of a student delegation, was framed around pre-conceived ideas of what he was to experience. "China", he thought, "[h]ome of the Cultural Revolution [and a] socialist society that had been forged in the struggle against imperialism, led by one of the people stuck on my bedroom wall". Hyde, then an up-and-coming leader in the Monash Labor Club, relied on an image of China summed up by Mao's glowing, screen-printed face, and expressed rather quaintly by the newly available *Little Red Book*, both widely-distributed artefacts of the 1968 revolt.[35] Australians who travelled to the World Festival of Youth and Students (WFYS), elaborate Soviet-run gatherings of youth from all over the world tasked with winning over new generations of predominantly Third World leaders to the socialist camp, encountered another far-off utopia. CPA youth leader Charles Bresland's trip to the 1957 festival, accompanied by some 100

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[31] For activist responses to Tet see Ken Mansell, *The Yeast is Red* (Masters Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 1994), 13. For an overview of Australian responses see John Murphy, *Harvest of Fear: A history of Australia's Vietnam War* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 198-206.

[32] *Student Guerrilla,* 19 March 1968, 1.

[33] *Student Guerrilla,* 16 April 1968, 1.

[34] Untitled leaflet, Dan O'Neill Collection, UQFL 132, Box 12, Folder 1, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.

[35] Michael Hyde, *All Along the Watchtower: Memoir of a Sixties Revolutionary* (Carlton, Vic.: Vulgar Press, 2010), 76.

other Australians "from all walks of life", was a clear attempt to paper over divisions within the party and beyond around the previous years invasion of Hungary and Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. The Party's response to these revelations had not been to increase openness and self-investigation, but rather to crack down on those who took talk of reform too literally, and Bresland's trip was one way to refocus the narrative on socialist progress rather than its victims.[36]

Leon Glezer, a 24-year-old Arts-Law student at the University of Melbourne fluent in four European languages, had very different motivations for attending the 1962 Festival in Helsinki, Finland. A member of early anti-racist group Student Action, Glezer opposed the White Australia Policy, had picketed hotels over informal regulations excluding "coloured" people and argued strongly against international wrongs like Apartheid, but still harboured fears of monolithic communism emblematic of the Cold War period. Despite his stated intention of discovering whether there had "been sufficient softening of international communism's attitude for democratic socialists to co-operate with them", the Melbourne University Labor Club almost refused to sponsor him as a delegate. Doing so, in the eyes of many, risked validating what they termed a "communist-run show" in the eyes of increasingly politicised students.[37] Many in the organisation seemed concerned that the very act of attending might legitimate a brutal regime, illustrating how even the possibility of travel sometimes encountered stern opposition. His, and the early New Left's, ideas around the parasitic and dangerous nature of International Communism were only to be reinforced by Glezer's widely-read reports in the student press, just as Bresland's travel writing affirmed the faith of those who might have questioned the USSR over its distortions of socialist principles.[38]

Whether travelling to 'see it for themselves', as a form of protest, to find new ideas or to make new connections, or a combination of these, the travellers discussed above display how varied, often conflictive or incomplete ideas fired their transnational passions, presuppositions which were to be challenged in what Turner calls the 'liminal' moment.

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[36] Charles Bresland, *Moscow turned it on!: Story of Australians at the 6th World Youth Festival* (Sydney: Coronation Press, 1957), 1.

[37] "Delegate to Youth Festival returns," *Chaos [Lot's Wife]*, 3 October 1962, 1; "Student for Helsinki," *Farrago*, 3 August 1962, 2.

[38] For more on the experiences of these travellers see Jon Piccini, "'There is no solidarity, peace of friendship with dictatorship:' Australians at the World Festival of Youth and Students, 1957-1968," *History Australia* 9, No. 3 (December 2012): 178-198.

European day-trippers: Liminality, Orientalism and the tourist/traveller dilemma

Brian Laver remembers well the August night that Soviet tanks rolled into Prague. Arriving a month earlier, the Brisbane radical had been astonished by "the vitality of popular expression and debate in the events unfolding" in the capital of the Warsaw Pact's most rebellious member state. "Prague was alive with meetings", he remembered:

> In one square meetings went on for 16 hours a day; they had begun before we arrived in Czechoslovakia and were still [going] one month after we returned from Bulgaria. In fact, I was in this park the night the invasion began talking to a group of East German students committed to revolutionary struggle against the Ulbricht bureaucracy.[39]

This experience of unrestricted communication across barriers of culture and language by individuals brought together in a fleeting moment of equality was symptomatic of travellers to the Czech capital during the 'Prague Spring' of democratic reforms. In one of the seemingly minor events that precipitated the wave of 1968 radicalism, Alexander Dubcek had been made head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on 5 January 1968. He soon inaugurated a series of much-needed political and cultural reforms, encouraging workplace democracy and freeing up the press, which excited both an increasing restive constituency and foreign left wing observers. As Paul Hoffman wrote in the *New York Times*, "[i]f you are under 30, Prague seems the place to be in this summer", with the writer recounting how youths from Spain, France, the USA and Britain were making the trip to Prague, hoping to "get a few ideas" from its democratic approach to socialism while discussing with local youth about politics, film, food, "about everything", as one traveller put it.[40]

An Australian traveller wrote in *Meanjin* how he watched "Prague fill up with young fellows, and their girls, all the months we have been here", Americans and Europeans who "carry rucksacks and transistors and live on the smell of an oil rag",

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[39] Brian Laver, *Czechoslovakia…a social crisis: Bureaucracy or People's Control* (Brisbane: Revolutionary Socialist Alliance, 1969), 2.

[40] Paul Hoffmann, "For those under 30, Prague seems the right place to be this summer," *New York Times*, 12 August 1968, 13.

illustrating both their itinerancy and connectivity.[41] Spaces like that which Prague became during 1968 allow for the experience of moments that Turner calls liminal, "betwixt and between routine social interaction". "The pilgrim crosses a threshold and leaves behind the structures of conventional life" for "the thrill of the moment…where ordinary rules do not apply".[42] This idea of a space apart from the ordinary life world is complemented with the notion of *communitas*, "a feeling of kinship and equality with others, laced with lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity and comradeship" where "[p]ilgrims reject the complex hierarchies of their previous social lives and greet each other as simple equals".[43]

Yet, to leave analysis here would not do justice to the variety of motivations, needs and concerns expressed by activists earlier in this chapter, a mix of the self-involved individualism and a submission to the collective, the need to venerate and the willingness to critique. Such rationales led to equally diverse experiences, with not everyone finding the euphoria of Laver's reminiscence. Some highlight the difficulties of a truly liminal moment, revealing how the ideal of spontaneous community could be clouded by Orientalist notions or presuppositions, or how such experiences could be fabricated for those whose eyes were only partially open. Finally, it raises the issue of whether these travellers were really tourists, a question of authenticity with which many political travellers struggled.

For Susan Burgoyne, sociologist and member of the CPA, attending the 1968 WFYS in Sofia, Bulgaria was indeed a liminal moment, though perhaps not the one she had expected. Another key event in the year's global narrative, Sofia's Festival— unlike its stage-managed predecessors—was marked by a widely publicised rebellion by delegates from around the world against the bureaucracy and conformism of festival organisers.[44] Burgoyne wrote a controversial report on her experiences as Australia's delegate on the festival's preparatory committee for the CPA's broad-left discussion journal, *Australian Left Review* (*ALR*). Spending four months in Bulgaria meant she saw the organisers' machinations and intrigues up close, tearing away the thin veil of idealism and revealing the Soviet-trained bureaucrats who facilitated the

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[41] David Martin, "Letter from Prague: on the fourth night of the invasion," *Meanjin* 27, No. 4 (December 1968): 515.

[42] Scalmer, "Turner meets Gandhi," 246

[43] Ibid, 246.

[44] On the 1968 festival see Nicholas Ritter, "Look Left, Drive Right: Internationalisms at the 1968 World Youth Festival," in *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, eds. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, 193-212 (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013).

event as "protecting the festival, not from the right but from those on the left who do not see the Soviet Union in the way that its leaders seek to be seen—as the leaders, teachers and arbitrators".[45] Burgoyne lambasted the Festival's programmed sessions equally harshly, describing them as farcical recitations of a dogma that was "black and white, good or bad and the solutions simplistic", while excluding any real discussion of the student-worker movements in Europe, Prague's inspiring reforms or the multiplying Chinese and Cuban influenced Third World guerrilla struggles.[46]

This disappointment was mediated by the experiences of a spontaneous 'counter' festival, led by visiting West German and Czech students but attended by youths of many nations whose radical *wanderlust* had driven them to Europe, first to Paris and then Prague. Organised as a way to "'break open' the 'front' between party and youth leaders from the Soviet bloc", visiting radical youth wanted to use the Festival to "challeng[e] the unquestioning conformity to authority demonstrated by youth from state-socialist countries".[47] And it was this counter-program of "discussion of strategy and tactics…at a national as well as an international level" that impressed the Australian. "Informal debates and teach-ins were organised when many festival participants found themselves dissatisfied with the standard of scheduled discussions", Burgoyne describes, gatherings that were "challenging and often produced a genuine unity amongst participants…forged out of a desire to understand and learn".[48] These meetings at the fringe of the Festival broke through the programmed and managed discourse of "peace, solidarity and friendship" that organisers had so carefully crafted, allowing for productive personal connections emblematic of *communitas*. As Burgoyne related: "I was in a group of Czechoslovaks in Bulgaria on August 21 and…was overwhelmed by their reaction to the occupation of their country…It was gratifying for an Australian in Europe to be able to talk to people from Czechoslovakia and know that they were aware that the communists in Australia supported them". The local and the global became connected, and a more spontaneous unity would be difficult to find.[49]

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[45] Susan Burgoyne, "The World Youth Festival," *Australian Left Review* (February-March 1969): 47.
[46] Ibid, 46.
[47] A discussion of these events is in Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 194-8.
[48] Burgoyne, "The World Youth Festival," 46.
[49] Ibid, 47.

Figure 6: Participants in a 1971 worker and student tour group of China, reproduced from Lachlan Strahan, *Australia's China: Changing Perceptions from the 1930s to the 1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 279.

Burgoyne and her fellow delegates at the WFYS in Bulgaria saw through the lies and distortions propagated by the Festival organiser. Instead, they created connections which, as Judy Wu puts it, "facilitated international exchanges of ideas that…fundamentally shaped [their] political understanding, identities, and agendas", and in doing so experienced a moment of spontaneous community and equality indicative of Turner's theorisations.[50] Those who travelled to China during the period of the GPCR professed similar experiences of equality and the collapsing of national and cultural differences, of reaching across ideological divides and furthering understanding. However, their experience of 1968's communality and revolutionary dynamism was of a more confected nature. The important role such travellers played in Chinese foreign policy raises questions around the degree to which Australians were sold a myth, while reflections on the dilemma of the supposedly political traveller as tourist are perhaps revealing of the limits of liminality as a theory.

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[50] Wu, "Journeys for Peace and Liberation," 577.

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Unlike those travellers explored in Chapter One—officials of the Communist Party undertaking long periods of study—these later sojourners were largely members of delegations that only stayed for a few weeks, taking in the sights in line with a pre-arranged itinerary. One particular delegation, organised by the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) in January 1968, is of particular interest. Its timing coincided both with the height of popular enthusiasm for the GPCR, which had initially been sparked by Mao's 1966 calls for youthful red guards to "bombard the headquarters", challenge the authority of party bureaucrats and destroy bourgeois forms of culture and life. These displays of revolutionary enthusiasm also saw, as this thesis has previously established, the worldwide moment during which rebellious youth 'discovered' Maoism.[51] Michael Hyde's excited anticipation for discovering the world that he understood through Chinese publications and character posters was indicative of many radicals during the period, who took on at least the aesthetic, if not the practice, of Chinese radicalism.

Beris Turnley, another member of this tour group who published a book on her experiences in 1971, admits to having had very little understanding of China upon arrival, yet she provides a generally sympathetic portrayal. She was impressed greatly by the China on display—best summed up by the large groups of well educated, English speaking and avidly Maoist Red Guards who guided and assisted the group—noting how their political involvement and feeling contrasted with the generally apathetic nature of Australian youth.[52] Turnley's trip had, as she put it, "cleared away much of my own suspicions, fears and reservations" about the PRC.[53] Another traveller, writing several years after the trip for *National U*, noted how, rather than the images of "confusion, anarchy and desperation" that appeared in the Western press, the nation was actually remarkably calm and prosperous. Work and study were continuing, food was "incredibly cheap and so plentiful that ration cards had long since been abandoned" while there seemed "to be an inordinate number of sweet shops", overflowing with goods and customers.[54] It was also made clear to the travellers that despite Australia's position as, in typically colourful Maoist lexicon, a "running dog" of US imperialism, this was a barb aimed at "the governments, the

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[51] On 'down to the countryside' see Rebecca E. Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 134.
[52] Beris Turnley, *Journey into China* (Melbourne: Lansdowne, 1971), 16-17.
[53] Ibid, 101.
[54] "Following Mao's little red book," *National U*, 6 September 1971, 9.

policy makers, the people in authority" and not the people, whom the Chinese saw as on their side.[55] Other travellers to Asian revolutionary hotspots encountered a similar feeling of community across borders of race and culture. As Peggy Somers recalled of her time meeting members of the NLF diplomatic mission in Cambodia, "I have a deep affection for all the Vietnamese representatives I have met here. They tell me they regard me as their sister!"[56]

Despite the earnestness of these travellers, their experiences of spontaneous solidarity were problematic. In juxtaposition to the student radicals meeting in liminal destinations all over Europe, those who travelled to revolutionary states in Asia encountered not only a radical cultural difference, but also party machines that, similarly to those in the Soviet Union, sought to meld travellers to their own agenda. Gaps in understanding, often articulated through an orientalist lens, were common. Turnley noted that the Australians, who "had so little in the way of epoch-making traumas and upheavals", had a hard time understanding the revolutionary transformation, something which "even those who had studied a great deal of Chinese history and politics" found it difficult to comprehend. She put this down to "the very nature of oriental society—the values, attitudes, beliefs, customs and habits" which were "so very different from our own". Indeed, her report teems with stories of self-sacrificing Chinese youth who were so thoroughly different from those of the west. there were no beauty products, no blue jeans, and seemingly no romantic interest, as far as Turnley could see, just an ethic of "serving the people".[57] For their part, the Chinese guides seemed equally confused about Australia, which many Red Guards "believed to be a nation of downtrodden peasants" rather than one of the world's wealthiest, most urbanised states.[58] This mutual incomprehension, which "seemed insurmountable", was at least partially overcome through "the hours of discussions" the travellers had with their translators, other Red Guards, as well as supposedly everyday peasants and workers, which "succeeded in sending us back home with a greater understanding of China today".[59]

Paul Hollander describes this type of rapport building as part of "the techniques of hospitality" employed by socialist states like the PRC, whether that

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[55] Turnley, *Journey into China*, 19-20

[56] Somers to Salmon, 8 March 1967, in Malcolm Salmon Papers, MLMSS 6105, Box 2, Folder 2.

[57] Turnley, *Journey into China*, 18.

[58] "Following Mao's little red book," 9.

[59] Turnley, *Journey into China*, 16-17.

meant royal treatment or shepherding visitors along pre-arranged, idyllic tour routes. This hospitality was presupposed on the notion that, as "ideas are weapons, the favourable impressions and the hoped-for publicized accounts" of pilgrims were "political assets to be nurtured carefully".[60] And indeed, the popularity of Maoism in Australian student circles exponentially increased from 1968 onwards, due at least in part to the stories, theories and ideas Hyde and other travellers brought back with them. The euphoric mass applications for the 1970 tour evidences just how important seeing Maoism in action had become. It is, however, important to note that while many of the travellers' experiences were of this pre-packaged nature, spending time on a showcase collective farm or touring schools and factories built since the revolution, they did apprehend and take umbrage at more explicit forms of political stage management.

Turnley writes how the travellers' first day in China, after an arduous flight and border crossing, was entirely composed of revolutionary song performances, photos holding their newly-received *Little Red Books* and long lectures on the progress of the GPCR—an experience "so overwhelming that it tended to have the opposite effect to what the Chinese would have desired".[61] The group were taken to a mass denunciation, where a sports teacher was publicly humiliated for failing to meet Maoist standards of revolutionary character, an event greeted with a mixture of pseudo-revolutionary masochism, morbid interest and horror.[62] Travellers seemed to be markedly more impressed by their 'everyday' encounters with China and the GPCR, which they and other western intellectuals perceived as "a liberating attack on bureaucratic idiocy and bourgeois consumerism in the name of equality, frugal lifestyles and lack of selfishness".[63] Hyde remembers how:

> Whether we were at a post office or buying ice cream from a street cart, we found ourselves embroiled in dialogue and debate about US imperialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America, or the revolutionary opera *The White-Haired Girl*, or the history of the cultural revolution, or the Vietnam War.[64]

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[60] Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba 1928-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 348.
[61] Turnley, *Journey into China*, 26.
[62] Hyde, *All along the watchtower*, 84-6 and "Following Mao's little red book," 9.
[63] Charles W. Hayford, "Mao's Journeys to the West: Meanings made of Mao," in *A Critical Introduction to Mao*, ed. Timothy Cheek, 324 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[64] Hyde, *All along the watchtower*, 88.

These sorts of encounters with the 'other' raised an additional question for some travellers: were their experiences of China really nothing but cultural tourism?

As Agneiszka Sobocinska has noted, there were few disparagements more derogatory in the globally mobile Sixties youth culture than 'tourist', often equated with the aging, boorish and working class figure of the 'Alf'. 'Alf' was a cultural archetype who, having slaved away in suburban obscurity for decades would, at "the age of sixty-five, equipped with a dashing sports coat, matching luggage, good wishes from the bowling club, and two P&O cruise tickets", embark on an overseas trip, where he "imagines he is able to begin living, not knowing that he died many years before".[65] This image of the aging, white 'tourist' was counter-posed to that of the 'traveller', a discursive operation aimed at "encoding authenticity" onto the travels of those who went 'off the beaten track' or abandoned the privileged lifestyle of the typical western traveller in favour of a supposed immersion in local cultures. One Australian who travelled the 'hippie trail' put it in black and white terms: "your *parents* were tourists. *Straight* people were tourists. *You* were a traveller".[66]

This could be an even more problematic operation for those who justified their travel as political. Some political travellers, like the anonymous student who accidentally encountered May '68, were self-consciously tourists unexpectedly swept up in radical activism through an interest in seeing, rather than participating. As previously noted, Denis Freney at least retrospectively took on the title of "tourist" freely—noting how his trip across Europe, Africa and Asia meeting and propagandising local Trotskyist groups "had been fruitless in terms of winning support for…our part of the Fourth International", but "I was having a great time".[67] The liminality of overseas travel, however, did provide Freney with the opportunity to explore his closeted homosexuality. Previously hidden due to fear that "family, friends and comrades would discover my true desires", Freney explained how he felt "[m]y life as a world revolutionary would be impossible to sustain" if such a revelation where to become public knowledge. If travel provides possibilities for the reinvention and translation of global ideas in local contexts, then this change can also occur on a personal-political level, which also points towards a further problematising of the tourist. For personal enjoyment could, and indeed was, a political act for

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[65] Allan Ashbolt, "Godzone 3: Myth and Reality," *Meanjin Quarterly* 25, No. 4 (December 1966): 373.

[66] Sobocinska, "People's Diplomacy," 215.

[67] Freney, *A Map of Days*, 189.

Freney, who relished in his "newly discovered identity" nearly a decade prior to the heralding of Gay Liberation.[68]

Yet, even decades after their trips, some activists still struggle with the tourist identifier. Hyde's memoir of his journey to China—an experience perhaps surprisingly close to that of the package deal tourist boom of the 1970s—constantly denies this categorisation. Recalling a particular moment when he and several friends were spontaneously swept up in a revolutionary procession through Shanghai, to their guides' bewilderment, Hyde noted that the Australians found themselves treated as equals by the marchers. "We were in our twenties", he remembered, and "were prepared to do anything for the cause. A Red Guard-led demonstration in the heat of proletarian Shanghai wasn't something you hesitated about joining". Draped in Mao badges, the Australians "trailed through the arteries of downtown Shanghai, joining our voices to the shouting and demands of the march". Despite these quite touristic escapades, Hyde pleaded that their actions were far from "a cynical exercise by a few European day-trippers. From what we could understand, we were on their side".[69]

This was fairly ambiguous, however. How could the Australians be 'on their side' when they were under no threat, but were rather the guests of a nation who used hospitality as a political tool? And while the Chinese youths did share to a degree the freedoms of travel that Australians enjoyed, with trains and buses made free to allow easy travel and "linking up" of youth movements across the country, much less seemed at stake for these Western visitors.[70] Jobs points towards this contradiction in his work on European 1968 travellers, for while they sought to participate and experience revolutions beyond their own nation states, they rarely faced the mass incarceration and political recriminations that followed, particularly in Soviet bloc nations.[71] Indeed, one of the hardest questions Hyde remembers encountering was whether to give money to beggars in Hong Kong, from where they crossed the so-called "bridge of no return" into China. "Would it help", they wondered, "or would

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[68] Ibid, 178. This concept of escaping an oppressive home environment to discover some form of (homo)sexual freedom is further explored in work such as Rebecca Jennings, "It was a hot climate and it was a hot time:" Lesbian Migration and Transnational Networks in the Mid-twentieth Century," *Australian Feminist Studies* 25, No. 63 (2010): 31-45.
[69] Hyde, *All along the watchtower*, 91.
[70] Karl, *Mao Zedong and China*, 131.
[71] Jobs gives the example of a British youth in Paris who used his nationality to avoid arrest. Jobs, "Youth Movements," 377.

we just be perpetuating the system?" This was, and continues to be, a question often posed by privileged, albeit politically inclined, tourists in the underdeveloped world.[72]

Turner's theorisations, of a pilgrim leaving behind their 'mundane' existence for the experience of spontaneous affinities formed across borders of race, culture and politics, seems to only partially encapsulate the experiences of these Australians abroad. Whether travelling to Czechoslovakia or China, all felt they had experienced the breaking down of hierarchies, of sharing and learning with other radicals on an equal footing that was indicative of the 1968 moment. Those who undertook guided tours of China during the GPRC, however, struggled with issues of the confected nature of their experiences, as well as facing the realities of sometimes-slippery dichotomies between travellers and tourists, showing the liminal experience as one laden with potential disconnections.

The pilgrim's return: Translating and debating the global

While the experience of overseas travel is obviously one of an enlightening and challenging nature—opening "a new world: playful, experimental, fragmentary and subversive"—it is also one marked by the fact that it must end. The return of the pilgrim to their former mundane existence is almost a foregone conclusion. What happens after that, however, is much less clear. That the pilgrim is seen to have "made a spiritual step forward" and thus to occupy a special status is accepted, but what of radicals who travelled with firmly educative and activist motivations?[73] Their previous experiences had often been less than mundane, while attempts to import lessons from overseas gave them not just a special status, but also an important role in the translation of these ideas into a new context. And nor were the pilgrims' gospels always accepted, with some questioning the use of ideas gleaned from overseas, while others sought to discredit their heightened status altogether.

Some did not return at all. Peter Tatchell, for instance, who had been involved in anti-war and indigenous rights activism in Australia prior to a 1971 trip to the UK to avoid conscription, became heavily involved in the nascent Gay Liberation Front and went on to play one of the UK movement's most public roles, while the career of

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[72] Hyde, *All along the watchtower*, 80.
[73] Scalmer, "Turner meets Gandhi," 246.

Germaine Greer is well known.[74] For those who did return, however, Turner's work appears at least partially illuminating. As Scalmer notes in his study of political pilgrims who met and studied with Gandhi, "direct contact with the Mahatma brought genuine prestige [and] suggested authority" for those who undertook the trip, making them more knowledgeable and understanding of the global situation and its implications for the local.[75] The newsletter of radical Brisbane cultural venture Foco Club, explored in Chapter Three, advertised a report by Brian Laver on his trip through Europe:

> This Sunday, Brian Laver returns to Foco to address his first public meeting since his return from Europe. He met most of the world leaders of the struggle, by workers and students, to change the whole fabric of Western Society and has brought back many ideas and evaluations to help us here.
>
> His analysis of the current European situation contains many surprising aspects and, as one would expect, differs completely from the attitudes presented in any section of the Australian Press.[76]

This homage captures well the powers a returned pilgrim was perceived as possessing, with Turner arguing that such rites of passage were an important step in the movement from one social position to another. Having made personal contacts with "most of the world leaders of the struggle" made Laver someone who not only had, in Scalmer's terms, "drunk from the…well" of rebellious knowledge and practice, but also who had brought back lessons from these experiences to assist with the development of local movements.[77] In this fashion, as Gildea, Mark and Pas have put it, ideas and practices were "'brought home' or 'domesticated', used as a source of knowledge or practice for revolutionary techniques, or employed as an ideological template through which domestic political failings could be understood and contested".[78] This sort of process proved even more pronounced in Australia, where geographic isolation and the 'Cultural Cringe' ensured that ideas from overseas were

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[74] On Tatchell see Peter Tatchell, "The ideals and activism of the early 1970s gay liberation era," available at http://www.petertatchell.net/lgbt_rights/history/ memories_of_glf.htm, accessed 17 August 2012. Interestingly, Tatchell staged a public protest at the 1973 East Berlin WFYS, see Josie McLellan, "Glad to be Gay Behind the Wall: Gay and Lesbian Activism in 1970s East Germany," *History Workshop Journal* 74, No. 1 (2012): 105-130.

[75] Scalmer, "Turner meets Gandhi," 248.

[76] "Brian Laver," *Foco Newsletter*, 20 November 1968, 2.

[77] Scalmer, "Turner meets Gandhi," 248.

[78] Gildea, Mark and Pas, "European Radicals and the 'Third World,'" 459.

often seen as infinitely superior to local inventions. One radical satirised this tendency, pointing out how the "Australian Left must by default seek its heroes and philosophies abroad: 'Vive Le Dixon or Aarons' to say nothing of Ted Hill or Jim Cairns sounds as banal as it is [sic]".[79]

Even so, some of these translations proved easier than others. Laver had always been a primary ideological influence on Brisbane radicals. He and American academic Ralph Summy had played a key role in the local proliferation of American radical thought in the mid 1960s, so when his European experiences of the 1968 revolt saw a personal ideological shift, this was soon reflected in local practice. His experiences of the Eastern bloc—that "[t]he apathy, indifference and fatigue with official rhetoric was as striking in Czechoslovakia as it is in Western 'democratic countries'"—saw a rethinking of his previously close relationship with the Communist Party. Laver's job at Trades Hall was at the CPA's behest, and he claims to have been offered a high position in the organisation during its period of courting the New Left.[80] Yet, as he later put it, "on the ship coming home…I realised that a lot of my Communist friends were not going to change—they were still trying to justify Soviet Imperialism…then I started to create an anarchist/socialist movement".[81]

While the CPA had made the "first step", being one of the first to criticise the USSR's invasion of Czechoslovakia, Laver believed that until it "makes some real analysis within its forces for the rise of the bureaucracy it will not be able to join in any significant way with the emerging revolutionary forces".[82] More productively, perhaps, Laver saw the politics of mass involvement he had seen in Prague as the way forward, with the student and workers revolts in Europe providing "a model of how a libertarian socialist revolution would break out as a rank and file workers and students [movement] from the bottom", a belief entirely in keeping with the *zeitgeist* of the rebellious year.[83] These ideological changes and realisations were reflected in the Brisbane movement's trajectory during 1969.

In April 1969, "fresh from the European Student Revolts of 1968, and articulating a resurgent Marxism", as one student journalist wrote, Laver led other

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[79] Maragaret Mortimer, "New Words for Old," *Arena* 18 (1969): 64. The writer refers to Richard (Dick) Dixon and Laurie Aarons, both leaders in the CPA.
[80] Laver, *Czechoslovakia*, 3.
[81] Brian Laver interviewed by Constance Healy, 21 March 2002, in Constance Healy Collection, UQFL 191, Box 17, Folder 6, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.
[82] Laver, *Czechoslovakia*, 12.
[83] Laver interviewed by Healy, Constance Healy Collection, UQFL191, Box 17, Folder 6.

radicals in "transforming a dwindling, dispirited and disunited SDA into the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance" or RSA. A local variation on post-1968 Marxist *groupuscules* multiplying in Europe and America which sought to take their activities from protest to resistance, the reporter believed that Laver "must take most of the credit for" RSA's formation and, albeit limited, success.[84] If Laver's translation appeared rather 'by the book', needing little by way of local contextualisation, many others found that ideas from overseas were not directly applicable in local contexts. Denis Freney was particularly impressed by his experiences of worker's self-management in Algeria, whose revolutionary post-colonial government had encouraged former French owned property to be run by workers and peasants collectively. As Freney said of the experiment's relevance to global revolutionary forces: "If the Fourth International was to get anywhere, it had to involve itself in a real revolution, and the Algerian revolution was one such case in hand".[85]

His experiences, however, were not so easily transferred into Australia. Despite the fact that Algeria's experiments "cannot be said to be…definitive [in] testing Self-Management as a global economic and political system", the recently-returned traveller believed that "the Algerian experience with all its failings did point to such a possibility".[86] Freney's political work took on firm hues of self-management, presented as workers' control, which he argued strongly for it within the Communist Party he rejoined in 1970. These arguments met with success, with the party adopting many of these ideas into its reworked, de-Stalinised program. The party organised a conference in 1973 that explored the growing proliferation of work-ins and other such actions across Australia, particularly in the New South Wales Builders Labourers Federation, in an attempt to translate global ideas and practices of workers running their own workplaces into disparate and evolving local contexts.[87]

Occasionally, ideas from overseas were simply rejected, at least by some local activists. Much as travellers to China in the 1950s had their impressions of Maoist theory dismissed as "psychology, not politics" by the party hierarchy, a debate broke out in the pages of *ALR* after Burgoyne published her confrontational piece attacking

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[84] F.T.N Varghese, "The 1969 Un-Year," *Semper Floreat*, 24 February 1970, 3.
[85] Freney, *A Map of Days*, 159.
[86] Denis Freney, "Workers self-management in Yugoslavia and Algeria," (unpublished paper, 1969), 6, in Dan O'Neill Collection, Box 1, Folder 22.
[87] Freney, *A Map of Days*, 325-6.

the running of WFYS in Sofia.[88] Ostensibly about inadequacies in Real Existing Socialism, the discussion was actually part of broader ructions within the Party over its direction: remaining loyal to Moscow or taking an independent road open to local conditions. As previously noted, the Party had taken the radical step of publicly distancing itself from the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Far from an attempt to gain credibility with the New Left and other movements, leading CPA unionist Jack Mundey explained that the decision arose from the Australians' political sympathy with the Czechs. Policies adopted at the Party's 1967 Congress were similar "in more than a few ways" to those of their Czech counterparts, calling for democratisation and the extension of 'free speech', previously viewed as bourgeois.[89] This was but the latest and most provocative of the CPA's questionings of the USSR under the post-1965 leadership of Laurie Aarons, which included distancing itself from Soviet anti-Semitism and curtailments of Khrushchev-era freedoms, moves which allowed a better relationship with the new social movements of 1968.[90] "One cannot ignore the impressive radical student movements of Europe, especially in West Germany, and of the USA", Burgoyne exclaimed, just as "it would be foolish not to consider the experiences of the liberation movements in Africa and Latin America".[91]

Her criticism struck a chord of agreement, with other attendees describing how the Festival exposed deep flaws in the Eastern Bloc and the inability of Soviet bureaucrats to relate to a new generation of global radicals. One commenting memorably on the festival's slogan that "there is no solidarity, peace or friendship with dictatorship".[92] Drawing on the realisations of Burgoyne and many others of the USSR fallibility, the CPA organised the Left Action Conference over Easter, 1969, which brought together 1000 activists of various stripes and tendencies to discuss the way forward for the socialist movement. Not all were pleased by this turn of events, however. Burgoyne's fellow International Preparatory Committee delegate Tom Supple rejected her radical criticisms, instead lauding the festival as a "an historic

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[88] Mark Aarons, *The Family File* (Melbourne: Black Books, 2010), 175.
[89] Jack Mundey quoted in Lani Russell, "Today the Students, Tomorrow the Workers! Radical Student Politics and the Australian Labour Movement, 1960-1972" (PhD Thesis, The University of Technology Sydney, 1999): 271.
[90] For more on this questioning attitude see Phillip Mendes, "A convergence of political interests: Isi Leibler, the Communist Party of Australia and Soviet anti-semetism," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 55, No. 2 (2009): 157-169.
[91] Burgoyne, "The World Youth Festival," 49.
[92] N. Mortier, "World Youth Festival – Another View," *Australian Left Review*, August-September 1969: 34.

occasion which brought together some fifteen-thousand young people from over 120 countries" in just the bureaucratic language many younger members rejected. He also attacked the French May '68 movement as showing how revolution was impossible "without the support of the masses and correct political preparations by a communist or Marxist party", a clear jab at those who sought to substitute new connections for old.[93] This was only the latest salvo in a much broader debate within the organisation. Its drift away from Soviet hegemony led to an eventual split in 1971, which saw the formation of a pro-Soviet splinter group, the Socialist Party of Australia.[94] Burgoyne and her fellow reformers remoulded the CPA into an organisation that saw how "socialism as it exists in the Soviet Union (or anywhere else) is not sacred", but instead sought to understand their place in "a wide and varied world", one made visible through the practice of overseas travel.[95]

The return of the pilgrim to their "mundane" existence is, then, more problematic than one might have expected. Their translations were often contested, as were their claims to a greater purchase on public debate by having 'been there', as the lexicon had it. That Laver's speech on his experiences in Europe was to contain some "surprising elements" as his analysis "differ[ed] completely from the attitudes presented in any section of the Australian Press", was indicative of a particular mode of appealing to an activist community that was dismissive of the mainstream press and the government 'lies' it pedalled.[96] "Because antiwar protesters tended to be suspicious of government-issued reports and mainstream media representations of the war, they sought alternative sources of information", Wu explains of Americans radicals, and "[t]ravelling outside the United States and learning from those who had direct experience with the war became valuable avenues for those seeking greater knowledge about the Vietnam War".[97] Australian activists were already particularly disheartened with the mainstream press. They set up underground papers, commandeered student publications or used other forms of information distribution to avoid the media's perceived misreporting of both local protests and global events, and often relied on Australians overseas to supply 'unbiased' action-oriented reportage.

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[93] Tom Supple, "Festival defended," *Australian Left Review*, April-May 1969: 22-3.
[94] For overviews of this conflict and split see Tom O'Lincoln, *Into the Mainstream: The Decline of Australian Communism* (Carlton North, Vic: Red Rag Publications, 2009), 135-7 and Aarons, *The Family File*, 216-43.
[95] Burgoyne, "The World Youth Festival," 49.
[96] "Brian Laver," 2.
[97] Wu, "Journeys for Peace and Liberation," 577.

Trotskyist and leader of the Sydney University NLF aid campaign Hall Greenland, in the UK for much of 1968, provided lengthy writing on the student protest movement in West Germany while the anonymous writer who opened this chapter provided a participant-narrative of the French events, both of which were given pride of place in the student press.[98] Indeed, writing such reportage was a key aim for many activists, with one applicant for the 1970 trip to China believing that travelling to the revolutionary state would allow him to "record my experiences and observations for publication on return to Australia…through the Australia-China Society and student and youth newspapers".[99]

While the radical press of the time abounds with such reports, they were not always taken as gospel. For instance, one writer in Monash University's *Lot's Wife* described the sole right-wing member of the 1968 China tour as presenting his interpretation in "possibly a more objective fashion than the palliating left tourists have".[100] This challenging of the authenticity of a pilgrim's narrative on the basis of their ideological presuppositions or lack of legitimate experience—summed up in the derogatory 'tourist' moniker—was to find a vocal outlet in the lead up to the May 1970 Moratorium campaign. Arnold Zable, student at the University of Melbourne and now a well-known Australian writer, travelled to South Vietnam as a 21-year-old over the 1969-70 University break. Reflecting on his experiences many years later, Zable remembered how he escaped the "deserted streets of Melbourne" for Southeast Asia, where "[m]y friends believed I was going to backpack the region as I had the previous year, but I harboured a more radical possibility".[101] Due to the Saigon government's fairly lax system of journalist accreditation, Zable obtained a visa with ease and spent a week experiencing the nation in a very different way to his similarly-aged countrymen conscripted in the so-called 'birthday lottery'. He wrote a number of letters to friends about his experiences, one of which was prominently published in a number of student newspapers in March 1970, during the lead up to May's demonstration. Zable explained how the country had "a tremendous impact from the moment I entered". Adopting the persona of an informed pilgrim, Zable argued that

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[98] Hall Greenland, "The Easter German Uprising," printed in SDA pamphlet "An analysis of the German uprising of Easter 1968", in Dan O'Neill Collection, UQFL132, Box 1, Folder 2; "Honi reports on 'le revolte,'" 1-2.
[99] Winton to Waters, Undated, Australia China Society Records, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 3.
[100] Robin Rattray-Wood, "John Bailey's Second China Talk," *Lot's Wife*, 8 April 1968, 5.
[101] Arnold Zable, "The Summer of…1970," *The Age*, 9 January 2006.

despite his being involved in antiwar activity for some years, "actually being in Vietnam brings home the whole bloody mess vividly".[102]

Writing in a "heat of the moment" style indicative of new journalism, Zable recounts his hearing B-52 strikes and the double-speak of American commanders while spending time with aid workers, journalists and Vietnamese civilians—"people who count", as he put it, and whose opinions Zable saw as hidden from Australians by a pro-war press.[103] 'Being there' also allowed Zable a privileged position from which to comment on American politics. He claimed to have glimpsed a "second America", that approaching critical mass of antiwar citizens which showed itself in the hundreds of thousands who marched in the American Moratorium, and was "spreading even to Saigon"—with an army disintegrating under the weight of drug use and increasingly polarised racial politics.[104] Having been to Vietnam, he also claimed to understand "the more militant nature of American student activism" as arising from the "thick, if well-meaning, skulls" of its military leadership, which "force one further left, into a more radical position", a lesson Australian activist youth were learning equally quickly.[105] These thoughts were published in several student newspapers as well as delivered in public lectures upon his return, where "no one…questioned the validity of his conclusions or the importance of his personal impressions", one student scribe commented.[106] Another student described Zable's reportage as "one of the most important discussions of Vietnam which any student here will read", a clear privileging of his reportage over similar articles written by activists who stayed in Australia.[107] Opposition to Zable's increasing public profile, however, did emerge on several different counts. Marianne Wall, a student member of the Democratic Labor Party who had spent 11 days in Vietnam during the same time period as Zable's trip, wrote a response in *National U*, while a young Gerard Henderson added his particularly vocal opinions to Melbourne University's *Farrago*. Both attacked Zable on two counts: that his short stay and relatively limited itinerary clouded his experiences, and that the emotional and impressionistic content of his writing made its claims to truth difficult to support.

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[102] Arnold Zable, "Vietnam: Letter from Saigon," *National U*, 23 March 1970, 10.
[103] Ibid, 11.
[104] Ibid, 11.
[105] Ibid, 10.
[106] Chris McConville, "Arnold Zable on Vietnam," *Farrago*, 17 April 1970, 3.
[107] 'Rosenbloom,' "Heinous Henderson Hammered," *Farrago*, 3 April 1970, 5.

Wall sought to present Zable's personal experiences, mostly of Saigon and its immediate surrounds, as insufficient to warrant informed comment. Having spent her time "in the company almost solely of Vietnamese in areas as much as 300 miles away from Saigon", Wall sought to weaken Zable's credibility by postulating that her own further reaching travels could offer more astute observations.[108] His supposed reliance on "non-Vietnamese 'dispatch' foreign correspondents, whose bias is all too obvious", meant that he only received second-hand knowledge, while she noted that:

> If Mr. Zable had ventured further into the South Vietnamese countryside than Saigon…he may have developed a better understanding of the Vietnamese people, their culture and the progress of the war in military, political and economic terms.[109]

This relative lack of experience led to him making fanciful claims, Wall believed, including his report of having heard B-52 strikes from Saigon—which the author tried to dismissed as the rumble of electric storms. "It embodies", Wall concludes, "the emotionally overcharged feelings of some-one placed in an alien country about which he had very definite preconceptions".[110] Henderson agreed, adding that due to this limited experience, Zable's letter was "emotional, irrational and is lacking in evidence".[111] Zable responded to these charges by both defending his claims to authenticity and by talking down the importance of the 'unbiased' in favour of the intimate and emotionally engaged observer. He claimed to have "wandered around Saigon and Cholon twelve to fourteen hours every day—unsponsored" speaking "to everyone who would respond", from street kids to GIs, as a way of buttressing his credibility.[112] While he stated that this defence was "not…a claim to great authority", and nor did he consider himself to be writing "the gospel" as Henderson had insinuated, it is equally clear that Zable felt the need to articulate his authenticity publicly, and defend it from those who claimed to have seen and learnt more than he.[113]

The traveller was equally defensive of the reporting style he employed, which was not "a cool, footnoted analysis" but rather presented "my response to Vietnam" in

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[108] Marianne Wall, "Vietnam Reavowed," *National U*, 6 April 1970, 15.
[109] Ibid, 15.
[110] Ibid, 15.
[111] Gerard Henderson, "An open letter to A. Zable," *Farrago*, 24 April 1970, 8.
[112] Arnold Zable, "The Vietnam Debate: Arnold Zable replies," *Farrago*, 1 May 1970, 9.
[113] Ibid, 9.

all its emotional, liminal intensity.[114] Zable was inspired by the work of American underground press writers during 1968, who disregarded the idea of 'objectivity' in favour of presenting "a sense of what its like to be on our side of the story", which could not be articulated through "the cold arithmetic of facts".[115] This was a style increasingly adopted by travellers to Vietnam, as the realisation set in that mere images and facts—increasingly brutal and available for public consumption—were failing to turn citizens against the war. Franny Nudelman describes how travellers "addressed themselves to the problem of consciousness", rather than merely recording facts, as a means of producing a "profound, and potentially transformative, disorientation".[116] Zable valued the 'objective' nature of his reporting just as much as recording "the nature of my response" to what he saw, "particularly the growing anger as I realised the many distorted views we have received in the daily press on Vietnam".[117] The travellers' return was, then, sometimes less than that of a knowledgeable pilgrim returning to a ready audience. Instead, travellers often returned with a new set of ideas, practices and experiences that required articulation in a new, often hostile, context.

Conclusion

The year 2011, marked by Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring and anti-austerity activism in Europe, shows the importance of what George Katsiaficas dubs "World Historical Moments" in the globalisation of protest. 1968 was the last time that such a transnational protest movement emerged.[118] Rather than ideas transmitting via Twitter, Facebook or Skype, however, the idea of global revolution that marked the year took a slower, more personal route. "The tourist has always had a bad press", Richard White helpfully reminds us, with their experiences "defined as superficial

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[114] Ibid, 9.
[115] John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 94.
[116] Franny Nudelman, "Trip to Hanoi: Antiwar Travel and International Consciousness," in *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness,* eds. Karen Dubinsky and others, 241 (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009).
[117] Zable, "The Vietnam Debate," 9.
[118] George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston, Mass: South End Press, 1987), 3.

and blinkered…ephemeral and pre packaged".[119] This chapter has, however, illustrated the utility of a turn towards historicising travel, locating how the movement of radical Australians across borders was informed by, and impacted on, the local realities of activist politics. Desires for travel were fired by a wide variety of interests, not a mere divestment from the "mundane realities" of daily life but an attempt to use travel as a direct political protest, a means of finding new connections and ideas or reaffirming old ones. Activists articulated an array of motivations as disparate as the destinations they sought out. Locations as diverse as Prague, Cambodia, Algeria and China were chosen by radicals, many of whom experienced what Turner has labelled a liminal moment, where the ordinary structures of life are overturned and a fleeting moment of utopian community is unleashed. Activists who exchanged ideas and practices in these liminal zones were indeed important, but equally so were those who travelled to sites where radical cultural difference led to the recycling of orientalist notions. The sometimes-confected nature of their experiences also saw questions around whether these travellers were merely politically well-informed and often ideologically driven tourists.

Finally, the return of the pilgrim has been found to be more complex than the conferring of a mere special status. Instead, these travellers became central to the translation of radical ideas into new contexts. While this was sometimes a relatively simple and productive task of transmission, more often than not ideas had to be translated, or were rejected altogether, either due to their lack of local applicability or the threat they posed to older and more entrenched activist forms. The notion of being there was equally subject to contention. The pilgrim's purported ability to provide additional insights and informed observations was contested by those who saw these experiences as either ephemeral or overly emotional, and thus adding little to public debate or understanding. Perhaps most importantly, this chapter has revealed how Australian Sixties social movements—geographically far from the centres of protest and dissent—became worlded through the increasing global mobility of participants. Chapter Five will discuss how these transnational networks were multidirectional, with radical ideas and people breaching Australia's borders in equally conflictive and productive ways.

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[119] Richard White, "Australian tourists in Britain, 1900-2000," in *Australians in Britain: The Twentieth-Century Experience*, eds. Carl Bridge et al, 11.1 (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University E-Press, 2009).

Our unpolluted shores: Radical arrivals and the politics of the border

W.J. Morrison, manager of the International Bookstore on Melbourne's Elizabeth Street, was manning the till on 1 September 1966 when the raid began. "At 2pm", Morrison records, "I sold a copy of a publication…by the Vietnam Action Committee, entitled, 'American Atrocities in Vietnam'" to a seemingly interested customer. After the transaction was completed, the customer revealed himself to be a member of Victoria's Vice Squad, along with the two other individuals quietly rifling through the shop's shelves, and the unsuspected bookseller was placed under arrest.[1] Morrison was charged with displaying and soliciting "an obscene publication showing pictures of atrocities likely to create violence", and 86 copies of the offending publication, a composite of several articles from the American anti-war magazine *Liberation*, were seized. The pamphlet, described by *The Age* as poorly printed and containing both "murky photographs and words quoted out of context", soon became a hot seller in movement bookstores and a *cause célèbre* for those who opposed not only the war, but also Australia's censorship regime as a whole.[2]

Three years later another border breach sparked a storm of controversy. A self-described Black Power advocate and member of Bermuda's Legislative Assembly, Roosevelt Brown arrived in Melbourne for a three day stopover (hence not requiring a visa) in August 1969, seeking to establish the facts on a country that was "always discussed", but about which little was concretely known.[3] Both media and politicians, unsurprisingly, imagined Brown's intentions to be of a less educational nature, with his radical beliefs of oppressed peoples running their own affairs interpereted as a dangerous contaminant. Melbourne's *Sun* warned of a "Black Power upsurge in Victoria", the *Ballarat Courier* condemned his attempts to "stir up

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[1] W. J. Morrison, "Statement on the Seizure of 86 copies of a publication - American Atrocities in Vietnam - from the International Bookshop, Pty. Ltd., 17 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, on 1st. September 1966", in Youth Campaign Against Conscription papers, MS 10002, "Correspondence – 1966", State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

[2] On its crude production see "The Farce of Censorship," *The Age*, 9 September 1966, 2; on its newfound popularity see "Rush for Viet Pamphlet," *The Age*, 21 September 1966, 3.

[3] "Roosevelt Brown meets the press," *Smoke Signals* 8, No. 2 (September 1969): 6.

trouble", while Victoria's Minister for Aborigines, Ray Meagher, declared paternalistically: "I am sure I speak for Victoria's Aboriginals when I say we are happy to forget Mr. Brown".[4]

The birth of the nation-state in the eighteenth century centralised the idea of the border, separating peoples and cultures into demarcated imagined communities of understanding. This was particularly so for Australia, geographically isolated from the lands of its imagined affections, and instead located amidst an Asian region viewed in menacing hues. Consequently, the nation enacted restrictive immigration legislation known as the White Australia Policy as well as a particularly pervasive censorship regime designed to enforce cultural and political conformity.[5] As Nicole Moore puts it in her new history of censorship: "Australia's legal and administrative regimes have combined with Australia's physical isolation to make the ideals of censorship more realisable here than elsewhere".[6] Repressive immigration laws, along with this policing of literature, were aimed at maintaining purity and homogeneity, whether racially, politically or culturally. Consequently, an individual could be classed as a security risk, as anti-colonial activist and anthropologist Max Gluckman was when he was refused transit to Australia's territory of Papua New Guinea, and a book could be labelled obscene or seditious, finding its way onto the banned list.

Yet, as Wendy Brown points out, the onset of economic and cultural globalisation has comingled with the increasing ease of travel to weaken the sovereignty of the state and its ability to police both its physical and ideological borders. Rather than culminating in the utopian cosmopolitan future imagined by political and economic elites, however, this process has rather seen the reinscription of the border and the "theatricalized and spectacularized performance of sovereign power" by state-based politicians, often at the behest of citizens increasingly

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[4] "'Hot-Head' Blast on Black Power," *The Sun*, 1 September 1969; "Meagher hits back at Black Power leader," *Ballarat Courier*, 30 August 1969; "'Happy to forget' that visit," *The Herald*, 30 August 1969, reproduced at http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/images/history/1960s/aalbp/rbdx.html, accessed 5 January 2012.

[5] The work on Australia's policing of its border, particularly focused on the White Australia Policy, is voluminous. For example, see Andrew Markus, *Fear and hatred: purifying Australia and California, 1850-1901* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1979); Sean Brawley, *The white peril: foreign relations and Asian immigration to Australasia and the United States, 1919-1978* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995); Gwenda Tavan, *The long, slow death of white Australia* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2005) and Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the Question of Racial Equality* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008).

[6] Nicole Moore, *The Censor's Library* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2012), 346.

concerned about the impact these flows might have on national political and cultural life.[7] As Brown puts it:

> What we have come to call a globalized world harbors fundamental tensions between opening and barricading, fusion and partition, erasure and reinscription. These tensions materialize as increasingly liberalized borders, on the one hand, and the devotion of unprecedented funds, energies, and technologies to border fortification, on the other.[8]

Emblematic of this is the wall thrown up between Mexico and the USA, begun in 2006, which seeks to provide a physical separation where in a globalised marketplace heavily reliant on porous boundaries no such separation can really exist. And it is the movement of "nonstate transnational actors", refugees, itinerant workers or political activists, that personify anxieties towards these increasingly globalising, decentred political forces in the popular imagination.[9]

If the radical upsurge of the 'long Sixties' was, as Martin Klimke has it, "a global phenomena, representing social and cultural responses to emerging patterns of economic, technological and political globalisation", then scholars of the period could find much of use in historicising Brown's work on the walling mentality of the State.[10] The Sixties were a key moment in the birth of globalisation, and governments, their security apparatuses and a concerned citizenry either argued for or employed various forms of exclusion to police what one activist sarcastically termed "our unpolluted shores" with varying levels of success.[11] This chapter explores conservative attempts to control the flow of people and ideas that were so central to the Sixties. It looks at the processes, means and justifications government and its supporters employed, how commentators and the media responded, and in what ways activists resisted these restrictions. A surprisingly diverse array of individuals were proscribed from entry to Australia during the pre-Whitlam period, from the Marxist economist Ernest Mandel to North Vietnam's lead negotiator at the Paris Peace Talks Nguyen Thi Thap, and leading figures of the Black Panther Party, although none of this latter group ever actually applied for entry.

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[7] Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 26.
[8] Ibid, 7-8.
[9] Ibid, 21.
[10] Martin Klimke, *The other alliance: student protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 5.
[11] John Playford, "The Mandel Affair," *Revolution*, July 1970, 8.

As well as considering how these restrictions were articulated and challenged, the chapter will explore how elite definitions of a 'dangerous' radical shifted as new enemies came to the fore. A government and security apparatus well coached in the politics of superpower conflict struggled to deal with the emergence of new social movements equally critical of both sides of the Cold War. As Donald Horne argued of Australian political elites: "[t]hings were changing, and they didn't know what to do about it".[12] The second part of this chapter will explore how largely American-sourced radical literature, which either sought to publicise crimes in Southeast Asia or advocate methods of resisting conscription, was deemed obscene by government, leading activists to respond with vigorous anti-censorship campaigns. The reproduction of violent images from the conflict, however, raised a series of questions about the efficacy of gore as a mobilising agent. Looking at these moments of exclusion not only reveals how the limits of a parochial-minded political culture were tested, but also highlights the way in which the global Sixties impacted on a variety of different, long-standing debates.

Proven Newsmakers: Excluded radicals, national anxieties and border debates

Angela Davis, African American writer and political activist, was acquitted of murder, kidnap and conspiracy charges arising from a botched attempt to free Black Panther prisoners in the US state of California on 4 June 1972. Davis, a figure famed both for her 'political prisoner' status and a strikingly well kept afro, was a household name around the world, and one of her first post-release announcements was a desire to visit "her supporters around the world", in Cuba, West Germany, the Eastern Bloc and, perhaps surprisingly, Australia.[13] A particularly efficient organising effort by the Communist Party ensured that "Angela received more Trade Union support from Australia than from any other 'free world' state", as the organiser of the American campaign for her release wrote to his local counterpart. The Australians hoped Davis might reciprocate this support by speaking at the upcoming Black Moratorium, aimed

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[12] Donald Horne, *Time of Hope: Australia 1966-1972* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1980): 66.
[13] "Angela Davis visit?," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 June 1972, 2. For more on the case and the campaign see Bettina Aptheker, *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999 [1975]).

at bringing the plight of Indigenous Australians to national attention.[14] Word of such a trip soon made its way into the mainstream media, with Communist Party member Dennis Freney defending the invitation of overseas speakers to the Moratorium in the following terms: "the main reason for inviting these people is the need to draw international attention to our cause. Miss Davis and other people are proven newsmakers".[15] This capacity of foreign visitors to excite local interest and passions was something that concerned Australia's government who, despite claiming that it would be "quite stupid" to bar the activist, secretly listed her amongst a veritable who's-who of African American radicals to whom "visas should be withheld" pending an inevitably negative security assessment by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).[16]

Attempts like these to either encourage or curtail the movements of radicals given new freedoms by liberalised borders, increases in disposable income and the democratisation of air travel were a fundamental aspect of the global Sixties experience. While these physical movements played a key part in concretising the 'imagined community' of Sixties radicalism, such oppositional developments were seen as threatening by state-based authorities. When West German radical Karl Dietrich Wolff visited the United States in 1969, he was publically harangued before the House Un-American Activities Committee,[17] while the border hopping of fellow European radicals like Rudi Dutschke and Daniel Cohn-Bendit became the stuff of legend. The banning of German-born Cohn-Bendit from France in late 1968 for his vital role in the May events of that year saw thousands protest in Paris, declaring "we are all undesirables" and "borders = repression" in solidarity.[18] And, rather farcically, he was able to slip easily across the Franco-German border, with the assistance of only a pair of sunglasses and a rushed hair dying. These acts, both a negation of unenforceable national boundaries and the proclamation of a trans-European or trans-Atlantic revolutionary identity, were at once inspiring to activists and deeply concerning to their governments.

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[14] Bob Baker to Gloria Garton, 18 July 1972, Communist Party of Australia Records, 1920-1987, MLMSS 5021, Box 110, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

[15] "Angela Davis now invited to speak in Sydney," *The Age*, 9 June 1972, 2.

[16] "Angela Davis visit?," 2; "Outgoing Cablegram, 27 September 1972," in USA – Relations with Australia – Visitors to Australia – Angela Davis – Invitation to Australia by Moratorium for Black Rights Committee," A1838 250/9/9/23, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[17] Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, 4, 104-7.

[18] Richard Jobs, "Youth Movements: Travel, Protest and 1968 in Europe," *American Historical Review* 114, No. 2 (April 2009): 394; 398.

Richard Jobs explores how such "travel became the foundation for a youth identity that emphasised mobility and built a shared political culture across national boundaries" during the Sixties, mobility the states of Europe sought to actively curtail.[19] This took the form of banning and closing off borders to protestors—turning kombis loaded with young people away at checkpoints—as well as marshalling nationalistic or xenophobic fears. Cohn-Bendit became a 'German Jew' in the eyes of French conservatives, while visiting Western European youths provided an important scapegoat for the Soviet Union in justifying its invasion of liberalising Czechoslovakia. Students responded by appealing to an internationalist politics, and highlighting the impossibility, or futility, of building walls around nations at a time of increased political, economic and social interconnectedness. "I don't see why today, when we speak of a Common Market, of international harmony, of peace, we expel someone from a country", Cohn-Bendit protested.[20] And it was not just middle-class Europeans attempted to cross national boundaries. The cases of Davis and Brown were only two of many, with black and Third World activists using travel and other forms of direct association to further the promised bonds of the global revolutionary ideal.

The attempted movements of these activists across Australia's borders garnered significant attention from ASIO, who warned with typical hyperbole that "international revolutionary movements…pose…a real and growing threat to the liberal democratic Western world".[21] The security organisation's fears perhaps speak more to its own preoccupations than the imminent threat of radical subversion. As David McKnight argues, the organisation's "fertile imagination" saw it swallow "overseas models of revolution just as slavishly as the left-wing groups", leading it to make paranoiac pronouncements on the imminence of revolution in Australia.[22] Similarly, Margaret Henderson and Alexander Winter argue that the Queensland Special Branch's file on radical feminist and socialist Carole Ferrier "suggested to us a state-sanctioned collective form of political paranoia".[23] Henderson and Winter

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[19] Ibid, 376-7.

[20] Ibid, 396.

[21] "Note on the General Significance of the 'New Left' on the Western World", A12389/A30/PART 7, National Archives of Australia, Canberra. Underlining in original.

[22] David McKnight, *Australia's spies and their secrets* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 217-8; 232.

[23] Margaret Henderson and Alexandra Winter, "Memoirs of Our Nervous Illness: The Queensland Police Special Branch Files of Carole Ferrier as Political Auto/Biography," *Life Writing* 6, No. 3 (December 2009): 352.

identify "narcissism, megalomania, delusions of persecution, and grandiose systems of explanation" as central to the practice of Special Branch, categories that are equally illuminating of ASIO's concerns around globally-inspired activism. Noting that overseas speakers had been invited to take part in a national anti-war conference in 1971, one agent warned ominously that radical groups associated with the event "have close and developing links with radical and revolutionary organisations overseas". Consequently, allowing invited radicals to visit Australia "would facilitate this process as well as contribut[e] towards the development of new alliances and forms of revolutionary activity which...would be more relevant in the Australian environment", concerns which were used to block their attempted visits.[24]

I argue in this chapter that these efforts by Australia's conservative governments and security apparatus during the 1960s and early 1970s to wall ourselves off from outside radical contagions reveal not only political paranoia at home, but a number of anxieties surrounding the increasingly global, de-centred world. Fears of decolonisation, 'Asiatic' communism, the New Left and the upturning of racial hierarchies represented by Black Power, can all be glimpsed in the walling mentality displayed by government against proselytisers of these varied doctrines. The ideas and personalities associated with these movements, on the other hand, proved not just to be publicity material for activists, but also provided new opportunities for political engagement in a community increasingly embarrassed by its government's international reputation. I also demonstrate how technologies of exclusion shifted. No longer could government employ methods such as the dictation test, as were used against radical visitors like Egon Kisch in the 1930s, instead relying on more subtle bureaucratic measures.[25]

The territory now known as Papua New Guinea, which came under Australian mandate after World War Two, eventually became a part of the new United Nations international trustee system in 1946. Australia maintained its hold on the territory, and it was to guide the "natives" towards independence and self-government through "social, economic and political advancement".[26] It was, however, a difficult time for

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[24] ASIO, "Vietnam Moratorium Campaign National Anti-War Conference 17th-21st April 1971" in Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, A6980 S250654, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[25] For more on Kisch see Heidi Zogbaum, *Kisch in Australia: The Untold Story* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2004).

[26] Anthony Albert Yeates, "Outside Men: Negotiating Economic and Political Development in Papua New Guinea, 1946-1968" (PhD Thesis, The University of Queensland, 2009), 1. See also Donald

white domination over increasingly restive indigenous majorities. The post-war period saw a surge in national liberation struggles, from Algeria to Vietnam and Kenya that not only challenged continued European control of the world but also created a plethora of new nations that soon became a significant and organised voice in the international arena.[27] The Third World had come together at the Afro-Asian solidarity conference at Bandung in 1955, and the anxieties of Australia's government and media over what this new power bloc could mean for its policy of forward defence were palpable.[28] Even relatively progressive newspaper *The Age*, in arguing for greater regional engagement, warned that "[o]ur future will be greatly influenced by events in countries only a few hours flying time from our northern shores".[29] That Prime Minister Robert Menzies' announced his decision to commit ground troops to Malaysia in the same month as the conference can be read as a statement—intended or otherwise—of Australia's desire to curtail the threat posed by revolutionary decolonisation.[30]

Five years later, another international event sparked fears and reverberations, this time emanating from South Africa. Menzies' reaction to the Sharpeville massacre, discussed in Chapter Two, gave Australia the dubious distinction of being Apartheid South Africa's only friend in the Commonwealth. His calls for the upholding of "domestic jurisdiction" had the opposite effect, focusing more, mainly post-colonial, eyes on Australia's policies both in New Guinea and towards its indigenous population.[31] The reception that Max Gluckman, South African-born Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester, received from Australian authorities was conditioned by these anxieties. Gluckman applied on 17 March 1960, four days prior to the Sharpeville incident, for permission to visit the

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Denoon, *A Trial Separation: Australia and the Decolonisation of Papua New Guinea* (Canberra: ANU E-press, 2012).

[27] See Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2008).

[28] David Walker, "Nervous Outsiders: Australia and the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung," *Australian Historical Studies* 36, No. 125 (2005): 40-59.

[29] Editorial, "Bandung has a meaning," *The Age*, 20 April 1955, 2.

[30] Editorial, "Anzac and Asia," *The Sun-Herald*, 24 April 1955, 18. On the timing of this decision, see Christopher Waters, "After Decolonization: Australia and the Emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement in Asia, 1954-55," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 12, No. 2 (2001): 162 and Walker, "Nervous Outsiders," 47.

[31] See Jennifer Clark, *Aborigines and activism: race, aborigines and the coming of the sixties to Australia* (Crawley, WA: UWA Press, 2008), 15-40.

Australian administered half of New Guinea in August of that year as part of a fellowship he was undertaking at the Australian National University.[32]

This was a fairly ordinary request, as many other anthropologists had been allowed to enter the colony in recent years.[33] But Gluckman's political views made his intentions a cause for concern. His previous support for several communist front organisations, recent exposition of views opposed both to Apartheid and British imperialism in Africa and marriage to a former communist constituted "'adverse' information", in ASIO's nomenclature. Such concerns formed the basis for his exclusion, which was duly approved by the Administrator of the Territories of Papua and New Guinea.[34] Indeed, ASIO speculated that he was involved in an international conspiracy of communist-affiliated anthropologists, whose aim was to undermine Australia's grip on the territory and create a Cuba on Australia's doorstep.[35] Hannah Forsyth has pointed out that this sort of intelligence gathering on academics was common. Part of ASIO's brief being to "watch and influence academic political and ideological behaviour", including policies on hiring and promotion, leading to several high-profile disputes.[36]

When news broke of Gluckman's exclusion in August, some five months after his initial application, a media and political storm ensued. Gluckman was an eminent figure in the profession and someone who ASIO described as "adept" at using the media. He featured prominently in the press for several weeks, with reports and photos of his travels around Australia doing everything from smoking a pipe to playing a game of cricket. This coverage ensured he remained a political topic for some time.[37] As the Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck put it in his memoirs, those critical of government policies both at home and in New Guinea "whooped with joy"

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[32] "Application for Permit to Enter the Territory of Papua, 17 March 1960," Gluckman, Max Volume 1, A6119 1230/REFERENCE COPY, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[33] "Minister Replies On Visa Refusal, Security Interference," *The Mercury*, 31 August 1960, 16.

[34] "The Gluckman Affair," 19 October 1960, Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[35] They believed that the Gluckman case "may indicate a pattern of Communist planning in relation to Papua-New Guinea and the Australia National University" and that Gluckman and his associates launched "a planned attack on security processes". See ASIO, "Communist Anthropologists – The Australian National University – Papua-New Guinea," Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY. Margaret and Winter, "Memoirs of Our Nevour Illness," 352.

[36] Hannah Forsyth, "The Ownership of Knowledge in Higher Education in Australia 1939-1996" (PhD Thesis, The University of Sydney, 2012), 98.

[37] "Communist Anthropologists," Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY. The organisation hoped that Gluckman's "performance…would still be regarded as beneath a professor's dignity" in "the best academic circles."

when the controversy arose.[38] Many newspapers and Labor parliamentarians painted this as a breach of British justice. A heavy-handed security police was exercising unspecified and unquestionable powers to peddle "vague, undisclosed allegations", while others labelled the secretive process a "star chamber".[39] The Communist Party used its newspaper *Tribune* to claim that "secret police dominated the thinking of the government" and that this meant that "any citizen, irrespective of his standing in the community, can be branded as a security risk", something which "discredits Australia in the eyes of democratic people throughout the world".[40] ASIO felt particularly singled out by this verbal assault. One agent complained in an internal memorandum that "as usual, [ASIO] had few defenders and no opportunity to defend itself", while it was noted that "politically 'left'" members of parliament displayed nought but "fear and hatred" towards its activities, a persecution complex which saw many left-wing establishment figures earn long personal files.[41]

Many commentators, however, felt that this denial of civil liberties was far from the main issue at stake. International concerns, and primarily the reputation of Australia's trusteeship over New Guinea in post-colonial states, were in fact overriding. Menzies commented during the crisis that independence for post-colonial nations could be a "cup of poison" unless imperial states had "buil[t] up…capacities for self government", while a letter writer to *The Age* warned of the necessity to ensure that "the legitimate desire for independence [was not] used by world communism".[42] Such concerns were echoed by one government backbencher, who exclaimed that Gluckman's "many odd theories" should be blocked from the "very primitive and sensitive" inhabitants of New Guinea, and yet doubts were raised in the media as to whether Gluckman's exclusion really aided this objective.[43] Indeed, one writer went to far as to argue that Verwoerd, the notorious South African leader,

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[38] Paul Hasluck, *A Time for Building: Australian Administration in Papua and New Guinea 1951-1963* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1976), 406.

[39] "Reasons for entry bar undisclosed," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 August 1960, 3; "Security police now 'secret police' Ward says," *The Sun*, 8 September 1960, 4.

[40] "Ban on Gluckman 'shames Australia,'" *Tribune*, 9 September 1960, in Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY.

[41] "The Gluckman Affair," Gluckman, Max Volume 2. A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY.

[42] "Independence can be 'cup of poison,'" *The Age*, 5 September 1960, 3; Russell David, "The Case of Gluckman," *The Age,* 16 September 1960, 2.

[43] "N.G. Ban on Professor Defended," *The Age*, 5 September 1960, in Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY.

would approve of Australia's actions on the Gluckman case, a clearly politically charged comparison.[44]

Others noted that it would damage Australia's attempts to justify, particularly to Afro-Asian nations, what one newspaper called "the slow rate of progress towards self-government in New Guinea".[45] Kevin Blackburn has pointed out how the colonies and later nations of Malaya and Singapore used condemnations of the White Australia Policy as a form of "disguised anti-colonialism" during the period prior to independence. Attacking this restrictive immigration policy, Blackburn explains, was "indirectly attacking white colonial rule in South-East Asia".[46] Australian governments and the media—particularly after Sharpeville—became painfully aware that Australia's policies, not just on immigration but increasingly in New Guinea, were under the close scrutiny of many governments across the world, and consequently that negative publicity should be kept to a minimum.

In these terms, the banning was clearly counter-productive. As Melbourne's *Herald* editorialised: "Unless Mr. Hasluck clears the air other countries, and particularly the Afro-Asians, are likely to doubt whatever we say about our good intentions and administration in New Guinea".[47] Indeed, *The Age* warned that Gluckman's banning could "undo much of the good which has been done by the visits of such impartial witnesses as the Indonesian Ambassador", who had visited earlier in the year. Such rash and poorly explained decisions "give critics ammunition to spread rumours abroad that we are not prepared to give a glimpse of New Guinea to a research scientist who has criticised British policy in Central Africa".[48] Gluckman was quoted on numerous occasions as believing this opposition to European colonialism was the main basis for his exclusion, and official unwillingness to discuss the specifics led many to believe it afraid of what New Guinea might look like through an activist-academic's eyes.[49]

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[44] "Verwoerd would applaud," *The Sun-Herald*, 18 September 1960. In Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY.
[45] Editorial, "Minister should give facts," *The Age*, 29 August 1960. 2.
[46] Kevin Blackburn, "Disguised anti-colonialism: Protest against the White Australia Policy in Malaya and Singapore, 1947-62," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 55, No. 1 (2001): 101.
[47] Editorial, "NG Ban harmful," *The Herald* (Melbourne), 31 August 1960. In Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY.
[48] "Minister should give facts"; "NG ban is harmful."
[49] "Government 'misled,' says Prof. Gluckman," *The Sun*, 5 September 1960; "Professor Gluckman Criticises Security," *The Age*, 5 September 1960, in Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY.

While the Territory's administrator had invoked Harold Macmillan when acknowledging that Australia should "recongnise and accept that the winds of change blow here also", yet another condemnatory editorial noted how the "implication that there might be some unspecified danger in the brief presence of one leading anthropologist is hard to square with the 'winds of change' talk".[50] Anthony Yeates argues that government and security services responded to this uproar with the prosecution for sedition of a young patrol officer working in New Guinea, Brian Cooper, who had apparently espoused anti-colonial views to the inhabitants. Given the Gluckman case, ASIO "had good reason to build a case against Cooper in an attempt to vindicate their bumbling attempts to constrain dissenting ideas and liberal influences in Australia and strategically sensitive Papua New Guinea".[51] Such restrictions and prosecutions were, however, unable to stop the spread of anti-colonial ideas in Papua New Guinea, with a vocal pro-independence movement developing to question Australian colonial rule.[52]

The Gluckman case showed government how excluding individuals, rather than protecting Australia from their ideas, could actually give them even greater purchase on public debate. Consequently, the Federal Government increasingly came to disagree with negative ASIO security assessments of proposed visits by communist and fellow traveller, particularly from the USSR. One instance, in 1963, is indicative. Vadim Nekrasov, a political reporter for the Soviet daily newspaper *Pravda* was invited to attend the 40th anniversary celebrations for the local communist newspaper *Tribune*, but ASIO's negative security assessment saw his visa denied. In a similar manner to the case of the British anthropologist, "wide publicity" ensued. So, when another application was received later in that same year for several well-known Soviet authors to attend the third congress of the Union of Australian Women (UAW) under the auspices of the global peace movement, a different approach was recommended. R.L. Harry, First Assistant Secretary of the Attorney General's department, wrote to his superiors of the possible negative ramifications of rejecting these visitors, noting that "Press comment will, as before, almost certainly be critical of any application of restrictive visa policies". Harry thought this, as "it might…be suggested that the Australian Government is not prepared to allow open debate on views not shared by

[50] Editorial, "Winds and a ban," *The Herald* (Melbourne), 13 September 1960, in Gluckman, Max Volume 2, A6119 1231/REFERENCE COPY, NAA.
[51] Yeates, "Outside Men," 148.
[52] Ibid, 177-87.

the Government" and, even more alarmingly, it could lead to "some disadvantage in terms of our image overseas". The Attorney-General had, after all, made a statement expressing qualified support for a nuclear test ban in the South Pacific on August 15, and barring individuals articulating similar ideas might lead to "allegations of inconsistency", Harry warned.[53]

In 1969, two prominent Soviet women made a similar application. This time, however, a different terminology was employed to justify their entry. ASIO compiled a security briefing using similar language as it did in 1963, warning that the visits by *Pravda* journalist Olga Chechetkina and academic Zoya Zarubina could "pose a subversive threat", and that their visit would only serve to "give publicity to Communist front organisations". ASIO had long-standing, and not entirely unfounded, fears that visiting Soviet citizens acted as spies. Yet government increasingly dismissed such ideas, at least as a reason for exclusion. Using an excerpt from a speech delivered by Robert Menzies in 1961, ASIO sought to paint anyone with links to Communist front organisations like the Women's International Democratic Federation as threats to national security.[54] Government, however, seemed less concerned than its security services by the Russians' subversive potential. The international situation had, after all, changed since the height of the Cold War in the 1950s. No longer was the Soviet Union head of a unified communist movement, for one, and its misadventures in Czechoslovakia the previous year had removed any of the veneer left on its international reputation.

Australia's Communist Party had been amongst the first to publicly condemn the Soviet invasion, while radical students protested outside Eastern Bloc embassies in support of Dubcek's 'socialism with a human face'.[55] The visit of these Soviet women was, consequently, viewed in a less-than-threatening light by Australian authorities. Not only had New Zealand already granted them a visa, but the Minister for Foreign Affairs "doubt[ed] whether on this occasion the status of the UAW would be enhanced appreciably, if at all, by the attendance of the two USSR delegates".[56]

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[53] R.L. Harry to Minister, 2 September 1963, "Soviet Visa Applications – Australian Peace Movement," Union of Australian Women – Third National Conference, Sydney September 1963, A1209 1963/6602, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[54] P. Barbour, "Invitation by the Union of Australian Women to Olga Ivanovna Chechetkina and Zoya Vasilievna Zarubina, Nationals of the USSR," 29 August 1969, Union of Australian Women – General, A6980 S250370, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[55] On student protests against the invasion see *Wednesday Commentary,* 4 September 1968.

[56] Peter Heydon, Secretary, to Minister, "Proposed Visit of Two Soviet Women," 12 September 1969, Union of Australian Women – General, A6980 S250370.

Indeed, no mention was made of possible negative media reports or international blow back at all, only that Foreign Affairs "was inclined to doubt whether [the delegates] would be able to influence public opinion in Australia to any extent". The Foreign Affairs minister even went so far as to propose that letting these visitors in would have a detrimental impact on the UAW's political work, with their sponsoring of yet another Soviet delegation only serving to "support…their image as a communist front".[57] The threat of Soviet Communism was, then, seemingly vanquished by the late 1960s, and by 1973 the sponsorship of a visitor by the UAW or any other front "ceased to be a…factor" in ASIO's determining of their suitability.[58]

This did not mean, however, that Australia's borders were open to radical travellers, but rather that the definition of a 'subversive' was shifting. A poignant example of this was when the visas for two North Vietnamese women, one of whom was that nation's chief negotiator at the Paris Peace Talks, were refused. Although ASIO produced an almost identical security document on these two travellers, indeed the two documents were both produced on the same day, it seemed that the Vietnamese women—Asian as well as communist—posed a significant risk to Australian security. In this instance, Immigration decided to enforce the restrictions Menzies alluded to in 1961, while Foreign Affairs believed that allowing the women in would only embolden North Vietnam's obstructive negotiating in Paris.[59] While it is perhaps unsurprising that the government would exclude representatives of its enemy in Vietnam, the furore around a proposed visit by Marxist economist Ernest Mandel displays how a new radical left enemy had emerged to replace that of Soviet communism. The influence of 'New Left' ideas, largely from Europe, had grown immensely within Australian radical circles during the late 1960s. As this thesis has revealed, the work of Herbert Marcuse and Antonio Gramsci, as well as lesser-known Frankfurt School intellectuals were being widely read and debated in the Australian

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[57] Ibid. The UAW was a stronghold of Stalinists in the Party, lead by Freda Brown, who was along with her husband Bill to play a leading role in the 1971 pro-Soviet Party split. See Mark Aarons, *The Family File* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2010), 224-5; 228.

[58] T.A. Smith, Chief Migration Officer, to Minister, "Ms Lidia Alexeevna Barmina (50) and Ms Lyudmila Mikhailovna Kasatkina (49) – Russian business visitors," 9 September 1979, Union of Australian Women – General, A6980 S250370.

[59] P. Barbour to Secretary, Department of Immigration, "Proposed Visit of a Vietnamese Women's Delegation at the invitation of the Union of Australian Women," 29 August 1969, Union of Australian Women – General, A6980 S250370; R.F. Osborn, Assistant Secretary, Department of External Affairs to The Secretary, Prime Minister Department, "Viet Nam," 27 August 1969, Union of Australian Women – General, A6980 S250370.; R.F. Harris to the Minister, Department of Immigration, "Request from Union of Australian Women for Admission of two Vietnamese women as visitors," 5 September 1969, Union of Australian Women – General, A6980 S250370.

movement, while the ideas of Third World revolutionary movements were being 'translated' into local contexts.

Two ASIO reports from 1969 dealt explicitly with these developing threats—downplaying the importance of Soviet-allied communist parties who increasingly "function within the existing structure of society" and instead focusing on those new international movements who "take true revolutionary action to change society".[60] The May 1968 student-worker revolt in France was seen as a dangerous contaminant, with ASIO pointing out that it "served as a model for violent 'student power' and 'participatory democracy' actions in universities throughout the Western world" including in Australia, where "such action, though on a much smaller scale, gained maximum publicity".[61] The threat of this mimicry was second only to that of personal connections between these movements, with one of the reports warning how "a movement is underway for…student groups in Europe to collaborate officially and set up an international apparatus". ASIO saw these attempts at international outreach as mirrored in Australia by the formation of the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance by Brian Laver and other radicals inspired by the events of 1968, which the security police viewed as a challenge to CPA influence.[62]

Such fears seemed to be vindicated when Mandel applied for a visa to deliver a keynote address to the May 1970 Socialist Scholars Conference in Sydney. Famous for his texts on Marxist economic theory, Mandel was also a key leader in the international Trotskyist movement, editor of Belgium's largest left wing newspaper *La Gauche* and had previously been banned from the United States, Switzerland, France and his homeland of West Germany for spreading revolutionary ideas. He had spoken at mass rallies in France during the May 1968 uprising, and along with other 'aliens' had been barred from the country accordingly, while a tour of America in 1969 was curtailed under McCarthy-era laws precluding those who had "written or published on the international doctrine of communism" from entry.[63] His attendance at academic conference was a point of additional concern. In March 1970, only months before recommending Mandel's exclusion, ASIO produced a report warning that a group of "Marxist academics" from Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne whose

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[60] "Note on the general significance of the 'New Left' for the Western world," A12389 A30/PART 7.
[61] Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, "The 'New (Young) Left' in Australia: Recent Trends in Theory and Strategy," November 1969, A12389 A30/PART 7.
[62] "Note on the general significance of the 'New Left' for the Western world," A12389 A30/PART 7.
[63] John Playford, "The Mandel Affair," *Revolution*, July 1970, 8.

views were "without exception…explicitly revolutionary, and to the left of the CPA" were operating on campus and seeking to use their power to further a "red university" strategy of subterfuge.[64] Mandel's arrival must have appeared as a perfect storm in ASIO's nervous mindset, a globally mobile European far leftist addressing a proudly subversive academic conference. Such threats were, however, viewed differently by media and activists who jumped on yet another opportunity to lambast Australia's restrictive border policies.

Academic and activist John Playford, one of the university-based non-aligned Marxists ASIO had its eyes on, asked in the short-lived radical newspaper *Revolution* "why the Australian Government banned Mandel from our unpolluted shores".[65] Was this merely an example of following America's lead, of the Liberal Minister for Immigration Phillip Lynch hearing "his master's voice", as Playford condescendingly put it? This didn't seem sufficient, however, for the decision to bar Mandel was made in the American context only after an acrimonious public falling out between the State and Justice Departments, making common cause less palatable. Nor did the Australian government provided such a politically loaded rationale for their decision, instead making "cloudy references…to the national interest".[66] Thus, it could only be inferred that this was "a clear-cut case of political repression and mindless parochialism", showing that "the government is frightened of the free exchange of ideas that it does not agree with".[67] The case also highlighted for activists how Australia was very much connected to the global Sixties, if only negatively. As Playford bemoaned, "Although we can still read Mandel, Australians now share with the peoples of the US, the USSR and Eastern Europe the signal honour of not being able to dialogue with him".[68] The mainstream media also used this opportunity to repose the question of whether Australia required "protection" from a dangerous world.

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[64] This document is reproduced in Rowan Cahill, "Security Intelligence and Left Intellectuals: Australia, 1970," *International Gramsci Journal* 1 (2008), Article 5.
[65] Playford, "The Mandel Affair," 8.
[66] "Marxist expert refused visa", *The Australian*, May 13 1970, 3; Playford, "The Mandel Affair," 8.
[67] It is still only possible to guess as to ASIO's motives and debates they engendered, given the National Archives have up until the submission of this thesis failed to release their records on Mandel, after nearly two years of processing.
[68] Playford, "The Mandel Affair," 8.

Figure 7: This cartoon, reproduced in Australian radical newspapers, satirises the walling mentality against Mandel and other radicals. In *National U*, 2 September 1974, 11.

Julie Rigg, writing in the *Australian*, asked "who is the Australian government 'protecting' from what", questioning the veracity of a supposedly democratic government using "one of the most successful aspects of the totalitarian technique…censoring ideas or banning the men who carry them".[69] The supposed freedom of travel in a globalising world was marshalled by two Australian National University academics who, writing to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, stated how "in a country which claims to be democratic there is a strong prima facie assumption in favour of entry, especially for a short stay"—a right only to be rescinded in the face of "weighty reasons". That no such reasons were provided revealed a Government that was merely fearful of the spread of radical ideas, a notion dismissed by the letter writers who opined, "if a few speeches…could really endanger or subvert Australian

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[69] Julie Rigg, "Australia: In need of care and protection?" *The Australian*, 14 May 1970, 12.

society it would not be a society worth preserving".[70] This humorous aside seems particularly revealing. ASIO and the conservative government of the time, fearful of the threat posed by some of the New Left's more wild fantasies, sought to at least try and barricade Australia off from some of its more 'effective' voices.

Yet, as the case of Roosevelt Brown demonstrates, few international border breachers were more central to the anxieties of government than itinerant Black Power radicals, almost all of whom were African American. Here, long-held concerns of racial disharmony and invasion commingled in the imagination of many with new fears around increasingly vocal calls for indigenous self-determination and the porous nature of an increasingly globalised world. Consequently, cases like Brown's provoked a nervous anxiety from the conservative media and sections of the general citizenry, who vocally demanded the nation's protection from such dangerous figures as academic-activist Angela Davis and Black Panther leader Huey Newton. The opposition, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, was provided with an opportunity to challenge these fears with the politically motivated exclusion of African American comedian and civil rights activist Dick Gregory in 1970. This widely publicised incident, occurring only days before the second Moratorium, painted the government and its security services as dangerously backward and chauvinistic philistines, but also racist, while revealing such attempts at border policing to be both superfluous and self-defeating.

For its part, ASIO saw the threat of civil rights and Black Power radicalism as yet another arm of international communism's octopus-like network of subterfuge and division. The visit of African American communist singer Paul Robeson in 1960, though seemingly not opposed by ASIO, was closely monitored, particularly in regard to his interventions into indigenous affairs. ASIO compiled a report on Robeson's previous activities, including "political activity…helping Communist Front 'Peace' activities and 'anti-Colonial' organisations", while noting his meetings with Indigenous Australian activists and recording that he wished to return in the near future to "do some work for the benefit of Australian aborigines".[71] Such fears

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[70] Henry Mayer and Owen Harries, "The Mandel Affair," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 May 1970, 2.
[71] "CP of A interest in Aborigines," 15 March 1961; "Paul Robeson," 8 March 1961 in Robeson, Paul Volume 2, A6119 5034, National Archives of Australia, Canberra. For more on the details of Robeson's trip and reaction from Indigenous Australians, see Ann Curthoys, "Paul Robeson's visit to Australia and Aboriginal activism, 1960," in *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*, eds. Francis Peters-Little, Ann Curthoys and John Docker, 163-84 (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2010).

remained, if anything gaining force, over a decade later. One heavily censored report warned that the interest of international Black Power activists like Roosevelt Brown in indigenous affairs was part of a vast communist conspiracy to besmirch Australia's international reputation. "Communist world organisations", the report read, "have endeavoured to classify Australia amongst the imperialist countries by reproaching it with colonialism and racial discrimination", attempts international Black Power adherents were believed to be part of.[72]

Equally political concerns formed the basis of Australia's continuing restrictive immigration policies, particularly towards African Americans. During a March 1966 parliamentary debate on liberalising immigration laws, these ideas were made resoundingly clear. Liberal Member for Sturt, Keith Wilson, after reading out a bevy of racially-charged newspaper headlines from around the world, warned that "[w]e should not import into this country the problem that has beset other countries", while the member for Wimmera bluntly put it that "we don't want a Little Rock in Australia".[73] Word of this clearly racist sentiment soon made its way across the Pacific, with an article in the popular African American magazine *Ebony* reporting that "Australians in general do not dislike the Negro, they are just afraid that letting him in would be 'importing racial tensions'". The article, which was reprinted in the Aboriginal rights journal *Smoke Signals*, claimed that while it was impossible for an Afro-American to gain residency in Australia, the doors were open to white Americans fleeing "the negro problem".[74]

In the absence of African American migration in the pre-Whitlam period— only a handful applied to come to Australia, nearly all of whom were rejected as unsuitable—the threat of black radicals visiting Australia provided a vivid substitute. While generally open to African American entertainers or tourists staying for short periods, as Robeson's case shows, the proposed visits of Black Power militants was another matter entirely. A variety of figures were invited to venture down under by church and activist groups, sparking a flurry of letters from concerned Australians to the Department of Immigration. This not only illustrates how the basis of racial exclusion was shifting, now on the basis of disharmony and radicalism of a few rather

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[72] Undated, untitled (censored) report, Sykes, Roberta Volume 2, A6119 4229, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[73] Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (House), "Immigration," 24 March 1966, 592; 600.

[74] Era Thompson, "Australia: It's White Policy and the Negro," *Smoke Signals* 6, No. 3 (October 1967), 4.

than supposedly natural traits, but also the role concerned citizens sought to play in the constructing of borders.[75] As Brown relates, "nation-state walling responds in part to [the] psychic fantasies, anxieties, and wishes" of citizens, although it is rarely effective in achieving its purported aims.[76] In 1970, for instance, amid incorrect reports that the left-wing preacher Ted Noffs of Sydney's Wayside Chapel had invited Black Panther leaders like Huey Newton to visit Australia, A.W. Buckley of Arncliffe, NSW, wrote to the Department expressing his hopes that "this type of black is not admitted here". This was due to the fact that "their visit to this Country, at present free of th[e] coloured problem facing America, would not be in the interests of Australia".[77] These fears of outside contamination was mixed with concerns about the susceptibility of Indigenous Australians to 'dangerous' ideas. Such concerns emerged around the invitation of what were termed "Black Power workers" by the Australian Council of Churches in 1971 for a short visit, the purpose of which was "not only…fact-finding, but also explaining how Black Power militancy works" to indigenous Queenslanders.[78]

The Department received dozens of letters after these plans were publicised, with many writers expressing concern as to the impact such arrivals would have on what were termed "our aborigines". Mrs R.F. Kunde, a member of the Queensland Liberal Party and moderate Aboriginal rights group One People of Australia League (OPAL), questioned whether the government wanted "to see the aboriginal cause set back 50 years" by Black Power influence, or for Australia to "experience the resultant riots and bloodshed" militant Aboriginal self-determination would bring.[79] Finally, the invitation of academic and activist Angela Davis by organisers of the Black Moratorium sparked another flurry of citizen concern.[80] Charles Huxtable of Killara, NSW warned the Minister that his government was losing the hard won respect of most Australians through its "apparent appeasement" of the radical movement and the allowing of "international trouble-maker[s]" onto Australian soil. Describing Davis

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[75] On the role the everyday activities of citizens perform in the imposition of borders see Edith Sheffer, "On Edge: Building the Border in East and West Germany," *Central European History* 40, No. 2 (2007): 307-39.
[76] Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, 81.
[77] A.W. Buckley to Under Secretary, Department of Immigration, March 5 1970, in Black panther power movement, A446 1970/95140, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[78] Douglas Rose, "Churches: down to earth," *Courier-Mail*, March 24 1971 in Black panther power movement, A446 1970/95140.
[79] R.F. Kunde to Minister for Immigration, April 6 1971, in Black panther power movement, A446 1970/95140.
[80] "Angela Davis now invited to speak in Sydney," *The Age,* 9 June 1972, 4.

somewhat incongruously as both a "leader in communist warfare" and a "rebel anarchist", Huxtable's concerns clearly wedded the threat of international communism with that of race.[81] That Davis's mass of international post-trial speaking engagements made a tour of the antipodes an impossibility did not seem to curb the over-active Australian imagination of outside threats or desires for borders in an increasingly disordered world.

When government acted on these anxieties, however, spirited debate seemed more common than gratitude. This was the case when in September 1970, just days before the September anti-Vietnam war moratorium, the exclusion of Richard 'Dick' Gregory from Australia became front-page news. Noffs' Wayside Chapel had initially invited Gregory, a well-known African American comedian, civil rights activist and unsuccessful 1968 presidential candidate, but difficulties in organisation had driven them to approach the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) for assistance. The comic was being billed to do shows around the country, including TV spots, and the anti-Vietnam war Moratorium committee was approached to provide funds in exchange for Gregory speaking at their September rally in Sydney. This was where ASIO apparently became involved. Monitoring the phones of Moratorium organisers, it caught drift of their intentions and passed on the information to a Government mounting a law and order campaign around the upcoming protests.[82] That Gregory had applied on the basis of 'sightseeing' rather than his political agenda was used to deny him a visa.

Government sought to employ a terminology of otherness to conflate Gregory and those organising the Moratorium as foreign and violent forces dangerous to the national interest. This was a repressive toolkit at least partially borrowed from Richard Nixon. Jeremy Varon explains how the American Moratoriums of October-November 1969 had been "immensely successful in showing the breadth of anti-war sentiment", and were soon replicated in Australia to similar levels of success. And local conservatives were relying on an equally Americanised vocabulary to discredit the protests.[83] Nixon, noting the first Moratorium's success in presenting increasingly

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[81] Charles Huxtable to Minister for Immigration, June 9 1972, in Black panther power movement, A446 1970/95140.

[82] These and other details of Gregory's trip and the nature of ASIO surveillance discussed in Christopher Joyce, "Wanted: Dick Gregory," *National U* 6, No. 12, 29 September 1970, 16.

[83] Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction and revolutionary violence in the sixties and seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 116.

vocal anti-war oppositions, sought to present the second, set to be held on November 15, "as far more threatening than the October Moratorium". Nixon argued that this second event, organised by a younger and more radical constituency, "would attract violence-prone elements with an anti-American agenda".[84]

Conservative Australians borrowed Nixon's rhetoric to discredit Australia's second Moratorium, mixing fears of violence, of "political bikies pack raping democracy" as Minister for Labour and National Service Billy Snedden put it, with ever-present concerns around foreign contamination. While pronouncing that "the Government's policy is to allow the maximum freedom of travel to Australia", Prime Minister John Gorton then proceeded to rhetorically ask "why the Government should allow aliens to come to Australia for the purpose of interfering with political matters".[85] The Immigration minister Phillip Lynch took this further, insisting that allowing Gregory to involve himself in a "one-sided distorted anti-war campaign inimical to the objectives for which Australian troops are fighting in Vietnam…would represent a betrayal of [those] servicemen".[86] These points were difficult to defend, however, and received swift condemnation from a variety of sources. The charge of 'aliens' interfering in Australia was easily countered, with NUAUS's *National U* commenting:

> The Prime Minister's "aliens" approach looks a little hollow when you look at his Government's record at having Australia's politics interfered with by aliens from the White House, or from Vesteys, or from CRA, or the oil companies.[87]

On the other hand, charges of Gregory's violent intent were difficult to substantiate. Even the High Commissioner in Washington, James Plimsoll, sent a concerned cable to his superiors pointing out that "there is no evidence" Gregory, an avowed pacifist, "would himself advocate or incite violence".[88]

The ban was also painted in the media as yet another censorial blunder with the intention not only on silencing dissent, but ensuring the populace had little access to

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[84] Ibid, 116.
[85] "We won't allow aliens to interfere, says PM," *The Australian*, 5 September 1970, 1.
[86] Kenneth Randall, "Lynch defends visa ban: Visit would be a 'threat to nation', Minister claims," *The Australian* 3 September 1970, 1.
[87] Joyce, "Wanted: Dick Gregory," 16.
[88] James Plimsoll to Peter Heydon, 1 September 1970, in Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, A6980 S250654.

outside ideas. *The Australian's* lead editorial after Gregory's visa ban asked sarcastically why the government "didn't consider refusing re-entry to Dr [Jim] Cairns when he went overseas", adding more seriously that:

> Banning books is bad enough [but] banning people is preposterous…Surely Australia's national interest is not threatened by a comedian who advocates full civil rights for black people and a cessation of the Vietnam war. The country doesn't need to be protected from men like that, but from the whims of people who try to keep our minds closed.[89]

While the government denied a racial motivation for Gregory's exclusion, the flimsy basis of its public pronouncements led many to ask questions. Although he was invited to address an anti-war rally, it was through Gregory's widely reported civil rights activism that Gough Whitlam's Labor Opposition read the exclusion. Whitlam declared in a perhaps ill-titled press statement, "Gregory Lynched", that:

> Australians expect the Gorton Government to make a fool of itself but the world's most powerful Negro community is likely to conclude that the exclusion of one of its leading civil rights fighters springs from simpler, more serious and therefore more sinister motives than Mr. Lynch's effusion.[90]

Whitlam's imputation that government had acted in a racist manner, in keeping with the worst aspects of the White Australia Policy, was certainly the dominant response. Gregory himself lambasted the government for racism, and threatened to publicise his exclusion around the world, and particularly at a summit of non-aligned nations in Zambia that he was soon to attend.[91] Striking a similar chord, a student activist wrote in *National U* that while "Satire is one of the most effective political mediums and Gregory is one of the world's leading exponents of the art", which may well have been a reason for his ban, "maybe they just kept Gregory out because he is BLACK".[92]

Such ridicule did significant public damage to Gorton's transnationally and racially inspired law and order drive. Indeed, attempts to detract support from the

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[89] "Gregorian Moratorium*,*" *The Australian*, 3 September 1970, 10.
[90] "Gregory Lynched: Statement by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Whitlam," 2 September 1970, Personal Papers of Prime Minister E.G. Whitlam, M170 70/70, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[91] Peter Smark, "Gregory shapes up – in anger," *The Australian*, 4 September 1970, 1.
[92] Joyce, "Wanted: Dick Gregory," 16.

September Moratorium by linking it to an outside contagion or "alien" whose presence risked violence, disorder and betrayal seemed to have the opposite effect. The level of publicity Gregory's case received instead fired the Moratorium organiser's flagging public relations campaign. An ASIO background briefing bemoaned that the Gregory controversy had served to "promote more support than was expected" for the rallies which, while smaller than those of May and marred by violence instigated by overzealous police, were still viewed as successful.[93]

Wendy Brown argues that the state's increasing inability to control its borders in a post-modern, post-national world has seen calls for the imposition of new barriers, exclusions and controls.[94] It is clear that throughout the Sixties that anxious conservatives used evolving methods of exclusion to ensure that individuals seen as representative of possibly subversive overseas ideas and practices were kept out. While what was considered a dangerous radical underwent revision during the period, as the Soviet Union began to 'come in from the cold', the fear of dangerous overseas events and ideas like decolonisation and the New Left came to be personified in such "non-state transnational actors" as Ernest Mandel and Max Gluckman. Concerns around racial tensions and the radicalisation of "our aborigines" sparked another fit of border policing, with threats of visitation by various Black Power leaders eliciting a range of concerned responses.

The imposition of these exclusions, however, rarely achieved their protective aims. Instead, as Denis Freney alluded to in his comments on their ability to create news, the exclusion of radicals saw their ideas and causes gain just as much, if perhaps more, publicity than their eventual tours would have.[95] Nor were attempts at policing always successful in keeping out activists, with some slipping through the cracks. Youth group Resistance remarked that "it is difficult to make sense of [government] policy to these questions" when their tour of Andrew Pulley, an African American GI and Socialist Workers Party candidate, was not curtailed in a similar fashion to Gregory's.[96] Despite such inconsistencies, this exclusionary mentality meant that the consevative government could easily be painted as fearful, philistine

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[93] "September Moratorium, 1970," in Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, 1970, A1209 1970/6340 PART 2, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[94] Brown, *Walled States*, 7-8.
[95] "Angela Davis now invited."
[96] "Pulley tour a success," *Direct Action*, September 1970, 3.

and dangerously closed-minded—a scenario that was replicated in the debate over censorship.

The war is obscene: Censorship, Vietnam and the politics of gore

Australian governments of the Sixties had just as exclusionary an attitude towards books and pamphlets as they did to people. However, as Nicole Moore argues in her recent history of censorship, this was nowhere near as pervasive or puritanical as is often made out, and neither was it particularly successful in protecting the citizenry from dangerous ideas or scandalous images.[97] Moore outlines how from at least the late colonial period onwards, governments have sought to employ a series of overlapping, often contradictory, forms of literary and political censorship. Federally, Customs administered a system of restriction that slowly loosened throughout the period, particularly after a 1957 scandal surround J.D. Sallinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* appearing in the Parliamentary Library (it had been donated by the US ambassador and duly shelved) saw the first ever review of the so-called 'banned list'. The list was reviewed, many titles were struck off and its contents were to be made public, while censors employed by the Commonwealth Literary Censorship Board were to serve only five-year terms.[98] At State level, censorship laws were multiple and often employed politically, taking activists a longer period and many court cases to liberalise.

The censorship regime was also affected by the same anxieties that informed the exclusionary attitude of government towards international travellers. Writer and historian Geoffrey Dutton argued in a 1970 collection analysing Australia's censorship "crisis" that the nation's "obsession [with] censorship is only part of a larger pattern of protectionism", whereby Australians have sought to "hide ourselves away in a pure, all-white paradise".[99] James Baldwin's book *Another Country*, with its stridently sexualised view of race relations in America, was banned in 1963, an act which "escalated already mounting public criticism of federal publications and film censorship…opening the regime to direct charges of racism, casting (if not exposing) the censors as ideological agents for the increasingly unpopular white Australia

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[97] Moore, *The Censor's Library*, 1-2.
[98] Ibid, 222-3.
[99] Geoffrey Dutton, "Moral Protectionism," in *Australia's Censorship Crisis*, Geoffrey Dutton and Max Harris, eds, 96 (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1970)

policy".[100] Even the chair of the Literature Censorship Board, Kenneth Binns, provided an unheeded warning that "a ban on 'Another Country' might…be associated with Australia's misunderstood 'White Australia' policy and her refusal to support UN condemnation of South African Apartheid".[101] The definition of what was 'obscene' was thus becoming increasingly politicised, and many activists soon found themselves incurring the censors' wrath.

In October 1966, the Victorian government banned Eric Norden's *American Atrocities in Vietnam*. Containing three images of atrocities and graphic descriptions of the reality of the conflict, the small-run pamphlet was categorised somewhat grotesquely as "an obscene publication showing pictures of atrocities likely to create violence" by the Vice Squad.[102] A similarly stretched definition of obscenity was used by New South Wales police to charge Denis Freney and another supporter of the Liberation Bookshop in Sydney with distributing a "morally offensive" publication— the famous image of an American soldier holding a partially dismembered Vietnamese corpse.[103] Obscenity was not, however, the only means of attempting to silence critics. The publication in 1968 by Sydney radical group Resistance of a copied American pamphlet entitled *How not to join the army* sparked another storm of controversy.[104] In this piece, conscripts were informed of methods by which they could avoid service, or engage in sabotage if forced to serve. The Commonwealth Police compiled a lengthy report on the pamphlet, and the Commonwealth Solicitor recommended to the Attorney General that charges under the Crimes Act— particularly section 7A which made it illegal to incite, urge, aid or encourage the commission of offences against a law of the Commonwealth—be laid. The pamphlets and printing equipment were seized in highly publicised raids, although an inability to

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[100] Moore, *The Censor's Library*, 236. For more on Australia's history of censorship see, amongst others, Peter Coleman, *Obscenity, Blasphemy, Sedition: 100 Years of Censorship in Australia* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974); Augustine Brannigan, "Crimes from Comics: Social and Political determinants of reform of the Victorian Obscenity Law, 1938-1954," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 19 (1986): 23-41 and Deana Heath, *Purifying Empire: Obscenity and the Politics of Moral Regulation in Britain, India and Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[101] Quoted in Moore, *The Censor's Library*, 239.
[102] Morrison, "Statement on the Seizure."
[103] Freney, *A Map of Days*, 264.
[104] J. Percy, *How not to join the army* (J. Percy: Sydney, 1968).

conclusively prove who actually published the offending pamphlet made prosecution impossible.[105]

There was support for these censorial moves. Government backbenchers were particularly vocal, with one presenting such political publications as "seditious and filthy" and another demanding that "urgent action be taken to suppress these treasonable activities". Additionally, petitions seeking the banning of works like *The Little Red Schoolbook* were received by parliament, bemoaning the "dangerous error of judgement" it would be to leave such material uncensored.[106] Despite such protestations, attempts to politically censor books, pamphlets or ideas not only routinely failed, but merely secured publicity for activists and their causes. Freney, after being charged by the NSW police for distributing an obscene anti-war poster, recalls protesting "if this is obscene then the war is obscene…please go ahead and prosecute me, I'd love to argue this one out in court".[107] Indeed, the increased willingness on the part of activists to challenge the unpopular and internationally embarrassing censorship regime, which was only comparable to that of Catholic Ireland and Apartheid South Africa, was a hallmark of the period.

This was achieved both by producing images and text that radicals hoped would be deemed obscene or otherwise unsuitable for public consumption, and challenging the veracity of these decisions through the courts. The publishers of *Oz* Magazine and the Libertarians who took the reigns of UNSW's *Tharunka* in 1970 most famously executed these acts. The latter in particular became famous for its publication of sexually explicit content, including the poems "Eskimo Nell" and "Cunt is a Christian Word", which saw editor Wendy Bacon briefly jailed.[108] These youth and student activists were labelled "porno-politicians" by the previously anti-censorship Liberal senator Peter Coleman. Yet, despite their "publishing as a political end, as an instrument", as Frank Moorhouse put it, material was selected not so much for its interest to radicals, but "because it enraged police, politicians and others…[t]here was

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[105] Attorney-General's Department Minute Paper, received 16 July 1968, How not to join the army, A432, 1968/354, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[106] Malcolm Mackay, "Dr. Mackay's reply to Anglicans," *The Age*, 8 October 1968, 5; CPD (House), "Question: National Service," 30 May 1968, 1787; CPD (House), "Petitions: The Little Red Book," 18 October 1972, 2747.

[107] Freney, *A Map of Days*, 264.

[108] For more on these anti-censorship campaigns see Dominic Bowes, "Exposing Indecency: Censorship and Sydney's Alternative Press, 1963-1973," (BA Honours Thesis, University of Sydney, 2012) and Tim Briedis "'Pornographic poison of the mind': the *Tharunka* scandal, *The Little Red Schoolbook* and Sex Education at Fitzroy High," Unpublished paper, 2010.

no intention of reform or communication".[109] Such an approach was very much in keeping with the libertarians' "sceptic[ism] about the potential of activism", ideas inherited from the Sydney 'Push' of radical anarchists in the 1950s who sought to live their politics rather than proselytise.[110]

While these actions could be written off as the work of harmless hedonists, a more firmly political agenda often underlay them. As activist-intellectual and vocal censorship opponent Dennis Altman explained at the May 1970 Socialist Scholars Conference: "censorship, ostensibly non-political, becomes political in an age when obscenity is a political weapon".[111] The war in Vietnam and Censorship were also seen as intricately linked by activists, as Dutton argued, to Australia's "protectionism" against the outside world that saw it "hide behind the Royal Navy [and] the assorted weapons of the USA" by sending "troops to their infamous wars, from South Africa to Vietnam".[112] Yet, for Altman at least, this political relationship did not necessarily make the two issues directly comparable:

> I do not consider prohibitions on marijuana as evil as the war in Vietnam, nor theatre censorship as deplorable [as] discrimination against Aboriginals. I do believe, however, that the latter are not aberrations of our society but rather the logical consequences of the structure of values that underlie [it]. Only if these values are changed will elites lose the support, or if you prefer, acquiescence of the masses in their policies.[113]

The culturally, and particularly sexually, repressive nature of Australian society—understood thanks to Marcuse, Fromm and others—was seen by anti-censorship activists as a linchpin of the entire capitalist apparatus, which only a cultural revolution could disrupt.

Asides from these ideological concerns, the seizing of radical or overtly sexualised literature was a good way of generating publicity, with the act of declaring an imported publication obscene actually imbuing it with a new level of desirability as a refused commodity. Liberal minister for Customs and Excise Don Chipp partially

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[109] Frank Moorhouse, "Porno Politics," in *Uni Sex: A study of sexual attitudes and behaviours at Australian Universities,* eds. Wendy Bacon, et al, 35 (Dee Why West, NSW: Eclipse Books, 1972).
[110] Briedis, "Pornographic poison of the mind," 9. For more on The Push see *Sex and Anarchy: The Life and Death of the Sydney Push* (Ringwood, Vic: Viking, 1996).
[111] Dennis Altman, "The Politics of Cultural Change", Paper presented at the Socialist Scholars Conference, May 21-24 1970, in Altman, Dennis Patkin, Volume 1, A6119, 3692, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[112] Dutton, "Moral Protectionism," 97.
[113] Altman, "The Politics of Cultural Change."

justified his liberalising of censorship standards from 1970 onwards by arguing that salacious publications like the *Little Red Schoolbook* would appear locally in any case, and proscribing them would only increase their marketability. Responding to an opposition question, Chipp rhetorically asked whether the questioner "want[s] us to give millions of dollars worth of free publicity to something that would be printed and published locally, giving it front page coverage in all the newspapers and making it a best seller?"[114]

A similar point is made by a writer for Resistance's newsletter who noted that *How not to join the army* "has become a financial asset to us" with "[w]hat was a bunch of slowly yellowing roneoed paper in the corridor upstairs suddenly bec[oming] in the Government eyes the source of all dangerous criminal activity against the state and the army".[115] Thus, government attempts to limit or curtail the availability of these ideas had a reverse impact. After Victorian police seized the *American Atrocities* pamphlet, booksellers had thousands of copies brought down from Sydney, as the material had been cleared for a general readership by federal Customs.[116] As the *Australian* commented days later: "this action by the Victorian police provides a degree of advertisement beyond the dreams (and the pockets) of the Vietnam Action Committee. This is the exact opposite, presumably, of what the police intended".[117]

This sort of selective and State-based censorship was one of many protests raised by activists and media. Morrison asked why it was acceptable for the same images reproduced in the *American Atrocities* leaflet for which he was charged—of abuses by American or South Vietnamese soldiers of the local population—to be reprinted in the Melbourne *Herald* and the *Australian* causing "widespread horror amongst decent people".[118] Was this a case of political censorship? *The Age* hinted at the possibility, pointing out that having been "produced for a political purpose" the pamphlet's confiscation could not but raise the question of political censorship. While such a practice was "repugnant to Australian traditions and ways of thought", these claims were "even if groundless…not good for the health of the community".[119] Some

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[114] Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (House), "Question: Importation of Book," 11 April 1972, 1399.
[115] "The Pamphlet," *Resistance Newsletter*, 1968, 1-2.
[116] "Rush for Viet Pamphlet," *The Age*, 21 September 1966, 3.
[117] Editorial, "A stupid ban in Victoria," *The Australian*, 6 September 1966, 6.
[118] Morrision, "Statement on the Seizure." In YCAC Papers, MS 10002, "Correspondence – 1966."
[119] Editorial, "A Censorship Surprise," *The Age*, 5 September 1966, 2.

newspaper editorialists sought to use these and other examples, such as Queensland's banning of the soundtrack to US countercultural musical *Hair,* to argue for the imposition of national, more liberalised, policies on censorship, removing from often politically-overzealous State governments the power to control information. Yet, radical activists sought to take their protests beyond the parameters of liberal reform to a questioning of the very basis of obscenity as a category. As Altman argued, obscenity was a political means employed by government to distinguish what was and was not acceptable for consumption by a moral community, yet this very plasticity of meaning opened such definitions to interpretation, particularly as the everyday violence of the Vietnam War became more and more apparent.

Indicative of this type of moral appeal was an article that appeared in Melbourne University newspaper *Farrago*, where a student commented on claims by Vice Squad head Det. Sgt Whitehead that he had been "upset" by the content of the *American Atrocities* pamphlet. "How strange that he should react by trying to stop the pamphlet's circulation", the author commented, "If he really was sickened a more logical reaction might be [to] join the peace marchers".[120] Similar tactics were also used by members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, who having been charged with obscenity for reproducing an image of an American soldier holding a severed Vietnamese head asked the court "which is the most obscene thing…publishing this picture as we did and showing what happened there or the act itself?" They displayed enlarged images of atrocity photos outside the court in protest, and the case against them was thrown out.[121]

Increasingly, grotesque images of tortured, murdered or otherwise dehumanised Vietnamese bodies began appearing alongside other censorable material as a means of lodging a political challenge to government. Anti-censorship broadsheet *The Act*, for instance, contained on its front page the same image Freney was charged with producing during the Moratorium as well as a picture of a nude couple. Inside its covers, more grotesque images of faces decimated by shrapnel and children ripped limb from limb by bombs appeared alongside hardcore pornography and lewd cartoons. The authors, amongst them *Tharunka* editor Wendy Bacon and several Communist Party members, wrote in the opening editorial:

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[120] David Morawetz, "Strange vice attitude," *Farrago*, 23 September 1966, 4.
[121] Interview with Margaret Holmes, conducted by Siobhan McHugh, 1993, in ORAL TRC 2761/8/20-21, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

We see evidence in this lucky country of poverty, injustice, bigotry, victimisation, hunger and inequality. The lucky country can be a very unlucky country if you are old, poor or sick. To us, this is obscenity. This is vile and despicable, indecent and perverted.[122]

In an article accompanying the Vietnam atrocity photos, the unacknowledged authors recounted a series of facts about the war, including that the equivalent of nine Hiroshima bombs were dropped on North Vietnam in 1972 alone and that the fighting had displaced some eight million people. They asked whether these facts were "as indecent as a living prick or the word fuck".[123]

An article in the Melbourne based Radical Action Movement (a rebadged Students for a Democratic Society) newspaper *Troll* made this point clear: "We must show the hypocrisy of a society that happily supports, and conscripts young men for, genocide in Vietnam, and then screams about obscenity and corrupting influences in the socio-political challenges it chooses to call 'pornographic'".[124] And yet, there was a clear political problem for those seeking to mobilise what Quinn Slobodian calls "corpse polemics" for political gain.[125] And this was not just because focusing on "the horrors of war" meant, as Denis Freney put it in a paper given at a 1971 anti-war conference, that more subtle issues of the irrationality and wastefulness of war could be lost.[126] Rather, the *Troll* writer's rhetorical question of "What is more 'obscene': a drawing of a prick or a drawing of a child being napalmed or starving" threatened to create exactly the type of equivalency between the two scenarios Altman had warned against.[127]

Slobodian explains how the distribution of ever more violent images of brutality "often threatened to shade into the exploitative genres of sadistic action films and soft-core pornography", integrating them into a cultural context increasingly defined by the normalisation of (depictions of) violence and overt sexuality.[128] The Hollywood film *Bonnie and Clyde,* then regarded as the most violent popular film to

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[122] "The Culture of Repression…The Politics of Freedom," *The Act,* c. 1973, 2.

[123] "Mr Griffith…what is obscene?" *The Act,* c. 1973, 3.

[124] "School kids *Oz*," *Troll*, September 1971, 9.

[125] Quinn Slobodian: *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 135.

[126] Denis Freney, "The Youth Revolt in Suburbia and the Anti-War Movement," in *National Anti-War Conference, Sydney, February 17-21, 1971 – Papers Presented*, np (Sydney: Self-published, 1971).

[127] "School Kids *Oz*," 9.

[128] Slobodian: *Foreign Front*, 135.

have ever appeared, had been released uncensored in Australia in 1967 while, as critics of customs-centered censorship never tired of pointing out, locally produced pornography or sexually explicit stories were easily available.[129] The reliance on images of corpses as political ammunition also threatened to undermine the established traditions of concrete solidarity with Third World political actors analysed in Chapter Two. The turn towards using images of mutilated corpses—which only became more pronounced as the war grew in intensity—"risked effacing Third World individuality by transforming usually nameless and mute bodies into icons of mobilization", as Slobodian puts it.[130]

Violence and its uses had long been a topic of debate in Australian social movements. A 1967 debate in *Tharunka* took on just this question, condemning the use of corpses of as mobilising agents. Members of the Liberal Reform Group, a split from the Liberal party and precursor to the Democrats, had covertly included yet another overseas pamphlet, entitled *The Children of Vietnam,* in the student paper. This sparked a response from the disgruntled editor, who bemoaned how the use of "brutal" images of suffering children was "calculated…to elicit a powerful emotional response" rather than further political understanding or debate. "Australia has had more than enough of this spurious emotion-grabbing debate over Vietnam and to see it encouraged by a political group claiming considerable support from within Universities is appalling", he continued.[131] A letter supportive of the pamphlet's tone attacked the editor's protestations, pointed out that "[t]he purpose of the booklet is to make people aware of the suffering being endured by these children. Would you do this by showing *healthy* kids?"[132] This debate points towards American activist and writer Susan Sontag's argument that the political employment of Vietnam atrocity photography became increasingly problematic as the years dragged on. "[V]isual representations of suffering had become cliché", she argued, with the advent of TV and the war's sheer horror ensuring citizens "had been bombarded by sensationalist photography and, as a result, our capacity for ethical responsiveness had diminished". What was needed was a "narrative", not a decontextualised image, if systemic change

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[129] On Violence in Bonny and Clyde see John Allen, "Bonnie and Clyde," *Tharunka*, 4 June 1968, 11. On the wide availability of pornography see Richard Walsh, "A note from a victim," in *Australia's Censorship Crisis*, eds. Geoffrey Dutton and Max Harris, 131-2 (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1970).
[130] Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 135.
[131] Mark Lyons, "Children of Vietnam – an editor's apology," *Tharunka*, 1 August 1967, 7.
[132] W. Bottomley, "Lyons' Diatribe," *Tharunka,* 5 September 1967, 7.

was desired.[133] Activists in Australia were beginning to understand something similar, encountering the limits of the rhetorical employment of brutalised bodies.

Announcing a screening of French director Emile De Antonia's controversial documentary film "In the year of the pig", Resistance's *Newsletter* stated that "unlike most previous Vietnam documentaries the appeal of the film is mainly intellectual, not emotional". By 1970, when this newsletter was published, it was becoming clear to some activists that Vietnam was not a violent crime committed by an otherwise peaceful society based on rationality and law, but a part of the system itself. As a leaflet advocating more militant protest means in Brisbane argued—"My Lai was a stake, not a mistake. The war in Vietnam...was not caused by a breakdown in the machine, it is the logical outcome of it"—and as such attempts to appeal to the moral compass of a violent system were perhaps less than useful.[134] Antonia's film, splicing newsreel footage with interviews and a particular focus on the French war and America's role in it, "is no bleeding heart waffle about the attrocities (sic) committed by the Yanks and their various white and tan puppets", the author reported. Indeed, "the tired footage of napalmed babies, homeless villagers, etc, is thankfully almost non existent here". Instead, the film is "tellingly political", presenting "the napalmings, the saturation bombings, the defoliation…as inevitable results of the opposition of the whole nation to the US attempts to control Vietnam. They spring from the frustration of this aim".[135]

Clearly, at least those in the anti-imperialist wing of the movement were looking beyond the corpse polemic. A well-known cover of Trotskyist Paper *Direct Action* from 1971 seeking to foster involvement in the upcoming Moratorium used not images of burning children, but those of NLF guerrillas and civilian demonstrators, asking "tired of marching? What if they were?"[136] The narrative of the heroic guerrilla was replacing the dismembered corpse, and the political utility of a moral claim that 'pulled at the heart strings' was under challenge. The uses of corpse polemics also came in for indirect critique from other movements. Aboriginal activist Paul Coe, condemning the complicity of the anti-war movement in racist attitudes, noted at an anti-war conference that the visibility of war crimes like My Lai detracted

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[133] Judith Butler, "Photography, War, Outrage," *MPLA* 120, No. 3 (May 2005): 823-4.
[134] Quoted in Mark Young, "Student Radicalism at the University of Queensland, 1966-1972" (BA Honours Thesis, The University of Queensland, 1984), 66.
[135] "In the year of the pig!" *Resistance Newsletter*, August-September 1970, 3.
[136] *Direct Action*, January 1971, 1.

from the everyday structural violence that killed indigenous people. While in "Vietnam they kill children with guns and fragmentation bombs", creating photogenic scenes of atrocious violence to be circulated by activists, in "Australia they use more subtle methods—the children just die of malnutrition or dysentery".[137] This, Coe postulated, was perhaps part of the reason why 40,000 march at a Moratorium, but only 300 for Aboriginal land rights. The image was as important for what it did not say as for what it did, and activists like Coe began looking further afield for answers to their own political dilemmas, as the next chapter will discuss.

Conclusion

Restrictions imposed on the border, both as a physical barrier against undesirables and a moral demarcation between what was 'obscene' and what was not, provoked differing and conflictive responses throughout Australia's Sixties. In both instances, the collectively constructed barriers of government and conservative citizens appeared as dangerously philistine interventions causing irreparable damage to Australia's international reputation. The highly public exclusions of African American activists like Dick Gregory were replicated in the cultural arena by the censoring of Baldwin's *Another Country*.[138] Activists, as Hasluck noted, had a field day of these and other restrictions, using them both to tie Australia into global activist networks and to provide inspiration and publicity for local movements.

The exclusion of people seemed fairly clear cut. While opposition was registered in some areas, the visitation of 'dangerous' radicals only really seemed threatening to those who, as *The Australian's* editorialist put it, sought to keep our minds closed. While the definition of what was a 'dangerous' radical clearly shifted, the political use of such exclusions by activists remained. The struggle against censorship was, however, more problematic. Images of obscene violence and torture in Indochina, particularly after the revelations of My Lai, served a dual purpose, running afoul both of official justifications of the war as a mission to 'save' South Vietnam and the official censorship regime. However, by engaging in trench warfare with the censor through publishing images of hardcore pornography alongside those of mutilated Third World corpses, activists risked transforming those they sought to

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[137] Paul Coe, "Racism and the anti-war movement," in *National Anti-War Conference, Sydney*, np.
[138] For more on the 'collective construction' of borders see Sheffer, "On Edge," 307-39.

help free from imperialist domination into yet another circulating image in a society increasingly obsessed by such spectacles. It threatened to remove the context and intellectual argument, and less photogenic causes found it difficult to compete for the attention of a radicalising community. The politics of transgressing or contesting political and cultural borders could prove both a blessing and a curse for activists during Australia's Sixties.

Part Three

Possibilities and Disillusionment

Chapter Six

Wider horizons: Indigenous Australians abroad and the limits of global activism

BOAC Flight 70 was refuelling at Dubai airport on 21 November 1974, when two Palestinian commandos stormed aboard. Armed with automatic weapons, the hijackers locked down the cabin, directed the plane to Tunisia and began splitting those onboard into national groups. Poet and Australian Aboriginal activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal, formerly known as Kath Walker, was amongst those on board, and was soon questioned as to whether she was of Indian or Pakistani citizenship. Noonuccal, who had played one of the most public role in the 1967 referendum which finally ended constitutional discrimination against Indigenous Australians, recalls how she then told the surprised hijackers that "I am Aboriginal Australian and proud of it". Returning from a meeting of the steering committee for the Second World Black Arts Festival in Nigeria, Noonuccal then suggested that the hostage takers' nationalistic ambitions might be better served by involvement in that global exhibition of cultural pride than transnational violence. Despite, or perhaps because of her advice, delivered as a supporter of Palestinian national aspirations, Noonuccal did not receive any preferential treatment. She was categorised amongst the British and other European passengers on board rather than those from the third and developing world where her affinities lay.[1]

This relatively well known incident—recently immortalised in a play by Brisbane indigenous leader Sam Watson[2]—was only one of many in which activists encountered the multiplying 'black' and Third World liberation movements of the long Sixties, and was the only one which occurred at the barrel of a gun. Most of these meetings, in fact, were highly productive for those involved, while also throwing up complex challenges and difficulties. This chapter, moving on from the overview approach of the previous two, will explore in detail how various indigenous activists used the period's increased mobility to encounter and engage with the many

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[1] Kath Walker, "Flight into Tunis," *Identity* 2, No. 4 (August 1975): 6-8.
[2] Sam Watson, *Oodgeroo: Bloodline to Country* (Brisbane: Playlab Press, 2009).

new ideas and movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Members of these movements, not just Palestinian freedom fighters but also African American cultural nationalists and Chinese Red Guards, were connected by a complex and evolving Third World, anti-colonial imagination. This thesis has previously discussed how the end of World War II and the onset of the Cold War also marked the beginning of a sharp decline in the ability of colonial administrations to govern their subjects, culminating in a series of liberation struggles and new, non-aligned nations eking out a place in a bipolar world. Similarly, African Americans in the 'internal colony' of the United States began demanding more forcefully that the nation extend its liberal ideas to those who had long been excluded. As Fanon Che Wilkins argues in his study of the affinities and connections between the US civil rights group Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and African decolonisation struggles, these activists saw "their local efforts as inseparable from larger international movements engaged in similar and overlapping struggles for freedom and self-determination".[3] This chapter maps how the "wider horizons" of the Sixties, as one activists put it, allowed Indigenous Australians to identify with and make use of imagined and concrete networks between oppressed peoples—bonds Victorian activist Bruce McGuinness identified as emanating from "poverty, oppression, skin pigmentation, and the white man's hate for us".[4]

This was not, however, always an easy process of identification and communion. While previous chapters have presented the global imagination of activists as generally useful, albeit with some inevitable criticisms, this chapter and that which follows deal with broader issues of its fallibility in practice. As the narrative which opened this chapter suggests, being considered a part of the world of black, decolonising and national libration struggles was often difficult, as not only did Indigenous Australians lack a significant international profile, but the very definition of what constituted a 'black' people was open to contention. Equally, the benefits of being a part of these global networks were a subject of debate. Activists and commentators alike questioned whether transnationalising a highly localised indigenous politics was really worthwhile as the sometimes-romantic attachments

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[3] Fanon Che Wilkins, "The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa Before the Launching of Black Power, 1960-1965," *Journal of African American History* 92, No. 4 (Fall 2007): 469.

[4] "Wider Horizons," *Smoke Signals* 8, No. 3 (March 1970): 5; Bruce McGuinness quoted in Ravi de Costa, *A Higher Authority: Indigenous transnationalism and Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), 97.

with the rhetoric of decolonisation and Black Power often clashed with their troubling realities. Beginning with an overview of how scholars and activists have understood Black Power's local complexities, this chapter identifies how and why activists sought to become part of these global anti-colonial networks. It then move on to discuss several moments of international engagement by indigenous Australians who sought to experience and exploit these global networks by venturing to locations as far afield as Atlanta, London and Beijing. These trips provided a series of productive lessons that activists brought back, although they also led to debates, recriminations and an encounter with the limits of transnational politics in a quickly transforming world.

Our common enemies: Indigenous Australians and the meaning of Black Power

Roberta (Bobbi) Sykes wrote an open letter to the Planning Conference of the Sixth Pan African Congress in February 1973. Quoting West Indian author George Laming, who "many years ago defined 'Black' as 'synonymous with originating in Africa'", Sykes sought "to add another dimension" to such "smug" and elitist" sentiments which had "prevailed, been republished, and therefore mentally re-inforced" throughout the global Black Power movement.[5] She informed the conference organisers that:

> There exists on this globe other countries, less progressive perhaps, at least as far as the Black inhabitants are concerned, who have not been in the position previously to refute or challenge this definition, but who are definitely Black; who know of no African origins in their past, yet who wish to be recognised as part of the struggle.[6]

It was these forgotten people, Australian aborigines as well as Papua New Guineans and Pacific Islanders, who Sykes sought to bring into the 'black' fold.

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[5] Roberta Sykes, "Open Letter to the Planning Conference of the Secretariat of the Sixth Pan African Congress," 1 February 1973, in Sykes, Roberta Volume 2, A6119 4229, National Archives of Australia, Canberra; for smug and elitist nature of this stream of thought see Roberta Sykes, "Blacks will get blacker this year," *Nation Review*, 5 January 1973.
[6] Sykes, "Open Letter," in Sykes, Roberta Volume 2, A6119 4229.

Figure 8: Roberta 'Bobbi' Sykes featured on the front cover of Britain's *Observer* as a part of her tour of Britain. *Observer*, 2 November 1972.

Sykes had been a staunch activist for indigenous rights since leaving her family life in Townsville for that of a radical activist and writer. Her public profile and stinging writing style in the nation's most radical mainstream newspaper, the *Nation Review*, made her a well-known figure of dissent, despite ongoing debates

around her indigeneity.[7] Travelling to the United Kingdom and the United States in late 1972, Sykes had encountered a variety of radical organisations, but had been disappointed by their lack of knowledge about the Indigenous Australian struggle. While she was featured on the cover of London's *Observer* magazine as "Australia's Angela Davis", her visit to a bookshop in Harlem that "sported a sign advertising books about 'all the blacks in the world'" showed that consciousness of Black Australians was nowhere near that of the famous African American activist with whom she bore such a resemblance. Sykes was dismayed when she "asked to be shown to the section on Australian blacks" and "was told that there weren't any blacks in Australia. Hence no Black Australia section".[8] Despite these disappointments, Sykes hoped that the Sixth Pan African Congress, to be held in Dar es Salaam in 1974, would "forge even stronger bonds between us, so that in unity we can continue our struggle against our common enemies: racism, oppression, colonialism, with fortified determination".[9]

Few historians have given much credence to the often-frustrated transnational overtures of Sykes and others to become part of the global decolonisation and anti-racist movement. Russell McGregor argues that, while Indigenous Australian activism during the period needs to be seen as a sort of "anti-colonial nationalism", only "a few Australian adherents tried (inconsistently) to give priority to its ideal of transnational black solidarity".[10] Equally, many commentators pass off this global infatuation as a 'half way' point between pre-1967 liberal assimilationism and the land rights and sovereignty movements of the 1970s and 1980s based on claims to indigeneity.[11] Activist and movement historian Gary Foley has, however, condemned the manner in which "historians have trivialised, marginalised and dismissed the achievements and historical significance" of Black Power in Australia, which along with struggles in the

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[7] Debate around Sykes' memoirs, and their employment of Aboriginal tribal imagery, is summarised in Corey China, "Allegations, Secrets, and Silence: Perspectives on the Controversy of Roberta Sykes and the *Snake Dreaming* series," in James Gifford and Gabrielle Zezulka-Mailloux, *CULTURE + THE STATE 2: Disability Studies and Indigenous Studies* (Alberta, CA: CRC Humanities Studio Publishers, 2003): 108-123.

[8] Sykes, "Blacks will get blacker this year."

[9] Sykes, "Open letter," in Sykes, Roberta Volume 2, A6119 4229.

[10] Russell McGregor, "Another Nation: Aboriginal Activism in the late 1960s and early 1970s," *Australian Historical Studies* 40, No. 3 (2009): 345, 350.

[11] Peter Read is one who adopts this later perspective, arguing that Black Power – and particularly the Easter 1970 conference of FCAATSI that saw a split in the organisation over black control – was "the point, unrecognised at the time, when the demand for civil rights passed to the demand for indigenous rights." Peter Read, "Cheeky, Insolent and Anti-White: The Split in the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders – Easter 1970," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 36, No. 1 (1990): 81.

Third World began to fire the imagination of activists in the late Sixties.[12] Recent historical work by Jennifer Clark, Kathleen Lothian and others have sought to change this, arguing alongside Foley that Black Power began to appeal to Indigenous Australian activists largely through disappointment with the outcomes of previous, piecemeal reform. Lothian points out that in the years after the 1967 referendum "Aboriginal voices became increasingly more assertive and less compromising…demand[ing] immediate action that no longer accommodated European concerns but actively worked against them".[13] Sue Taffe argues in her work on the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) that the period from 1967 to 1970 saw a steady increase of indigenous participation in political debate, which led many to "publically question…the continuing value of a multiracial coalition dominated by whitefallas".[14] Clark argues that Black Power, rather than the domination of white 'do-gooders', gave these activists "a new language, a new way of looking at their growing movement, a confidence to appreciate the black perspective and a desire to assert it".[15]

In seeking to understand how this new language arrived in Australia, Lothian places prime importance on the transnational circulation of reading material. Foley describes how many of those who would become the public faces of militancy—himself as well as Paul Coe, Bob Bellear, John Newfong and several dozen others—formed a study group in Sydney and "began consuming all they could of the political literature of the day".[16] "[T]he writings of Black Americans", from those of SNCC Chairman Stokely Carmichael to Malcolm X and Huey Newton, "enriched the reflections of Aborigines on their own society, worked to stimulate pride in Aboriginality, and offered useful strategies for combating oppression", Lothian argues.[17] Bruce McGuinness wrote that that Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's foundational American text *Black Power* "should be the prized possession of every

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[12] Gary Foley, "Black Power in Redfern 1968-1972" (BA Honours Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 2001). Available at http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/essays/essay_1.html.

[13] Kathleen Lothian, "'A Blackwards step is a forwards step': Australian Aborigines and Black Power, 1969-1972" (Masters Thesis, Monash University, 2002), 42.

[14] Sue Taffe, *Black and White Together: FCAATSI: The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, 1958-1973* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2005), 261.

[15] Jennifer Clark, *Aborigines and activism: race, aborigines and the coming of the sixties to Australia* (Crawley, WA: UWA Press, 2008), 214.

[16] Foley, "Black Power in Redfern."

[17] Kathy Lothian, "Seizing the Time: Australian Aborigines and the influence of the Black Panther Party, 1969-1972," *Journal of Black Studies* 35, No. 4 (2005): 184.

aborigine", while Paul Coe recalls how "Malcolm X exploded in my mind" after he was lent a copy of the black radical's autobiography.[18] All in all, "Aborigines were finding that the ideas and terminology of Black Power resonated with their own life experiences".[19]

Yet despite this flourishing interest, it was the rhetoric of anti-colonialism that framed the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League's (VAAL) statement in support of Black Power, produced immediately after Roosevelt Brown's visit in 1969. The first overt affirmation of this political ideology by an Indigenous Australian organisation, the statement quoted Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction to Frantz Fanon's anti-colonial masterwork *The Wretched of the Earth:*

> Not so very long ago, the earth numbered two thousand million inhabitants: five hundred million men, and one thousand five hundred million natives.
>
> This is White Power

The statement continued, articulating the global connections between colonial subjects and oppressed racial minorities like themselves:

> Since the end of World War II, many of the coloured peoples who lived under…colonial rule have gained their independence and coloured minorities in multi-racial nations are claiming the right to determine the course of their own affairs in contradiction to the inferior state under which they had lived.
>
> This is Black Power.[20]

This mixture of anti-colonial and Black Power images captures both the wedding of these two struggles in the international decolonisation movement, and the manner through which Australia's indigenous peoples sought to use their lessons to understand the local issues in new ways. Black Power thus became not just the set of ideas propagated by African Americans in the USA for these activists, but a catch all

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[18] Lothian, "Seizing the Time," 183-4; de Costa, *A Higher Authority*, 98-9.
[19] Lothian, "Seizing the Time," 183.
[20] Editorial, "International contact forces thinking on 'Black Power,'" *AAL Newsletter*, October 1969, 2. For original Sartre quote Jean Paul Sartre, introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth*, by Frantz Fanon (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1967), 7.

for the rebelliousness of colonised peoples around the world.[21] The discussion of indigenous support for and feelings of communion with the Vietnamese struggle for independence in Chapter Three points in a similar direction.

Accordingly, what Indigenous Australians came to group under the banner of Black Power was not merely an "imitative politics" taken from overseas wholesale, but rather a series of ideas that "activists soon transformed into something quite different".[22] As Ravi de Costa argues in his important work on indigenous transnationalism, "simply observing the movement of ideologies and activists across borders, and the connections and solidarity between them, is…insufficient" to fully understand the complexity of these exchanges and manner in which they are transformed by local environments and realities. Instead, a historian must "understand the motivations of those making the connections", which de Costa puts down to the search for a higher authority "to restrain colonial and national authorities and to have [indigenous] claims heard", as well as to understand how movement across borders turned these motivations into reality.[23] Fiona Paisley's work on Anthony Martin Fernando, an itinerant Aboriginal activist of the early 20th century, captures how this unlikely figure—a well-educated man of Indigenous and South Asian heritage—managed to take the truth about Australia's colonial policies to the world. He not only publicised the genocide of his people by handing out leaflets at the 1925 Catholic Jubilee in Rome, but publically invoke the power of Britain to restrain Australia from policies that were even then out of step with "the international reform of colonialism in some parts of Africa".[24] This chapter argues, however, that travellers in the Sixties were not just searching for an organised authority capable of challenging or embarrassing the Australian state like Fernando. They were also looking horizontally, seeking out global co-thinkers and actors capable of providing new activist toolkits to better challenge "our common enemies", as Sykes put it.[25]

There was earlier precedent for Sykes' form of global outreach, too. Most noteworthy amongst these connections were those between the Australian Aboriginal

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[21] Scholars in the USA have also begun fruitfully understanding the US civil rights movement "as an integral piece of the Age of Decolonization." Gary Helm Darden, "The New Empire in the 'New South': Jim Crow in the Global Frontier of High Imperialism and Decolonization," *Southern Quarterly* 46, No. 3 (Spring 2009): 8.

[22] Lothian, "A Blackwards Step," 7.

[23] de Costa, *A Higher Authority*, 3.

[24] Fiona Paisley, *The Lone Protestor: A.M. Fernando in Australia and Europe* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2012), xv.

[25] Sykes, "Open Letter."

Progressive Association (AAPA) and the US-based Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) of Marcus Garvey in the early to mid 1920s. John Maynard has explored how, through contacts with African American seamen on Sydney's docks, Aboriginal waterside workers had "acquired knowledge of the works of Frederick Douglas, Booker T Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey".[26] The latter's ideology of Pan-African nationalism and cultural pride were to prove most significant, with a Sydney branch of Garvey's organisation forming in the early 1920s, which folded into the AAPA in 1924. The attendance of unknown Indigenous Australian activists at one of Garvey's open-air meetings in New York during 1925 served to solidify these connections. "Garvey's call for pride in culture, solid economic base, and strong association to land of birth" proved influential to members of the progressive association: "the logo, motto and much of the political rhetoric of the AAPA were incorporated from the doctrine of Marcus Garvey and his group".[27] This was not a seamless translation, as Garvey's "call for a return to Africa meant nothing in Australia to the Aboriginal people". However, his ideas of "recognising [the] cultural significance and the importance of their own homeland, struck a chord with the Aboriginal leaders". Despite the real differences Indigenous Australians had with some of Garvey's ideas and the UNIA's destruction by US authorities, the black nationalism that underlay Garveyism clearly impacted 1920s campaigners in a similar, if very distinct fashion to that of Black Power.

While Garveyism was a movement with a leader and defined program, Black Power needs to be understood more as "a fluidity of definitions and a number of ideologies", as Lothian articulates.[28] It could mean anything from the empowerment of black businessmen—which those like One People of Australia League (OPAL) President and Liberal Party senator Neville Bonner could support—to calls for pride in race or a redirection of violence against oppressors.[29] This political divergence is captured well in the narrative of Noonuccal's first overseas trip, to the UK in 1969. She was to attend the World Council of Churches consultation on racism, and as her biographer explains, she was "unrivalled in her experience":

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[26] John Maynard, "'In the interests of our people': The influence of Garveyism on the rise of Australian Aboriginal political activism," *Aboriginal History* 29 (2005): 11

[27] Ibid, 17.

[28] Lothian, "A Blackwards step," 8.

[29] On the fluidity of meanings see Ann Turner, ed, *Black Power in Australia: Bobbi Sykes vs. Senator Neville T. Bonner* (South Yarra, Vic.: Heinemann Educational Australia, 1975).

> Kath was now aged forty-eight…she had been a victim of racism herself; knew of her mother's deprivation; knew from her travels around Australia the different shades of discrimination that existed among the states; and had brought the plight of the dispossessed aborigines to the world through her poetry.[30]

And, while she was undoubtedly the best candidate for the job, Noonuccal was to learn just as much as she was to teach. As an elder statesperson of sorts, she had always supported a close partnership between black and white activists, sticking solidly to FCAATSI's line of "black and white together". As Noonuccal put it in a letter to Shirley Andrews in 1962:

> A 50/50 executive is a good idea. We will learn from each other…My people or rather some of them will try to carry all of the responsibility and some will think they have no need of the white people. This must be avoided at all costs. Black and white must stand together…colour is of no importance when all is said and done.[31]

This was a position Noonuccal was to adopt for the rest of her life, but her visit to Britain added a sense of urgency and augured the need for a more radical approach.

In a speech given several months before her trip, at the Easter conference of the FCAATSI, Noonuccal argued for Indigenous Australians to become more involved in the political process. As she put it: "Political parties in Australia should be encouraged to take their policy to the indigenous people and where Aborigines wish to join, they should be allowed to do so".[32] This was a statement very much in keeping with post-1967 optimism for gradual change within he context of assimilation policies. Yet, her report to the Australian Council of Churches detailing the results of the May meeting in London hinted at the need for a more militant and less conciliatory approach. While Noonuccal felt that the consultation delegates were in favour of "healthy cooperation of black and white people in all countries", indeed the report argued that similar events should be held in Australia, she was concerned that

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[30] Kathie Cockrane and Judith Wright, *Oodgeroo* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1994), 77.

[31] Oodgeroo Noonucaal quoted in Lothian, "A Blackwards Step," 20.

[32] Kath Walker, "Political Rights for Aborigines," Paper presented at the 1969 Easter Conference of the FCAATSI, Oodgeroo Noonuccal Papers, 1920-1993, UQFL84, Box 30, Fryer Library, The University of Queensland.

what were termed "black power agents" felt differently.[33] "These agents are, I believe, working towards a take over of the white world through violent revolution", the traveller warned, having spent some time in black enclaves like Notting Hill. "Ten year old children are being trained to take down a 17 stone policeman", she recalled, while Black Power leaders were "studying the situation of events of the Vietnam War and learning about how a small minority, illiterate groups of indigenous people (Vietnamese) keep a larger power (America) at bay". Her experience of the conference and encounters with downtrodden blacks in London led Noonuccal to believe that "[t]here are therefore two forms of Black Power emerging. Those who want to work for a dignified co-operation of black and white and those who wish to destroy or control the white race and rebuild the world for the black races".[34]

It was this notion of two different and distinct forms of Black Power that influenced and changed Noonuccal's political outlook. Commentators noted that the series of brash, even violent speeches and papers delivered upon her return from London were the result of the travelling activist having "met Negro black power advocates in London".[35] However, the nature of these meetings and the conclusions that she drew perhaps better illustrate and contextualise this turn towards Black Power ideology. Rather than taking what she saw as gospel, Noonuccal was in fact adopting elements of the ideology to stave off the worst. As she put it in a somewhat oracular manner: "[w]e have I believe, 10 years to bring about instant evolution or face the consequences of a bloody revolution".[36] In this context, the embrace of a type of separatism makes sense. Her call for indigenous leaders to "unite their people to withdraw from the brutal white society" and for the removal of "'white fathers', the frustrated white do-gooders and brutal white racists from their society" were an attempt to forestall the advent of a violent revolution driven by the continued white dominance of the lives of indigenous people.[37] Thus, while Sykes' experiences abroad only emboldened her quest to become a part of the militant world of Black Power activism, Noonucall's experiences of its practitioners' sometimes violent inclinations

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[33] Kath Walker, "Report to the Australian Council of Churches on the World Council of Churches 'Consultation on Racism' held in London 19th May 1969," Oodgeroo Noonuccal Papers, UQFL84, Box 30.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Len Fox, "Black Power in Australia," *Outlook* 13, No. 5 (October 1969): 11.

[36] Walker, "Report to the Australian Council of Churches," Oodgeroo Noonuccal Papers, UQFL84, Box 30.

[37] Kath Walker, "Black Australians: A speech given to the Sydney Journalists Club on the 16th of September 1969," Oodgeroo Noonuccal Papers, UQFL84, Box 30.

made her opinions and actions much more circumspect, and she was to remain a firm supporter of multi-racial coalitions. The travels of other activists were to further tie these leading figures into Black Power and decolonising circles, while also showing up more fundamental issues in the applicability of overseas ideas and the very efficacy of transnational activism itself.

In the black bag: Indigenous Australians at the Congress of African People, 1970

Atlanta, Georgia, was a logical choice for an international conference of Black nations and peoples. Located in the heart of the Deep South, Atlanta was a rail terminus for Confederate supplies during the Civil War, but by the early 20th century its African American citizens had defied Jim Crow segregation policies to produce a relatively large black middle and upper class. Atlanta was Martin Luther King Junior's hometown, a centre for the 'long' civil rights struggle, and was to be amongst the first major US cities to elect an African American mayor in 1973.[38] And, in September 1970, the city played host to what was the largest Black Power gathering to date, the Congress of African People (CAP), which attracted some 3000 participants from a variety of civil rights, Black Power and cultural organisations as well as overseas delegates.

The Congress was born out of a series of conferences held in the US and Bermuda from 1966 onwards, and was designed to unite the civil rights and Black Nationalist movements around a common program of political action. The Black Power movement was seen by many of its adherents as in decline amidst increasing conflicts over what type of change was required. Conservatives co-opted its ideas to imply black capitalism as opposed to self-empowerment and self-determination, while an increasingly violent disjunction emerged between those who argued for a cultural as opposed to a national revolution, exemplified by the fact that the Black Panthers held their Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention at the same time in Philadelphia. Unlike the avowedly revolutionary, Marxist program of the Panther's gathering, however, the Atlanta conference was designed to unite moderate forces from Rev. Jesse Jackson and Coretta Scott King to radical cultural nationalists like

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[38] For more on Atlanta's important place in the long civil rights movement see Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Inamu Baraka (Leroi Jones), creating a political organisation that laid the foundation for the famous Gary Convention in 1972, which many see as launching the contemporary African American political agenda. As CAP's historian put it, "the congress…galvanized many of the local leaders and organizations into a new generation of men and women who would become national leaders".[39]

Such an American focus ignores how the Atlanta gathering had ramifications beyond the nation-state. While its importance in the development of African American political consciousness is well documented, the stories of participants from other lands and cultures, "[p]eoples of African descent from the Caribbean and South America; Africans from independent nations and colonies [and] oppressed minorities from other continents; including Australian aborigines" are less well-researched.[40] Five leading Indigenous Australians travelled to the gathering and later recorded their stories in a lengthy pamphlet. What they saw, experienced and learnt was to have an important impact on their future political trajectories, however their attendance is generally presented in scholarly work as but one example of the movement's expanded interest in Black Power and cultural nationalism. Lothian, who provides the only sustained—if succinct—investigation of the travellers, argues that "the delegation [was] particularly influential for some of these activists in shaping their narrative of Black Power as a positive recognition and affirmation of Aboriginality".[41] Yet, while their trip was successful in opening "a definite line of communication" between colonised peoples,[42] it also showed up some of the real challenges and difficulties of bring these ideas "back home where black power needs to be seen in its Aboriginal setting".[43]

Roosevelt Brown's 1969 visit, discussed briefly in Chapter Five, marked a turn in the development of Indigenous Australian politics. As one member of the Atlanta delegation Bob Maza stated at the time of Brown's trip, it was "the moment

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[39] K. Komozi Woodard, "The Making of the New Ark: Imanu Imiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), the Newark Congress of African People and the Modern Black Convention Movement. A History of the Black Revolt and the New Nationalism, 1966-1976" (PhD Thesis, The University of Pennsylvania, 1991): 232. For a more recent take on the CAP, see Robeson Taj P. Frasier, "The Congress of African People: Baraka, Brother Mao and the year of '74," *Souls* 8, No. 3 (2006), 142-159.
[40] Woodard, "The Making of the New Ark," 226.
[41] Lothian, "A Blackwards Step," 146.
[42] Ibid, 146.
[43] Abschol fundraising letter, undated, in *Aborigines Visit the US: Report on trip by Five Aborigines to Congress of African People and United Nations,* np (Melbourne: ASCHOL, 1971).

enlightenment arrived in Australia".[44] However, white and black activists had been discussing Black Power well before this. Since the term's popularisation by Stokely Carmichael in June of 1966, articles began appearing in journals like *Outlook* and the student press outlining its usefulness and possible applicability for Indigenous Australians.[45] Brisbane student newspaper *Student Guerrilla*, which ran dozens of issues throughout 1968 primarily around issues of civil liberties and the Vietnam War, published 5% of its articles on Black Power.[46] Well-known Aboriginal leader Charles Perkins, returning from a tour of the United States in 1967, argued that Australian aborigines and African Americans shared "the same depressed socio-economic environment", and that "[w]e need Black Power" to rectify such gross inequities.[47] Brown's visit sparked the first major press interest in Black Power as a local issue, and for the first time concretely placed the Australian struggle within its global networks. Brown's visit itself was a testament to global flows of information. While Indigenous Australians had "always been discussed" at preceding Black Power conferences, Brown admitted that attendees had been forced to consult "books by anthropologists and certain people that had done studies on them" for their information. Brown was pleased when, after unexpectedly being interviewed by Melbourne's 3AW radio, Bruce McGuinness wrote a letter to the Bermudan MP asking if he would stop over to discuss his ideas with Australian activists.[48]

Brown's stated intentions to keep this line of communication open through "corresponding with [Indigenous Australians] and extending invitations to them to come to conferences…so we can know what's going on, and they can know what's going on on the other side" was soon realised in the invitation of five delegates to the CAP in Atlanta, to be held over the Labor Day weekend of 1970.[49] Promising a full reimbursement of their fares and costs while in the US, the five—McGuinness and Maza as well as Bob Bellear, Pat Kruger and Jack Davis—soon acquired a short-term loan from the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) for their trip, and embarked to America. The activists represented a variety of organisation,

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[44] Bob Maza, 'Tuesday 24th August, 1969', *National Koorier,* 1969, 7.
[45] For example, "Black Power," *Outlook* 10 No. 4 (1966): 18-19.
[46] For these figures see Alan Knight, "Ratbags, revolutionaries and free speech: The Queensland radical press in 1968," *Pacific Journalism Review* 10, No. 1 (2004): 153-170.
[47] Mark Rubbo, "Black Power," *Farrago*, 3 May 1968, 4. For more on Perkins' uptake of Black Power see Lothian, "A Blackwards Step," 42-3.
[48] "Roosevelt Brown meets the Press," *Smoke Signals* 8, No. 2 (September 1969): 4-11.
[49] Ibid, 8.

VAAL, FCAATSI, the West Australian Council for Aboriginal Advancement and the newly-formed National Tribal Council (NTC), yet all were young activists who had been intrigued by and previously articulated version of Black Power. Maza argued in the April 1969 edition of VAAL journal *Smoke Signals* that "a national pride of being *black* Australians" needed to be cultivated, McGuinness' opinions "changed dramatically overnight" in support of Black Power after he toured rural Queensland, while Jack Davis had begun calling for Aboriginal ownership of the Australian nation. White rule, he argued, should be on the proviso of "an agreement by negotiation…making Commonwealth Government's right to govern Australian conditional on the grant of an allocation of Commonwealth revenue".[50]

Such rhetoric was also taking organisational form. The VAAL had transitioned to an indigenous-controlled organisation by early 1970, and the Brisbane Aboriginal and Islanders Tribal Council was formed at the same time, claiming to stand for "self-reliance" and, contrary to the Black-White coalition favoured by the FCAATSI, to "depend on our own efforts, on the united stance of our own people" to force change.[51] Similar calls for black control were taken up, and defeated, at a disorderly April 1970 meeting of FCAATSI in Canberra. After this disappointment, forty indigenous activists including Noonucaal and McGuinness joined with their white supporters to establish the NTC, which allowed voting rights only to Aboriginal or Islander peoples and fostered "a new spirit and sense of Aboriginal pride".[52] This increasing militancy made touring the birthplace of such ideas an exciting and worthwhile proposition, particularly as it could provide concrete experiences of practices previously only read about and sometimes misunderstood. As one writer in *Identity* sarcastically quipped on this topic, while Bobbi Sykes' "reading of Black American literature seems to be quite extensive", her "first hand experience of Black America" was lacking, leading her to spout "the latest things that black leaders there are saying" without understanding their context.[53] The trip was, then, an exciting opportunity: as Pat Kruger recalled, "I thought my feeling good could know no

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[50] Bob Maza, "The Koorie's Dissilusionment," *Smoke Signals* 8, No. 1 (April-June 1969): 3; Lothian, "A Blackwards Step," 59, 61.

[51] A. Barrie Pittock, "Easter 1970 and the origins of the National Tribal Council" (Unpublished Manuscript, 1970), 4, available at http://indigenousrights.net.au/files/f102.pdf, accessed 4 April 2013

[52] Ibid, 8-9.

[53] "Birds both black and beautiful," *Identity*, November 1972, reproduced in Sykes, Roberta Volume 2, A6119 4229.

bounds".[54] Davis remembers being "keen to go" when McGuinness called him with the invitation, that arrived with less than two week's notice, and he "agreed immediately [although] there was not much time for packing".[55]

Despite the increasingly militant and globalised nature of their activism, the activists still felt trepidation about their trip. None, after all, had ever been abroad before, and the press coverage they had been exposed to about American life had been less than positive. As McGuinness later explained:

> There was a certain fear in each of the Koori delegates when departing on this trip. We, like all Australians, had been subjected to the news reports of Race riots, killing, burning, looting, plane crashes, assassinations and sabotage in the US, so that the question foremost in each of our minds was 'will we ever come home'.[56]

This also hints at the difficult and decidedly different experience of travel that colonised peoples experienced when compared to their white, often middle-class, contemporaries. Jobs' argument that the easy availability of travel universalised the experience of the Sixties and broke down national borders only really applies to Europe and possibly the trans-Atlantic context, while studies of mobility by Third World or African American people's tend to focus on well-known statesmen or groups, like the SNCC, who had a well-educated, large middle-class membership and access to significant institutional resources.[57]

Indigenous travellers, on the other hand, often had only the most limited education in semi-rural, racist institutions and lacked the cultural capital that came with higher education. As activist, author and former prison inmate Kevin Gilbert put it in 1973, "It is interesting to see…what an overseas trip does for an aboriginal person, who may previously not have travelled any further than from Cowra to Walgett, or Townsville to Sydney".[58] Funding was also very problematic, with the

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[54] Pat Kruger, "A year in the revolutionary education," in *Aborigines Visit the US*, 31.

[55] Jack Davis and Keith Chesson, *Jack Davis: a life-story* (Melbourne: DENT, 1988), 145.

[56] Bruce McGuinness, "Report by Bruce B. McGuiness Director Administraive Officer A.A.L.," in *Aborigines visit the US*, 7.

[57] On SNCC, see Wilkins, "The Making of Black Internationalists." For other examples of this focus on the global lives of well-known spokespeople and organisations see Sarah Seidmen, "Tricontinental Routes of Solidarity: Stokely Carmichael in Cuba," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 4, No. 2 (2012): 1-25 and Michael L Clemons and Charles E Jones, "Global Solidarity: The Black Panther Party in the International Arena," in *Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party*, eds. Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, 20-39 (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[58] Kevin Gilbert, *Because a white man'll never do it* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1973), 111.

Commonwealth's $40,000 yearly grant to VAAL cut at the first whiff of Black Power. Also, while some of the individuals discussed in this thesis had travelled for years, or directly sought to use travel as exile to distance themselves from their home nation politically, indigenous travellers had a very different agenda. When asked by a fellow delegate what "Australia" had been called before the white man, all Bob Maza could think of to say was "home". This statement, illustrating the importance of place-based politics to Indigenous Australians, facilitated what he termed a "pretty good rapport" with other delegates who felt the same about their positions of colonial subjugation.[59] Thus the delegates, far from home, were made to feel as if they were "in the black bag", as McGuinness put it.[60]

The first shock the travellers experienced upon arrival, however, was that America was far from the battlefield they had come to expect. McGuinness recalls how, rather than "armed Black people snarling at armed White people" and a general mood of dejection and powerlessness, the first sight he glimpsed was "a Black man arm in arm with a White girl"—a simple social right still unseen in most parts of Australia.[61] When taken to their hotel an even more astonishing event transpired, with a white porter scrounging for a tip their black hosts had let fall to the ground. "I don't think it was intentional", McGuinness explained, "but you should have seen that guy on his hands and knees picking up the nickels and dimes while us poor lowly coloured folk stood around watching"—an experience certainly outside of routine social interaction in Australia.[62] These two experiences of everyday empowerment by a supposedly downtrodden community served as an introduction to the Congress, which by all accounts proved highly enlightening. The CAP's political aims reflected the diversity of its attendees, with its "ideological statement" outlining how "it is necessary to organize the largest mass of black people possible, worldwide, at any given time", and that as such activists needed to act in a way which would "attract and politicise the largest number". As such, eleven workshop streams were organised. Traditional sessions on political liberation and economic autonomy were complimented with more philosophical discussions of religion and history as well as important everyday matters of law, justice and technology, which hoped to "organize

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[59] Bob Maza quoted in Gilbert, *Because a white man'll never do it*, 117.
[60] McGuinness, "Report," 8.
[61] Ibid, 7.
[62] Ibid, 7.

brothers and sisters in the technical disciplines…to improve the technical capacities of black communities".[63]

Opportunities to converse and share ideas with a wide variety of black leaders were, however, seemingly the most significant benefit of the trip. McGuinness recalls meeting Baraka, former beat poet and now a leading figure amongst black nationalist, who "held me spellbound for the duration of our talk". Only one other meeting, with the Rev. Jesse Jackson, sparked similar feelings in McGuinness. Jackson wast "truly a commanding figure and worthy of the respect shown to him by his followers, friends and enemies", McGuinness extolled.[64] Kruger recalls how the everyday interactions with conference delegates were just as important, as she "met, talked and lived with black brothers and sisters in the struggle, mostly from North America, but also from the United Caribbean, South America, Asia and Africa".[65] Overall, Davis describes the Congress as "packed with a kaleidoscope of incidents that created a pattern of indelible memories", while Maza lauded how it had opened "lines of communications between blacks throughout the world".[66] Once the Congress had closed, delegates travelled across the US to New York City, where they were interviewed by the *New York Times* and presented two petitions to the UN demanding its intervention in Australian affairs.[67] McGuinness recalls that a trip to Harlem presented him with an experience of intense communality. While noting the rampant crime and poverty, he believed it to be a place where, as far as the black population was concerned, "equality is reality…part blacks are regarded as 'all Black'". "I could walk on the corner of Lennox and 125th", he recalled, "where so many famous black people had walked before me. People like Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael [and] H. Rap Brown". In this pilgrimage to such an everyday location, McGuinness truly felt part of this "Black fraternity", who were "all bonded together by their repression".[68]

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[63] Woodard, "The Making of the New Ark," 228-30.
[64] McGuinness, "Report," 15.
[65] Kruger, "A year," 31.
[66] Davis and Chesson, *Jack Davis*, 148; Thomas A Johnson, "World Unity of Blacks Sought at Parley," *New York Times,* 4 September 1970, 42.
[67] For another report on the Indigenous Australians in American newspapers see "Third World Seeks Unity," *Origin* (reprint from *New York Times*), 30 October 1970, 8-9. For the petitions presented to the UN, see *Aborigines in the USA*, 19-23.
[68] McGuinness, "Report," 15. These streets now carry alternative names of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Malcolm X Boulevard, respectively.

While visiting the US had a pronounced impact on the radicals, not all came away enamoured by Black Power. Certainly, some saw what their experiences as transformative. McGuinness recalls his meeting with Black Panther representatives in New York—who he described as "the essence of the black movement"—as having provided lessons for Australia. These were not the use of violence, which "the Australian press never lets us forget", but rather their community survival programs whereby "in Harlem alone, they supply 500 free breakfasts to Black school kids".[69] Lothian also explains how Davis' experiences of the Black Arts movement in the US and its focus on "'inwards' rather than 'outward' looking" cultural politics deeply influenced his key involvement in Sydney's National Black Theatre.[70] The Congress' themes also seem to have shaped the way activists imagined the national aspirations of indigenous peoples. The organiser's call of "It's Nation Time" influenced Kruger, who commented that the conference allowed her to "stand back and reflect" on the fact that European Australians were "living a lie" by labelling themselves 'Australians', and that the term needed to be reclaimed. "I promised myself", Kruger wrote, "that I would no longer refer to the original inhabitants of this country…as 'Aborigines' but more emphatically as 'Australians,' for "this country is not called aboriginal land, it is Australia" and the white "interlopers" who occupied the nation needed to be awoken to the fact of indigenous sovereignty and nationhood.[71]

Not all participants, however, felt that the trip had equipped them with the ideas or tools appropriate for political activity in Australia. Reflecting on his participation in the Atlanta conference, Bob Maza rebuked the extremes of African American politics, and those in Australia who sought to emulate them. "The black situation in the USA made me realise that if our black movement here in Australia is going to be left in the hands of whatever ego-trippers there are around…then we are going to head the same way that the black Americans did", a path Maza saw as sectarian, violent and ineffective at facilitating real change.[72] This critique centred on the ultra-masculinist approach of some younger activists and their employment of African American terminology: Honky, Uncle Tom, and so forth. Bob Bellear similarly condemned those who held American-style "ultra black ideas" and who

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[69] Ibid, 14. For more on the Black Panther Party in Australia and its connections in the US see Alyssa Trometter, "The Hard Inner core: Black Power and the unravelling of the Australian Black Panther Party" (PhD Thesis, The University of Melbourne, Forthcoming).
[70] Lothian, "A Blackwards Step," 149-51.
[71] Kruger, "A year," 31.
[72] Bob Maza quoted in Gilbert, *Because a white man'll never do it,* 113.

rejected working alongside whites: "these people are certainly going to ensure that we…isolate ourselves", he warned.[73] The CAP's unwillingness, contrary to previous promises, to reimburse the activists expenses would also have hardly garnered much faith in the support networks Black Power made available.[74]

Other travellers in the group proposed an even broader critique of the usefulness of overseas ideas. Jack Davis argued that the experience of Black Americans, victims of transportation and slavery yet now a significant part of American life, could not really relate to Australian Aborigines, who had been in Australia "since the creation" and had little purchase on public life.[75] Indeed, Indigenous Australian activists might have found much of benefit in the ideas of 'Red Power' beginning to be espoused by groups like the American Indian Movement (AIM), yet little focus appears to have centred on this possibly productive avenue. This point of national distinctiveness within an international movement that was articulated at the conference by Baraka himself, who argued that "[t]he United States is not China nor nineteenth century Russia, nor even Cuba or Vietnam. It is the most highly industrialized nation ever to exist, a place where the slaves ride in Cadillacs and worship their slave master's image, as god".[76] Bob Bellear struck a similar chord, noting how "the thing is that blacks in Australia…can't equate the problems of this country, the problems of class struggle, the problems of racism in this country with problems in any other part of the world". Yet, this was not a rejection of the global as having no role in local affairs—as he related "while people are being murdered anywhere in the world you must be concerned"—but simply that local concerns must always hold precedence. "[T]he problem…is getting blacks just to know about each other, in such a vast country as this", Bellear suggested, and thus overseas experiences should only be of secondary concern.[77]

The Atlanta Congress seems, then, to have thrown up as many issues and problems as it did ideas and inspiration. In travelling to the heart of the Deep South, the activists were able to encounter, and critique, a "shattering new world of belligerent Black solidarity".[78] Kruger described how the Congress had made her a

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[73] Bob Bellear quoted in Gilbert, *Because a white man'll never do it,* 115.
[74] *Aborigines in the USA*, i. ABSCHOL launched a large fundraising campaign to reimburse the money.
[75] Davis and Chesson, *Jack Davis*, 149-50.
[76] Woodard, "The making of the New Ark," 234.
[77] Bob Bellear quoted in Gilbert, *Because a white man'll never do it*, 115.
[78] *Aborigines in the USA*, i.

"sister in the struggle for the liberation of black people wherever they are and whoever they are",[79] while McGuinness was to go on to propagate Black Power ideas for years to come. On the other hand, Davis opposed what he saw as the excess of these ideas and "didn't become personally involved" in attempts to propagate them after his return. Time spent in America convinced Davis of the need for "a literate aboriginal leadership to emerge", and he deemed cultural production like theatre to be the best step forward for advancement.[80] So, while Aboriginal control of rights and welfare organisations soon became "axiomatic" in Australia, Black Power was hardly received as gospel.[81] Other trips to perhaps more peculiar locales were to provide equally illuminating and, in some ways, much more disappointing.

Red Blacks: Indigenous travel to China and the contradictions of a transnational politics

When Roosevelt Brown arrived in Australia in 1969, Unitarian newspaper *The Beacon* noted how he "was treated as a 'trouble maker', an outside agitator here to stir up the natives. Obviously a Red. And there is noting worse than a Red Black".[82] Despite Brown being a member of the Bermudan Labor Party and by all accounts a fairly moderate individual, such comments point towards longstanding fears of communist contamination. The trips Indigenous Australians made to the People's Republic of China (PRC) from 1972-74 mark an interesting and under researched chapter in the global engagement of Aboriginal people, and throw light on how these 'red blacks' who journeyed to the People's Republic were both inspired and disillusioned by its promises of global revolutionary unity of colonised peoples.[83] This section will firstly explore cooperation between communists and indigenous Australians, previous trips to socialist states, and the complex place China held in the global Black and decolonising imaginary before moving on to the experiences of these activists behind what was dubbed the "bamboo curtain" and the trips' after effects.

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[79] Kruger, "A year," 31.
[80] Lothian, "A Blackwards step," 150.
[81] Read, "Cheeky, insolent and anti-white," 80.
[82] Quoted in Clark, *Aborigines and activism*, 210.
[83] de Costa mentions the trips in passing, de Costa, *A Higher Authority*, 101. For more on the place of China in the Australian radical imaginary see Jon Piccini, "'Light from the East: Travel to China and Australian activism in the 'long Sixties,'" *The Sixties* 6, No. 1 (June 2013): Forthcoming.

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) had been involved in indigenous rights struggles in various guises since the 1920s, making the relatively tiny organisation the only Australian political group to do so for decades. Thanks to the Communist International's (Comintern) dedication both to enforcing conformity amongst its member parties and an increasing interest in the plight of oppressed national minorities, the CPA gradually adopted a platform on indigenous issues in the late 1920s and early 1930s that built on that of the Communist Party USA.[84] The Australians' official 1931 policy called for equal wages, the end of protection boards and for legal cases concerning Aboriginal people to be heard by an all-black jury. Despite these radical notions, the popular Social Darwinist distinction between tribalised and de-tribalised peoples as well as that between full-blood and half-caste remained official policy until 1954. This race chauvinism, Drew Cottle argues, was more present in the Australian party as it had never taken the American road of directly challenging such thinking within the organisation, due largely to a lack of indigenous membership.[85] Yet, Communist activists still played a significant role in both distributing information and assisting in industrial disputes, like that on the Pilbara in 1946. Aboriginal activists joined the party as a consequence of its steadfast stand, though often for only a short period. Waterside worker and FCAATSI leader Joe McGuinness joined due to his experiences on the Cairns docks, while Charlie Leon took up membership as a builder's labourer in the 1950s, explaining how while Liberal and Labor wanted "to do things for us", the CPA "was not for charity but for our dignity".[86]

The CPA also played a significant role in the international propagation of the indigenous cause. They encouraged and facilitated the publication of major works including Tom Wright's *New Deal for the Aborigines,* Gerald Peal's *Isles of the Torres Strait* and of course Frank Hardy's *The Unlucky Australians* as well as

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[84] For more on Comintern policy during the period, focusing on the relatable example of African Americans and the national question, see Oscar Berland, "The Emergence of the Communist Perspective on the 'Negro Question' in America: 1919-1931, Part 1," *Science and Society* 63, No. 4 (Winter 1999-2000): 411-423, Oscar Berland, "The Emergence of the Communist Perspective on the 'Negro Question' in America: 1919-1931, Part 2," *Science and Society* 64, No. 2 (Summer 2000): 194-217 and Oscar Berland, "Nasanov and the Comintern's American Negro Problem," *Science and Society* 65, No. 2 (Summer 2001): 226-8.

[85] Drew Cottle, "The Colour-line and the Third Period: A Comparative Analysis of American and Australian Communism and the Question of Race, 1928-1934," *American Communist History* 10, No. 2 (2011): 130.

[86] Douglas Jordon, "Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics and the Trade Union Movement, 1945-1960" (PhD Thesis, Victoria University, 2011), 248-51

ensuring that Indigenous Australians could travel overseas.[87] Well-known activist and then Party member Faith Bandler attended the 1951 Berlin World Festival of Youth and Students as part of the Communist-affiliated Unity Dance Troop. Bandler had her passport as well as radical materials, including records of African American communist musician Paul Robeson, confiscated upon return, Illustrating how fearful Australian authorities were of such trips. Bandler, sharing a similar fate to Robeson himself, was not to be granted another passport for a decade.[88] In 1961, builder's labourer and President of the controversial All-Blacks Redfern rugby league team Valentine 'Monty' Maloney travelled to Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary at the behest of the Communist-controlled Building Workers Industrial Union, who had appointed him an "international delegate". His response to the trip was indicative of the style of reportage the CPA hoped for from its returned pilgrims. Maloney publicly joined the Party upon his return, described the nations he had visited as happy, prosperous and having eliminated racism. Concomitantly, "the only way to give the coloured people of this country equality was through the communist party".[89]

When the Sino-Soviet split occurred in 1961, the communist world was divided in half, creating a new pole of attraction for Indigenous activists. And China was, if anything, the socialist state that seemed most resolute and supportive of Third World, decolonising and minority people's movements. Beijing had expressed solidarity with many decolonisation struggles, presenting itself as a leader of non-aligned Afro-Asian nations at the Bandung Conference, as well as supporting the rise and importance of the African American civil rights movement.[90] Mao's 1963 "Statement Supporting the Afro-American in Their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism" and a further 1968 statement "in Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression" were received by militant

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[87] Ibid, 254-5, 277.

[88] Ann Curthoys, *Faith: Faith Bandler, Gentle Activist* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 47. Robeson's American passport was confiscated between 1950 and 1958.

[89] For more on Malone see Jackie Hartley, "Black, White…and Red? The Redfern All Blacks Rugby League Club in the early 1960s," *Labour History* 83 (November 2002): 165. See Malone's ASIO file for this comment, transcribed by an agent. "Valentine Edward Maloney aka Monty Maloney," 21 November 1961, Valentine Edward "Monty" Moloney/Maloney Volume 1, A6119 2834, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[90] On Maoism's importance to Third World and decolonising struggles see Alexander C. Cook, "Third World Maoism," in *A Critical Introduction to Mao*, ed. Timothy Cheek, 288-312 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

sections of the US civil rights movement as a "true signs of international solidarity".[91] Maoism also decentred the industrial working class as revolutionary agent in favour of peasants and colonised peoples, making China not only a central player in the Third World project but also providing theoretical foundation for a plethora of Third Worldist groupings both in the colony and metropole.[92]

One leader of the American Black Panther Party visited China in 1970, reporting how "[o]ld and young would spontaneously give emotional testimonies, like Baptist converts, to the glories of socialism", while Huey Newton commented, in a line oft-repeated by Indigenous Australian travellers, that "I felt absolutely free for the first time in my life" while in the People's Republic.[93] As one scholar of Black Maoism recalls, this interest in the radical potentiality of China was widespread amongst African Americans activists:

> In Harlem in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it seemed as though everyone had a copy of Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, better known as the "Little Red Book". From time to time supporters of the Black Panther Party would be seen selling the Little Red Book on street corners as a fund-raiser for the party. And it wasn't unheard of to see a young black radical strolling down the street dressed like a Chinese peasant — except for the Afro and sunglasses, of course.[94]

While Indigenous Australians never held such affection for Maoist political style, the story of their encounter with the Chinese revolution is no less interesting. It seems that the Chinese Communist Party paid little attention to their plight until 1972. This was despite overtures be white radicals, like when members of the Communist-led Plumbers Union travelling to Beijing in 1957 carrying both "an aboriginal message stick and a water colour by an aboriginal artist", announcing that it was "fitting that the original Australian people should send a message of good will to the

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[91] For copies of these two statements see Fred Ho and Bill Mullen, eds, *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 91-96.
[92] On the importance of Maoism in American 'Black Power' politics see, for example, Frazier, "The Congress of African People," 143-4 and Robeson Taj P. Frasier, "Thunder in the East: China, Exiled Crusaders and the unevenness of Black Internationalism," *American Quarterly* 63, No. 4 (December 2011): 929-953 and Robeson Taj P. Frazier, "'The Assault of the Monkey King on the Hosts of Heaven': The Black Freedom Struggle and China – The New Centre of Revolution," in *African Americans in Global Affairs: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Michael L Clemons, 313-344. (Boston, Mass.: Northeastern University Press, 2010).
[93] Elaine Brown and Huey Newton quoted in Robin D.G. Kelly and Betsy Esche, "Black like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution," *Souls* 1, No. 4 (1999): 7-8.
[94] Ibid, 7.

old established Chinese civilization".[95] 1972 was, after all, a year of significant momentum. The Tent Embassy established in Canberra, while a small group of Brisbane activists declared the formation of a Black Panther Party, with a slightly modified program to that of their American namesakes.[96] The embassy, in particular, saw significant media interest, and sparked the Chinese *People's Daily* to publish an article publically attacking the Australian government over its destruction. Lauding the "heroic" work of protestors, Beijing registered "a great sense of revulsion" at Australia's actions.[97]

Only weeks after the Embassy's establishment, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) noted that the Chinese had begun using their local intermediaries in the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA (M-L)) to approach prominent activists about organising indigenous delegations.[98] Eric Walsh put this in context for *The National Times*, describing how "Peking has shown a real political interest in minority groups, particularly coloured ones, from many nations" for years, hoping that their militant rhetoric and aid would appeal more to these peoples than Soviet calls for peaceful coexistence with imperialism. These invitations, however, were "the first indication of such interest in Australia", with the author noting their coinciding with a period "when the aboriginal community is mobilising with some success for the first time". Walsh also described how the invitation had "cause considerable surprise" to the McMahon government, which was still "groping for reasons" as to why the dialogue between his Government and China had broken off late in the previous year.[99] The Chinese Party, for their part, probably saw the 1972 delegation as a useful instrument in further undermining McMahon's shaky conservative government.

Activists, on the other hand, had many reasons to develop this relationship with the People's Republic. Journalist John Newfong—originally proposed as a leader of the delegation until he took up a position as editor of new journal *Identity*—spelled out why such a trip should be undertaken: tying international travel into a broader

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[95] "Aboriginal Message Stick for China," *The Age*, 15 August 1957, 3.
[96] On the Australian Black Panther Party, see Kathy Lothian, "Seize the Time: Australian Aborigines and the Influence of the Black Panther Party, 1969-1972," *Journal of Black Studies* 35, No. 4 (March 2005): 179-200.
[97] "Chinese Papers Attack Australia," *The Age*, 24 July 1972, 4.
[98] See "CPA (M/L) – interest in Aborigines," Dixon, Charles Volume 1, A6119 3646, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[99] Eric Walsh, "Aborigines invited to China," *National Times*, 14 February 1972, in Dixon, Charles Volume 1, A6119 3646.

project of shaming Australia in the international arena and seeking new allies. Despite having made contact in the past with leaders in other Commonwealth nations, particularly those of India and Canada, Newfong believed that it was now "appropriate to initiate communications with countries outside the Commonwealth". The choice of China was, of course, intentionally controversial. Newfong noted that its "[e]thnic minorities…were well treated", unlike in Australia, and that if adequate gains could not be made through the proper channels, indigenous peoples' "only hope is to conduct a lobby with overseas governments hostile to the present Government here".[100] China, whose hostility was well known, had proven both monetarily and politically supportive of causes like the Palestinian struggle and postcolonial African states, and Australian activists thought they might be able to generate similar support for their own struggle. Charles 'Chicka' Dixon, who was designated to lead the first delegation, recounts how it was hoped that "the Lib[eral Government] would stop us from going" which "would've made a good pre-election stink".[101] However, when this threat did not force the government's hand, the agenda returned to one of garnering political and other support, shaming Australian racism while experiencing Chinese socialism and its racial policies.

As was the case for other indigenous travellers, Dixon was a person of significant interest for ASIO, though in his case this only exacerbating suspicious raised by long-term membership of the Communist-led Waterside Workers Federation. Dixon described his ten years working on the Sydney docks as "the greatest political experience of my life. I learnt to care about other people. We walked off the ships on Greek political prisoners, South African cargo [and] the Vietnam war". It was the latter which really fired Dixon's passions, for "it wasn't just a local issue; it was world-wide", while he recalled meetings with Maoist union leader Syd Clare who "talked to me about other people's struggles, minority group struggles", as well as the National University of Minorities in Shanghai well before Dixon was to have a chance to see this institution for himself.[102] ASIO paid significant attention to Dixon's political forays, compiling several character profiles and keeping tabs not only on political activities, but his past alcoholism, incarceration, marriage and

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[100] "Aborigines hope for Peking talks", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 February 1972, in Dixon, Charles Volume 1, A6119 3646.
[101] Charles 'Chicka' Dixon quoted in Gilbert, *Because a white man'll never do it*, 115.
[102] Chicka Dixon interviewed by Gary Foley, 5 and 12 of May 1995, TRC 3282, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

divorce. He was described in one document as "strongly anti-European and pro-communist", in another as "shrewd [and] intelligent", while yet another mocked him as "a naïve version of Charles Perkins", the famous activist and leader of 1965's Freedom Rides. Dixon's intelligence, contacts in the union movement and "love for publicity", ASIO believed, made him a "reasonable choice for organising…a tour to China".[103] As discussed in Chapter Five, the level of interest given to activists by the security police seemed to be due to an ill-informed belief that their border crossing was part of a vast international communist conspiracy. In fact, a 1962 report into Communist activities amongst indigenous Australians maintained that the CPA fermenting a "militant Australian Aboriginal 'nationalism'" would enable the[m] to draw the aborigines into the Soviet government's international anti-colonial and anti-imperialist campaigns".[104] The personal contact Australian activists were making abroad were supposedly only another part of this shadowy plan.

After a long period of organising and at least one stalled trip, the first group of activists finally departed in October 1972. The second, in July 1974, did so under less scrutiny from the government and security services. Dixon led eight other Indigenous activists from different organisations, age groups and geographical locations across the heavily guarded border, expressing understandable concern. Having been warned that they might face imprisonment, torture or worse in China, Dixon recalled thinking he had "never seen so many guns" on the British side of the border, only to be overwhelmed by the "doubly armed" Chinese guards on the other. After this initial shock, however, the activists took a much more positive view of China. Their hosts knew "little of us, except that we had made a prolonged stand outside Parliament House", and peppered them with questions. Cheryl Buchanan, an activist from Brisbane and one of only two indigenous university students in Queensland, was reported in the daily press as saying how she "was being treated like a human being for the first time in my life" in China, likening her treatment in Australia to that of "animals or inferior beings".[105] Dixon was able to compare the seeming progress of China to the inequities of Australia: "there are no babies starving like there are in

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[103] "Aboriginals Progress Association," 7 October 1965, Dixon, Charles Volume 1, A6119 3646. "Aborigines tour of China: October/November 1972," Dixon, Charles Volume 2, A6119 3647, National Archives of Australia, Canberra; "INWARD MESSAGE: Aboriginal visit to Communist China," Dixon, Charles Volume 1, A6119 3646.
[104] Undated, untitled (censored) report, Sykes, Roberta Volume 2, A6119 4229; David McKnight, *Australia's spies and their secrets* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 231.
[105] "Aborigines tell China of 'racism,'" *The Age*, October 31 1972, 1.

Alice Springs [and] no old people going to garbage tins for a feed, like I saw in Australia". He also marvelled in the seeming lack of racism, and commended how "it's good that for four weeks no one is going to call us 'Jackie' or 'nigger'".[106] This idea of being treated as an equal for the first time, expressed in the same fashion that American Black Panther leaders had during their trips, was not only a 'liminal' experience for these activists, but another important facet of the hospitality techniques employed by the Chinese government.

The Chinese had developed a separate itinerary for Third World and minority visitors to that designed for supporters from the developed world. Instead of only visiting universities or factories (although these were still on the agenda), the focus was on minority people's policies. The 1972 delegation was "the first to visit Inner Mongolia and spent a great deal of time talking to many of China's minority groups".[107] They were impressed with the manner in which minority cultures were apparently treated, and how their perspectives were incorporated into broader society. Children "learn the languages, songs, dances, music of the [minority] nationalities", while in broader society "[d]ifferent cultures are regarded as precious and are kept, nurtured, encouraged". While Chinese policies were nowhere near as open and inclusive as their public relations campaigns indicated, these experiences allowed for negative comparisons with Australia's policies towards minorities.[108]

Besides such propagandistic uses, the trips also provided a series of lessons to activists to be brought home. Foley told a journalist during the 1974 trip of how he was impressed by the Workers and Children's Palace's in Shanghai, where "all sorts of cultural and educational activities are combined with facilities for sports and entertainment", ideas which "could be adapted very well to the needs of urban Aborigines in Australia".[109] China's communal way of living, experienced in typical Potemkin village scenarios, was equally well received. One traveller on the 1972 delegation, an "old tribal fellow", noted how the Chinese "are like us, before the white man came", a reflection of indigenous practices of sharing and living off the land.[110] Foley took this further, noting after his 1974 trip that, as "Aboriginal society

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[106] "Film of 'embassy' in Peking," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 October 1972, 10.

[107] "China visit," *Identity* 1, No. 7 (July 1973): 28.

[108] Worker-Student Alliance leaflet, Melbourne University, 1973, Dixon, Charles Volume 2, A6119 3647.

[109] Margaret Jones, "Aborigines in China look at Communes," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 1974, 1.

[110] Gilbert, *Because a white man'll never do it*, 116.

is already semi-socialist", Chinese communes were "a concept that I believe…would be applicable after land rights is granted".[111] Activists were calling for a broad definition of land rights involving sovereignty over land stolen by white settlers, though if this "ultimately means the organisation of existing reserves into economically independent, autonomous communities, then the basic organisation of the people's communes is the ideal concept on which to model the[m]".[112]

These opinions were expressed often in the press, and ASIO kept a close eye on travelling radicals. The conservative *News Weekly* warned that "extremists" using the Chinese example, or money gained from this dangerous source, threatened to "put back for years the legitimate cause of aboriginal reform and self-determination".[113] Another article warned that this trip was just another communist attempt to "manipulate" Indigenous Australians, and constituted a "clear intervention by Peking in the internal affairs of Australia".[114] Yet, despite rhetoric from some about Aborigines now having "800 million Chinese on our side", other travellers despaired that these delegations were "perhaps too late to be of maximum benefit to the Aboriginal Advancement Movement".[115] Australia's Labor opposition leader Gough Whitlam, meeting with Chinese acting Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei during a controversial 1971 visit, asked what would become both of China's covert monetary support for its acolytes in the CPA (M-L) and other involvements in Australian affairs should his party be elected and recognise the mainland. Pengfei's response, that the Chinese would pursue a policy of "non-interference" illustrates their changing foreign policy needs, as the militant anti-imperialism of the 1960s gave way to forming alliances with "small powers" like Australia and Canada.[116] Indeed, Sobocinska relates how Whitlam was "so impressed" with the China he saw in his 1971 visit that not only was one of his first acts of government to normalise relations with the mainland, but he travelled again in 1973, the first Prime Ministerial visit to a

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[111] Jones, "Aborigines in China," 1.

[112] Gary Foley, "An Aboriginal in the People's Republic of China," *Identity* 2 No. 1 (July 1974): 39.

[113] "Money from China," *News Weekly*, 22 February 1974.

[114] "Fishing in troubled waters," *News Weekly*, 25 February 1972.

[115] "BLACK POWER WARNING: Support for Aboriginals," *Daily Telegraph,* 12 February 1973; "China Visit," 28.

[116] William Griffiths, "Barbarians in the Middle Kingdom: Whitlam talks with China, 1971" (BA Honours Thesis, University of Sydney, 2011), 43. China was in fact beginning to reconsider its foreign policy orientation, with Mao announcing the "Theory of Three Worlds" in 1974, which placed powers like Australia as a second world of oppressed developed nations. For more on these changes at the level of foreign policy see Kuisong Yang and Yafeng Xia, "Vacillating between Revolution and Détente: Mao's Changing Psyche and Policy Toward the United States, 1969-1976," *Diplomatic History* 34, No. 2 (April 2010): 395-423.

Communist nation. So, "[a]fter decades of suspicion, the Australian government had become a 'fellow-traveller'", to the disappointment of the PRC's guests.[117] "Originally, those involved had hoped for some direct financial assistance similar to that provided for black countries in Africa and for Black America", one article bemoaned, but the harsh world of *realpolitik* had ensured that "this particular delegation seems to have been regarded as hardly more than a lobbyist overture".[118]

An important contradiction in the discursive solidarity of decolonising and Third World nations is evident here. In idealising China and pinning hopes for both "substantial financial aid" and support in mounting "an international lobby" on its leadership, the indigenous travellers did not count on the regime's ever-present self-interest.[119] China was always in a state of flux, and these travellers did not have access to the same opportunities that their American Black Panther counterparts did only a few years before, or those of other Australian travellers in the 1950s and 1960s for that matter. For, as one activist put it in the wake of Whitlam's promise of recognition and normalising relations, "sponsorship of Australian Aborigines for political reasons or otherwise must, to the Chinese, [now] seem far less attractive".[120] This was, after all, the beginning of détente, a period of "convergent response to disorder among the great powers", as Jeremi Suri argues. The revolt of China's youth and workers became just as out of hand as did those in the West, with elites across the Cold War divide beginning to see such manifestations as part of a global threat to their bureaucratic powers, which had to be stamped out through mutual cooperation.[121]

Indeed, Foley's 1974 delegation was effectively barred from meaningful contact with the Australian media while in China. Tellingly, a reporter for the Australian Broadcasting Commission's AM current affairs program opined that perhaps such measures were taken "because the Chinese authorities fear that militants in the delegation might say something…detrimental to the Australian government", certainly not a matter that would previously have concerned the brash and belligerent

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[117] Agneiszka Sobocinska, "Australian Fellow Travellers to China: Devotion and Deceit in the People's Republic," 32, No. 3 (September 2008): 331.

[118] "China Visit," 28.

[119] "China trip by Aborigines, *Canberra Times*, 14 February 1972 and "Chinese Aid for Blacks," *Canberra Times*, 17 March 1972. Cuttings in Newfong, John Archibald Volume 1, A6119 3434, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[120] "China Trip", 29.

[121] Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge: Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), 2.

regime.[122] Despite these disappointments, China provided the travellers with new experiences and ideas that both reflected and informed the increasingly militant tinge of Aboriginal activism. Although people's communes never flourished in the Northern Territory, leading indigenous activists took away from what they saw in China that another world was indeed possible. Gary Foley, for example, maintained a Maoist orientation throughout the 1970s, joining calls for Australian independence from the joint powers of US and Soviet imperialism in an issue of *Identity*, illustrating how ideas and connections made in China were still much in operation.[123] If travel to America had showed to some the limits of Black Power radicalism, experiences of China equally displayed that a transnational activism that sought global alliances with the Third World could be easily doomed to failure.

Conclusion

Sydney activist Paul Coe, whose rousing Moratotium speech so challenged Denis Freney in Chapter Three, was invited to speak at a Canadian anthropological symposium in 1972 alongside "people from…FRELIMO [Front for the Liberation of Mozambique] as well as other south-east African liberation movements". There, he made what now might be seen as a surprising argument: that "the Aboriginal movement should be classified as a liberation movement rather than a civil rights movement or a land rights movement", for "we had been colonised just as forcefully and arrogantly as anyone else in Africa or in the States".[124] He returned home having been told that Indigenous Australians "would have a great part to play" in an emerging "international solidarity movement to destroy capitalism", the "arrogance and greed" of which was the real enemy of indigenous peoples around the world.[125]

It was the transnational imagination of which Coe's statements are but one example that led to well-known incidents like the founding of Australia's Black Panther Party and provided much of the impetus for the Tent Embassy. It also, as this chapter has shown, fired the passion of activists to venture overseas and experience for themselves ideologies of black nationalism and Third World uplift, to better

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[122] Transcript of "AM", 31 January 1974, Foley, Gary Volume 1, A6119 3871, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[123] Gary Foley, "Blacks for Australian Independence," *Identity* 3, No. 3 (1977): 18. See Foley's ASIO files for records of his extensive contacts with the Australian Maoist movement.

[124] Paul Coe quoted in Gilbert, *Because a white man'll never do it*, 111.

[125] Ibid, 111.

understand what liberated thinking meant in practice. As Maynard has put it, travel provided "a much broader perspective of events and made [activists] aware that others around the globe" were in a similarly submissive and rebellious position, giving them "the courage to challenge the notions of inferiority they were expected to accept".[126] This was, however, far from an easy process, with often-contradictory experiences matching that of the decolonisation project itself. Going overseas could just as easily prove the irrelevance of global ideas to local realities or exposing Australian activists to the often-harsh world of *realpolitik.*

Events in the mid 1970s also made involvement in these global rebellious networks a less favourable prospect. Whitlam's government made it a priority to begin funding indigenous travellers, arguably institutionalising the practice and robbing it of any radical lustre. The Labor government provided significant financial backing to those participating in the Lagos festival, for instance, and two white bureaucrats travelled with Noonuccal on her trip to its planning congress. The Third World project itself seemed to be falling apart, as well. The hosting of the Lagos Festival by Nigeria's latest military ruler after its disastrous civil war points towards some of the decolonisation process's troubling realities, while the Congress of African People soon became a staunchly Maoist organisation and dissolved into one of countless Marxist *groupuscules* that populated the 1970s US left. And perhaps most importantly, China's rapprochement with the West continued under Mao's successors, effectively ending the decades-long role it had played as a political utopia for Australian activists. The ideal of a global revolutionary force of oppressed coloured peoples—what Prashad dubs "the darker nations"—was swiftly unravelling.[127] Despite the failure of this particular utopian imagination, it would be a mistake to dismiss this search for wider horizons out of hand. Important lessons were learned and translated into new contexts, and perhaps most importantly, leading indigenous activists encountered a world where they were not "animals or lesser creatures", but instead equal human beings struggling for a better world. As the Chinese began coming in from the cold, however, another group of transnational actors were about to make their presence felt on the campuses and streets of Australia.

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[126] Fred Maynard, "Transcultural/transnational interaction and influences on Aboriginal Australia," in *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, eds. Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake, 208 (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2005).

[127] On the decline of Third Worldism see Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: The New Press, 2007). On this transition of the CAP see Frazier, "The Congress of African People."

Chapter Seven

A dangerous disease to catch: Overseas students, transnational policing and the passing of an idea

On December 10 1974, the Singaporean government received an unwelcome guest. Ian Macdonald, president-elect of the National Union of Australian University Students' (NUAUS) successor organisation, the Australian Union of Students (AUS), arrived on a tourist visa, supposedly "to do some shopping". Although this was not uncommon for an Australian, with 40,000 trips being made to the island state annually, his arrival aroused suspicion.[1] Macdonald, who had been cooperating for months with dissident Asian students in Australia to protest repression in their homelands, was summoned for an interview with the head of Singapore's Immigration Department upon arrival. He then admitted, in the words of local daily *New Nation*, to having "other business to transact". "Contact[ing] students of the Singapore University" as well as making "arrangements for student travel and attend[ing] the court case of Tan Wah Piow", a militant student charged along with two labour leaders for fermenting a strike in the repressive state, were high on the traveller's agenda.[2] Needless to say, MacDonald's planned tour across Singapore and Malaysia—two nations viewed by activists as united by a shared opposition to their less-than-democratic governments—was drastically cut short, with his being given "in effect…24 hours notice to leave".[3]

Ten months later, Philip Boon Bong Lim, a Malaysian student studying at the University of Melbourne, was fined $50 by the Adelaide Magistrates Court for "having thrown a missile likely to damage property of the Australian government".[4] Lim had attended a protest rally against the visit of Malaysia's autocratic leader Tun Abdul Razak and, having noticed a member of the Prime Minister's entourage

[1] Agnieszka Sobocinska, "People's Diplomacy: Australian travel, tourism and relations with Asia, 1941-2009" (PhD Thesis, University of Sydney, 2010), 81.

[2] *New Nation* transcript, 13 December 1974 in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

[3] Michael Richardson, "Students strain friendship," *The Age* 17 December 1974, 8.

[4] "Malaysian fined $50 over incident," *The News* (Adelaide), 20 October 1975, in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.

photographing protestors, a fellow student informed the court, Lim had "bent down to avoid bring photographed and then picked up a stone" which had proceeded to damage the offending vehicle.[5] These "anti-Malaysian activities", as Razak's administration labelled overseas student activism, led Education Minister Mahathir Mohamed to threaten that students engaged in "activities detrimental to the country will be detained when they return home"—a threat those involved knew to be anything but hollow.[6]

This thesis has previously demonstrated how an ethic of solidarity developed amongst Australian activists towards global struggles, primarily in the Third World. Australians came to see their counterparts in Asia as not just recipients of charity, but partners in a global revolutionary struggle. Activists raised money for the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front, earning the ire of government and patriotic citizens, while pilgrimages to revolutionary hotspots around the world and socialist nations like China seemed to cement imaginary bonds into material reality. Although such transnational connections were an important part of the period's activism, they rarely required the involvement of 'the other' in the form of overseas activists in any meaningful way. However, as the example of Australia's increasingly mobile indigenous activists illustrates, the movement of what Judy Tzu-Chun Wu labels "unexpected historical actors" were an important part of the period's worldedness.[7] Many such travellers between Third and First World nations were students, either taken up under Cold War treaties like the Colombo Plan or privately funded, who were to be inculcated with anti-communist ideas. Despite these intentions, however, many like Lim and other Southeast Asian students studying in Australia took a different path and became oppositional activists. Through a series of coincidental local and global developments, sections of a previously quiet and largely ignored international student community sought to capture Australia's public limelight, mobilise their peers and turn the rhetorical solidarity of Australian students into practical reality.

These student travellers, labelled "dissident guests" by Quinn Slobodian, played an important role across the globe, not only by mobilising protest in their countries of

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[5] Ibid.

[6] "Mahathir: Majority are being forced to criticize the Government – Warning to our students overseas," *New Straits Times*, 12 October 1975, in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.

[7] Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Journeys for Peace and Liberation: Third World Internationalism and Radical Orientalism during the U.S. War in Vietnam," *Pacific Historical Journal* 76, No. 4 (2007): 577.

temporary residence, but also through encouraging concerned governments to cooperate in ending such radical cross-pollination.[8] As Macdonald noted upon his return to Australia, the leadership of many Southeast Asian nations saw "the influence of student behaviour in the Western democracies, especially Australia, as a dangerous disease…to catch".[9] This chapter analyses how these connections, between radical students on one hand, and their respective governments on the other, were consolidated and challenged during a period of intense change and unrest in the region, culminating in the first steps towards Australia's overseas student industry. It also seeks to understand what can be called the end of the Sixties: the contradictory moment whereby a truly transnational relationship of solidarity and exchange was formed while the historical moment was rapidly ebbing.

A problem to be managed: Laying the foundations for transnational exchange

The state of Malaysia came into existence in 1963 after the absorption of Sabah, Sarawak and, briefly, Singapore into what had been previously known as the Federation of Malaya. Students, as Weiss argues, played important roles in both anti-colonial struggle and later anti-government activism. The University of Malaya (then located in Singapore, before a move to Kuala Lumpur) was formed in 1949, taught exclusively in English, and had a tiny intake of students. Still, it was the University's Socialist Club that defined campus intellectual life in the 1950s, with the group's newspaper *Fajar* (Dawn) becoming "the intellectual forum of the left and the anti-colonial movement".[10] A clear global engagement was evident, with *Fajar*'s editors facing sedition charges over the publication of an article that attacked US and British policies in the region in the wake of the Viet Minh victory against French colonialism at Diem Bien Phu.

After independence, student activism continued, albeit in a diminished capacity, until 1969, when racial rioting saw parliamentary democracy give way to a two-year period of emergency rule. During this period, students—who had challenged the ruling alliance's hold on elections—were "rebuked as meddling puppets of

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[8] Quinn Slobodian, "Dissident Guests: Afro-Asian Students and Transnational Activism in the West German Protest Movement," in *Migration and Activism in Europe Since 1945*, ed. Wendy Pojmann, 33-55 (New York: Palgrave, 2008).

[9] Richardson, "Students strain friendship," 8.

[10] Meredith W. Weiss, "Still with the people? The chequered path of student activism in Malaysia," *South East Asia Research* 13, No. 3 (November 2005): 294.

communist and opposition forces", not helped by the fact that many were Chinese while the Government was moving towards a strident Malay nationalism.[11] The *University and University Colleges Act* was passed in 1971, and strengthened further in 1974. Continued student opposition and attempts to "join…forces with peasants and workers in presenting a socialist-inflected challenge to state-led development policies, as well as protesting about international concerns such as the Vietnam War and Middle East conflict",[12] were controlled with "[w]aves of tear gas, arrests, and Special Branch and police intimidation".[13] As Hishammudin Rais, described as the "Che Guevara of Malaysian student politics" and later temporary resident of Australia noted, this was an activism tied to the circulation of protest ideas. As Rais explained: "we would debate all kinds of topics including the Vietnam War and legalising marijuana".[14]

While Australian students shared many of these concerns with their Malaysian counterparts, there was rarely any significant collaboration between the two communities. The use of Asia as a protest aesthetic, what Wu has labelled "radical orientalism", instead saw the idealised Third World, usually Vietnamese, freedom fighter appear in a plethora of protest publications.[15] Despite its intentions of moving beyond the corpse polemic to real political engagement, as described in Chapter Five, Trotskyist paper *Direct Action's* January 1971 cover, "Tired of marching, what if they were?" invoked the inhuman sacrifices and struggles of a people who were still largely unknown to activists.[16] This comparison could also lead to a sense of moral equivalency between their two positions in the global movement, sometimes spilling over into a narcissistic projection of the importance of Australian activism. Anne Summers, later a key figure in feminist activism and writing, narrates how upon seeing an early anti-war rally march past her Adelaide University office:

> I felt frustrated watching these events. I would have liked nothing more than to have been part of the protests but I was still working full-time, as an administrative assistant at the Workers' Educational Association. The

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[11] Meredith W. Weiss, "Intellectual Containment: The Muting of Students in Semidemocratic Southeast Asia," *Critical Asian Studies* 41, No. 4 (December 2009): 509.
[12] Weiss, "Still with the people," 298.
[13] Weiss, "Intellectual Containment," 509.
[14] "Still living on the edge", *The Star Online*, November 26, 2006, available at http://thestar.com.my/lifestyle/   story.asp?file=/2006/11/26/lifefocus/15728774&sec=lifefocus, accessed 21 October 2011.
[15] Wu, "Journeys for Peace and Liberation," 578-9.
[16] *Direct Action*, January 1971, 1.

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WEA was on campus and from my office window I could see the students march past to do battle in the city. I was trying to find enough people for a creative flower arranging course while the fate of the Third World was being determined, or so it seemed, on the streets outside.[17]

This understanding that national liberation struggles in far-off countries could be "decided" on the streets of sleepy Adelaide by a First World population was contradictory. While it was a clear act of (naïve, as Summers alludes to) solidarity, the "voice" of Third World students was absent, de-subjectifying a group of students who were undoubtedly present on campus.

These two protest communities were brought together by the politics of alliances and agreements that constituted the Cold War. Malaysia was, after all, a former British colony, a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, and a key pillar of both the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and the Colombo Plan. These agreements were seen as vital tools in Australian policies of containment and forward defence. Australia and Malaysia shared close military and political co-operation, although Malaysia's post-colonial opposition to Apartheid and the continuing White Australia Policy challenged this at times. Australian troops had served in the territory throughout the 1950s and 1960s, combating Communist guerrillas and taking Malaysia's side in the Indonesian confrontation. This collaboration underpinned the Five Power Defence Arrangements between Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, the United Kingdom and New Zealand of 1971.[18] Educational commitments under the Colombo Plan ensured Australia was host to many Malaysian students seeking technical training for use in their homeland. Australia also proved to be a favoured destination for self-funded private students, usually those of Chinese descent excluded from higher education under pro-Malay university entry policies. By the mid 1970s, there were around 10,000 overseas students studying in Australia, of whom 6,000 were Malaysians. A large majority of these—at least 80%—were private

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[17] Anne Summers, *Ducks on the Pond: An Autobiography, 1945-1976* (Ringwood, Vic.: Viking, 1999), 231.

[18] For SEATO see Damien Fenton, *To Cage the Red Dragon: SEATO and the Defence of South East Asia, 1955-1965* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012). For the Colombo Plan see Daniel Oakman, *Facing Asia: A History of the Colombo Plan* (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2004). For rhetorical conflicts between Malaysia and Australia see Kevin Blackburn, "Disguised anti-colonialism: Protest against the White Australia Policy in Malaya and Singapore, 1947-62," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 55, No. 1 (2001), 101-17. On the Five Power Defence Agreement see Ian Storey et al (eds.), *Five power defence arrangements at forty* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011).

scholars unconnected to government aid programs, and as such not sponsored by or directly answerable to their home nations either.

Considerable scholarly attention has been devoted of late to Colombo Plan students. A 1951 agreement on technical and economic support that Lyndon Megaritty describes as "fighting the Cold War through aid", the Colombo Plan involved hosting a small number of overseas scholars in Australian educational institutions.[19] This was supposed to be a well-managed policy which would "ensure that Australia as a European dominated country was seen in the best possible light by its regional neighbours", while also melding future Asian leaders in an appropriately anti-communist light.[20] These students constituted the first post-war figure of Australian global engagement, as Nicholas Brown has put it, and were also the first personal encounter many Australians had with Asians outside of a military context.[21] Private scholars—the main contributors to radicalism and consequently those who caused the highest level of governmental concern—are less visible in this literature. Despite being by far the largest group numerically, no clear policy or objective governed them until 1966, when the intention of "help[ing] the student's homelands by increasing their numbers of qualified people" was belatedly announced. There were also perpetual concerns that these students were not making appropriate use of Australia's overextended higher education network, or were simply migrants hoping to secure permanent residency, and as such hardly assisting in fostering international relations.[22] They became, as Megarrity explains, "a 'problem' to be managed".[23]

Two key reforms in Australia had a profound impact on the developing private overseas student 'crisis'. In 1973 the newly-elected Whitlam government abolished the last vestiges of the White Australia Policy, including the stipulation that all overseas students had to return home after completing their course of study, and increased sought engagement with Australia's Asian neighbours. Additionally, in

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[19] Lyndon Megarrity, "Regional Goodwill, Sensibly Priced: Commonwealth policies towards Colombo Plan scholars and private overseas students, 1945-72," *Australian Historical Studies* 38, No. 129 (2007): 88-105.

[20] Ibid, 93.

[21] Nicholas Brown, "Student, Expert, Peacekeeper: Three Versions of International Engagement," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 57, No. 1 (March 2011): 34-52; David Oakman, "'Young Asians in Our Homes': Colombo Plan Students and White Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 72 (2002): 89-98. For other scholarship exploring Colombo Plan scholars, see David Lowe, "The Colombo Plan and 'soft' regionalism in the Asia-Pacific: Australian and New Zealand Cultural Diplomacy in the 1950s and 1960s," Alfred Deakin Research Institute Working Paper No. 1, 2010.

[22] Lyndon Megaritty, "Under the Shadow of the White Australia Policy: Commonwealth policies on Private Overseas Students 1945-1972," *Change: Transformations in Education* 8, No. 2 (2005): 37.

[23] Megaritty, Regional Goodwill, Sensible Priced," 89.

1974, higher education was made free for both domestic and international students.[24] These two events laid the foundations for a new and more profound voice in the form of a vocal overseas student movement, unhindered by political controls on their activity and (seemingly) fears of deportation, who concretely brought global concerns into a local setting. On the other hand, a growing realisation on the part of Australian authorities that allowing overseas students entry in such numbers was no longer economically viable, as well as constituting a significant strain on bilateral relations, drove Whitlam-era officials to seek greater collaboration with a Malaysian government keen on silencing voices of dissent abroad.

The projection screen speaks: Australians find overseas student activists

It is a common understanding amongst scholars that Western student movements used Third World revolutionaries as projection screens, inscribing their revolutionary fantasies onto an unknowable other, and Australians were frequently guilty of this.[25] Such distant idolisation is, however, far from the whole story. The direct involvement of Third World students in political campaigns alongside particularly West German students have been unearthed by historians like Slobodian, who explains that "the projection screen spoke", mobilising students on a plethora of international issues. "Educational migrations from the Third World", Slobodian argued, "created the conditions for Africans and Asians to speak in their own names, rather than as distant objects of charity or romantic identification".[26] These students have thus received a new voice and prominence in narratives of Sixties protest. This new approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how a global ethic of solidarity develops in social movements, possibly best summed up in moral philosopher Emanuel Levinas' understanding that "ethics reside[s] in the face-to-face encounter with the other and the choices these evoke".[27] Or, as Rudi Dutschke, West German radical and self described "internationalist" related on his experiences of overseas student protest:

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[24] Lyndon Megaritty, "A highly regulated 'free market': Commonwealth policies on private overseas students from 1974 to 2005," *Australian Journal of Education* 51, No. 1 (2007): 40.

[25] See, for example, Uta G. Poiger, "Imperialism and Consumption: Two Tropes in West German Radicalism" in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, eds. Alex Schmidt and Detlef Siegfried, 161-72 (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006).

[26] Slobodian, "Dissident Guests," 33.

[27] Quote from Douglas Booth, "Beyond History: Racial emancipation and ethics in Apartheid sport," *Rethinking History* 14, No. 4 (December 2010): 461.

"Our friends from the Third World stepped into the breach…and the Germans had to follow".[28]

The road overseas students took to becoming transnational political subjects was, however, long and winding. There were many good reasons why one would not want to raise dissent while abroad, with some fearing retribution either by their home governments or Australia's. One Singaporean studying at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), which had the highest number of overseas enrolments, recalled how overseas students were "always on our toes" due to the White Australia Policy, and the immigration department "would come down hard" on those it deemed as not adequately fulfilling their academic obligations.[29] The student experience also left some isolated from Australian political life, with many recoiling into either studious monasticism or participation in national-based social activities. One student remembered that it was important "not to step over the line" between these student activities and politics, while another believed that the segregated social circles of overseas and Australian students meant they were rarely sought out for political activity—"I [didn't] go out to the pub with them that often", they remarked wryly.[30]

There were, however, some students who did become involved in Australian politics. Socialist journal *Outlook*, for example, noted in an article on rising student protest at Sydney University over the March 1960 Sharpeville massacre, that it was the "impassioned speech" of an unnamed Asian student at a front lawn meeting that convinced those present to stage a rally in Martin Place.[31] Students from Malaysia appear to have been organising in private quite early on as well, with the "Socialist Club of Malaysian Students, Victoria" publishing a journal since the late 1950s. ASIO also paid some attention to these students, seeing them as particularly susceptible to Communist Party of Australia (CPA) propaganda, although the agents could unearth nothing to substantiate these fears.[32] Students also kept abreast of developments at

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[28] Rudi Dutschke quoted in Timothy S. Brown, "'1968' East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History," *American Historical Review* 114, No. 1 (February 2009): 75.

[29] Long Foo Yee interviewed by Julia Horne, 10 July 2000, OH 132, UNSW Archives Oral History Collection, Sydney.

[30] Chua Yong Hai interviewed by Allison Holland, 14 February 2000, OH 125, UNSW Archives Oral History Collection, Sydney; Michael Chan interviewed by Julia Horne, 28 November 2001, OH 138, UNSW Archives Oral History Collection, Sydney.

[31] John Glyde, "Students in Martin Place," *Outlook* 4, No. 3 (June 1960), 14. The students speech was said to have been as "a member of the human race", convincing the varied groups to come together around a single action.

[32] For evidence of this groups existence, see correspondence between the Socialist Club of Malaysian Students, Victoria and Lorraine Salmon, wife of CPA foreign correspondent Malcolm Salmon, in

home by receiving information about radical nationalist or socialist movements through newspaper subscriptions or private letters.[33] Others recall hearing nationalist leaders like Singaporean soon-to-be Prime Minister Lee Quan Yew speak, on the rare occasions that such leaders visited.[34] And a small number of articles began appearing in newspapers like the UNSW's *Tharunka* and Monash's *Lot's Wife*, the editors of which actively encouraged correspondence from overseas students. One writer was Loh Chee Hong, who in 1966 argued that Australia's imperial fantasies and racism clouded positive engagement with the Asian region. Australia was described in feminine terms as the "daughter" of Britain, hoping for the United States to defend her from the "Great Fiery Dragon" of yellow hordes to the north.[35]

The Overseas Student Service (OSS) was the official representative of these growing numbers of overseas students in Australia. Founded in 1957 under government auspices to provide services and support, the OSS underwent a gradual transformation "from dependence to independence" during the same period, as Vivien Fleming explains.[36] After an initial period of inactivity and a limited focus on welfare, it was soon "snapped out of its lethargy" by a 1969 conference which "made reforms…strengthened its links with campus officers and appointed a research committee", all under the new leadership of the energetic director, Charles Chew.[37] By 1971 the OSS began making more forceful representations to government for the rights of overseas students in Australia, successfully winning a yearly government grant of $5500 dollars to fund a full-time secretary and typist. Additionally, the students had begun to shift away from, as the 1973 Director related, a focus on "the symptoms and not the causes of overseas students' unhappiness" towards an engagement with both domestic and international issues. 1971 saw the first truly politically campaign launched by overseas students, when South Vietnamese student Troung Phuc Troung revealed approaches by his government requesting he spy on

Salmon Family Papers, MLMSS 6105, Box 16, State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW). For surveillance of students for possible communist sympathies see Oakman, "Young Asians in Our Homes," 91.

[33] Jimmy Koh interviewed by Julia Horne, 7 July 2000, OH 130, UNSW Archives Oral History Collection, Sydney.

[34] Ibid; Alfred Shum interviewed by Julia Horne, 30 November 2001, OH 142, UNSW Archives Oral History Collection, Sydney.

[35] Loh Chee Hong, "voice of asia," *Lot's Wife,* 28 June 1966, 4.

[36] Vivien Fleming, "From Dependence to Independence: The History of the Overseas Student Service" (BA Honours Thesis, Flinders University, 1986).

[37] Graham Hastings, *It can't happen here: A political history of Australian student activism* (Adelaide: Student Association of Flinders University, 2003), 153.

expatriate dissidents studying in Australia "after a number…had delivered outspoken speeches at a seminar during Information Week at the University of Western Australia in 1968".[38] As the Director of OSS noted at the time:

> Overseas students are now extremely uneasy about expressing opinions, and this is a country that believes in the principle of "Free Speech". It would appear that the South Vietnamese Government is not only trying to 'gag' critics of its policy, but at the same time, infringe upon an individual right within a democracy.[39]

Indeed, the first time a foreign student received front-page coverage in Australia's national student newspaper, *National 'U'*, was in response to this 1968 seminar. Under the headline "Viet Student Speaks Out" it was revealed that Tran Thanh Dang, a fourth year economics student at UWA in Perth had addressed a "capacity audience" of some 500 people on the high levels of support for the NLF amongst South Vietnamese, the corruption of the former Diem regime and the rigging of 1967's elections.[40] Tran's status as a Colombo Plan student became a cause for concern. The article's author explained how the student "risks censure and faces serious repercussions from the Australian and South Vietnamese governments" for expressing his opinions so openly. "Although there has been no instance of a Scholarship being withdrawn for purely political reasons", it was revealed, "each recipient must sign an undertaking not to engage in political activities". *National U* sought to present Tran's actions as "an example to the many Asian students in Australia who have been reluctant to contribute to such debates and have thus denied Australians their much-needed first-hand knowledge of the Asian scene".[41]

While such instances of assertiveness did not provoke the wave of reactions some radical students hoped for, a steady trickle of criticism began. Sekai Holland, a Rhodesian student of law under the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan and now a significant player in Zimbabwean politics, played a key role in the organising of protests against the Springboks tour in 1971, and more generally in

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[38] Fleming, "From Dependence to Independence," 43.
[39] Report of the OSS Director to the AUS August Council, 1971, quoted in Fleming, "From Dependence to Independence", 43.
[40] Bob French, "Viet Student Speaks Out," *National U*, 14 October 1968, 1.
[41] Ibid, 1.

other anti-apartheid activism, during her long stay.[42] Similarly, in 1974 an anonymous Iranian student studying in Canberra penned a long, emotional plea to Australians, seeking their support in opposing the imminent arrival of the dictatorial Shah of Iran on a state visit.[43] Iranian students had by the late 1960s developed a truly transnational student movement, becoming "an integral part of the student movements in the United States and Western Europe" and a running sore on the Shah's foreign policy.[44] Much like their Malaysian counterparts, "Iranian students abroad enjoyed rights that were absent in Iran, especially the freedoms of speech, assembly, and press" while in the West.[45] The student's *National U* article, written under the pseudonym "A.N.", noted how "for the first time in my life I am feeling free to write about all the suppression and injustices that has been done to me and my fellow students back home in Iran".[46] "Education, health, everything is in a miserable condition", the author explained, while compulsory military service and a well-developed secret police ensured that "all students and intellectuals…are in permanent terror and agony". He ended with a globally-inflected call to arms: "Students and people in European countries and America showed their feelings by bitter demonstrations against the Shah's visits there…[t]he people of Iran will appreciate your sympathy for the victims of the Shah's corrupt dictatorship".[47]

The student's plea, "as a representative of millions of Iranians who are helpless to protest for their human rights", can be seen to constitute a kind of middle ground in the development of ethical solidarity. Rather than appearing merely as a distant object of charity, this student was visible (despite his anonymity) and could be perceived as a fellow student engaged in political activity. A "Stop the Shah" committee was quickly established and organised a 150-strong demonstration at the official welcome ceremony outside Melbourne Town Hall. It was the most expensive police operation in Victorian history, with the protestors condemning how even though "the Shah brought with him three Boeing 707 jets with a large staff and TV crew…still the Labor government budgeted $43,000 dollars towards the expenses of his trip".

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[42] See Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan – South Rhodesia – Legal Training – Miss Sekai M. Love, A1838, 2305/4//25/2, National Archives of Australia, Canberra for details.
[43] A.N., "Iran under the Shah," *National U*, 2 September 1974, 3.
[44] Matthew Shannon, "An Augury of Revolution: The Iranian Student Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1960-1972" (Masters Thesis, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, 2009), 2.
[45] Ibid, 2.
[46] A.N., "Iran under the Shah," 3.
[47] Ibid, 3.

Despite such expenditure, an Australian correspondent at events reported that "[n]oisy shouting of slogans" from "no ties with the murderer" to "free the political prisoners…drowned out the police band playing the national anthems as well as the welcoming speeches [with] police attack[ing] the protestors when the Shah and other official guests looked nervous and upset". Three protestors were arrested and one hospitalised, with the correspondent quipping that "Perhaps the cops wanted to show the Shah that they could imitate [his] police in putting down opposition".[48]

It was during this period in 1974 that Khoo Ee Liam, who had undertaken studies in Australia and New Zealand from 1965 to 1971, was arrested under Malaysia's restrictive Internal Security Act. The vague definition of a "security risk" provided in this controversial legislation allowed thousands to be detained indefinitely without trial. Andrew Jamieson, condemned Liam's detention in *National U* as "not only…show[ing] up the lack of civil liberties prevalent in Malaysia", but also "giv[ing] rise to the knowledge that Malaysian students studying here and in New Zealand are subjected to political surveillance".[49] President of the Overseas Student Service, Michael Yeoh, ominously warned that "the 6000 Malaysian students in Australia are being watched".[50] The timing of this "finding" of Malaysian student dissent by Australia's national student newspaper was, however no coincidence. In 1974, Malaysia's *Universities and University Colleges Act* was further strengthened in response to mass student unrest. Concerningly for the government, these manifestations involved many Malay students, and centred on rising food prices and corruption in government and ended in a military occupation of the University of Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur campus.[51] That same year, the Overseas Student Service took a dramatic turn towards a radical politics. The Whitlam Government, elected in December 1972, had "met…many of the basic demands of the OSS"—such as the removal of development assistance criteria on applications and making it easier for students to become permanent residents post-graduation.[52]

Thus, the OSS President's 1973 report to the National Student Union's Annual Council spelt out that the organisation wished to "interpret student welfare in a much wider context", abandoning its previous role as "completely outside politics" This

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[48] Max Wechsler, "The Shah's visit: The Butcher's Backyard," *National U*, 7 October 1974, 7.
[49] Andrew Jamieson, "Malaysian Student Victimised," *National U,* 1 July 1974, 4.
[50] Michael Yeoh quoted in Jamieson, "Malaysian Student Victimised," 4.
[51] Weiss, "Still with the people," 307-9.
[52] Hastings, *It Can't Happen Here*, 153.

increasingly radical position meant the organisation would encounter "the wrath of the Department of Foreign Affairs" in the not-so-distant future, its President believed, and it sought to reach out for Union support to fund its operations in the form of a full-time Director's position in case Foreign Affairs decided to pull funding.[53] This was a big step for OSS to make, given overseas students had been almost completely ignored previously by the Union, "ironically so in years when general student interest in Asian affairs was rising sharply because of Australia's Vietnam involvement".[54] Indeed, overseas students had occasionally protested about this level of ignorance by the national union. OSS asked in a 1972 issue of *Tharunka* whether Australian students might turn their "anti-racialist" energies towards the overseas student "silent minority" in their midst, before Australia becomes "unique in having the only non-international campuses in the world".[55] The Union, which became AUS in 1971, began focusing on overseas students after Whitlam's reforms saw an almost doubling in numbers during 1973-4, hence making them a significant constituency for the first time. As part of their new form of radical activism, overseas students also began to reconsider the role they played in Australia's foreign policy, reimagining themselves as not simply students undertaking studies to help their home nations but as a new anti-communist elite in formation.

Activist Timothy Ong described in a lengthy piece how "Australia's foreign student policy was born in the climate of the Cold War with an explicit political intent", caught as it was between a natural affinity with colonial powers and the "proximity of increasingly 'troublesome' neighbours to the north".[56] How it dealt with this dilemma, the activists felt, was best summed up by Jean Paul Sartre's famous denunciation of colonialism in his introduction to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them; as with a red hot iron, with the principles of Western culture [and] after a short stay in the mother country they were sent home, whitewashed.

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[53] Report of the OSS Director to the AUS August Council, 1973, quoted in Fleming, "From Dependence to Independence," 43.
[54] Fleming, "From Dependence to Independence," 34.
[55] The OSS, "The plight of Asian students," *Tharunka*, 8 November 1972, 4.
[56] Timothy Ong, "The politics of Australia's foreign-student policy," *Malaya News Service,* 1-15 September 1975, 7.

Students could only resist such whitewashing and indoctrination by "breaking out of the role assigned to them" by the post-colonial education system.[57] OSS member P Chandran argued similarly in a 1974 issue of *Tharunka* that overseas students "must rid ourselves of the 'Aid' mentality which has characterised us in the past and which causes us to see ourselves as no more than aid components with no role to play in this society". They called upon their fellow students to "rise above the sense of helplessness that has plagued us in the past" and "learn from the students of Thailand" who were rebelling on mass against the military regime.[58] Upon hearing of Liam's imprisonment, on charges of having "close association with members of the New Zealand Communist Party" and seeking to join the banned Malayan National Liberation Front, OSS launched a "Free Khoo Ee Liam" campaign, which included a call for the end of political surveillance. A rally was held to coincide with Malaysian Independence Day, 31 August, which drew some 150 participants onto the street of Sydney. Many overseas protestors donned "masks to protect their identities from Malaysian authorities and highlight for the Australian public the issue of political surveillance", while in a particularly theatrical occupation of urban space, the protestors carried a coffin painted with the slogan "democracy is dead in Malaysia" down busy city streets.[59]

It was in this context of an upturn of struggles in Australia by Malaysian students that Ian Macdonald departed on his drastically shortened tour of South-East Asia, creating the first of several international incidents that were to force the hands of Australian and Southeast Asian governments into curbing this seemingly threatening new relationship. On December 9—a day before Macdonald's arrival—the *The Age's* South-East Asia correspondent Michael Richardson reported on a rather odd press conference in Kuala Lumpur. "Two Malaysian Ministers", head of Home Affairs Tan Ghazali and Mahathir Mohamed, recently appointed Minister for Education and soon to be Prime Minister, had "charged overseas foreign students with indirectly encouraging some Malaysians 'to create a lot of problems in this country'".[60] Responding to international criticism over "the police occupation of two universities there in the wake of five days of student demonstrations", the Malaysians sought to locate these disturbances as resulting from an outside contagion, namely

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[57] Ong, "The politics of Australia's foreign-student policy," 7.
[58] P. Chandran, "Asian Column: 1974 Overseas Students Manifesto," *Tharunka*, 3 June 1974, 10.
[59] Fleming, "From Dependence to Independence," 46.
[60] Richardson, "Malaysia tells our students 'don't meddle,'" *The Age*, 10 December 1974, 6.

"meddling" Australian students.[61] "The brunt of the Ministers' attack", however, was directed at the Australian Government. "They should solve their own problems first", Tun Ghazali declared angrily, "[t]hey solve their problems by shooting their Aborigines and having a white Australia policy".[62] This was clearly not the type of sentiment Australia wanted, especially from a supposed ally in the region.

Scholars have previously described how fear of international criticism was central to the slow process of abolishing official discrimination in Australia, both against indigenous peoples and migrants.[63] Indeed, the Whitlam government was at the forefront of recasting Australia's international reputation, seeking real dialogue and engagement with an Asia previously viewed through the prism of the Yellow Peril or the Domino theory. And it was Whitlam's withdrawal of combat troops from the Malayan peninsula, there under the Five Powers Defence Agreement to combat communist guerrilla forces, which some proposed as the real reason behind Malaysia's particularly harsh acrimony.[64] In another move that embittered the Malaysians, Whitlam controversially "decided to relax discretely long-standing restrictions on freedom of political expression by foreign students" as part of changes to the overseas student system that moved it from an aid focus to one of cultural and intellectual exchange, although this political gag had technically only ever applied to Colombo Plan scholars. Students were thus allowed to "engage in political discussions in public outside the campus as well as in private or on campus - subject only to the provisions of Australian law", something unfathomable to many in Malaysia, where dissent was easily criminalised as communist-inspired.[65] At a press conference during his 1974 trip to Southeast Asia, Whitlam had to fend off questions from Malaysian journalists as to whether there were "communists amongst Malaysian students in Australia", responding that "unless he is a criminal or an advocate of violence a private student's political convictions would be of no concern".[66]

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[61] Ibid, 6.
[62] Ibid, 6.
[63] See in particular Jennifer Clark, *Aborigines and activism: race, aborigines and the coming of the sixties to Australia* (Crawley, WA: UWA Press, 2008), 46-53; Meg Gurry and Gwenda Tavan, "Too soft and long-haired? The Department of External Affairs and the White Australia Policy, 1946-1966," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 58, No. 1 (2004): 127-42 and Gwenda Tavan, *The long, slow death of White Australia* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2005), 112-3.
[64] Ong, "The politics of Australia's foreign-student policy," 8.
[65] Richardson, "Malaysia tells our students," 6.
[66] "List of questions from local press to the PM during Asia trip," Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446, 1972/95023.
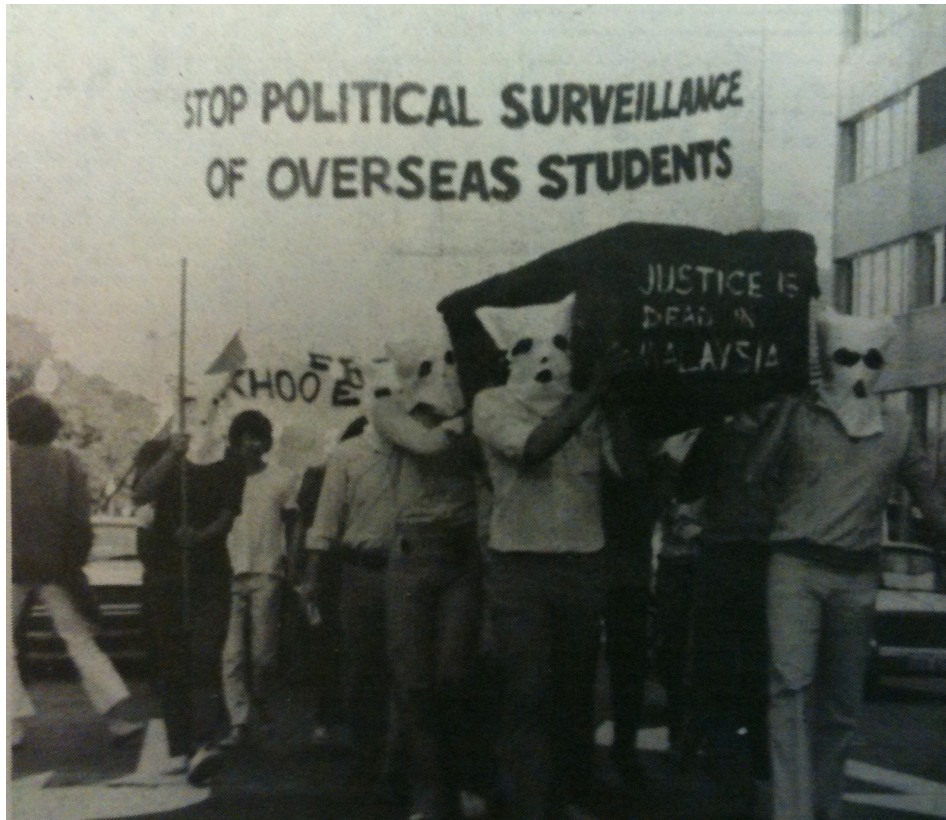
Figure 9: Overseas students and their Australian supporters protest their surveillance while in Australia and crimes back home in Sydney. *National U*, 1 September 1974, 8.

One consolation, however, was that there had been no Australian students involved "on this particular occasion". The AUS president's arrival in Singapore, however, changed all that. Writing a week after the original piece, Richardson noted that student activism was straining bilateral relationships—which had "never been more cordial" according to the embattled Whitlam—between Australia and those non-Communist governments in South-East Asia that had "felt the impact of student power this year and are closing ranks to crush it".[67] Tan Wah Pioh, President of the University of Singapore Students Union and whose trial MacDonald aimed to attend, was said to "have been involved in an unlawful assembly of retrenched employees and to have committed criminal trespass in entering Trade Union premises" during a demonstration for the rights of the unemployed. The trial was internationally condemned as a frame-up by a government seeking to further intimidate students after

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[67] Richardson, "Students Strain Friendship," 8.

its draconian deportation, to an uncertain fate, of five Malaysians who "had persistently breaching a written undertaking not to become involved in local politics".[68]

Macdonald's forced departure fit into an established pattern of political repression, but its international character provided further ammunition for those seeking to undercut support for radical causes. Singapore's Foreign Minister, Sinnathamby Rajaratnam, rebuked foreign students who "meddle in Singapore's politics", and made a speech attacking AUS influence over local students. The Minister condemning them for "assisting to organise an "Asian students' seminar in Hong Kong last March", during which Singapore was reprimanded in a widely circulated communiqué, and explicitly argued that this was a form of sub-imperialism.[69] "The most interesting part of the communiqué for me", Rajaratnam stated:

> was that immediately after some bold references to Asian 'student self-government' the communiqué goes on: 'in order to carry out the aims and achievements of the conference, the Student Education Commission of Asia…was set up and will be initially run by the Australian Union of Students under the sponsorship of Asian student associations.'[70]

Thus the Minister sought to, as Meredith Weiss puts it in her study of governmental control over student dissent in Southeast Asia, "undercut the symbolic resources and ideational tools for mobilization" that these students sought to employ by locating their activism as arising from unwarranted Australian intervention, highlighting how transnational relationships can be as harmful as they are productive.[71] Through this process of "intellectual containment", the Southeast Asian governments began their campaign of clamping down on overseas dissent, and they were to find some helpful allies in Australia.

Drop-outs from their country: Policing transnational education and activism

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[68] Ibid, 8.
[69] Ibid, 8.
[70] Ibid, 8.
[71] Weiss, "Intellectual Containment," 502.

Mahathir's strident rhetoric, located by Catherine Chan as marking the beginnings of Malaysia's conflictive relationship with Australia under his leadership, sparked a concerned response amongst the Australian government.[72] Despite the final ending of Australian support for South Vietnam in 1972-3, Whitlam's government was just as fearful of large-scale communist rebellion in the region as its predecessors. Marxist Humphrey McQueen highlighted this in a long piece, titled in a less-than-subtle attack on ALP figure Jim Cairns, "Living off Asia", arguing that ALP policy in Asia was fundamentally counter-revolutionary, an argument at least partly proven by their tacit support for Indonesia's 1975 invasion of East Timor.[73] Alfred Roy Parsons, Australian High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, penned a concerned, eleven-page report to Whitlam's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Donald Willesee, on the 4 February 1975 titled "Malaysia: The Private Overseas Student Program, Is it a success?"[74] The document came in response to the recent emergence "of a number of factors [that] have conspired to suggest the need to review the policy".

Many of these concerns were long standing: Australia "was not getting [its] money's worth from the program", which had become a backdoor immigration policy at best and a threat to bilateral relations at worst.[75] Nor was it achieving the purported aims of greater cultural understanding, with many conservative Malaysians "shocked by the impact of Western permissive culture on their children".[76] In a new phenomenon, however, Parsons noted a 40% increase in the number of students being admitted into Australian institutions between 1973 and 1974, as well as a significant increase in the amount of students being given permanent residency after graduation. One table outlined how the period 1971-2 saw only 72 Malaysian students stay on in Australia after their course completion, while 578 returned home. By the years 1974-5, however, 296 students were granted residency, with only 222 returning home.[77] The phenomenon of "criticism of Malaysia by Malaysian (i.e. Chinese) students in Australia", however, appeared to be his principal worry. Not only had "Malaysian

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[72] Catherine Chan, "From Then to Now: A Pre-history of 'recalcitrance': Student protest in 1974-75 and Australian-Malaysian relations" (BA Honours Thesis, The University of New South Wales, 2005), 3.

[73] Humphrey McQueen, "The ALP's strategy for Counter-Revolution in Asia, or Living off Asia," in *National Anti-War Conference, Sydney, February 17-21, 1971 – Papers Presented*, np (Sydney: Self-published, 1971).

[74] Alfred Roy Parsons, "Malaysia: The Private Overseas Student Program, Is it a success?" in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

student stirrings…caused several Malaysian ministers to be vocally critical" of Australia's race relations record, but "the behaviour of Malaysian students in Australia could affect our bilateral relations" as well. The increasing number of students wishing to stay in Australia and their increased vocality indicated to Parsons that "many of the private students presently seeking admission to Australia…cannot in any way be described as committed Malaysian citizens".[78]

What exactly constituted a committed citizen, however, proved difficult to pin down. They were apparently not of Chinese descent—a point the author stressed at several points—reiterating the Malaysian Government's policy of blaming its Chinese minority for any upsurge in student radicalism, despite the movement taking on an increasingly multi-racial character in 1974-5.[79] And, while Parsons' admission that responsibility for maintaining a loyal citizenry "lie[s] with the Malaysian Government", he argued that:

> There is no obvious answer to the question: how do we recognise a committed Malaysian and how do we keep him committed? Some wastage is inevitable; it is a matter of reducing the level of wastage, thereby preventing the whole purpose of the program from being undermined.[80]

The High Commissioner went on to outline several ways whereby such "wastage" could be avoided. Enforcing a strict policy on the speaking of Bahasa Malaysia—the official language—was one way to ensure compliance. The standardisation of this Malayan language across the various ethnic minorities, which the government in Kuala Lumpur wanted to "be the nation's basic unifying factor", was something Parsons believed to be "very much in Australia's interests to support"—despite this being a compulsory second language to many.[81] Parsons also felt that Malaysia's secondary schooling system was now sufficient to allow for the education of the whole population, and as such no further provision for study at this level in Australia should be provided. Those who studied both at secondary and tertiary level in Australian institutions were rather uncharitably termed "drop-outs from their own country…and it is hardly surprising that many of them do not wish to return home",

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Indeed, Australian government files are filled with reports on Malaysian students who couldn't speak the new national language proficiently.

or remain supportive of their government while in Australia.[82] Indeed, the Malaysian government sought to discredit its students in Australia as "running down the government just to get permanent residence".[83] This was an argument common in the pages of popular newspapers *New Nation* and the *New Straits Times*, which claimed that "Many Malaysian students are spreading 'Hate Malaysia' propaganda among the Australians" to buttress their claims for asylum, despite the fact that such students "owed their allegiances to Malaysia".[84]

Possibly Parsons' most far-reaching suggestion, the imposition of a quota system on Malaysian students so that more Malays would be admitted at the expense of Chinese, was tersely dismissed by an inter-departmental meeting held to discuss his report two months later. "The meeting felt that Australia could be accused of racial discrimination", though the suggestion for greater Malaysian government involvement in vetting students was received more positively.[85] Ric Throssell, representing the recently established Australian Development Assistance Agency, suggested that it might be of benefit to "ask the Malaysians to make decisions about which students and what courses would be approved". This idea was positively received, with a representative from the Department of Foreign affairs suggesting "we at least invite the Malaysians to endorse private students", under the guise of establishing "racial and socio-economic balance in the program".[86] A Prime Minister and Cabinet's representative supported the motion, although they "were concerned about the reaction of Malaysian students in Australia to these proposals", not to mention a backlash from the broader community for colluding with the Malaysian government's crackdown on oppositional dissent.[87]

It was felt that, in the words of a representative of the Education Department, if "any action were seen as coming from the Malaysian Government there might not be much reaction in Australia as the move could be seen as one for which Australia had no direct responsibility".[88] A discussion paper sent to Australian embassies on the issue spelt this out more precisely, explaining how the "participation of the home

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[82] Parsons, "Malaysia," Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.
[83] "Mahathir: Majority are being forced to criticize the government," 1.
[84] Transcripts of *Sunday Mail* and *New Straits Times* articles from 12 and 13 January 1975, in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.
[85] "Consolidated Minutes of an Interdepartmental Meeting, held Wed. April 23 1975 at the Department of Foreign Affairs", Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

government in the selection of students…should generally ensure that student's criticisms of the home government…is avoided".[89] This seems clear evidence of intent to co-operate in the suppression of "disaffected overseas students". All that was required was an incident of sufficient magnitude to allow for the Malaysian government to clamp down, and one was provided when Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak announced a tour of Australia in October 1975. A strident Malay nationalist whose tightening of the UUCA in 1974 was despised in the student community, Razak had come to power in 1970 and had already been forced to cancel an earlier visit over fears of protest. This trip was to have been led by Mahathir as Education minister and was intended to inform expatriate Malaysians of the "realities" of their homeland, from which it was felt they were alienated. The prospect, however, of the trip not being handled "inconspicuously", but rather that the minister would "engag[e] in public debate either with members of his own country or Australians" led the Department of Foreign Affairs to comment that the trip "might simply worsen existing problems".[90] Most dangerously, the Department felt that "there may be attempts to provoke the Malaysians into statements like those made last month about the extra-territorial application of Malaysian laws and…student surveillance", not to mention embarrassing statements about Australian race relations.[91]

So, when Razak announced his October visit, a key concern remained the possibility of protest, something the tours coinciding with University examinations was supposed to render less likely. The threat of significant protest was not imagined either, for a swelling overseas student movement and its shrinking and increasingly dispirited Australian counterpart were undergoing a further process of entanglement and radicalisation. Graham Hastings has described Australian student activism from roughly 1971 onwards as existing in a "post-Vietnam environment" that saw a significant demobilisation of radical passions.[92] Only months after the successful May Vietnam moratorium, *Outlook* stalwart Ian Turner wrote a particularly prescient article announcing the journal's closure amid concerns of what this new environment might entail. As this thesis has noted, *Outlook* had "responded sympathetically to the

[89] "Private Student Programme," Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.
[90] "Anti-Malaysian student activities in Australia," 18 January 1975, Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Hastings, *It Can't Happen Here,* 187.

Third World revolution" and, in line with the increasing violence of Vietnam, soon became preoccupied with the decolonising world. Its search for answers in China and other anti-colonial nations and struggles reflected and emboldened broader interest amongst a swiftly radicalising movement in these global causes. Yet, the Vietnam conflict's seemingly imminent end and a significant dropping off in numbers between the May and September anti-war Moratoriums sparked fears for Turner. He asked whether the war's passing as a unifying factor meant that "our own grouping, and the new radical movement that we have, at least partially, helped to create, will atomise into a series of special interest groups and ad hoc campaigns, losing a co-ordinated endeavour and a central direction".[93]

And indeed, the evaporation of the Vietnam issue soon saw a plethora of issues from Women's and Queer liberation to land rights, urban space and environmentalism begin to construct separate identities and practices. The Whitlam Government had a lot to do with this, with many activists channelling their energies towards government and becoming institutionalised—the halls of government replaced the street for many as the site of struggle. Perhaps ironically, then, it was during this period that the far left, represented by Trotskyists around the Socialist Youth Alliance, the CPA and Maoists, held the most sway over student politics. Hastings describes how these factions developed a "power sharing situation" within AUS from 1973 until the late 1970s, whereby "the union was divided into spheres of influence" with the CPA and Labor Left holding the National Secretariat, Trotskyists the activist portfolios of education and media while the Maoists would control the travel division and the OSS.[94] The organisation's domination by various shades of radicalism also saw an increasing focus on international solidarity work. AUS rejoined the International Union of Students in 1971 after a long debate over its communist sympathies, while also supporting numerous Third World struggles from Palestinian liberation to independence of Southern Africa from colonial rule.[95]

It was a logical progression, then, for AUS to provide more of its resources to overseas student solidarity, a decision that could be read as attempting to fill the hole left in activist practice by the end of the Vietnam War. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* cynically observed that perhaps the Malaysian issue provided a "ready made

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[93] Ian Turner, "The long goodbye," *Outlook* 14, No. 6 (December 1970): 5.
[94] Hastings, *It Can't Happen Here*, 187.
[95] Ibid, 156-9.

cause" for Australian activists, yet this can only be a partial answer.[96] The victory of the National Liberation Front and North Vietnamese forces in the Vietnamese civil war actually provided inspiration to this global imagination - with UNSW in particular experiencing a wave of student defections from the Embassy-controlled Union of South Vietnamese Students in Australia. These students began "seeking out others…to struggle against a system they have been coerced into supporting for so long".[97] International Student Solidarity Week (ISSW), held between 28 July and 1 August, provided a further opportunity for the cementing of links between overseas students and Australians, with the project explained in the following terms:

> Student Solidarity is International. It exists in spite of, and as a result of, the nature of national governments. American students supported their counterparts in South Vietnam. The Dutch Students supported their counterparts in Indonesia in their struggle for independence. Today the British, Australian and New Zealand student organisations support the student struggle in South East Asia, and condemn imperialism as 'practiced' by their respective governments.[98]

The project was presented as a natural—and overtly transnational—historical progression of Australian students, like their American and European counterparts, 'finding' and directly supporting those their governments sought to suppress. One Malaysian student writing for *Lot's Wife* expressed this point well. No longer were students merely the inheritors of national "cultural traditions", they were "increasingly becoming a central element of social change" around the world.[99] Details around the imprisonment of Khoo Ee Liam, as well as new allegations around his torture, were re-published during this period under the headline "the cry of a fellow student", indicating how much this transnational student identity was solidified.[100]

The aims of ISSW, proposed by the Asian Students' Association conference in Hong Kong the year before, was as a "demonstration of solidarity among progressive student organisations, especially those in the Third World". "[R]ecent events in South East Asia and Africa centring around the suppression of workers, peasants and student

[96] Quoted in Chan, "From Then to Now," 83-4.
[97] "Vietnamese students: end of an era," *National U*, 21 April 1975, 3.
[98] "International Student Solidarity Week: Student Solidarity is International," *National U*, 21 July 1975, 1.
[99] "Student Politics in Malaysia," *Lot's Wife*, 13 May 1974, 11.
[100] Ian Macdonald, "Khoo Ee Liam: The cry of a fellow student," *National U*, 30 June 1975, 1.

movements", an article about the event explained, meant that it was important to "express our solidarity with them so that they can continue their just struggle with the knowledge that they have support from overseas".[101] Action Groups were established on a campus level to facilitate the showing of films, distribution of literature and the inviting of speakers, "all of which inform the student population of the political and socio-economic situation in the Third World".[102] On a more practical level, Australian and Malaysian students established *Malaya News Service*, a fortnightly journal of news and opinion from Malaysia and the overseas solidarity movement, in Melbourne. Letters published from around the world—New Zealand, America, Britain, as well as Singapore and Malaysia—indicated the journal's wide reach and impact. One letter, from an anonymous Malaysian student in Kuala Lumpur, related how he and his friends, who distributed the journal covertly, were "greatly inspired" by the publication, and other combined actions of Australian and Malaysian students.[103]

Malaysian students in Australia also became significantly more vocal after the announcement of Razak's tour. Much like that of the Shah, Razak's visit provided an opportunity to create further alliances between local and overseas students with the intention of directing public and media attention to his government's crackdown on peaceful protestors across the country. H. Leong's was indicative of these attempts to mobilise Australians, writing to *National U* demanding that Razak, a man "of the same species as [Spanish dictator Francisco] Franco, [South Korean leader] Pak Jung Hi [and South Vietnamese President] Nguyen Van Thieu", be opposed and boycotted. As the author put it, "the Malaysian people need your support, they either are under fascist repression and could not voice their demands or are under constant political surveillance (in Australia) and dare not voice their opinions".[104]

Activist Malaysians also challenged what was called "Tidak-apa" or apathetic attitudes amongst the student diaspora, only a small minority of whom had taken an oppositional stance. These attempts often took the form of confessional articles and letters in the student press, with one particularly indicative letter coming from G.H. Lee, who castigated himself for not taking advantage of the freedom of thought and debate education in Australia allowed. "The only books I read are my textbooks and

[101] "Solidarity day for overseas students," *National U*, 9 June 1975, 10.
[102] Ibid, 10.
[103] "Letters," *Malaya News Service,* 1-15 November 1975, 16.
[104] H Leong, "Boycott Razak's Visit," *National U*, 10 October 1975, 15.

my primary concern is to obtain my degree—that grand piece of paper", Lee admitted, who then went on to attack the condescension and indifference other students expressed at his desire to protest the visit of Razak.[105] And based on the amount of letters and correspondence received by *Tharunka* from Malaysian students during this period—the largest volume in its history—such attempts at mobilisation were quite successful.

Even so, criticism of the protestors' tactics and ability to comment on issues at home still found a hearing. One student, who favoured discussions with Razak over protest, attacked the self-righteousness of those involved and also questioned whether their dissent from "the comfortable sanctuary of Australian soil" was legitimate. Had they, like the writer claimed to have, been in Kuala Lumpur for the recent round of protests at which 1000 students were arrested?[106] Despite these criticisms, harking back in many ways to similar ones made of travelling radicals earlier in this thesis, oppositionists were in a better position than ever to protest Razak's October visit. The Prime Minister toured Adelaide and Canberra after an initial trip to New Zealand, where opposition was so fierce that the leader threatened, "relations…could be jeopardised if the demonstrations against him didn't stop".[107]

Protests here seemed no less severe. Razak commented that his trip was "enjoyable and beneficial…except for the demonstrations", noting elsewhere that he had "expected perhaps a petition or a small delegation with a list of grievances but not this".[108] Though only visiting Canberra and Adelaide, neither of which were central locations of overseas activism, he was still hounded by protestors, including one group who publicly burnt his effigy draped in a sign reading "I am a fascist".[109] On Saturday 18 October the Prime Minister's motorcade was intercepted by several dozen protestors, mostly Malaysian, where seven arrests were made, Razak's vehicle was damaged, and allegations of police brutality were aired by no less than the Vice Chancellor of Adelaide University.[110] Razak and his government were given

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[105] G.H. Lee, "End all 'Tidak-apa' attitude," *Tharunka*, 22 October 1975, 16. For similar calls see M. Lum, "Dear Editors," *Tharunka*, 22 October 1975, 7 and 'A Malaysian Student,' "Dear Editors," *Tharunka*, 22 October 1975, 16.

[106] K.H. Wong, "Dear Editors," *Tharunka*, 22 October 1975, 16.

[107] "Razak: Australia proves no refuge for Malaysian tyrant," *National U*, 20 October 1975, 1.

[108] "Visit Beneficial: Tun Razak", *The News*, October 21 1975, 1; *Malaya News Service*, 16-31 October 1975, 1.

[109] Pictured in *National U*, 20 October 1975, 1.

[110] "University protest over Razak incident: Demonstrator 'beaten and kicked by police'", *The Advertiser*, 20 October 1975, in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.

significant right of reply by the Australian press, with Mahathir Mohamed declaring "good riddance" to those students involved.[111]

Razak, however, was more circumspect in his reprimand. He commented that if students were engaged in "normal student activities" they would "be alright", while if they were carrying out "seditious activities" they would meet the full force of Malaysian law.[112] Malaysia took this opportunity to, as one article put it, "control [its] students overseas", using measures suggested in Parsons' document and subsequent ministerial discussions. "If they are definitely not studying", the PM warned "and wandering around from Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide causing trouble", then they should come home. Speaking several days after these incidents, Mahathir Mohamed stated that "all students going overseas must register with his Ministry, detailing their course of study so that authorities could keep track of them". Such a policy would eliminate the previously identified problem that Malaysia really had no idea how many of its nationals were undertaking private study overseas.[113]

In a further measure, it was announced that parents of private overseas students would now be compelled to sign a written guarantee that their children would "behave themselves" overseas, or risk being called back to Malaysia to face the consequences. This fairly unsubtle threat to students' relatives back home delivered the message that student activities overseas, even if they received permanent residency in Australia, could still impact on those left behind.[114] Threats were also made about limiting the number of students going overseas and the imposition of special university-based courts to try dissidents. And while these more extreme threats proved largely rhetorical, it was the beginning of the end for these transnational radicals and the idea of global revolution that sustained them.[115]

Smash the AUS Bureaucrats: Overseas students and the end of the Sixties

Hishammudin Rais, President of the University of Malaysia Students Union, fled his country of birth on 10 December 1974, a day after the military occupation of his

[111] "Ex-Malaysians told 'good riddance', *The Advertiser*, 30 October 1975, in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.
[112] "Visit Beneficial – Tun Razak", 1.
[113] Razak Retaliates: Malaysian students curbed", *The Advertiser*, 27 October 1975, in Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Parsons, "Malaysia," Private Overseas Student Program – Part 4, A446 1972/95023.

campus began. "I grabbed my passport, denim jacket and RM5", Rais recalls, "and hid out in the secondary jungles around the campus. The next day, there was a thunderstorm, and I slipped out through the jungles of Bangsar before getting a lift on a construction worker's motorbike".[116] Thus, Rais' 20-year exile began, and one of his first stops was to be Australia. Invited by AUS to address its 1975 Annual Meeting, Rais was to spend a year in Australia touring campuses and organising with local students, who colloquially dubbed him "Hisham". Almost exactly one year after his arrival, on January 16 1977, Hisham was arrested at Tullamarine Airport and sent to Maribyrnong detention centre. He was charged with offenses relating to a protest against another overseas visitor—Lee Quan Yew, Singapore's increasingly repressive Prime Minister.[117] Lee's visit, coming barely a year after Razak's tour, saw new levels of inter-governmental co-operation. An ASIO file relating to the visit indicates that the organisation received information on protestors' movements from The Singaporean High Commission, and carries direct instructions from new PM, Malcolm Fraser, to identify "leaders and participants"—particularly those who protested outside his country home.[118]

Rais's charges, including "wilfully damag[ing] one Police uniform tunic…valued in all at $6.00", indicate Australian Government intentions to intimidate the overseas student movement. Indeed, the movement claimed ASIO had put a spy in their midst during the Razak and later demonstrations, and this level of (at least partially imagined) repression drove the movement into an introspective cul-de-sac. As Fleming relates: "In the OSS directors report to the 1977 Council, for example, only four of the 23 pages...were devoted to student welfare issues", with the rest carrying long descriptions of governmental spying and repression.[119] The movement away from their broader constituency was only worsened by a growing alliance with a far-left group of Australian Maoists, the Students for Australian Independence (SAI). This group formed after the folding of the previous, and quite successful, Workers Student Alliance and attempted to create a progressive nationalist movement. The Whitlam dismissal and the victory of National Liberation forces in Southeast Asia only seemed to bolster the group's contention that Australia was a

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[116] "Still living on the edge."
[117] "Political asylum for Hishammudin Rais now," *National U*, 7 March 1977, 1.
[118] Reports headed "OP ALUDE" dated 13 October 1976 and 20 October 1976 in Yew, Lee Kwan, A6119 4249, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[119] Fleming, "From Dependence to Independence," 55.

colony, like Malaysia, of the United States.[120] These ideas also owed much to Mao's 1974 theory on the three worlds, which argued that small western nations like Australia and Canada were just as exploited by imperialism as nations of the Third World.[121] Students found Mao's ideas to be particularly useful, allowing them to argue that:

> The Malaysian and Australian Governments are birds of a feather. Both are simply administrators of imperialist interests in their countries. At present, the Malaysian Government is simply more willing to use force.[122]

Not only were these first and Third World students united in their activism, but the material conditions of their countries as auxiliaries of empire were now imagined as largely identical.

Maoist students used this alliance with their Third World co-thinkers to challenge the dominance of what they called "bureaucrats" within the national student union. Jefferson Lee, a member of SAI, was elected editor of *National U* for 1977, and filled the publication with Maoist propaganda, as well as, according to some, engaged with OSS in a campaign of obstruction within the Union. Hastings presents this as the key moment when the far left lost its grasp on student politics, falling into fratricidal infighting many saw as comical.[123] SAI and its allies called a spill motion against the Trotskyist and CPA leadership, accusing them of bureaucratic tendencies and depoliticising the union while OSS radicals daubed "SMASH THE AUS BUREAUCRATS" on the wall of union offices, factionalism that only furthered their isolation.[124]

While this all might seem fairly petty, it had important flow-on effects, firstly in the rapid decline of international solidarity work within the student movement. "Once a feature of the Australian student movement", a report on Communist Party student work noted at the time, "there has been less and less done since the ascendency of the Maoists in the OSS", indicating the group's isolation from its erstwhile allies in the

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[120] For details on the nationalist turn in Maoist politics see John King, "Contested Interpretations, Confused Pedigree, Common Symbol: The Eureka Flag and Australian Nationalism 1970-85," *Victorian Historical Journal* 75, No. 2 (September 2004): 150-57.

[121] For more on this turn in Chinese foreign policy, see Kuisong Yang and Yafeng Xia, "Vacillating between Revolution and Détente: Mao's Changing Psyche and Policy toward the United States, 1969–1976," *Diplomatic History* 34, No. 2 (April 2010): 415-422.

[122] "Hisham: Struggle for political asylum goes on," *National U*, 2 May 1977, 3.

[123] Hastings, "It Can't Happen Here," 165-7.

[124] Ibid, 166.

left.[125] An OSS circular on UNSW highlighted this lack of interest in global solidarity, noting that "a growing disregard for the struggle of people in the Third World" characterised the national union's leadership.[126] And indeed, on a global scale, support for National Liberation struggles and socialist states was diminishing throughout the 1970s. The first 'boat people' from Vietnam and the revelations of Pol Pot's genocide in 1978-9 sparked intense recriminations within the left over their support for the Communists during the Indochina conflict.[127] Communist activist Denis Freney struck a similar note when he retrospectively bemoaned Australian Party support for Indonesia during its occupation and integration of West Papua. Though cloaked in the language of anti-imperialism, their support for the "Indonesian revolution" under Sukarno meant that "the rights of West Papuans to self-determination" were not considered, something the protest veteran described as "paternalism".[128]

Samuel Moyn argues that those groups of the mid 1970s—such as the National Liberation Front in Malaysia and East Timorese resistance fighters—who continued to conceive of themselves "in terms of postcolonial self-determination, adopting strategies of armed violence…fell outside the pale of empathy" for westerners increasingly unwilling to support such enterprises.[129] Similarly, with the huge publicity given to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* sparked not only a turn away from the utopian imaginary of a socialist world, but the increasing ascendency of groups like Amnesty International who replaced calls of "liberation" with demands for individualised "human rights".[130] The age of the revolutionary hero

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[125] Louise Casson and others, "Perspectives on the student movement – Position paper for the Socialist Student Conference 1978," Peter Murphy Papers, MLMSS 6642, Box 11, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

[126] "OSS Circular," July 1977, Records of the Australian Union of Students, 1934-1991, Box 359, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

[127] For more on this emerging anti-Third World sentiment amongst former Sixties activists see Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 158-169.

[128] Denis Freney, *The Politics of Solidarity: Supporting Liberation Struggles in the Australian Context* (Sydney: Communist Party of Australia, 1986), 5.

[129] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010), 173.

[130] For the effect of Solzhenitsyn's work see Kenneth Cmeil, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," *Journal of American History* 86, No. 3 (1999): 1231-1250. The increasingly voluminous field of human rights history notes the transformative nature of these years. See Moyn, *The Last Utopia* and Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the evolution of international human rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) for just two of the best-known examples.

was largely over, and international solidarity with such struggles was fast becoming a political liability.

These controversies merged with OSS' attempts to undermine the AUS student travel apparatus. Established in the 1960s, the travel scheme facilitated the tour of China that Turnley and Hyde undertook in 1968, but overseas students argued that it had since fallen from grace. In many ways, however, the overseas students' involvement simply showed just how isolated they were from the political cultural *zeitgeist* of the time. Attacking student travellers as "tourists" and the plentiful Union-chartered aircraft to Asian destinations as taking advantage of rather than assisting Third World nations, overseas students argued that this sort of travel was completely lacking in political utility and posed no educational value.[131] This political employment of travel, however, was increasingly antiquated and ignored the realities of the mass tourist boom. After all, a progressive traveller in the late 1970s was much more likely to have a *Lonely Planet* guidebook tucked into their rucksack than a copy of the *Little Red Book*. Travellers on the supposedly anti-materialist 'hippie trail' were by this time booking Qantas package tours, while the People's Republic would open its borders to unrestricted tourism only a few years later, fast becoming a prestige destination amongst backpackers seeking to 'rough it' in the Third World.[132] As Sobocinska describes, *Lonely Planet's* 1984 guidebook to China "was concerned less with socialist progress than with the nation's authenticity" as a destination for those seeking some of the world's last "undiscovered" tourist sites.[133]

This misunderstanding of the evolving youth relationship to travel supplemented the "wild factional brawls…not only with students from the Australian Independence Movement, but also generally within the left" which allowed conservative students like Tony Abbott and Peter Costello, heads of the Liberal Clubs on Sydney and Macquarie Universities respectively to respond.[134] The New Right that these figures represented was growing in prominence as the Left entered a seemingly terminal decline. Neo-classical economic policies were seemingly more relevant as

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[131] On this debate see David Spratt and Frans Timmermann, "AUS Student Travel: still getting nowhere fast," *National U*, 13 June 1977, 18-19.

[132] Sobocinska notes how, by 1972, several companies were advertising overland package tours and Qantas had launched its own "alternative lifestyle magazine," *Detours*, to tap into the counterculture's travelling enthusiasm. Sobocinska, "People's Diplomacy," 218.

[133] Ibid, 234-40.

[134] Paul Carrick, "Three Years After: 1979 Special Council: The need for strategic development," Peter Murphy Papers, MLMSS 6642, Box 11.

Keynesianism was discredited by stagflation, and the Right began borrowing many modes of New Left organising, including a passion for overseas ideas and practices. Conservative ideology, as Corey Robin puts it in his rethinking of the subject, is based on the "absorption of the ideas and tactics of the very revolution or reform it opposes", a point amply demonstrated by those conservative students, discussed in Chapter Four, who travelled to Vietnam in 1970.[135] The Institute of Public Affairs' invitation of Milton Friedman to Australia in 1975, Verity Archer argues, marked a key point in the uptake of neoliberal ideology by that organisation, and its dissemination in the Australian mainstream. Transnational activism was no longer the Left's monopoly.[136]

This new buoyancy led to a more aggressive student Right. Robert Clarke, a Liberal student, challenged the legality of Melbourne University's Student Representative Council (SRC) paying its fees to AUS in late 1977, as it was making payments "outside of the powers of the SRC", including to the OSS and in particular the campaign to free Hishammudin Rais. Hisham, who was after all not a student or even an Australian, had applied for political asylum, something Whitlam had posed as a possibility under his changes to overseas student policy in 1974, only to have his claim rejected by Malcolm Fraser's government under shadowy reasoning.[137] The Kaye Judgement, as the decision was known, was then used as ammunition by a coalition of other leftists to expel OSS from the union, amidst unproven allegations that its report to the 1978 Annual Conference was a forgery concealing the theft of thousands of dollars for various underground Communist groups in Southeast Asia. Leaders of the overseas student movement condemned these moves, protesting that the "vile and underhanded manoeuvre…against 14,000 overseas students" would ensure that "[f]rom now on there will be two independent, distinct and separate students' movements in Australia, the Overseas…and the Australian".[138] As another commentator noted, "in one swoop, the only organisation representing overseas

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[135] Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: From Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (Oxord: Oxford University Press, 2011), 43.

[136] Verity Archer, "Dole Bludgers, Tax Payers and the New Right: Constructing Discourses of Welfare in 1970s Australia," *Labour History* 96 (May 2009): 177-190.

[137] Questions in parliament reflected the Government's evasiveness – answering opposition questions around why Rais' claim was rejected with only vague statements that he was not eligible "according to the principles which have been widely accepted in the international community." Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (Senate), "Answer to Questions – Hishamuddin Rais," 24 March 1977, 548.

[138] "Overseas Students' Service Executive Statement on the Declaring of OSS as Ultra Vires Under Kaye Judgement by the AUS Bureaucratic Leadership", in Peter Murphy Papers, MLMSS 6642, Box 6.

students had been levered out of the only organisation that could give them some honest 'muscle'".[139] These bonds were never to be properly reforged, and were a significant factor in the Union's acrimonious collapse only a few years later.

The splitting of the overseas and Australian student movements was additionally to play into the hands of another power, the Fraser Government. Soon after taking office, Fraser indicated a desire to overhaul the overseas student program, and particularly to overturn his predecessor's policies of free tertiary education for overseas students. A Private Overseas Student Policy Task Force was established, whose 1979 report argued that overseas students "were [studying] primarily for their own benefit" and did not deserve taxpayer subsidisation.[140] Students were to be charged 25% of the total cost of their degrees, a figure increased to 100% by the Labor Government in the 1980s, and an industry was born. Although private students had never really been a part of the aid program, the idea that these students were studying to benefit themselves, and not bilateral relations with Australia's near neighbours, marked a significant turn in discourses around overseas education. In keeping with the ascendant 'user pays' philosophy of the neoliberal mode of capitalism, overseas students were seen by successive governments as customers paying for a service rather than (temporary) residents imbued with and capable of demanding rights. Most importantly, a new rule was implemented making it necessary for any student wishing to claim permanent residency to return home for a period of at least two years, which by 1981 saw a dramatic falling away in students staying in Australia post-graduation.[141] Such a policy would also have had obvious flow-on effects for activism—an almost guaranteed deportation at the end of one's studies would certainly discourage students from taking an oppositional stance—and OSS' expulsion from the national students union left them with neither the supporters nor the financial base to resist.

It was developments in Southeast Asia, however, which had perhaps the largest impact on weakening the diasporic movement. Malaysia, in particular, saw "the student left…decimated" after the 1974-5 crackdown, and replaced with a more regime-friendly Islamist-oriented movement.[142] This denial of a Malaysian movement

[139] Gary Ross, "AUS: The Great Stumble Sideways," *Tharunka*, 6 March 1978, 11.
[140] Department of Foreign Affairs, "Private overseas student policy task force report - 1979," A2539 B1979/11, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
[141] Megaritty, "A highly-regulated 'free market,'" 40.
[142] Weiss, "Still with the people," 311.

to fire passions was an important factor in the overseas student movement's retreat in the late 1970s, for depriving a cause of its local particulars obviously has a radical impact on its global presence. That these conflicts extended well beyond the fall of Whitlam in November 1975, seems an interesting corrective to the dominant narration that sees the Sixties ending in that conflictual moment. And while this thesis has argued against pinning an arbitrary beginning and end date on the Sixties phenomenon, the collapse of international solidarity seems particularly illustrative of the process whereby the global Sixties slipped away in Australia.

Conclusion

Overseas students mobilised again, as Eugene Sebastian writes, in the 1980s to oppose the Hawke government's policies of full-fee payment, although these protests occurred firmly outside the organisational and political dimensions of their forebears a decade before.[143] And although they numbered only 10,000 in the mid 1970s, international students now constitute one of Australia's largest export earners. In 2005, there were 375,000 overseas students studying in Australia, 10 times the numbers of only twenty years earlier.[144] Yet the fact that these "temporary transnationals" had a radical hue in the not-so-distant past seems completely forgotten in present Australian debates and popular memory. And the present round of South-East Asian students appear to have an equally poor historical consciousness. Weiss explains how the Malaysian government has successfully undercut the popularly held notion that students should participate politically by "mak[ing] student mobilization seem not inevitable and right, but presumptuous and ill-advised".[145] As Weiss explains:

> By obscuring the history of student (and other, especially left-wing) activism, Malaysian authorities have significantly stymied mobilization: students now are told that it would be out of character for Malaysian students to engage politically. Most have no evidence to the contrary, and

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[143] Eugene Sebastian, "Protest from the Fringe: Overseas Students and their Influence on Australia's Export of Education Services Policy, 1983-1996" (PhD Thesis, The University of Sydney, 2009).
[144] Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Australian Social Trends 2007: International Students in Australia" (Canberra: ABS Publishing, 2007), 1.
[145] Weiss, "Intellectual containment," 518.

thus no reason not to believe and internalize that mantra—which carries over into post-graduation life, as well.[146]

Weiss and Michelle Ford's research on contemporary attitudes amongst overseas students is revealing in this regard. Out of the 30 students interviewed for their paper, only one admitted to being a member of a political organisation, at which "the other students present were extremely surprised", although Thompson and Rosenzweig point out how the everyday resistance of present-day overseas students to their commoditised, rights-free status is much wider than popularly understood.[147] Perhaps such a thesis could arguably hold true for Australia as well. That Australian students and society in general are presented as a-political and cynical when compared to their forebears only a few decades ago, although for a host of different reasons, is another interesting transnational relationship.

This chapter also poses an important methodological question. If "the nation-state [is] a nodal point at which global influences coalesce in response to unique local conditions", as Timothy Brown understands, then how can we accurately account for the reverse: of globally mobile individuals such as overseas students using a foreign location as stage for struggle?[148] This points to one of the flaws in dominant approaches to transnational scholarship, described by Slobodian as political drain. The focus on the local specificities of global movements both overstates the importance of the 'local' (almost always Western) location and downplays the histories, ideas and struggles of the global 'other' that made the transnational moment possible.[149] This chapter has located this group of overseas students as centre, rather than peripheral, not only to Australian activism in the 1970s, but to Australian diplomacy with its near neighbours. Revealing the struggles of these students, and the movement of their Australian counterparts from romantic identification to direct engagement and eventual rejection, tells not only a vital story of international activism largely ignored in Australian scholarship but one which places a problematic end date on Australia's Sixties.

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[146] Weiss, "Intellectual containment," 518

[147] Meredith Weiss and Michelle Ford, "Temporary Transnationals: South-East Asian students in Australia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41, No. 2 (2011): 241; Liz Thompson and Ben Rosenzweig, "Public policy is class war pursued by other means: struggle and restructuring as international education economy," *Interface: a journal for and about social movement* 3, No. 1 (May 2011), 39-80.

[148] Brown, "'1968' East and West," 75.

[149] Quinn Slobodian, "Jurisdictional Leap, Political Drain, and Other Dangers of Transnational History," *New Global Studies* 4, No. 1 (2010): 5-6.

Conclusion

Jim Cairns—former police officer, economics lecturer, key figure in the Australian Labor Party and, by 1968, 54 years of age—was perhaps an unlikely candidate to be swept up by the global revolutionary ideal of the Sixties. However, his story seems particularly indicative of the themes discussed in this thesis. As Cairns' biographer Paul Strangio writes, he found in the ideas of the 'New Left' and in particular its critique of capitalism and imperialism an answer to questions that had plagued him since childhood. While these ideas were first expressed in his 1961 public support for Cuba's "democratic socialist revolution" against the US sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion, a decision that "appalled" his right wing counterparts and saw him removed from the shadow cabinet, the war in Vietnam and the participatory democratic politics of its opponents solidified his international interests.[1] In 1965 he wrote a book, entitled *Living With Asia*, which argued for Australia to reposition itself as an Asian nation rather than remain a white bastion hostile to the region's nationalist yearnings.

Cairns later became Chairman of the Victorian Vietnam Moratorium Committee, and in early 1971 finished a speech to a Moratorium conference by quoting Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh.[2] This global interest had not gone unnoticed, even by the United States' Embassy in Canberra. A cable was sent to the State Department in 1973, commenting that Cairns' recent trips to Communist controlled areas of Korea and Vietnam, the first by an official Australian representative, and his welcoming of a National Liberation Front delegation to Australia had seen him receive the condescending nickname "Ho Chi Jim" from his conservative opponents.[3] By late 1974 Cairns had fallen again under the spell of global ideas, this time on the sexual revolution that changed his life trajectory and, indirectly, saw him cast from office. He absorbed writings of the women's liberation movement and the sexually

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[1] Paul Strangio, *Keeper of the faith: a biography of Jim Cairns* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 128-9.

[2] J.F. Cairns, "The Anti War Campaign 1971," in *National Anti-War Conference, Sydney, February 17-21, 1971 – Papers Presented*, np (Sydney: Self-published, 1971).

[3] US Embassy, Canberra to Secretary of State, "Visit to Australia by PRG and North Vietnamese Delegation," 4 May 1973, available at https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973 CANBER02520_b.html, accessed 24 April 2013.

attuned theories of Herbert Marcuse and Erich Fromm, popularised by the New Left, which he described as "some of the most influential books [I had] read".[4]

In concluding this thesis, perhaps it is best to first outline what it has not been. It has not told the story of the Sixties in Australia: a colossal topic perhaps better suited to a book series than a thesis. Nor is it a history of Australia in the Sixties, although it has located many of the instances in which Australians from a wide variety of backgrounds and motivations found themselves involved in its contortions. It is, rather, the history of an idea, the idea of global revolution that the period promised. It is a history of what this idea meant to a variety of Australians and visitors to its shores—from a Deputy Prime Minister to the many activists whose only trace of radicalism is a yellowing pamphlet, report or letter in a rarely consulted archive box—the ways in which they encountered this idea and, for many, became disillusioned in its practicality and possibilities. Through extensive research of government, organisational and personal archives, as well as newspapers, pamphlets, books, journals and oral histories from across Australia, it has examined the often complex and contradictory motivations that drove individual activists and the movements they made up to engage with the global in various ways. Whether through reading an overseas pamphlet, establishing a radical meeting space, or travelling beyond the nation's borders to experience the decade's rebelliousness for themselves, Australians sought out overseas connections to challenge a nation they at least imagined as mired in a dangerous complacency. Additionally, this study has demonstrated how the global Sixties could arrive, sometimes unannounced and often unwanted, at Australia's doorstep, as well as the often-difficult process of translating radical ideas into a new and often hostile context.

Globally, studies of the transnational Sixties are booming. Yet, much as Sixties activists struggled to make global ideas relevant in a very different context, few local histories have take on the challenge of systematically melding local activist histories with those from the wider world. Those who have looked to the global imagination of the period have too often seen it as tied inextricably to the United States. Radicals are often seen as engaging in a political Beatlemania for anything and everything their trans-pacific heroes uttered. This process of forgetting is noted by Kristin Ross as vital to the sanitising of the period's rebelliousness, the process

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[4] Strangio, *Keeper of the faith*, 307.

whereby "what [is] sayable and thinkable about the political culture of the 1960s" has been lowered "to just a few tropes or phrases".[5] Such an approach has only relatively recently been challenged by a small number of scholars employing a nuanced and less dismissive tone, looking at how Australians engaged with and translated American ideas as well as those from further afield. In analysing a variety of participants in Sixties social movements and their transnational connections, it has looked at what they read, how they lived, where and why they travelled, and how the arrival of radical ideas and visitors from elsewhere assisted, conflicted with and transformed local forms of activism.

To achieve this, a case-study approach has been employed to track a wide and varied cast—Australian activists in a variety of movements, Soviet journalists, Bermudan Black Power advocates and Southeast Asia students—across a range of locations from Brisbane and Sydney to Sofia and Beijing. As such, this thesis has located Australia's engagement in the world of the radical Sixties, which began by unearthing how a new—or rather, reforged—global imagination was tentatively constructed in reactions to several important precursors. Established radicals saw in China's early years of communist rule a new form of party organisation, less doctrinaire and perhaps better suited to Australia than that of an increasingly discredited Soviet Union, while the spectres of racism and decolonisation in South Africa, the USA and Asia began to energise a new generation to solidarity activism. While communist cadres who travelled to China were looking for a "stimulant for jaded commitment", those who campaigned for 'natives' in South Africa, 'negroes' in the Southern United States and revolutionary heroes in Vietnam discovered an inspiring alternative to the supposedly apathetic political climate of Menzies' Australia and also found new toolkits and modes of politics, not in Moscow, but in the newly-discovered Third World.

And as the decade progressed, transnational circuits of ideas and protest became even more influential. The student left established new bookshops and meeting rooms stocking everything from Malcolm X to Marcuse and Mao, which were voraciously read by a swelling group of radicals interested in their local applicability. These radical locations also provided safe spaces for experimentation in new forms of cultural and political expression. The city, as it was around the Western

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[5] Kristin Ross, "Establishing Consensus: May '68 in France as seen from the 1980s," *Critical Inquiry* 28, No. 3 (Spring 2002): 651.

world and beyond, became a radical tapestry of spaces, locations and protest, with conflictive forms of public political expression from overseas employed as old forms and practices came to be seen as increasingly irrelevant. Spaces were found or created for an explosion of new social criticism and action from previously marginalised political actors like women and Indigenous Australians who also transformed the theories of decolonisation, the mental and physical liberation of the colonised subject, to their own ends. A plethora of new publications simultaneously emerged, while others were taken over and transformed, in fashions that borrowed from the participatory ethos of the American New Left, the radical style of the global counter culture and the roneoed newssheets of Paris during May 1968. University newspapers became the closest thing Australia had to an underground press, indigenous publications like *Origin* were formed, while older ones like *Smoke Signals* took on a more radical hue.

Reading and borrowing was, however, rarely enough to satisfy a radical's global interest. The mainstream media was often dismissive or hyperbolic about activism overseas, particularly if it involved the threatening moves towards equality of colonised and coloured peoples, making reliable information hard to come by. Criticism was also raised within activist quarters of those who imposed overseas ideas from books or journals without either adequate understanding or consideration of local traditions. So, relying either on the new availability of cheap flights and disposable income of the post-war boom or the often highly-contingent compassion of friendly organisations and governments, many activists sought to unearth accurate and translatable movement knowledge by visiting the hot spots of global revolution. Previously overlooked by scholars as the fancy of the privileged—as it certainly was for Australians of only a generation before—travel has become increasingly central to the global study of radical circuits and trajectories. This scholarship has unearthed, as Richard Jobs puts it, how activists were no longer content simply "being inspired by one another; they were actually seeking each other out".[6]

The travel of Australians was rarely just a form of protest, of fleeing a harsh political reality, it was instead undertaken with a firmly educative outlook. While some stumbled accidentally upon the decade's political ferment, others, like many of those who visited China in the 1950s, were in search of a new model of radical action.

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[6] Richard Ivan Jobs, "Youth Movements: Travel, Protest and Europe in 1968," *American Historical Review* 114, No. 2 (April 2011): 384.

Similarly, Brisbane radical Brian Laver sought to discover the applicability of ideas expressed by fellow youths across Europe to an Australian climate, while indigenous activists travelled to Atlanta and London to experience theories of Black Power that were so often misreported in metropolitan dailies. What these diverse activists shared was a desire to inform, to spread the gospel back home to their various, interconnected movements. Much of the source material of this thesis has been the reports, whether speeches, articles, interviews or books, that radicals produced upon their return. While few believed it possible to recreate Paris' May revolution or proletarian Shanghai in Brisbane or Melbourne, activists hoped they might find something to "adapt and apply to Australian conditions", or at the very least could return with a set of experiences which, when popularised, might transform their fellow citizens from "sympathetic bystanders to active revolutionaries".[7] As Judy Wu described, these trips and the "face-to-face contacts" that activists experienced "inspired their political imagination and expanded their sense of communion beyond the confines of the nation".[8]

The products of such contacts, however, often failed to match expectations or were not particularly well received back home. While the rhetoric of Black Power featured increasingly prominently in Indigenous Australian publications and protest during the period, encounters with its practitioners in locations like London, Atlanta and New York showed something of its theoretical and practical limitations. And while Bruce McGuinness could feel an imagined community with revolutionaries like Malcolm X and H. Rap Brown while walking through Harlem and Patsy Kruger became "a sister in the struggle for the liberation of black people" around the world, other activists worried that such a global perspective risked overlooking just how different life was for Aboriginal Australia when compared to that of African Americans.[9] Indigenous travellers to China had a similarly problematic experience, being treated more as a "lobbyist overture" than collaborators in a revolutionary anti-colonial struggle by a government increasingly warming to Australia as an ally.[10]

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[7] Leslie Roones Bowling to Marjorie Waters, 1 August 1970 and Warren H Winton to Marjorie Waters, Undated, in Australia-China Society Victoria Branch Records, 1952-1982, MS 13187, Box 3848, Folder 4, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

[8] Judy Tzu Chun Wu, *Radicals on the road: internationalism, orientalism and feminism during the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 3.

[9] Pat Kruger, "A year in the revolutionary education," in *Aborigines Visit the US: Report on trip by Five Aborigines to Congress of African People and United Nations,* np (Melbourne: ASCHOL, 1971), 31.

[10] "China visit," *Identity* 1, No. 7 (July 1973): 28.

Student and worker visitors behind the 'bamboo curtain' in the late 1960s, for their part, saw less to criticise. Instead, they often validated and venerated pre existing rumours of red guards and cultural revolutions.

They also became immersed in 'radical orientalism', finding everything that was desirable in the politicised aesthetic of China's revolutionary youth. One young Brisbane radical, for example, attended a university disciplinary hearing only days after his return from China "in full Chinese workers dress - blue cotton tunic, matching cap, two-inch-square Mao badge and well-thumbed Little Red Book".[11] Others bought in to the falsified China their guides presented with the vigour of a tourist, eagerly casting aside questions around China's increasingly violent and dogmatic political practice when confronted with glowing revolutionary youths so much more committed than their western counterparts. And finally, the very nature of travel reportage could come in for question, with multiple trips to South Vietnam by activists on both sides of the increasingly-heated debate around the May 1970 Moratorium culminating in a public dispute over the reliability of 'being there' as a political tool. Travel was, after all, an experiential pursuit intended to impart a sense of authenticity. However, the distortions of a host government and the questions of hostile commentators threw doubt on how open a traveller's eyes really were, disrupting the imparting of cultural capital onto the returned pilgrim.

This thesis has employed a transnational approach that identifies the local in the global, as well as the global at work locally. As such, it has weaved the stories of those radicals, from European Marxist theorists to overseas students, who at least tried to visit Australia for various periods throughout the long Sixties into the national narrative. Some of these personalities visited Australia out of interest, like Roosevelt Brown who wished not only to learn more about Indigenous Australians than he found in anthropology textbooks, but also to try and forge connections between them and the global movement he represented. Others found themselves in Australian universities through an intricate web of Cold War alliances and development plans. University students from South East Asian nations travelled to Australia in increasing numbers throughout the period as part of the Colombo Plan and as private scholars, and by the 1970s were fired to protest by revolutionary developments in their home nations and across Asia. Australian activists also played a key role in inviting well-

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[11] "Dossier on a Mao-type campus stirrer," *The Australian*, 31 October 1971. Reproduced in Shearman, Richard Francis Volume 3, A6119 4838, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

known overseas figures like Angela Davis, judging them to be proven newsmakers able to generate media controversy and negative response from a fearful government.

Both overseas students and visiting radicals found themselves on the receiving end of government hostility and surveillance. Building on traditions of Australian solidarity with overseas struggles, the radicalisation of South East Asian students in the early 1970s saw them forge an alliance with their increasingly fractious local counterparts to protest inequality, corruption and imperialism in Malaysia and Singapore. A large number of radical activists were invited and many were eventually excluded as the conservative state and its security apparatus tried to impose physical and ideological barriers against an evolving left-wing enemy. Wendy Brown writes that the state, as national borders are challenged by globalisation, enacts a spectacularised form of sovereignty to at least be seen to challenge increasing transnational flows.

As fears of international communism shifted and modified in response to the New Left and Black Power movements, government enacted a bordering mentality against a variety of activists, leading to wide condemnation. Similarly, when a properly transnational student movement emerged in the 1970s, the Asian-focused Labor government conspired with allies overseas to enforce the policing by state authority over education and activism. Australia's looking to the Asian region—so well argued for by Cairns—seemed to mean that the Whitlam government could ignore its newfound neighbours' less-than-democratic sentiments. And, while this thesis has taken as one of its key theoretical points that imposing an arbitrary date range on the Sixties as a conceptual moment is problematic, the crumbling of the alliance that came to exist between Australian and South East Asian students signifies in many ways how this radical period and the global ideal that underpinned it came to an end.

The 'worlding' of Australian history is well underway. Scholars have tied Australian policies and principles of racial exclusion to similar examples across the Anglo-Saxon world, unearthing the deep interconnections between Australia and Asia in spite of the official policy of White Australia, as well as how Indigenous Australians sought alliances overseas. This thesis has drawn significantly on such studies as well as theories of transnationalism, to fill an important gap. In identifying the myriad ways in which Australian social movement actors imagined, engaged with, visited and critiqued some of the most important ideas and sites of Sixties revolt, it

has enlarged the scope of transnational Sixties studies, helping to understand the period as a truly global phenomenon. As Jeremy Prestholdt writes, "radicals on every continent perceived a meaningful link between their lived circumstances and a system of domination that transcended national boundaries".[12] Australians made themselves a part of the decade in many ways, while others sought to distance themselves from its impacts, which were seen as either dangerous, ill-advised or both. Equally, an international cast of characters sought to either learn, protest or make use of Australia's relative freedoms to campaign for political change abroad, narratives that paint Australia and its supposedly lotus-eating citizenry onto a global canvas of change.

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[12] Jeremy Prestholdt, "Resurrecting Che: radicalism, the transnational imagination and the politics of heroes," *Journal of Global History* 7, No. 3 (November 2012): 508.

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