



ABSTRACTS AND NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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**“Men First, Subjects Afterward”
Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience,”
and the Thoreauvian Echoes of 1968 and After**

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Thoreau’s political reputation in the United States dates from the 1960s when the Americans began to see themselves in a political context. The single most famous fact of Thoreau’s life had once been perceived as his going off to Walden Pond in order to drive life into a corner; in the sixties that was superseded by Thoreau’s night spent in jail in order to drive the government into a corner. This paper will deal with Thoreau’s impact in both the US and Europe in 1968, as well as two decades later when ‘Civil Disobedience’ became the slogan of the velvet revolutions in Eastern Europe.

Keywords: Thoreau; Civil Disobedience; political context; the US and Europe in 1968; velvet revolutions; Eastern Europe

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Emerson's major works in Bulgarian. Her current project focuses on Margaret Fuller's work, both research and translation. Albena Bakratcheva is life member of the Thoreau Society, USA and founding member and Executive Council member (2011–2015) of IASA, the International American Studies Association. In 2014 the Thoreau Society granted her the Walter Harding Distinguished Service Award.

ALESSANDRO BUFFA

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Inner City Blues: Blues Legacies and the Roots of 1968

In this article, I would like to propose an alternative and long view of "1968" which is grounded in black liberation movements, Afro-diasporic cultures, neighborhood-based organizations and sustained and propagated by music and sound. Venturing into this alternative history, I consider the Bronx, Harlem, and Naples, Italy as networks of resistance and nodal junctures for the transmission of Afrodiasporic cultures of opposition. Connecting the mutual influence of global social movements, music and neighborhood-based organizations, my article is also an invitation to start thinking about history through acoustic/musical resonances.

Keywords: Activism in the South Bronx; inter-ethnic alliances; Black liberation movements; Afrodiasporic and creolized cultures; music and echo-chamber effect; Harlem; Naples; Mediterranean

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**Memory of the Warsaw Pact Intervention
in the Post-August History 1968–1989
Manipulation, Oblivion, and Conservation**

The meaning of the Warsaw Pact intervention in August 1968 soon became a matter of political manipulation. The spontaneously shared notion of the "occupation" quickly turned into its very antithesis.

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The postulate of the “friendly assistance” of the Soviet Army gradually promoted on the official level played a key role in the policy of the so-called consolidation. As a consequence, the Prague Spring was denigrated as an attempted counterrevolution. The memory of the August “occupation” disappeared from the public sphere: It went underground or was pushed into the private sphere. The idea of the heroic and victorious fight against the counterrevolution, so much cherished by leftist radicals, reached its peak by the end of 1970 when it was confirmed by an official document. After that, it started losing its momentum as if the Prague Spring and the August events were rather due to fall into oblivion. But in 1989, the relevance of the 21st August suddenly reemerged in public protests against the Communist régime, which were taking place on that date. The article explores the coexistence/parallel lives of the three conflicting memories of the August 68 during the post-August history of normalization mentioned below: the privatized memory of occupation, the radical memory of fraternal assistance, and the policy of oblivion.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia; Soviet army; Prague Spring; normalization; memory

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Counter-revolution, or Authentic Socialism? American Far-Left Reactions to the Czechoslovak 1968

For the majority of Leftists in the 1960s, the Soviet Union ceased to be intellectually and ideologically inspiring. Both Soviet Communism and Western capitalism at that time represented “the System” which offered universal manipulability and universal marketability as its only alternative modes. Thus, the Left searched for authentic socialism, whether in the Marxist-humanist philosophy, in the Third World revolutions, or in the local socialist traditions. However, even though the global Left faced several general problems common to all Cold War worlds, there were also important contextual differences which prevented the common base from further development.

Following this general context, this article will focus on the Left in Czechoslovakia and in the USA, particularly on the question whether the Czechoslovak reform movement of the late 1960s was inspiring for various groups on the US Left. With regard to the US left-wing reactions to the Prague Spring or to the resistance of Czechoslovak people against the Warsaw Pact invasion, the article will pay attention

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especially to the discursive dichotomy of authentic socialism vs. counter-revolution.

Keywords: Prague Spring; US Left; authentic socialism; counter-revolution; the 1960s

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**American and European Leftist Academia
through the Prism of Paul Berman's *A Tale of Two Utopias:*
*The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968***

In his book, Paul Berman outlines a productive framework for a further interpretation of ideas of the leftist thinkers in North America and Europe. This article tries to follow Berman's approach and to provide a critical stance towards the views of a number of Western social and political philosophers who write after 1968 and even after 1989. My findings confirm Berman's light irony to this trend of thought but emphasize that some of the works discussed seem to be realistic in avoiding unjustified optimism concerning the leftist position.

Keywords: leftist thought; social and political philosophy; political left; global predicament; subject fetishism; commodification of subjects; simulacrum; global surplus recycling mechanism; sin of the Left

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Eastern-European 1968s?

The concepts of 'long 1968' and 'counterculture' compete in order to define the same cultural movement. Depending on the cultural context, historians used both of them to broadly define the same idea. Yet the whole situation becomes more complex when explaining the protests in Eastern and Central Europe of the late 1960s. In this paper, I argue that the protests from Eastern and Central Europe were the result of a diffusion from Western Europe as well as an evolution of locally-generated situations.

Keywords: the long 1968; East-Central Europe; Roszak; promises of 1968.

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**Modes and Moves of Protest
Crowds and Mobs in Nathan Hill's *The Nix***

The role of mass protest has been recurrently central yet controversial in the American culture. Central because American history presents a constellation of significant collective protest movements, very different among them but generally symptomatic of a contrast between the people and the state: from the 1775 Boston Massacre and the 1787 Shays's Rebellion, to the 1863 Draft Riots, but also considering the 1917 Houston Riot or anti-Vietnam war pacifist protests. Controversial, since despite—or because of—its historical persistence, American mass protest has generated a media bias which labelled mobs and crowds as a disruptive popular expression, thus constructing an opposition—practical and rhetorical—between popular subversive tensions, and the so-called middle class "conservative" and self-preserving struggle.

During the 20th century, this scenario was significantly influenced by 1968. "The sixties [we]re not fictional," Stephen King claims in *Hearts of Atlantis* (1999), in fact "they actually happened," and had a strong impact on the American culture of protest to the point that their legacy has spread into the post 9/11 era manifestations of dissent. Yet, in the light of this evolution, I believe the very perception of protesting crowds has transformed, producing a narrative in which collectivity functions both as "perpetrator" and "victim," unlike in the traditional dichotomy. Hence, my purpose is to demonstrate the emergence of this new and historically peculiar connotation

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of crowds and mobs in America as a result of recent reinterpretations of the history and practice of protest in the 1960s, namely re-thinking the tropes of protest movements of those years, and relocating them in contemporary forms of protest. For this reason, I will concentrate on Nathan Hill's recent novel, *The Nix* (2016), and focus on the constant dialogue it establishes between the 1968 modes of protest and the Occupy movement.

Keywords: mobs; crowds; American literature; *The Nix*; Nathan Hill; mass protest; dissent

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The Case for a Native American 1968 and Its Transnational Legacy

Partly as a result of compartmentalized academic specializations and history teaching, in accounts of the global upheavals of 1968, Native Americans are either not mentioned, or at best are tagged on as an afterthought. "Was there a Native American 1968?" is the central question this article aims to answer. Native American activism in the 1960s was no less flashy, dramatic or confrontational than the protests by the era's other struggles—it is simply overshadowed by later actions of the movement. Using approaches from Transnational American Studies and the history of social movements, this article argues that American Indians had a "long 1968" that originated in Native America's responses to the US government's Termination policy in the 1950s, and stretched from their 'training' period in the 1960s, through their dramatic protests from the late 1960s through the 1970s, all the way to their participation at the United Nations from 1977 through the rest of the Cold War. While their radicalism and protest strategies made Native American activism a part of the US domestic social movements of the long 1960s, the nature of American Indian sovereignty rights and transnationalism place the Native American long 1968 on the rights spectrum further away from civil rights, and closer

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to a national liberation struggle—which links American Indian activism to the decolonization movements of the Cold War.

Keywords: 1968; Native Americans; sovereignty; social movements; transnationalism; decolonization

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