

THE ORIGINS OF STUDENT RADICALISM: A STUDY OF THE SIXTIES

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INTRODUCTION

This essay is a study of the emergence of political and cultural radicalism in the sixties, specifically those forms of dissent and rebellion which were expressed by a particular generation of student (and therefore 'middle-class') youth in Melbourne. My purpose has been to account for the origins of the new forms of student radicalism and to assess the particular impact of the Vietnam War as a factor contributing to the radicalisation.

The radicalisation process witnessed and experienced in Australia was not separate from the process of growing dissent that occurred internationally in the sixties and that in some countries was strong enough to shake the ruling order of society. Still by far the best sociological studies of sixties radicalism in Australia, partly because they so rigorously interrogate the very notion itself, are two articles (by Richard Gordon and Warren Osmond) that appeared in the 1970 publication "The Australian New Left".¹ There has been a surprising paucity of analysis since that effort, which may reflect the decline and fragmentation of the same sixties movements but which is hardly warranted from the point of view of their historical importance. Most of the recent work has a tendency to focus on the later, more radical, sixties years (1966-72). This study below will offer a counter-balance in order to assess the impact of 'Vietnam' but also on the grounds that the radicalism of the sixties originated in the distinctive earlier years (1961-5).

Youth Culture.

Without attempting to suggest that there may be a single cause, it is important to seek an explanation for the sixties. The most common explanation offered for the radicalisation is the notion of the development of a youth culture, and a corresponding generational consciousness. Almost without exception, those authors who have dealt specifically with the cultural/political radicalism of the sixties emphasise the generational character of the rebellion—a "self-consciously alienated"² reaction against the way of life of 'the oldies'. Various factors, emerging in the fifties and becoming increasingly apparent over the following decade, have been suggested to explain the strong generational identification of youth. Two stand out—a decline in the sense of belonging to a 'class' was both a cause and effect of this identification;³ the increasingly prolonged period of adolescence experienced by the youth of the post-war 'baby-boom' generation encouraged a specific and independent 'youth culture'.⁴ Not only was the

¹ Richard Gordon and Warren Osmond, "An Overview of the Australian New Left" and Warren Osmond, "Toward Self-Awareness", in Richard Gordon (ed.), *The Australian New Left*, Melbourne, Heinemann, 1970.

² Peter Cochrane, "The War at Home" in G. Pemberton (ed.), *Vietnam Remembered*, Weldon Publishing, 1990, pp. 169-70.

³ Stephen Alomes, "Cultural Radicalism in the Sixties", *Arena* No. 62 (1983), pp. 32-3, 34. See the discussion in Hebdige (p. 74) of the development of youth culture (and its 'marginal discourses') as part of the process of polarization and fragmentation of working-class community. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture - The Meaning of Style*, London, Methuen, 1980.

⁴ See Stephen Alomes, op. cit, p. 33; Stephen Alomes, *A Nation At Last*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1988, pp. 185, 189; Donald Horne, *Time of Hope*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1980, p. 49; Julie

sixties' teenage cohort proportionately large, far greater numbers of young people were staying on at school, or attending university.⁵ It has been suggested that these conditions allowed the emergence of a "youth market"⁶ but also the space for questions of meaning and identity to arise.⁷

The concept of a "youth market" was first put forward in 1980 by Donald Horne, an author who himself played a decisive historical role in the sixties. In Horne, the context for this concept was the development of a "permissive", "self-indulgent" society made possible by affluence ("the era of assured and optimistic economic faith"), and the extension of consumerism, both conditions transforming middle-class values away from traditional puritanism.⁸ Peter Cochrane has employed the same basic economic framework—the notion of an indulgent "permissive consumerism" stemming from the "marketplace" of a capitalism that had "itself signalled that the time for deviation was approaching."⁹ According to both Horne and Cochrane, permissive consumerism, as an ideology, encouraged a belief in the right to self-fulfillment.¹⁰ The critique of the mass society which developed at the same time started from the awareness that self-fulfillment could not be achieved through consumer goods.¹¹ Thus, for Cochrane, "it was capitalism (that was) laying the foundations for the discontent of the Vietnam era".¹² And affluent post-war Australia was also making room for 'romanticism'.¹³

It is thus, for these authors, basic economic causes that produced the 'youth culture' and, in turn, questioning, dissent and radicalism. For York, the Vietnam protest movement too 'emerged' from the 'youth culture'.¹⁴ According to Cochrane, the permissive ideology of the 'youth culture' created by the market of consumer capitalism¹⁵ contained "no simple and direct lines" into radical activity or political

Ockenden, *Anti- War Movement and the Student Revolt at Monash: an examination of Contending Ideologies 1967-70* (BA Hons. Thesis), Monash University, 1985, pp. 6-7.

⁵ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 169; Horne, *op. cit.*, p. 41; Barry York, *Student Revolt Latrobe University 1967-73* (MA Thesis, Sydney University, 1984), pp. 9, 25; Sol Encel, "Education and Politics", *Outlook*, No. 1 (February) 1965.

⁶ Horne, *op. cit.*, p. 41; Ockenden, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁷ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 169. On the Left, what was initially seen by some as the negative, exploitative 'cult of the teenager' had, by 1966, become a positive phenomenon associated with the "aware generation". W.E. Gollan, 'Society and the Juvenile Delinquent', *Orbit*, Vol 3, No. 3 (December 1963); Editorial, *Target*, Vol. 5. No. 1, 1966.

⁸ Horne, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 13, 73, 84. Horne refers at one point to "the spirit of permissiveness" (p. 26).

⁹ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

¹⁰ Horne, *op. cit.*, demonstrates that this idea extended to the belief in the right to (consume) sex - the subject of his first chapter.

¹¹ For the development of moods of romanticism among the 'affluent alienated', see Alomes, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-9. See also Horne, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 73.

¹² Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 168. Alomes also employs the notion of 'consumer capitalism' in his basic framework. See Alomes, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹³ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

¹⁴ Barry York, *Power to the Young*, in V. Burgmann and J. Lee (eds), *Staining the Wattle*, Penguin, 1988, pp. 228, 233.

¹⁵ For the pivotal role of the transistor radio for teenagers, see Barry York, *Student Revolt Latrobe University 1967-73*, Canberra, Nicholas Press, 1989, p. 26. York, *Power to the Young*, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

activism and could just as easily lead into sensualism.¹⁶ He admits difficulty in explaining why some took the political path rather than the hedonistic road, and suggests biographical method, or psychology, might be necessary.¹⁷ Perhaps, however, there is a flaw in Cochrane's historical method. Certainly the idea that some took the 'search for self-fulfilment' 'beyond the market-place' into political action explains very little.¹⁸

Student Radicalism

Cochrane asserts that student rebels "came out of a distinctive youth culture".¹⁹ This culture was not unified but consisted of various subcultures (rockers, sharpies, surfers etc) all alienated from the parent culture. Yet Cochrane's chapter does not contain one reference to the specific characteristics of the student subculture. Consequently, this subculture is effectively reduced to, or collapsed into, the generalised 'youth culture' concept. Precisely because student subculture was characteristically 'literary' and its music (initially jazz, folk) an expression of the rejection of mass consumerism, student subculture (at least in the early sixties) bears a certain antagonism towards 'youth culture' and certainly cannot be reduced to it. And being 'cultural' (i.e. created rather than consumed, commodified) it gives rise to a cultural radicalism whose origins are not in the economy but relatively autonomous in relation to the economy (understood as 'a market'). For instance, the mood of romanticism, so strongly present in the subculture of students, was not a product of, or a reaction to, the market-place (permissive indulgence), but a response, having its own intellectual and literary history, to "urban industrial society".²⁰

It is possible, therefore, to interpret the relationship between sixties cultural dissent and the 'market' in quite the opposite way to that undertaken by Cochrane and York, as Alomes has done in his discussion of the co-option of romantic moods, creative and oppositional cultural initiatives, sexuality, and the desire for self-fulfilment, by consumer capitalism.²¹ One can accept the importance of post-war affluence as the general background to sixties dissent without ascribing some sort of demiurgic power to the 'market'.²² This essay develops the view that the sixties cultural and political radicalisation of students emerged from the specific subcultures of students rather than from the marketed and merchandised 'youth culture'.²³ Those student subcultures

¹⁶ For a discussion of the functionality (to capitalism) of the hedonism of the sixties, see the views of Kelvin Rowley (and the counter-views of Denis Altman) in John Docker, "Those Halcyon Days - the Moment of the New Left", in B. Head and J. Walter (eds), *Intellectual Movements and Australian Society*, Melbourne, Oxford, 1988, pp. 293-4.

¹⁷ Cochrane, op. cit, p.173.

¹⁸ Cochrane, op. cit, p.169.

¹⁹ Cochrane, op. cit, p.169; York, *Power to the Young*, op. cit, p. 233.

²⁰ Alomes, op. cit, pp. 35-37.

²¹ Alomes, op. cit, pp. 43-5, 46.

²² For a discussion of the significance of 'affluence', see Docker's presentation of the views of Denis Altman, in Head and Walter, op. cit, pp. 290-293. Capitalism can be interpreted in terms of its social relations rather than in terms of the 'market'.

²³ York suggests that it is not possible to analyse the sources of student unrest in isolation from the 'youth culture'. This is correct, but does not entitle him to ignore the specific student culture (that preceded the establishment of Latrobe University).

formed in reaction to the mass culture were an expression of students making their own history, and attempting to make sense of their social world.²⁴ Similarly, the generational consciousness of students was 'made' rather than absorbed.

The student subcultures are historiographically ignored by Cochrane and York (no doubt 'explained', in the case of the latter, by the lack of a tradition at Latrobe University) partly because, in believing that the sixties 'earns its reputation in the latter part of the sixties', they do not attempt to present the actual historical development of student radicalism from the early sixties.²⁵ The narrative in this essay instead begins in this period - not because of any disagreement with Cochrane's view that the 'sixties' is an arbitrary concept,²⁶ but because from the point of view of chronological narrative the period 1960-1 is when student radicalism actually begins to be 'made'.

The disturbing aspect of the York/Cochrane view is that a radicalisation created by capitalism itself²⁷ can just as easily, in a new manifestation of capitalism, be eroded irrespective of the political relevance of the strategies of the radicals. Such an 'economistic' or 'structuralist' approach can not take into account the specific political weaknesses that eroded the strength of the radical movement in the sixties and seventies.

As a control experiment in the exploration of student radicalism in the sixties this essay will focus on a case study of Melbourne University.²⁸ The absence of any reference to specific spatial locations is a weakness of some of the material written about sixties radicalism. In the work of Stephen Alomes, for instance, the benefit of the degree of abstraction in his method is the success he has achieved in integrating and interconnecting so many different themes into a convincing whole.²⁹ But his brush strokes are too sweeping, and pay no heed to location; nor do they recognise any chronological distinctions. There is no sense, in the Alomes essay, of a transition between various phases of the history of sixties radicalism.³⁰ His essay, organised as a complex structure, employs none of the methods of narrative history—with its ability to show interconnections by presenting movement through time.

²⁴ For the 'culturalist' (and anti-structuralist) view that people 'make' their own history, see Susan Dermody et al, *Nellie Melba, Ginger Meggs and Friends*, Malmsbury, Kibble, 1982, pp. 1-3 (introduction). See also Docker, in Head and Walter, op. cit, p. 289.

²⁵ Cochrane, op. cit, p. 165. York (*Student Revolt*, p. 39) suggests that the student movement, before the onset of the Vietnam War, was not 'sustainable' or 'conscious'. Altman also dates the sixties from the elections of 1966. See Dennis Altman, "The Personal is Political", in Head and Walter, op. cit, p. 308.

²⁶ 'History does not conform to ten-year blocks'. Cochrane, op. cit, p. 165.

²⁷ Cochrane (p. 183) uses the term 'a temporary alignment of forces'.

²⁸ See Patrick O'Brien, *The Saviours: An Intellectual History of the Left in Australia*, Drummond, 1977; Kelvin Rowley, "Melbourne University: Fluctuating Fortunes of the Left", *Old Mole*, No. 3, June 29, 1970.

²⁹ Alomes, op. cit.

³⁰ This tendency is also present in Horne and in Docker who both at various times jump about the decade in seven league boots. York, on the other hand, does recognise these phases, but completely discounts the importance of the earlier phase (prior to 1965-6). See York, *Student Revolt*, op. cit, p. 21. The treatment by Osmond (op. cit, p. 173) is notable for recognising the transition between phases.

The study below of radicalism at Melbourne University is also an attempt to relate concrete detail to certain abstract themes, in particular the content of student subcultures. One of the weaknesses of York's approach is that the content of his heavily theoretical opening chapters does not appear to be articulated in the narrative (of events at Latrobe University) that unfolds later in his book. We are not able to comprehend exactly how the specific rebellion at Latrobe illustrates the theories offered by York for student revolt in general, and this is because of the absence of the mediation provided by a consideration of student subcultures.

Youth subcultures/ Student subcultures

In the post-war period, youth subcultures reflected "the breakdown of consensus". They represented a "challenge to hegemony...expressed obliquely, in style" and a form of resistance aimed at offending the silent majority.³¹ In Australia, this pattern was manifested initially in the rocker, jazzier and surfer cults, and somewhat later in the 'mod'/'sharpie' wars.³² As distinct from the styles adopted by some other 'youth cultures' however (particularly various working-class youth cultures), student cultural style is more articulate, often literary, and consequently more easily 'read'.³³

SECTION ONE: SOURCES OF CULTURAL RADICALISM

1. Criticism and "New Criticism"

To suggest in the very early years of the sixties that the decade that was to follow would eventually enjoy a mythical notoriety as the decade of turmoil and radicalism would have required a great feat of the imagination. Certainly there were very few in complacent and conservative Australia who would have dared. These were the years of the parliamentary dominance of Sir Robert Menzies, who had successfully applied the red smear to his opponents and enjoyed the kudos flowing from his association with 'affluence', the outcome of a seemingly endless economic boom. The causes of the profound social conservatism of Australians - as reflected in the values of discipline, hard work and respectability - were more basic. The post-war years had seen a consolidation of the 'cultural ascendancy' (hegemony) of those groups within the ruling class that have

³¹ Hebdige, op. cit, pp. 17-18. See also Osmond, op. cit, p. 171 for a discussion of the phases of 'radicalization'. According to Osmond, rebellion begins in a pre-intellectual, but "implicitly radical", cultural phase where " 'instinctively' people seek 'alternatives' in their rejection of a society in which they feel alien". For example, in street-gangs. Osmond thus maintains that fully-developed radicalism must be intellectual.

³² See, for example, Ian Meldrum, 'Mod Sharpie War - Special Report', *Go-Set*, November 6, 1966. See also *Go-Set*, August 10, 1966 ('Sharpies Hunt in Packs'); *Tribune*, March 13, 1963 ('surfies' versus 'rockers'). For reflections on the 'rocker' phenomenon, see Jeff Nuttall, *Bomb Culture*, London, Paladin, 1970, p. 33; Hebdige, op. cit, pp. 49-51.

³³ See Hebdige, op. cit, p. 148 (see also pp. 128-31).

been described as 'the industrial bourgeoisie'.³⁴ But these years had also spawned social groupings, in particular members of the 'new middle class'³⁵ based in the professions and closely aligned with an expanding tertiary-trained intelligentsia, who were to offer a challenge to traditional middle-class values.³⁶ The challenge was to be led by a 'class' of intellectuals (which included older 'liberals' such as Donald Horne, but also students rebelling against 'straight' society or 'distancing themselves from the privatised hedonism of suburbia').³⁷ The movement against conservatism represented an important revival and resurgence of liberalism in Australia and was characterised above all by a profoundly optimistic belief in the possibility of modernising Australia by overcoming the backwardness and parochialism of her cultural life.³⁸

Despite the easing of Cold War tensions in the early sixties, and the softening of anti-communist attitudes, the cultural standing of left-wing, 'progressivist' thought in Australia had nevertheless been considerably weakened and thus complemented the reduced political influence of communist and left forces. The "radical-democratic definition of the national character"³⁹ that had been fostered by Australian communist intellectuals ("Left Australianism")⁴⁰ was now somewhat tattered. For many, it had been supplanted by a new definition, one seemingly more appropriate to the supposedly 'affluent' and 'classless' post-war Australia: the notion of an essentially "suburban" and "middle-class" national character. The trend was reflected in the more metaphysical and modernist themes of writers such as Patrick White, Vincent Buckley and A.D.Hope; the

³⁴ R.W. Connell and T. H. Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1980, p. 298. For a discussion of the 'cultural order' prevailing at the height of the Menzies 'era', see also Horne, op. cit, pp. 4-5, 63; Cochrane, op. cit, p. 165.

³⁵ The term used by Alomes, op. cit; and Horne, *Time of Hope*, op. cit; Cochrane, op. cit, p. 168; Docker, in Head and Walter, op. cit, p. 303. Horne (p. 61) uses the term 'intellectualised middle class'. The validity of the term 'middle class' to categorise these groupings (which others have described as 'new working class') is perhaps problematic. As Rowse has argued, the term 'middle class' as used by the 'New Critics', rather than being a concept of class, was a generic term referring to certain positively regarded values and attitudes not present in the working class (associated with xenophobia, puritanism and egalitarianism) and associated instead with go-ahead managerialism and pluralistic, modernist, internationalist attitudes to cultural life. Indeed all those attitudes that would go towards the making of a new middle-class version of the Australian Legend. See Tim Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character*, Malmsbury, Kibble, 1978, pp. 198-203, 218, 221-3, 226.

³⁶ Such as anti-intellectualism, puritanism, authoritarianism and philistinism. Reasons suggested for the challenge include 'affluence' ("assured and optimistic economic faith" - Horne, op. cit, p. 84), and 'freedom from the 1950's inevitability of marriage, mortgage and children offered by the birth control pill' (Alomes, op. cit, pp. 31-2; Horne, *Time of Hope*, op. cit, pp. 96-99). For a derogatory view of the professional middle-class, see John Docker, in Head and Walter, op. cit, pp. 299-300.

³⁷ Alomes, op. cit, p. 32.

³⁸ The new liberalism was very deliberately "internationalist". It would eventually mobilise sufficient political support (under Gough Whitlam) to sweep into parliamentary office in 1972. In the early sixties the 'new liberalism' also reflected a changing international situation (the thaw) and was inspired by the seemingly charismatic figures of Kennedy and Wilson. Much of the flavour of the new 'radical' movements in Australia (including those of students) was derived from this influence. As discussed below, the issues brought to the fore at this time were those of peace, censorship, hanging, education, racial discrimination. Alomes, *Arena*, op. cit, pp. 30-31; Alomes, *A Nation At Last*, pp. 183-4; Peter O'Brien, "Some Overseas Comparisons", in Gordon and Osmond, op. cit, pp. 223-4, 231-2. For a discussion of the definitions of 'liberalism' and 'radicalism', see Warren Osmond, *Toward Self-Awareness*, op. cit, pp. 179-80.

³⁹ Tim Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character*, pp. 192-195, 196.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 192.

definition itself had been forged in the sociological writings of the conservative 'New Critics' Donald Horne and Peter Coleman, editors respectively of *The Bulletin* and *The Observer*.⁴¹

In *The Lucky Country*,⁴² Horne, a self-styled 'radical conservative', outlined the tenets of a program (more accurately described as representing a "new liberalism") aimed at replacing those conservative leaders and governing elites (which, for Horne, included the 'left establishment') he believed were preventing the modernization of Australian political and cultural life.⁴³ The critique aimed at Menzies and his entourage; on the other hand the populist 'New Critics' embraced the life of the suburbs and provided a legitimization of the lifestyle of 'Alf', the suburban everyman.⁴⁴

A related source of iconoclastic criticism, much more irreverent than that found in Horne although similarly indebted to the Sydney Andersonian/libertarian tradition,⁴⁵ was the enormously popular genre of literary and stage satire of the early sixties.⁴⁶ The satirical onslaught, suggestive of a new political maturity despite its clearly elitist (even anti-humanist) origins, was often directed at the most sacred or hegemonic Australian cultural institutions—Menzies, the monarchy, the RSL, wowserism, the ABC—but its most significant contribution (quite radical in its implications) was to draw attention to the backwardness and prejudices of suburban 'Alf'. This undermined the populism of both the (Old) Left and the Right (Horne) and thus implicitly questioned the structures of everyday life.

Oz satirical magazine, launched in Sydney in 1963, albeit with a definite North Shore inflection and undergraduate tone, became, as one writer put it, "perhaps the most definitive and defiant 'moment' of the student sub-culture of the early sixties".⁴⁷ In pointing to the consumer mentality at the root of Australian conformity, 'Oz'

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 197, 216. John Docker, *Australian Cultural Elites*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1974, pp. 144-155.

⁴² Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country*, Penguin, 1964.

⁴³ Rowse, op. cit, pp. 191, 208, 217. See also Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, pp. 182, 188; Warren Osmond, *The Dilemma of an Australian Sociology*, Arena Monograph, 1972, pp. 6, 12.

⁴⁴ Rowse, op. cit, pp. 204, 206. Part of the appeal came from the impression created by the 'New Critics' that they were saying something 'fresh and radical' (Rowse, p. 260). For Rowse's criticisms of the "quietist populism" in the writings of Sydney writer Craig McGregor, see Ibid, pp. 209, 210-3, 255-7. For McGregor's eulogies to the richness of suburban life where "happiness is a Victa Motor Mower", see Craig McGregor, *People, Politics and Pop*, Sydney, Ure Smith, 1968, pp. 166, 168-170, 172-5. The communist author Judah Waten was initially crudely dismissive of Horne's book, but a later article in the communist *Guardian* (written by Malcolm Salmon) expressed respect for Horne's insights and suggested that the Left use the book as a stimulus to itself better analyse Australian society. *Guardian*, December 10, 1964; January 21, 1965 ('Donald Horne's Lucky Country - Another View'). The 'Alf' stereotype seems to have originated with the character in Alan Seymour's play 'The One Day of the Year' in 1961. See Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, p. 185.

⁴⁵ Rowse, op. cit, p. 215.

⁴⁶ The work of Barry Humphries, the Mavis Bramston Show (television show), the playwrights Alan Seymour and Ray Lawlor, and *Oz* magazine. See Rowse, op. cit, pp. 204-5, 206, 214-5, 260-1; McGregor, op. cit, pp. 36, 80; Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, pp. 182-8; Donald Horne, *Time of Hope*, pp. 101, 116-7.

⁴⁷ Gordon and Osmond, "An Overview", op. cit, p. 24. See also McGregor, op. cit, pp. 20, 39, 45-6, 82-90. Horne, *Time of Hope*, p. 18.

contributed to the development of a radical cultural critique of the 'mass society',⁴⁸ and its focus on generational issues (exemplified in its treatment of the adult 'Alfs', and the Vietnam/conscription issue) contributed to the emergence of a politicised youth culture.⁴⁹

2. Student Subcultures

Jazz

Osmond has suggested that the development of a distinctive (and privileged) 'university' subculture, identified by traditional jazz, beards, duffel coats etc, was an important factor that contributed to the growth of activist student politics.⁵⁰ Jazz, particularly the 'traditional' form, had been very popular as a cultural activity in left-wing political organizations in Australia⁵¹ and seems to have retained such a status even as late as 1965.⁵² Later, in the fifties, it had become an important part of the middle-class subculture, particularly for duffel-coated youth in the Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne. In the early sixties, however, although a growing interest in Modern jazz was evident,⁵³ 'Trad' was in a state of decline: "The boom which made Trad jazz the plaything of the new generation of affluent youth has passed. From 1959 till last year "Jazz" was the social badge by which the affluent class could distinguish itself from the more "vulgar" "rockers".⁵⁴

Elsewhere jazz was closely associated with the symbols of a 'subterranean', specifically 'beatnik' (hipster/beat), subculture which identified closely with black (negro) folkstyles.⁵⁵ There is little evidence that this 'beat' style existed in Australia to anywhere near the same extent as it did in England and the United States,⁵⁶ but by 1965 the mystique of 'guru' beat writers Kerouac and Ginsberg held a certain romantic fascination for the growing number of non-conformist students and indicated the emergence of an interest in the sensualist attitude (central to the "now" or "hippie" 'counter-culture' of

⁴⁸ Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, p. 185.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 187. See 'The Truth About the Alf Conspiracy', *Oz*, No. 11, July 1964.

⁵⁰ Gordon and Osmond, "An Overview", op. cit, pp. 18, 22.

⁵¹ The Eureka Youth League, for instance, had a close association with the Graeme Bell Band in the fifties. See B. Clunies-Ross, *An Australian Sound: Jazz in Melbourne and Adelaide 1941-51*, in P. Spearitt and D. Walker, *Australian Popular Culture*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1979, pp. 78-9. See also I. Turner, *Room for Manoeuvre*, Melbourne, Drummond, 1982.

⁵² *Target*, Volume 4, No. 1, (February) 1965.

⁵³ Note the strong student reception at Melbourne University for Dave Brubeck in 1962. *Farrago*, April 6, 1962. The 1963 Intersarsity Jazz Convention featured both 'trad' and 'modern' jazz. In March 1963 the Melbourne University SRC made tickets available for concerts by Louis Armstrong (*Farrago*, March 8, 1963). Note the role of the Melbourne University Rhythm Club which held 'record sessions' on campus.

⁵⁴ Adrian Rawlins, *Melbourne's Jazz*, *Farrago*, May 24, 1965. As Rawlins notes, 'trad' started to give way in popularity to 'modern' jazz at this time, especially with the opening (April 1963) of such venues as the 'Fat Black Pussy Cat' in Toorak Road South Yarra. See also *Farrago*, 18 October, 1963 (Ken Carter, 'Australian Jazz - A Perspective'). For 'trad' in Britain, see Hebdige, op. cit, p. 51. The Melbourne University student newspaper *Farrago* carried advertisements for trad jazz haunts like Bond Street in Glen Iris (See *Farrago*, October 6, 1961).

⁵⁵ Hebdige, op. cit, pp. 48-9, 51, 147; J. Nuttall, *Bomb Culture*, pp. 98, 100-1.

⁵⁶ Peter O'Brien, in Gordon and Osmond, op. cit, p. 229.

the late sixties) of 'submission to the present'.⁵⁷ Earlier 'beatnik' style seems to have been more intellectual and was associated with an interest in (in fact it had been modelled upon) existentialism,⁵⁸ and with anti-bomb protests.⁵⁹ In the 'public mind', the 'beat' association with protest carried over into the Vietnam period. The first battalion of Australian troops leaving for Vietnam were warned by their commanding officer to beware the "beatnik minority who will challenge you on Australia's presence in Vietnam."⁶⁰

Folk Music

As a practice in urban cultural style, folk music in Australia emerged in close association with traditional jazz⁶¹ and seems to have shared with it both devotees and venues.⁶² But even before the appearance of the very first coffee lounge troubadour in Melbourne, folk music was being encouraged by those on the left of the political spectrum - for its supposed intrinsic value as an authentic form of "peoples' " music and for its value as an exemplification of the left's version of the national/popular myth. An event roughly contemporaneous with the writing of Russel Ward's "The Australian Legend"⁶³ was the formation of the first Bush Music Clubs devoted to the collection and performance of traditional Australian music (mainly rural, "bush", songs and dances).⁶⁴ Despite the best efforts of the nationalist traditionalists, the "folk music" that most quickly caught on in Australia was that inspired by the American revival, in the crass form of the products of the commercial 'hootenanny' craze,⁶⁵ but also in the form of the protesting singer/songwriter taking a cue from the tradition of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ John Finlay, 'Hemingway and Kerouac - Two Generations', *Lot's Wife*, Vol. 5, No. 5, 15 June 1965. See also 'Editorial' in the same issue, for comment on the extremely popular Jack Kerouac. See also John Romeril, 'Childe Romerill to the Firetower Came', *Lot's Wife*, Volume 5, No. 3, April 22, 1965. In 1965 'Discurio' Record Shop in York Place, Little Collins Street (Melbourne) was selling a record made by the ultimate New York beatnik group, The Fugs. See 'Comment', Vol. 1, No. 1, April 1966.

⁵⁸ Nuttall, op. cit, p. 101. See also Colin Johnson, *Wild Cat Falling*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1965.

⁵⁹ In England, says Nuttall, 'CND grew by the infectious enthusiasm of the beatnik group' (op. cit, p. 48).

⁶⁰ *Target*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July/August 1966. Hence, the term "Vietnik" for the early anti-Vietnam War protestors. See Russ Darnley, 'Why Demonstrate?', *Left Forum* (Sydney University Socialist Club), March 1966.

⁶¹ As in Great Britain, where interest in jazz led to an interest in country blues and folk music. See Nuttall, op. cit, p. 38. At a Sydney Town Hall Rally, for instance, on April 21, 1963, Graeme Bell and his All-Stars appeared on the platform with folksingers Marion Henderson and Tom Baker. *Tribune*, April 17, 1963. For the Folk revival in Australia (including its close early association with jazz), see Craig McGregor, *People, Politics and Pop*, pp. 146-155.

⁶² A number of jazz spots, such as the New Fat Black Pussycat, the Downbeat Jazz Club, and Frank Traynor's, also hosted folk artists in the early sixties.

⁶³ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*, London, Oxford, 1958.

⁶⁴ Ian Turner, "Ten Years of Australian Folklore", *Australian Tradition*, March 1966. For a more critical perspective on the work of the early bush music clubs and folk lore societies associated with the left and the Communist Party, see Graeme Smith, Making Folk Music, *Meanjin*, Volume 44. No. 4, December 1985.

⁶⁵ A Canadian hootenanny show called "Sing-Out" was shown on ABV-2 on Saturdays at 6.00 pm in mid-1964. See *Australian Tradition*, July 1964, p. 23.

⁶⁶ Even Tin Pan Alley had been forced to concede that folk music was "bigger than ever". Commercial interests in the United States even brought out a film called "Hootenanny Hoot". See Irwin Silber, Folk Music - 1963, *Sing-Out*, Vol. 13, No. 4, October/ November 1963; Irwin Silber, Review of 'Hootenanny

Until the early sixties, just as the number of known genuine Australian traditional songs could be counted on a few hands, there were also very few political songs to choose from - although the Australian Student Labour Federation, the Eureka Youth League and the Victorian Fabian Society had made available socialist songbooks.⁶⁷ By September 1964, songbooks were abundant.⁶⁸ Also, from early 1963, the leftist "Sing-Out" magazine, available in quality bookshops in Australia, began printing the work of composer/performers like Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs and Tom Paxton⁶⁹ (and the songs arising from the black civil rights struggles in the South).⁷⁰ The Australian left held Dylan in awe.⁷¹ Before long, and not necessarily in imitation, there were Australian singer-songwriters.

In the period 1963-5 folk music seems to have been integral to many (adult) left-wing, labour movement and communist functions (fairs, election meetings etc)⁷² including the essentially adult peace movement.⁷³ It is possible, however, to trace the gradual process by means of which the music became, in this period, the property of youth. By far the majority of the several thousand people who attended the Newport Folk Festival in early 1965 were teenagers and youth.⁷⁴ In recognition of the importance of folk music to young people, and as an attempt to use this popularity to revitalise the trade union movement, the ACTU held a Youth Week in August 1964, the main feature of which was

Hoot', *Sing-Out*, Vol. 13, No. 5, December/ January 1963/4; Irwin Silber, Traditional Folk Artists Capture the Campus, *Sing-Out*, Vol. 14, No. 2, April/May 1964 (see especially p. 14).

⁶⁷ See, in particular, the 1962 *Eureka Youth League Songbook*, with an introduction by Rex Mortimer.

⁶⁸ Singer Gary Shearston told *Target* magazine - "there are so many songbooks on the market that you couldn't get before. I'm nearly going mad trying to learn all the new songs". *Target*, Vol 2. No. 8, September 1964. Shearston may have been referring to the output of Oak Publications, publishers of 'Sing-Out' in the U.S.

⁶⁹ Gordon Friesen, Something New Has Been Added, *Sing-Out*, Vol. 13, No. 4, October/ November 1963.

⁷⁰ At this moment, it was as if the new composed songs like Dylan's "With God on Your Side", "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll", and "Only a Pawn in their Game" - and the spontaneous creations of the march, picket-line and boycott were mutually inspiring one another. Students at Berkeley (California), during the uprising there in 1965, composed their own protest songs (see Irwin Silber, Songs from Berkeley, *Sing-Out*, Vol. 15, No. 2, May 1965) and the tradition was extended even further with the first anti-Vietnam war songs in 1964/5 (by Phil Ochs, Buffy St-Marie, Tom Paxton and Malvina Reynolds).

⁷¹ *Guardian*, October 17, 1963, p. 4; Rex Mortimer, The Place of Topical Song, *Australian Tradition*, September 1964; Jan Richardson, Newport- USA, *Australian Tradition*, Vol. 2, No. 1, May 1965 ("Dylan seemed to give the present generation a sense of reality"). However, for the expression of a sense of ambivalence and concern at the extent of American influence, see the Editorial, *Australian Tradition*, Vol 2, No. 1, May 1965.

⁷² On his tour of Australia in September 1963, Pete Seeger made a point of singing to wharfies in their lunch-hour and the Sydney wharfies soon afterwards instituted a Folk Song Competition "in the Australian tradition". *Guardian*, September 19, October 17, 1963.

⁷³ Martyn Wyndham-Read and Gary Shearston were two singers who in 1964 entertained the essentially adult peace movement. Shearston sang to 7000 people in the Sydney Stadium for the opening of the Australian Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament. See *Guardian*, October 29, 1964. Wyndham-Read sang to about 1000 people at a CICD function in the Royale Ballroom of the Exhibition Buildings. See *Guardian*, August 27, 1964. Brian Mooney also sang to the Peace Congress in Sydney, at a concert in the Trocadero. See *Target*, Vol. 3, No. 10, November 1964. Committed left-wing performers were Jean Lewis, Denis Kevans, Don Henderson, and Clem Parkinson.

⁷⁴ *Target*, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 1965 (Report by Brian Aarons on the Newport Folk Festival).

the 'Four Capitals Folk Song' Concerts.⁷⁵ By mid-1964, leading Victorian communist Rex Mortimer was describing the 'folk wave' as a phenomenon of "the new strata" rather than the old manual working class.⁷⁶

Whereas in Britain, it was the jazz clubs that spawned anti-bomb CND activists,⁷⁷ the comparatively later appearance of youth participation in Australian peace activities meant that it was folk music (by this time extremely popular and experiencing a never-to-be repeated boom), rather than the declining jazz form, which became the main musical accompaniment of protest. Increasingly, the typical participants in protest were youth. By 1963, young people, for the first time, were numerically dominating increasingly large peace marches.⁷⁸ Musical involvement in protest developed as a consequence, with the (folk) song being integrated into the action of resistance carried out by the participants rather than just being performed from the stage to essentially passive audiences.⁷⁹ Guitars and banjos were prominent on the Hiroshima Day (and other anti-bomb/peace) marches, such as the first Frankston-Melbourne march in August 1963; and songs borrowed from the U.S civil rights struggle were important for those who took action in the aboriginal cause - the 500 Sydney University students sitting down in front of Parliament House in July 1964, and the thirty students who travelled by bus to Northern New South Wales towns in the February 1965 Freedom Ride.⁸⁰ The anti-Vietnam movement took over the same chants and songs, marching to the singing of "We Shall Overcome", and resisting to "We Shall not be Moved".⁸¹

⁷⁵ A group of singers from various Australian states touring the Eastern cities. 1500 attended the Melbourne concert at the Town Hall. See *Guardian*, July 16, 23, 30, August 13, 1964. *Target*, Vol 2. No. 7, August 1964. *Australian Tradition*, September 1964, p. 11.

⁷⁶ Rex Mortimer, 'The Folk Wave', *Arena*, No 4, 1964 (Winter), p. 14. 'The Guardian' made a point of noting that it was 'young people' who were talking about Seeger following his concert in Melbourne. *Guardian*, September 19, 1963.

⁷⁷ Nuttall, op. cit, p. 47.

⁷⁸ Between 4000 and 5000 people participated in Melbourne's (Australia New Zealand Congress for International Cooperation and Disarmament) Aldermaston Solidarity March at Easter 1963. *Tribune*, April 17,24, 1963; *Guardian*, July 9, 23, 1964.

⁷⁹ The Youth Peace Group that was established in 1963 organized a number of folk concerts and its Southern Branch set up a successful folksong centre/coffee lounge - "The Fallout Shelter" - in Elsternwick. *Guardian*, August 1, 13, 27, 1963. *Australian Tradition*, May 1964, p. 7. The Victorian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament held a Folk Concert in Traralgon in 1965. (*Australian Tradition*, Vol 2. No. 3, November 1965). Evidence for the strong involvement of jazz, alongside folk, groups in peace marches is provided by the poster for the 1964 Frankston-Melbourne Hiroshima March - "Trumpet Blasts: Not Atom Blasts". See *Guardian*, July 9, 1964. The new 'Youth Against Apartheid' organization, set up to organise a boycott of South African goods (and call for sanctions), also organized a folk concert - on September 1st, 1964, in the Assembly Hall, Collins Street.

⁸⁰ *Target*, Vol. 2, No. 6, July 1964; *Target*, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 1965. The Freedom Ride students held a Folk Concert in Paddington Town Hall (with Shearston, Lewis, and two aboriginal singers, performing). See the Michael Leyden song about the Freedom Ride - "A Time to be Singing", *Australian Tradition*, Vol 2. No 3, November 1965.

⁸¹ *Sanity*, March 1966; *Target*, Vol. 4, No. 8, December 1965 (report of the October 22 Vietnam Action Campaign demonstration). Songs sung in Australia against the war were not always derivative in this way: a number of singers, the best known of whom were Don Henderson and Glen Tomasetti, began to write original material. See *Australian Tradition*, June 1966; October 1966; April 1967; September 1967.

SECTION TWO: A CASE STUDY: THE REVIVAL OF STUDENT POLITICS—MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY

1. The Transformation of the Subculture

With quite some justification student political activity during the fifties has been described as ‘careerist’ and ‘defensive’.⁸² The pervasive ‘cold war’ notion of ‘the end of ideology’⁸³ was both the cause and an effect of a widespread student apathy.⁸⁴ The origins of a change in the consciousness of students, moving many of them ‘beyond apathy’ to political concern,⁸⁵ can be sought, partly at least, in the conditions directly experienced in the universities as they were transformed from ‘liberal institutions’ into modern technocratic workplaces producing ‘human capital’. An accelerating expansion of the student population was being encouraged, to allow the technological changes required for the development of the Australian capitalist economy.⁸⁶ The expansion, resulting in a quadrupling of student numbers between 1947 and 1968, was producing ‘students of a new kind’.⁸⁷ In the early sixties, before Vietnam and even before ‘Berkeley’, Melbourne University students were becoming aware of the pressures placed on them - as ‘units of human capital’ - by accelerating change.⁸⁸

And in the sphere of culture, there were signs, as early as 1961, of a challenge to the repressive and intimidating cold-war atmosphere that had blanketed student literary expression. The redoubtable red-baiter Frank Knopfmacher was cast, in one review of “brilliant” *Bulletin* writers, as Dr Frank Knuckleduster—“Ph.D (Arizona), General Spry’s

⁸² Gordon and Osmond, “An Overview”, pp. 16-18.

⁸³ The March 23, 1962 issue of *Farrago* carried a photo of a man selling the communist *Guardian* on campus with the caption “Man With Ideology”.

⁸⁴ The extent of such apathy has been debated. See Gordon and Osmond, op. cit, pp. 16-18; Lloyd Churchward, Student Politics in the Fifties - the Pre-Thomas Era, in ‘*Shop*’ (Melbourne University Labour Club), Vol. 1. No. 2. A report by a Melbourne University Labour Club member in 1959 complained - “... there was too little interest in politics.... and attendances at meetings were low”. See Australian Student Labour Federation, Report of Annual Congress, Newport NSW, 1959 (McLaren Collection).

⁸⁵ See Editorial, *Orbit*, Vol. 2. No. 3, November 1962; Mark Langton, Students in the Sixties - the End of Apathy, *Orbit*, November 1962. Despite such optimism, however, complaints about the prevalence of student apathy were to be voiced frequently throughout the sixties. For a very pessimistic and contemptuous view of youth consciousness, based on survey results, see ‘The Vacuity of the New Generation’, *Farrago*, May 10, 1965.

⁸⁶ In his theoretical discussion of the causes of student revolt, Barry York lists two factors as the fundamental causes of rebellion (even more important than ‘affluence’ and ‘Spockian’ upbringing) - the ‘obsolescence of institutions’ and ‘the crisis of authority’. See York, *Student Revolt...*, op. cit, p. 16. See also York, *Ibid*, Chapter Four (‘Human Capital and the Universities’) for a discussion of the extent of the expansion involved in Australian universities in the sixties. See also Alan Barcan, “The Educational Revolution”, *Meanjin*, No. 90, 1962.

⁸⁷ York, *Student Revolt*, p. 17.

⁸⁸ *Farrago*, August 2, 1963 (‘The Malaise at Melbourne’); June 12, 1964 (‘Shop is a Mere Factory’); August 10, 1964 (‘Steam Roll Education’); September 14, 1964 (Editorial); April 12, 1965 (‘University Studies Too Wearisome’). See also Damien Broderick, Editorial, *Lot’s Wife*, Vol. 5. No. 1, March 9, 1965 (“students are prepared for employment, not for life”). For a comment on the overcrowding of Universities, see ‘The Oriented and the Disoriented’ (Editorial), *Rebel*, Vol. 3. No. 1, 1963 (Sydney University ALP Club) (Box 30 McLaren Collection).

favorite phrenologist and soothsayer contributes a sensational exposure of the Melbourne University communist cell which meets weekly in the Vice-Chancellor's residence".⁸⁹

The occasion of Moomba was the spur to attack "the pathetic lack of spiritual and cultural life of this city" and "the dingy, suburban, aggressively middle-class solemnity" of Mr Melbourne.⁹⁰ The Prosh procession, revived by Melbourne University students in May 1963 and ostensibly apolitical, aimed satirical barbs at the Monarchy and State Premier Bolte ("Hang Tait. Kill Everybody", exclaimed one banner) as it wound through the streets of Melbourne.⁹¹ Following such breakthroughs, parodied versions of the establishment press ("The Sin", "The Rage", "The Hairold"), with headlines mocking the 'reds under the bed' mentality,⁹² became a regular feature at Melbourne University - the flippant, irreverent tone sometimes barely concealing concern at the drift of international events.⁹³ Following the banning of an issue of 'Oz' magazine in July 1964, and the subsequent six-month gaol sentence served on two of its editors, 'Farrago' urged students to show their disgust.⁹⁴ An 'Oz Defence Appeal' was established and a lively campus debate ensued on the merits of the outrageous 'Oz' and the limits of satire generally.⁹⁵

The satirists were soon joined on a broader front. As Alomes has put it, "social criticism in the early 1960's began with the fight to win freedom of expression".⁹⁶ The official ban on books like 'Lolita', 'The Group', 'Ginger Man', 'The Trial of Lady Chatterley', and 'Another Country' was a major issue on the Melbourne University campus in 1964, but still one merely debated.⁹⁷ In 1965-6 students began to confront the censors.⁹⁸ In

⁸⁹ *Farrago*, April 28, 1961.

⁹⁰ "Who Wants Moomba?", *Farrago*, June 15, 1962. Anticipating the appearance of 'Alf' in 'Oz' magazine, such diatribes against suburbanism also became the stock-in-trade of the Melbourne University radicals. In May 1964, Dirk den Hartog and Bill Garner thundered - "Students have only got one job in society - to be as radical as hell. Perhaps most of us WILL end up as suburban slobs; but at this moment.. we are university students - still, we hope, not so completely squeezed into shape by the system which this society is that we can't make constructive criticism of it". *Farrago*, May 15, 1964.

⁹¹ *Farrago*, May 10, 1963; Minutes of 57th Melbourne University Students Representative Council (Report by Prosh Director Ross Christie), Melbourne University Archives.

⁹² 'Outed Communists Gain Power in Hayman Island', *The Rage*, July 26, 1963.

⁹³ Such as when "Nhu's Weekly", purportedly the product of B.A. Santamaria, proselytised on the 'communist' inspiration behind Buddhist suicides in Saigon. *Farrago*, June 12, 1964. In July 'Farrago' was forced to publish an apology for spelling Mr B.A. Santamaria's name in the above fashion. See 'The Guardian', July 9, 1964.

⁹⁴ *Farrago*, September 28, 1964.

⁹⁵ *Farrago*, July 27, September 28, October 12, 1964; April 26, July 21, 1965; April 15, 1966. See also *The Guardian*, October 8, 1964 for the Communist Party's defence of the 'Oz' editors; *The Melbourne Partisan*, No. 1, April, 1965.

⁹⁶ Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, op. cit, p. 189.

⁹⁷ Censorship was the subject of the Second Union Debate in June. See, W. Garner, 'Censorship Voted Out', *Farrago*, June 12, 1964. Also, *Farrago*, April 10 ('Obscenity harms nobody: Murray-Smith'), July 26, 1964.

⁹⁸ The Sydney University ALP Club printed an extract from James Baldwin's 'Another Country' (contrasting this ban with the attitude towards *The Bomb*). *Rebel*, (Lent, 1965) (McLaren Collection). Sydney students published an anti-censorship magazine called 'Obscenity'. See *Lot's Wife*, Vol. 5. No. 10,

Victoria, where wowseryism and respectability, symbolised for students in the figure of Liberal politician Arthur Rylah, had prevented the free (literary and lived) expression of sexuality, the struggle against censorship encouraged new and more liberal moral attitudes.⁹⁹

Melbourne University's *Farrago* newspaper told of one Queensland University student, Humphrey McQueen, who had been suspended in 1962 after publication of an article on unconventional sexual behaviour.¹⁰⁰ A somewhat guarded discussion on 'sex outside marriage' (including the morality of contraception) developed at Melbourne in 1963 and moved towards consideration of 'pre-marital intercourse' in 1964-5.¹⁰¹ The sexuality debate was, of course, male-dominated and occurred in the context of (and hardly altered) a misogynist student culture, with its pervasive, unquestioned sexism typified above all in the Miss Freshette Quest.

The popularity of folk music at Melbourne University, particularly after 1963, was an expression of a growing humanist and idealist trend, and of the widespread mood of romanticism prevailing amongst student youth in the early sixties.¹⁰² This seems to have been sufficiently threatening to the right-wing to inspire a vitriolic attack by Patrick Morgan on the simplicity and romanticism of "the folk cult". For Morgan 'folk song' had assumed a "quasi-religious role" with its own rituals, services, faithful, heretics, apparel, and taboos. It was an escapist movement aimed at avoiding "the complexities of our life".¹⁰³

Others stressed the authenticity of folk song.¹⁰⁴ In a review of Pete Seeger's performance at Melbourne University, Adrian Rawlins praised the singer's sincerity and contrasted folk music with 'entertainment' concerned with "escape from real experience into a safe, sugar-coated area of stereotyped unreality". Folk, on the other hand, was a "healthy reaction away from stereotyped and mass-produced

September 14, 1965 for the trial of the 'Tharunka' editors. At Monash, the issue broadened to one involving the right to sell magazines on campus. See C. Hector, 'Obscenity Anyone? Or In the Warden's Loungeroom', *Lot's Wife*, Vol. 6. No. 2, March 15, 1966.

⁹⁹ For the prurient attitudes that prevailed at the very onset of the sixties, and that were represented by such movements as the Father and Son Welfare Movement, see Rosemary Auchmuty, *The Truth About Sex*, in P. Spearrit and D. Walker, op. cit, pp. 182-5.

¹⁰⁰ *Farrago*, August 3, 1962.

¹⁰¹ *Farrago*, April 26, June 21, 1963; July 27, 1964; April 5, 1965.

¹⁰² See Alomes, Arena, op. cit, p. 30 for a discussion of the close relationship between folk music, and the idealistic innocence and Christianity of early sixties cultural radicalism.

¹⁰³ Patrick Morgan, 'Doom, Innocence...and Escape', *Farrago*, March 13, 1964, p. 6. For a pointed reply to Morgan, see Roger Holdsworth, *Hope, Understanding.....and Reality*, *Farrago*, March 20, 1964. Morgan's article reflected a more general right-wing concern with the growth of the folk movement at this time of left-wing revival on campus. The National Civic Council issued a private circular to its members suggesting that folksinging was a communist plot. In Brisbane, 'Christian' youth set up the Coolibah Folk Lounge to counter communist propaganda. See *Target*, Volume 2, No. 7, August, 1964. The National Civic Council, through J.P. Maynes of the Clerks Union, also attacked the folksingers involved in the August 1964 ACTU Youth Week as an 'embarrassment to the Trades Hall Council'. See *Guardian*, July 30, 1964.

¹⁰⁴ See Nuttall, op. cit, p. 38, for a reference to American folklorist Alan Lomax's influence in the United Kingdom. His "field recordings were sociologically authentic" and "authenticity (was) held to be a creative merit".

'entertainment'.¹⁰⁵ Another writer suggested that 'folk' was a sign that popular music was "transcending its commercial situation".¹⁰⁶

2. 'Student Action'

The first significant upsurge of student activism since the late forties was the movement known as 'Student Action', formed at Melbourne University in 1961.¹⁰⁷ The movement had a strongly organic relationship to the student body¹⁰⁸ and showed the value of students taking independent political action. The immediate purpose was to intervene in the forthcoming Federal election campaign to oppose the racialist and discriminatory immigration policy supported by both major parties.¹⁰⁹ In the pre-election period, students protested against the deportation from Australia of two Malayan divers who had been working at Darwin,¹¹⁰ and organized demonstrations against both Calwell and Menzies. The demonstration was then a novel, and thus by its very nature provocative, form of rebellious cultural activity - the 'rag' of Melbourne University tradition consciously turned towards political ends.¹¹¹

The attack on the Lib/Lab consensus of joint support for the White Australia Policy was an important breakthrough, and was carried out with an intensity and self-assertive stridency new to student politics.¹¹² Organization generally was at a high level.¹¹³ Also new was the notion of students as a 'moral force' - the conscience of society. The stridency, the sense of moral mission, comes through strongly in the style of protest,

¹⁰⁵ Adrian Rawlins, Dinkum Bloke, *Farrago*, October 18, 1963, p. 6. Seeger's appearance at Melbourne University was organized by the Labour Club which sometimes conducted a program of lunchtime songs - anti-Polaris songs, Irish rebel songs, songs from the Spanish Civil War etc).

¹⁰⁶ Nuttall, op. cit, p. 59.

¹⁰⁷ Although 'Student Action' also involved students from Monash, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and Swinburne.

¹⁰⁸ 'Student Action' was formed following a mass meeting of students, on Friday, October 13, attended by an estimated 1000.

¹⁰⁹ Vladimir Ulyanov (Bill Thomas), Students as a Moral Force?, *Farrago*, October 6, 1961, p. 2. For Thomas's inspirational role as Student Action (and ALP Club) leader, see the obituary by Vincent Buckley in *Farrago*, May 4, 1962; *Farrago*, April 26, 1963. For a slightly earlier student protest against the colour bar, at a private hotel in South Yarra, see *Farrago*, October 6, 1961. For Student Action's (and the ALP Club's) links to the Sydney 'New Critic' Peter Coleman, see Bob White, The Student Mind, Action and Politics, *Farrago*, October 8, 1962.

¹¹⁰ Student Action Letter, October 30, 1961; Student Action Circular to Members, 30 October, 1961. (Student Action Papers, McLaren Collection of Australian Political Pamphlets, Box 25, Special Collections, Baillieu Library).

¹¹¹ Gordon and Osmond, An Overview, op. cit, pp. 19-20. The April 1961 downtown march against apartheid (and Menzies) had been the 'biggest' march for over a decade, the first in four years, and the first legal demonstration in the University's history. *Farrago*, April 14, 28, 1961. See also the review of 1961, in *Farrago*, March 5, 1962 ('Student Action and Allied Movements'). See also K.Bryan, Calwell's technique in the Last Ballot, *Farrago*, March 5, 1962, for a view emphasising the role that students, as students, had played as a moral force in what was otherwise regarded as a "sordid, narrow and materialist" election campaign.

¹¹² Gordon and Osmond, An Overview, op. cit, p. 18.

¹¹³ Twenty-three area committees were set up, coinciding with Federal electorates, and these printed and distributed 100,000 pamphlets. ('General Outline of the Campaign', Student Action Papers, Box 25 McLaren Collection).

and this in turn is best captured in the ‘Student Action’ songs. ‘Student Action’ appears to have been a singing movement, influenced by the nascent folk song revival, and sang (to the tune of ‘Michael Row the Boat Ashore’):

“Old Bob Menzies he ought to know
White Australia
That the divers don’t want to go
No more White Australia.

Let’s be human, let’s be bold
White Australia
A new world rises from the old
No more White Australia.

Arthur Calwell - he ought to say
White Australia
That the divers they can stay
No more White Australia”.¹¹⁴

After the elections ‘Student Action’, which had developed strong links with the Australian Student Christian Movement, dissolved itself into the Victorian Association for Immigration Reform (whose members were threatened with expulsion from the ALP). Though student activity against racialism continued,¹¹⁵ the main 1962 campaign, one in which the same strident style and impressive degree of mobilisation was evident, was against the Bolte Government’s hanging of Robert Tait.¹¹⁶ The Melbourne University Anti-Hanging Committee also had its lyrical members, composing songs for use at parties and demonstrations.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ This was one of three ‘selected’ songs to be sung on cue ‘at appropriate times’ at demonstrations. Also selected were the Pete Seeger composition “If I Had a Hammer” and William Blake’s “Jerusalem”. A ‘Student Action’ song, composed in November 1961, which found its way into the songbooks was the parody “There are mean things happening in this land” (Though you’re in the human race We’ll check the colour of your face). See Victorian Fabian Society, *Socialist Songs* (ed. Race Mathews), n.d, for an opening Dedication explaining how the late Bill Thomas of ‘Student Action’ had ‘taught people to sing’. Further evidence of the link with the budding folk scene is the contribution made by balladeers Trevor Lucas and David Lumsden to the Student Action Film Group’s short production “White Australia” about the 1961-2 Student Action demonstrations. For the further development of Student Action film-making, see *Farrago*, June 15, 1962; May 8, 1964.

¹¹⁵ See *Farrago*, March 16, 1962; May 4, 1962 (demonstration in April against the White Australia Policy); *Farrago*, March 15, 1963 (anti-apartheid picket at Trade Fair).

¹¹⁶ *Farrago*, September 7, 21, October 8, 1962; March 15, 1963; June 19, 1964. See also Anti-Hanging Committee Papers, in McLaren Collection, Australian Political Pamphlets, Box 25, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, Melbourne University. Also Melbourne University Students Representative Council Minutes, 57th SRC, SRC Correspondence October 1962, Melbourne University Archives. Despite the importance of the anti-hanging campaign, “Michael Hyde” is clearly incorrect to claim that “in the pre-Vietnam period, the only real period of student activism was in 1963 (sic) when a student anti-hanging committee...mobilised...”. See M.Hyde (ed.), *It is Right to Rebel*, Canberra, 1972, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ To the tune of ‘Click Go the Shears’, the chorus of one song began “Snap goes the trapdoor, snap, snap, snap”, and the first verse continued “In the Legislative Assembly Henry Bolte stands, tying a noose with his pale twitching hands...”. *Farrago*, October 8, 1962.

3. The Transformation of Political Style

Despite the resurgence of student activism at Melbourne University in 1961-2, the ideological atmosphere was still permeated with the anti-communism carried over from the height of the Cold War.¹¹⁸ Each 'socialist' club was a besieged fortress. The ALP Club, with Knopfelmacher at the helm, dominated campus debate, and its preoccupations were reflected in 'Farrago's' 'red-scare' headlines, derogatory skits on the local communists (and Peace Congress), and snide attacks on the Labour Club.¹¹⁹ The image of the ALP Club had benefited from the group's close association with 'Student Action', and (through Leon Glezer and Peter Samuel) with the new 'radical' magazine 'Dissent'. The rather extraordinary amount of space given over in the student newspaper to discussion of 'socialism' is suggestive of a revival of the idea at that time - when ideology was supposed to have come to an end! - and also an indication of a student political culture in flux.

To many, the once-powerful but now remnant Labour Club, on the other hand, had been a 'straight communist front'.¹²⁰ In July 1963, John Paterson, President of the Students Representative Council and ALP Club member, wrote that "the Labor Club cannot hope for more than a lingering collapse on the periphery of student life".¹²¹

Yet ultimately it was the Cinderella club that outlasted and outshone its rival. The very forces unleashed by ALP Club activism were contributing to a revival in the Labour Club. As one editorial in 'Farrago' put it, significantly on the very same page that introduced students to Pete Seeger:

"During the middle fifties people were concerned about apathy, and lack of thought; students generally just didn't give a - about anything. It was IN. Now, however, since the

¹¹⁸ Perhaps not quite so surprising given the influence of the anti-communist camp ('Dissent', Peter Coleman etc) over 'Student Action'.

¹¹⁹ The ALP Club followed a 'Democratic Socialist' (Crosland) line and had 250 members in July 1963 (*Farrago*, July 26, 1963). Knopfelmacher was allowed a good few column inches in 'Farrago'. See, for example, 'Knopfelmacher Defends K. Marx', *Farrago*, May 11, 1962. In March 1962, an earlier "Bulletin"-inspired 'scandal', concerning alleged communist (Mr. Geoff Sharp) cell activity in the Social Studies Department, resurfaced in 'Farrago'. See *Farrago*, April 28, May 19, 1961; March 30, 1962. The editors of 'Farrago', to their credit, belittled the red-scare. See (Editorial), University Reds, May 19, 1961. Joining the anti-communist push was the Moral Rearmament movement. For criticism of the Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament, see *Farrago*, June 15, 22, July 6, 1962. The ALP Club had attempted to take over the Youth Section of the Congress. See J. Legge, 2 Legges Good..., *Farrago*, July 12, 1963. See also M. Hyde, It is Right to Rebel, op. cit, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁰ *Farrago*, March 5, 1962. For letters defending the Labour Club from 'slander', see *Farrago*, March 16, April 6, 1962. For a story 'linking' the club to the selling of the communist 'Guardian' on campus, see *Farrago*, March 23, 30, 1962. Peter Samuel suggested the club had but 40 members and was 'run by the daughter of Communist Jackie Brown'. See *Farrago*, July 27, 1962. For an outline of the Labour Club's view of "socialism" at this time, see *Farrago*, June 17, 1963 ('New Light on Left'). For an outline, from a critical viewpoint, of the ALP Club's "socialism", see J. Legge, 2 Legges Good..., *Farrago*, July 12, 1963.

¹²¹ John Paterson, Political Affiliations of Australian Students, *Farrago*, July 26, 1963. A despondent Labour Club editorial in 1963 opined that "it is easy to feel that social protest is no more than a feeble shout in an echo chamber". Shop, 1963 (McLaren Collection, Box 27). This was the first issue produced in five years.

Thomas revolution Melbourne has become an active University. The hip thing is to be “socially aware”. Hence the large membership of political clubs”.¹²²

The resignation of Knopfelmacher from the ALP Club marks a distinct turning point at Melbourne University.¹²³ It precipitated the decline of the ALP Club (and its eventual split)¹²⁴ and coincided with the revival of the Labour Club,¹²⁵ which was exhibiting a new intellectual seriousness, with its study groups and critique of the ‘personality politics’ previously characteristic of Melbourne University.¹²⁶ Now, no one political club was able to dominate *Farrago* as the ALP Club had previously. “Neglecting the clubs”¹²⁷ and reflecting the increasingly pluralistic nature of campus culture, the paper came under attack from the Right for “depravity”.¹²⁸

SECTION THREE GENERATIONAL POLITICS

1. The Origins of a Political Style

Several writers have attempted to distinguish the characteristic features of the style of the new ‘sixties’ social movements. Denis Altman has suggested the new style originated partly in the rapid decline, beginning in the sixties, of traditional working class culture

¹²² ‘Militant Apathy’, *Farrago*, September 11, 1963.

¹²³ For the dispute between James Jupp and Knopfelmacher which led to this resignation, see *Farrago*, August 2 (‘ALP Club Gyration’), October 7, 1963.

¹²⁴ James Jupp, M.U Politics Reviewed, *Farrago*, April 24, 1964; Tony Branigan, Twentieth Century Man, *Farrago*, April 17, 1964; M. Hyde, It is Right to Rebel, op. cit, p. 6. The split, in 1964, was between ‘Groupers’ and ‘Fabians’ (Hyde) and paralleled the Sydney Univ. ALP Club split between Trotskyists and Fabians. In the wake of the split, the Democratic Socialist Club was formed and attracted speakers such as Jim Cairns to the University in 1965. See also Australian Student Labour Federation Executive Newsletter, September 1964 (McLaren Collection).

¹²⁵ On June 9, 1964, 300 students heard Jim Cairns address a Labour Club lunch-time meeting. The apparent revival of the Labor Club worried ‘The Bulletin’ and ‘Newsweekly’. See *Arena*, No. 2, December 1963 (Editorial); Melbourne University Labour Club Newsletter, September 1963 (McLaren Collection); Adrian. M. Jones (President, Melbourne University Labour Club), Letter to Editor, *Farrago*, July 26, 1963. For the stepping up of Labour Club activity in 1964, see *Outlook*, No. 4, 1964; *Farrago*, April 24, June 12, 1964.

¹²⁶ Adrian Jones, What’s Wrong with University Politics, *Shop* (Journal of MULC) Vol. 1. No. 1, March 1964; Adrian Jones, Idealism Socialism and the Labour Club, *Shop*. Vol. 1. No. 2, 1964. The same point, about the tendency of students to select a particular ‘guru’, had been made by others on a number of occasions, including in *Farrago* editorials. As a token of its commitment to ‘academic freedom’, the Labour Club took up the cause of Knopfelmacher, rejected in 1965 for employment at Sydney University. The Labour Club seems, in the course of 1965-6 to have forged new links, co-operating with the Democratic Socialist Club on a new magazine and playing an important role in the consolidation of the Student Action structure when this was revived by the Students Representative Council (and the clubs and societies) in mid-1965.

¹²⁷ A. Goddard, *Farrago* Neglects the Political Clubs, *Farrago*, October 12, 1964. For the ALP Club (and Bill Thomas) influence on ‘*Farrago*’ in 1962, see ‘*Farrago* for 1962 in Retrospect’, *Farrago*, October 8, 1962.

¹²⁸ The charge was made by B.A. Santamaria of the National Civic Council in his television appearance on July 19, 1964. See *Farrago*, July 27, August 3, 1964; *The Guardian*, August 13, 1964.

(with its movements based on economic interests, and its traditional discourse based on class divisions).¹²⁹ Horne has pointed to the ‘theatricality’ in the new protest style: the conscious effort to organise disruption, and ‘gate-crash’ the agenda by forcing media attention.¹³⁰ Embryonically present in Student Action as early as 1961, the style of spectacular action to grab a headline became a tradition. The pro-U.S civil rights demonstration outside the U.S Consulate in Sydney on May 6, 1964 was judged so successful precisely because of its media effect - including in the United States itself!¹³¹ As Robert Hughes put it, on ABC Radio:

“Now I think that it’s a damn good thing that at last University students in this happy, complacent, sit-on-its-bum culture have finally decided to get round and make a serious and violent political protest”.¹³²

In the same month, May 1964, 600/800 Melbourne University students, using a tactic later taken up and used by university students nationally,¹³³ staged an all-night “sit-in” in the Baillieu Library to draw attention to the University’s financial crisis, and to conditions in the Library - and were able to listen to the media coverage on their transistors.¹³⁴ The February 1965 ‘Freedom Ride’ for aboriginal rights, which culminated in an attempt by hooligans to run the student bus off the Walgett road, left Sydney accompanied by news reporters and TV crews and was “a national and international news sensation”.¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Denis Altman, in *Head and Walter*, op. cit, pp. 308-9.

¹³⁰ At first, this was achieved simply by the novelty of demonstrating; later events were more theatrical, memorable. Horne, *Time of Hope*, op. cit, pp. 9, 57. Police in Sydney appear to have felt threatened by student demonstrations. See Lyndall Ryan, *Students Meet Police Chiefs, Rebel*, Vol 3. No. 1, 1963. Horne neglects to mention that the use of strong arm tactics by police was often the main cause of disruption and theatricality, such as when twenty-five students were arrested outside the U.S Consulate on May 6, 1964. The Vietnam Action Campaign and the Youth Campaign Against Conscription were two Vietnam protest groups strongly oriented towards the media. See Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*, Berkeley, 1980. See also Barry York, *Student Revolt...*, op. cit, pp 26-27.

¹³¹ *Rebel* (Sydney University ALP Club), Vol. 4. No. 2 (1964).

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ As part of the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) national “work-out” project in mid-1966, in which ten universities and nine technical colleges participated, to highlight deficiencies in the Australian educational system. At Melbourne, 2000 students crammed into the Baillieu for a “sleep-in”. *Target*, Vol 5. No. 3, July/August, 1966 (McLaren Collection). A new SRC-sponsored ‘Student Action’ began gearing up in 1965 for a campaign against “the deficiencies in the Victorian education system” (*Farrago*, July 26, 1965) and in April 1966 participated in the national “Work-out” on Education, when over 1000 students carried out a “sit-in” in the Baillieu Library. For the “Work-out”, see *Farrago*, March 28, April 15, 22, May 20, July 8, 1966; *Target*, Vol. 5. No. 3, July/ August 1966.

¹³⁴ *Farrago*, June 12, 1964; *Target*, Vol. 2. No. 8, September 1964, p. 6; *The Guardian*, July 16, 1964.

¹³⁵ The Freedom Ride was organised by SAFA (Student Action for Aborigines), an organisation formed after the National Aborigines Week protests of July 6-12, 1964 when students had sat down on the footpath in front of Parliament House in Sydney. See *Target*, Vol 2. No. 6, July 1964. For the Freedom Ride, see *The Guardian*, February 18, 25, 1966; *Target*, Vol 4. No. 1, February 1965; *Target*, Vol 4. No. 2, March/ April 1965; Darce Cassidy, *Black Girls With Sunburnt Skin*, Comment, Vol 1. No. 1, April 1966; Radio Documentary on Freedom Ride produced by Darce Cassidy and presented 3CR Open House program, January 24, 1988. For links to earlier student anti-racialism, see Jon (Darce) Cassidy, *White Australia - Why?*, *Rebel*, Vol 3. No. 1, 1963.

Many of the elements of the new radical cultural style of the sixties were derivative, and reflected both the increasingly international character of the student/radical culture, and the strong attraction of American influences.¹³⁶ The massive publicity campaign for better overall education in Victoria, launched by the Melbourne University SRC in September 1962, culminated in an Education Rally (attended by 10,000¹³⁷ at the Myer Music Bowl) in April 1963 which adopted the style of U.S Presidential election rallies. Australian students borrowed political models and inspiration from the struggle against racialism in the United States. As a token of strong identification with black American culture, 2000 Sydney University students demonstrated outside the U.S Consulate in May 1964 against the slow passage of the U.S Civil Rights Bill in the U.S Senate.¹³⁸ This issue was linked to the question of black rights in Australia, specifically the conditions at Lake Tyers. As *Farrago* commented, "The problems of aboriginal advancement are at last arousing a significant number of students. The repercussions of the Alabama crisis are being felt nearer home".¹³⁹

Inspiration was derived also from the 1965 Berkeley Student Revolt,¹⁴⁰ and from the U.S anti-war movement.¹⁴¹ Horne contrasts the early (pre-1965) influence of the Australian

¹³⁶ American influence was probably more pragmatic than ideological. As the Executive Newsletter of the Australian Student Labour Federation commented in February 1965 with reference to Student Action for Aborigines - "student actions have worked well in the U.S.A, we have to make it work here". Although, as Barry York explains, young radicals in Australia 'imitated' the influences from overseas, these international features were not in themselves the 'originating source' of rebellion. See Barry York, *Student Revolt - Latrobe University 1967-73*, op. cit, pp. 7-8, 17. See also Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, op. cit, p. 193; Donald Horne, *Time of Hope*, op. cit, pp. 4, 47, 57-8, 63, 84; Stephen Alomes, *Cultural Radicalism in the Sixties*, *Arena*, No. 62, op. cit, p. 28. For the derivative ideological and strategic approaches of the 'New Left', see Peter O'Brien, *Some Overseas Comparisons*, in Gordon and Osmond, op. cit, pp. 219-20, 227-8; Gordon and Osmond, *An Overview*, op. cit, pp. 35-9.

¹³⁷ The audience comprised mainly secondary school students. See *Farrago*, September 21, 1962; March 29, April 26, June 17, 1963; June 12, 1964. The audience was entertained by Paul Marks, Don Ayrton, Brian Mooney, Martyn Wyndham Read and the Red Onions Jazz Band. The Rally was followed up by the National Education Congress, held in Melbourne in May 1963 and attended by 4000 delegates. The publicity campaign involved 200 speakers from the student body. See *Orbit*, Vol. 3, No. 1, June 1963; Vol. 3, No. 2, September 1963.

¹³⁸ The demonstration, on May 6, was apparently met with a certain amount of police brutality. Fifty students were arrested. *Farrago*, May 8, 1964; *Target*, Vol. 3, No. 5, June 1964; *Rebel* (Sydney University ALP Club), Vol. 4, No. 2, 1964; K.D.Buckley, *Cops and Robbers*, *Outlook*, No. 4, 1964 (August).

¹³⁹ *Farrago*, July 3, 1963. See also H. Zinn, *Birmingham Alabama Segregation Climax*, *Farrago*, June 21, 1963. Student activities on the aboriginal question escalated through 1964 and 1965. Sydney students demonstrated at Parliament House on July 8, 1964 (part of a national Australian Student Labour Federation action which also involved Monash and Melbourne students) and went on to organize the now famous February 1965 'Freedom Ride' to Walgett and Moree. For the Melbourne action, see *Farrago*, July 13, 1964. For early interest in the Alabama situation, see also Minutes, University of Melbourne 57th Students Representative Council, October 16, 1962; Melbourne University Labour Club Newsletter, June 1963 (McLaren Collection).

¹⁴⁰ 'The Student Left in America: some Lessons for Australia' (Editorial), *Views From The Underworld* (Melbourne University Labour Club), Vol. 1, No. 3, September 1965, (McLaren Collection, Box 27).

¹⁴¹ The example of the Berkeley Vietnam Day Committee, which grew out of the May 1965 Berkeley (University of California) 'Teach-in', was particularly influential. For the 'internationally co-ordinated' protests organised by the Vietnam Day Committee in Melbourne, and the Vietnam Action Committee in Sydney, see Youth Campaign Against Conscription (YCAC) Papers, Latrobe Library, Melbourne.

Communist Party on anti-Vietnam War protests with the later fidelity to “forms of protest developed in the United States”.¹⁴²

For Altman, the new style, while due in the last analysis to long-term social and cultural changes, was precipitated by opposition to the Vietnam War. Donald Horne, noting the intensity of protest in the period from March 1965 to March 1966, also implies that Vietnam was the catalyst.¹⁴³ In fact, the new media-oriented protest style, was one developed by students well before the issue of Vietnam captured their imaginations. When Dr Jim Cairns, addressing the large crowd at the Myer Music Bowl on a Sunday afternoon in November 1965, called for “a kind of resistance movement” against the repression of unconventionality in Australian life, he was, rather than starting something new, in effect obliquely associating himself with a cultural current already in motion.¹⁴⁴

2. The Origins of a Generational Political Consciousness

The notion of generational politics was initially foreign. Student politics reflected the preoccupations of adult academic ‘gurus’. Also, in the communist-dominated Old Left, and in the youth movement associated with it, there was at first little recognition of any specific youth interest (over and above the interests of young workers), despite the noticeable increase in youth participation in such festivals as May Day.¹⁴⁵ The program of youth demands put forward by the Eureka Youth League was economic (‘the right to a job’) and subsumed by the perceived priorities of the labour movement as a whole.¹⁴⁶

“The Bomb”: An Assault on a Generation

Unlike its declining counterpart in Britain, the Australian movement against atomic weapons was growing.¹⁴⁷ In the period 1960-2, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) was established¹⁴⁸ which allowed youth to act independently of the Communist-

¹⁴² Horne, *Time of Hope*, op. cit, p. 52. The efficiency of media networks meant that United States developments were becoming more accessible. The film “Sons and Daughters”, about a 1965 demonstration in Oakland organized by the Berkeley Vietnam Day Committee, was seen by Australian activists in 1966. See *Sing-Out*, Vol. 17. No. 3, June/July 1967.

¹⁴³ Horne, *Time of Hope*, op. cit, p. 52.

¹⁴⁴ “Australia is a country in which it is easy to be free if one wants to be - not enough of us want to be free. Every person who wants to be himself, speak, act and sing for himself, is pressed back into line. In Australia we have to be normal. Anyone who is unconventional is thought of as a bit of a ratbag. We have a right to resist these pressures and threats which inhibit freedom. We need a kind of resistance movement”. Jim Cairns, speech to Folk Concert audience, Myer Music Bowl, November 28, 1965, *Vietnam Day Committee Bulletin* No. 3 (YCAC Papers). See also the report by Roger Holdsworth in *Sing-Out*, Vol. 16. No. 1 (February/March 1966), p. 57.

¹⁴⁵ *Tribune*, May 8, 1963.

¹⁴⁶ *Target*, June 1962, vol 1. no 3; September 1962, Vol 1 No 6; *Tribune*, February 6, March 6, 20, 27, 1963. Although it was the Eureka Youth League that issued the first warnings about the ultimate youth issue - conscription. See York, in Burgmann and Lee (eds), *Staining the Wattle*, op. cit, p. 230.

¹⁴⁷ See Nuttall, op. cit, p. 20 for a discussion on the mental effect of living in the ‘bomb culture’.

¹⁴⁸ 1960 in Melbourne; 1962 in Sydney. Although, as noted by Gordon and Osmond, the question of disarmament and nuclear weapons tended to draw the emerging independent student ‘movement’ back into the political universe of the Old Left. Gordon and Osmond, *An Overview*, op. cit, p. 22.

aligned peace movement¹⁴⁹ and therefore begin to break through the Cold War political notion that one had to support either the democratic west or the totalitarian east. The moral force of CND derived from the fact that it was against the arms race which threatened to wipe out both.¹⁵⁰ And ‘the bomb’ was a generational issue.¹⁵¹ As one participant in Sydney University CND said:

“We should remember that we are a new generation. This is a new time in many different ways. It is a time for new things. It is a time for audacity and adventure in thought and in action”.¹⁵²

VCND activism (including that of the Melbourne University Branch)¹⁵³ carried over into anti-Vietnam war activity. The organization began 1965 with the annual Easter “Aldermaston” march from Dandenong to Yarra Bank¹⁵⁴ and went on to hold a vigil outside the U.S Consulate in July to protest American actions in Vietnam.¹⁵⁵ The VCND played the major role in the formation, in September 1965, of the Vietnam Day Committee.¹⁵⁶

The Emergence of Youth Politics: Conscription

“You miserable brats ... half of you wouldn’t be at University if it wasn’t for me”.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁹ For example, opposition to the resumption of atmospheric tests by the USSR. CND in Victoria campaigned against atmospheric testing by both superpowers. See *Farrago*, March 16, 1962, for the all-night vigil (attended by fifty students) outside the U.S Information Service in South Yarra.

¹⁵⁰ Gordon and Osmond, op. cit, p. 23.

¹⁵¹ As Nuttall (op. cit) points out (p. 20), the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki “divided the generations in a very crucial way” by cutting off one generation from its future: “the people who had not yet reached puberty at the time of the bomb were incapable of conceiving of life with a future”.

¹⁵² Hall Greenland to an audience of sixty at a mid-February Sunday meeting in St. Andrews College. “Notes on Sunday CND”, Rebel (Sydney University ALP Club), Vol 3. No. 1, 1963.

¹⁵³ The Melbourne University Branch of CND involved members of the Student Christian Movement but appears, like the Victorian Committee of CND, to have suffered gate-crashing tactics at the hands of the right-wing Melbourne University ALP Club.

Farrago, September 22, 1961; July 13, 27, September 7, 1962. According to the still right-influenced ‘*Farrago*’, the SCM and the ALP Club were “strongly represented” on the Victorian CND Committee. See also *Farrago*, March 15, 1963. Prominent VCND activists included Ross Terrill, David Hudson, Geoff Richards, and John Rudolph.

¹⁵⁴ Thirty stalwarts started at Dandenong and were joined by 200 along the way. *Guardian*, April 14, 22, 1965.

¹⁵⁵ One hundred young people took part in the 24-hour vigil and suffered freezing temperatures. *Sanity*, Vol. 3, No. 2, July 1965 (Papers of the Youth Campaign Against Conscription, Latrobe Library, Melbourne). The VCND’s policy on Vietnam included the call for the withdrawal of Australian troops.

¹⁵⁶ *Sanity*, Vol. 4, No. 6, October/ November, 1965 (Papers of YCAC). It has been suggested that the VDC was the VCND with a new name (Michael Hamel-Green, interview, Brunswick, October 19, 1991). The editor of the VCND journal “*Sanity*”, Roger Holdsworth, was Secretary of the Vietnam Day Committee.

¹⁵⁷ The Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies at an election meeting in December 1964, replying to a group of eighteen jeering students who were chanting in unison - “Give the youth of Australia the same choice Sir Robert had in 1916” (to which Menzies fired back “Oh, get a haircut”). *The Sun*, December 3, 1964, cited in ‘*The Melbourne Partisan*’, No. 2, August 1965 (McLaren Collection).

Protests against Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War began as early as May 1962 when some trade unions protested against the despatch of thirty army instructors to Vietnam.¹⁵⁸ Early opposition to the escalation of the conflict was mounted by an alliance of the "middle-aged" - liberal non-communists working with members of the Communist Party and other organizations of the 'Old Left'.¹⁵⁹ The relatively small youth presence was mobilised by an organisation, the Eureka Youth League, with strong attachments to the middle-aged 'Old Left'.¹⁶⁰ In Melbourne, the Australian and New Zealand Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament, an organization emphasising the need to reconvene the (1954) Geneva Conference, was responsible for nearly all anti-Vietnam War mobilizations until late 1965.¹⁶¹ The demonstrations, never numerically more than several hundred, were most often respectably moderate affairs, bearing witness in walks through the city or standing vigil outside the U.S Consulate.¹⁶²

On November 10, 1964 Prime Minister Menzies introduced a scheme for the conscription of twenty-year-olds, and put through legislation obliging conscripts to serve overseas.¹⁶³ Sydney students responded within days, well before their counterparts in Melbourne, and a Youth Campaign Against Conscription (YCAC) was also established considerably earlier in Sydney.¹⁶⁴ The Youth Campaign Against Conscription was not established in Melbourne until August 22, 1965.¹⁶⁵ The YCAC, by emphasising opposition

¹⁵⁸ Bob Scates, *Draftmen Go Free* (self-published, 1989), p. 4. Soon after this, Melbourne wharfies banned the loading of barbed wire for South Vietnam. For the years 1962-3, see also D. Freney, *How Vietnam Changed Australia - the anti-war movement*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁵⁹ Ann Curthoys, *Mobilising Dissent - The Later Stages of Protest*, in G. Pemberton (ed.), *Vietnam Remembered*, op. cit., p. 138. A number of the early protests were mounted by left-wing trade unions working independently - for example the three separate demonstrations in Melbourne in February/March 1965, two of which were held outside the U.S Consulate. See *The Guardian*, February 18, March 18, April 1, 1965. See also Ann-Mari Jordens, *Conscription and Dissent*, in Pemberton, op. cit., pp. 74-5, for comment on the role of left-wing trade unions, and the minor involvement of youth in the anti-war movement in Sydney 1964-6. See also York, in Burgmann and Lee (eds.), *Staining the Wattle*, op. cit.

¹⁶⁰ For example, the thirty Eureka Youth League members in Sydney who visited the home of Sir Garfield Barwick (Minister for External Affairs) to demand withdrawal of Australian troops. See *The Guardian*, August 29, 1963. And even as late as April 1965, demonstrating youth were more than likely to be those representing the Eureka Youth League. See *The Guardian*, April 29, 1965. See also Ann Curthoys, *Mobilising Dissent*, in Pemberton, op. cit., p. 140.

¹⁶¹ See ANZ - CICD Report 1965, YCAC Papers, Folder 16c, Latrobe Library. This is not to discount the role of individuals like Dr Jim Cairns. For Cairns' extraordinary schedule of meetings on the Vietnam issue, see I. Dowsing, *Jim Cairns MHR*, Acacia Press, 1971, p. 24; P. Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man*, Penguin, 1981, pp. 79-80.

¹⁶² See *The Guardian*, July 16, August 13, 1964; April 14, 29, 1965. The demonstration of 500 outside the U.S Consulate in Sydney on April 8, 1965 was the largest to that date. See *Tribune*, April 13, 1965.

¹⁶³ For a description of the workings of the scheme, see Ann-Mari Jordens, in Pemberton (ed.), op. cit., pp. 67-9.

¹⁶⁴ On November 29, 1964. Jordens, op. cit., p. 75. According to Jordens, the leadership of the peace movement had shifted to Sydney in 1963. See also Scates, op. cit., p. 9. The Sydney YCAC held lunch-time rallies in Wynyard Park, with Bill Leslie chairing, and Jean Lewis singing. See *Tribune*, April 13, 22, 1965.

¹⁶⁵ Michael Hamel-Green, *The Resisters: A History of the Anti-Conscription Movement*, in Peter King (ed.), *Australia's Vietnam*, Allen and Unwin, 1983, pp. 207. Forty people met at the Young Labor Association (YLA) Coffee Lounge, "The Whip", in Lygon Street, Carlton. The meeting was prompted by the appearance of a (YCAC - sponsored) full-page advertisement in the 'Australian' newspaper on June 19, 1965, signed by 144 potential conscripts - 'young Australians opposed to overseas conscription'. For an earlier, apparently abortive, attempt to form a youth organization against conscription in Melbourne (the Youth Against

to conscription for overseas service, and a negotiated settlement in Vietnam, was in effect aligning itself with the policies of the Australian Labor Party.¹⁶⁶ The essential direction of the campaign waged by the YCAC (and the Save Our Sons women's organisation) in 1965-6 was electoral in nature, aimed at re-electing a Federal Labor government (in November 1966) that would abolish conscription.¹⁶⁷ Tactics of defiance - to attack the 'very legitimacy of the scheme'¹⁶⁸ - were not contemplated, and all but a handful of youth registered for the ballot. Nevertheless, especially when compared to the low level of previous mobilisations, the YCAC, from its headquarters at 118 Orrong Road Armadale, did generate an intense and sustained level of youth activism (students and young workers together) in opposition to the draft.

Specifically campus-based student activity against conscription seems to have been slow to emerge. In February 1965, the Annual Council Meeting of the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) expressed its 'condemnation of conscription in any form',¹⁶⁹ but campus anti-draft groups were not formed until 1966,¹⁷⁰ when the Melbourne University Campaign Against Conscription (March), and the Monash Anti-Conscription Society (May), came into being.¹⁷¹

3. Vietnam – and the Elaboration of a Style

I am an Australian Twenty Years old
 So I went down to the Barracks as I'd been told
 While waiting for the Officer-in-Charge to call my name
 I lit a cigarette with my Ronson Variflame
 But something wasn't right with it
 And as the flame grew
 Higher

Conscription Committee meeting at the Unitarian Church on March 10), see *The Guardian*, February 18, March 4, 18, 1965. The meeting was initiated by the Unitarian Church Youth Group and attended by 100 young people.

¹⁶⁶ For a strong criticism of this alignment, see Hamel-Green, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁶⁷ Hamel-Green, *op. cit.*, p. 102. The YCAC stood a candidate, a Melbourne University final year Engineering student, Andrew Blunden, as an independent candidate in the Chisholm electorate in the November 1966 election. See YCAC Papers, MS 10002, Folder 16 (a), Latrobe Library, Melbourne. For the YCAC Policy Statements, see YCAC Papers, MS 10002, Folder 16 (h).

¹⁶⁸ Hamel-Green, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

¹⁶⁹ Letter from NUAUS President John Ridley to Youth Against Conscription, Elgin St. Carlton, June 24, 1965, YCAC Papers, Folder 16 (c). The Monash University students' newspaper 'Lot's Wife' editorialised against the 'hypocrisy' of conscription in July 1965 and opened up its columns for debate on the issue. *Lot's Wife*, July 13, 1965.

¹⁷⁰ For instance, none of the Melbourne University-based organizations (CND, the Folk Music Club, the Democratic Socialist Club) sponsoring the November 1965 Myer Music Bowl Concert were specifically concerned with conscription.

¹⁷¹ See Vietnam Day Committee advertisement in *The Herald*, May 27, 1966, p. 11, YCAC Papers. In Orientation Week at Monash, pickets appeared around the recruiting depot of the University Regiment. See 'Sanity', March 1966. In late 1965, 'Lot's Wife' had carried advertisements for the YCAC, and the Monash SRC established a Conscription Committee in March (1966). In June and July 1966, both Monash and Melbourne Universities (under the aegis of the SRC's) conducted Forums on Conscription, using the previously successful Teach-in format. See *Farrago*, July 29, 1966; *Lot's Wife*, June 28, July 12, 1966.

My call-up papers accidentally caught on fire.¹⁷²

The period March/April 1965 saw a significant escalation of the Vietnam War, with the bombing of North Vietnam, and the large-scale commitment of U.S and Australian combat troops. Rolling demonstrations began to occur at U.S Consulates around Australia.¹⁷³ The strident and dramatic style already established in student activism was applied in anti-Vietnam War protests, albeit in a slightly more confrontational fashion. May 1965, for instance, saw “sit-downs” (against the decision to send Australian troops to Vietnam), resembling those tried in other arenas, in places as far apart as Brisbane and Canberra, within one week of one another.¹⁷⁴

With the formation of the Vietnam Action Committee (VAC) on August 10, 1965 in Sydney, anti-war activity reached a new level of intensity and militancy.¹⁷⁵ The emergence of VAC was inspired by the Berkeley Vietnam Day Committee, and a number of its protests were held to coincide with Californian events.¹⁷⁶ On October 22, 1965 VAC held a demonstration in Pitt Street (Sydney) “in solidarity” with the Berkeley-convened ‘International Days of Protest Against the Vietnam War’. The demonstration, the largest to that date, was “the most spectacular... seen in Sydney since 1938”. Four-hundred marchers sat down in the roadway, blocking traffic, and police arrested fifty.¹⁷⁷

VAC devoted much of its energy to the mailing and distribution of propaganda.¹⁷⁸ An important and defiant breakthrough against Government intimidation was the wide publicity given to VAC’s printing and sale of the banned pamphlet “American Atrocities in Vietnam” by Eric Norden.¹⁷⁹ The numbers attending the demonstrations held

¹⁷² Don Henderson, first verse of song to the tune of ‘The Overlander’, *Comment*, Vol. 1. No. 1, April 1966.

¹⁷³ Hamel-Green, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹⁷⁴ The Brisbane “sit-down” involved young workers as well as students; the Canberra protest, which blocked traffic in the city centre, involved delegates to the national conference of the Australian Student Labour Federation (ASLF). *Target*, Vol. 4. No. 5, July 1965; Curthoys, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

¹⁷⁵ For the formation of VAC, see VAC Newsletter No. 1, September 1965. Over 125 people attended a meeting at Federation House in Phillip St. Particularly instrumental in the convening of the meeting was Robert Gould, Secretary of Sydney CND.

¹⁷⁶ For example, even in August 1966, VAC’s Days of Protest were held in solidarity with the Fifth Avenue Vietnam Peace Parade Committee of New York. See VAC Newsletter, No. 11, June 1966.

¹⁷⁷ Vietnam Action Newsletter, No. 4, November 1965. (McLaren Collection, Australian Political Pamphlets, VAC Papers, Box 9). Media coverage, local and international, was extensive. For the excitement, within the protest movement, generated by this particular demonstration, see VAC Newsletter No. 8, March 1966 (“Sydney has never seen the like of this before”). For another perspective on the Pitt Street sit-down, see Curthoys, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-1. In the April 15, 1966 march from Martin Place to Garden Island, the crowd surged against the dockyard gates to force the police to release leader Bob Gould who had earlier hoisted himself onto the roof of the gatehouse in a gesture of civil disobedience. See VAC Newsletter, No. 10, May 1966. Another sit-down was attempted on the steps of the U.S Consulate on June 30, 1966 to protest the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong by the U.S Air Force. See VAC Newsletter, No. 12, August 1966.

¹⁷⁸ For example, 100,000 copies of the leaflet ‘Why are we Fighting in Vietnam?’ had been circulated by December 1965. In mid-1966 the VAC Newsletter was being circulated to over 5000 people in Sydney

¹⁷⁹ VAC printed 30,000 copies of Norden’s pamphlet, which had earlier been seized by the Vice Squad at Melbourne’s International Bookshop. See the Statement (September 2, 1966) by the proprietor of the International Bookshop, Mr. J. Morrison, YCAC Papers, Folder 16 (d).

regularly by VAC steadily increased.¹⁸⁰ By April 1966, Sydney papers were referring to the “New Look Peace Movement”.¹⁸¹ Increasingly, the various state anti-war groups began to co-ordinate their activity.¹⁸²

SECTION FOUR VIETNAM AND THE ONGOING RADICALISATION OF STUDENTS

The Case of Monash

The first signs of a campus arousal over Vietnam did not occur until some months after the first Australian anti-conscription rallies (at Monash, radical students were gearing up for a Lake Tyers campaign¹⁸³) and were prompted by the decision (April 7, 1965; announced on April 29) to send the first Australian batallion.¹⁸⁴ On April 28, Melbourne and Monash students braved the cold and the wet to march to the Shrine of Remembrance.¹⁸⁵ It was Monash, however, which mainly provided the lead. The link between Monash and the Vietnam issue was established at an early date. Founded only in 1961, Monash was relatively free of conservative tradition, and as a new university that visitors described as having a “mellow, rustic atmosphere”,¹⁸⁶ it never suffered from Cold War inhibitions. In June 1965 the student newspaper ‘Lot’s Wife’ came under the control of one Pete Steedman (“a throwback to the 1956 rock era who drinks too much”¹⁸⁷) whose role as an individual in radicalising the campus (albeit one without any effort to dint its misogyny) has since assumed almost mythic proportions.¹⁸⁸ Affecting a style that was at once aggressively protuberant, rabelaisian, and arrogant (though sometimes self-mocking), Steedman threw down the gauntlet to the racist right, brought the Vietnam issue to the fore, and baited Christians and censors alike¹⁸⁹ - thus earning for his paper fulsome praise from Richard Neville of ‘Oz’, and the charge of ‘depravity’ from the Right.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁰ VAC Newsletter No. 9, April 1966. Three thousand attended the Project Vietnam protest in Sydney on March 16.

¹⁸¹ VAC Newsletter, May 10, 1966.

¹⁸² As originally advocated by VAC. See VAC leaflet “Where do we go from here?” (December 1965), VAC Papers (McLaren Collection), Box 9.

¹⁸³ Lot’s Wife, Vol. 5. No. 2, April 1, 1965. Even the ASLF Executive Newsletter in February 1965 contained no mention of either conscription or Vietnam (McLaren Collection).

¹⁸⁴ In early April, 100 students attended a meeting at the University of New South Wales organised by the Labor Club. Tribune, April 13, 1965. For further developments on Sydney campuses, particularly the role of the student newspapers, in 1965, see Curthoys, op. cit, p. 138.

¹⁸⁵ The Guardian, April 29, 1965.

¹⁸⁶ ‘Visit to the Bush: Monash’, *Farrago*, March 29, 1963.

¹⁸⁷ Lot’s Wife, Vol. 5. No. 12, October 19, 1965. For a short pen portrait of Steedman, see Lot’s Wife, Vol. 5. No. 5, June 15, 1965.

¹⁸⁸ Hyde, It Is Right to Rebel, op. cit, p. 7; Ockenden, op. cit, p. 78.

¹⁸⁹ Steedman editorially castigated “a society where man does not even have the right to be alienated”. Lot’s Wife, Vol. 5. No. 12, October 19, 1965. Earlier, in March, as SRC Vice-President, Steedman had challenged 3AW’s ‘frockless priest’ Norman Banks (who he had called ‘a pompous, braying fool’) to sue him. See Lot’s Wife, October 21, 1964; Lot’s Wife, March 9, 1965.

¹⁹⁰ Lot’s Wife, April 22, 1965 (Eric Butler’s charge of ‘depravity’); September 14, 1965 (Neville). In his attacks on the Left Establishment (‘the militant unions’ resisting modernization, and Arthur Calwell of ‘a

Three of the sixteen ASLF delegates arrested in Canberra in May 1965 for their then novel sit-down protest were from Monash.¹⁹¹ And it was Monash which in July 1965 hosted the second of Australia's university 'Teach-ins', modelled on the Berkeley example and instrumental in initiating an informed and rational Vietnam debate amongst students.¹⁹² Something of the electrifying excitement created by the marathon Monash Teach-in, attended by 2000 and watched by a TV audience of many thousands more, is captured in an ecstatic 'Lot's Wife' report that claimed that a language had been found that could 'bridge the gap between the Library and the suburbs'.¹⁹³

And, unlike the older student political clubs at Melbourne University, the growth, and political character, of the maturing Monash Labour Club was influenced deeply by the mounting concern over Vietnam.¹⁹⁴ From its inception until 1964, the club had followed the right-wing Melbourne University ALP Club. Even as late as May 1965, the majority of its members supported 'Whitlamite' policies in opposition to the Victorian State ALP Executive. The club polarized in the course of 1965 over the issue of whether to support (as had its delegates at the ASLF Conference) the National Liberation Front (of South Vietnam), and the following year 'passed into the hands' of the NLF-supporters, the more left-wing 'Cairnsites'.¹⁹⁵

The move leftwards at Monash reflected a more general tendency in 'socialist' student politics nationally. In the very early sixties, the powerful, anti-communist Melbourne University ALP Club not only exercised considerable weight on campus but also at the level of the Australian Student Labour Federation, a 'parliament' for student 'socialist' opinion ranging from Fabianism to Trotskyism.¹⁹⁶ However, faction-fighting within, and

bygone era') Steedman's social philosophy reflected the themes of the 'New Criticism' (Horne). See Editorials, *Lot's Wife*, July 28, 1965; May 3, 1966; and 'Lot's Wife' interview with Arthur Calwell ('Images Don't Count'), June 28, 1966.

¹⁹¹ M. Hyde, *op. cit.*, p. 8. 'Hyde' claims that this sit-down, held on an impromptu basis by delegates at the Australian Student Labour Federation Conference, was the first anti-Vietnam demonstration at which students were arrested.

¹⁹² Ockenden, *op. cit.*, introduction - p. 3; Curthoys, *op. cit.*, p. 138; Jordens, *op. cit.*, p. 75. Late in 1965, the Monash Labor Club produced a booklet, 'The Vietnam Tragedy', consisting of the papers presented at the lectures on Vietnam that the club had held in July. See *Lot's Wife*, July 28, 1965.

¹⁹³ 'Lot's Wife' also suggested that the event had projected an image of students which would 'cancel the familiar notion of the flour-bomb throwing rabbit'. *Lot's Wife*, August 10, 1965. Speakers at the 'Teach-in' included Messrs Cairns, Denis Warner, Hasluck and MacMahon Ball.

¹⁹⁴ It was the Monash Labor Club which organised the Melbourne protests during National Aborigines Week in July 1964. The emerging importance of the club was recognised by the May 1964 ASLF Conference when it chose Monash Labor Club delegates to comprise the most important positions on the 1964-5 ASLF Executive. ASLF Executive Newsletter, No. 2, July 1964 (ASLF Documents, McLaren Collection, Box 30). ASLF Executive Newsletter No. 1 (June) mentioned that the MLC's membership for 1964 had tripled that of 1963.

¹⁹⁵ Michael Hyde, *It is Right to Rebel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 8-9.

¹⁹⁶ The Melbourne University ALP Club controlled 16 of the 45 delegates (and was able to win most of the key executive positions) at the May 1963 ASLF Conference, and controlled 15 of the 53 delegates at the May 1964 ASLF Conference (where it was successful in putting a motion for a ban on Communists belonging to university ALP clubs, a move aimed at the left-wing Sydney University ALP Club). See Australian Student Labour Federation, Report of Annual Congress (Canberra, May 1963), McLaren

defections from, the club severely weakened its influence.¹⁹⁷ From 1965 therefore, the ASLF moved increasingly further to the left politically,¹⁹⁸ though it also polarized - with the 1966 Conference in Adelaide (through the isolation of the Fabian/Whitlamite delegates) passing a motion of support for the NLF.¹⁹⁹

The Case of Melbourne University

At Melbourne University, action on Vietnam was belated, despite an early awareness of the undemocratic nature of the South Vietnamese regime.²⁰⁰ A Vietnam Debate had been held in May 1965²⁰¹ and the issue became the subject of club meetings.²⁰² Serious articles on conscription did not appear in 'Farrago' until September/October 1965.²⁰³ (Despite the involvement of some of its members with the VCND²⁰⁴, the Labour Club on campus appears to have been slow to act on the Vietnam issue.²⁰⁵ It did, however, declare its support for the 'Viet Cong'.²⁰⁶)

Collection Australian Political pamphlets, Box 30; ASLF Newsletter, June 1964 (McLaren, Box 30). See also 'ASLF Carve-up', *Farrago*, June 7, 1963 (and reply by J.M.Legge in *Farrago*, June 17, 1963).

¹⁹⁷ The factional struggle involved a challenge by James Jupp to the influence over the club of Dr Frank Knopfelmacher. See John. F. Russell, Still Waiting for Lefty - Almost a Farce, *The Bulletin*, June 1964. Later in 1964, the MUALPC disaffiliated from the Victorian Fabian Society. It did not even send delegates to the May 1965 ASLF Conference in Canberra.

¹⁹⁸ The 1965 ASLF Conference in Canberra initiated the sit-down protest over Vietnam and conscription that was later seen by some as 'the starting point of the new wave of student protest in Australia'. Socialist Students Alliance (Sydney Section), Discussion Bulletin No. 1, Easter 1969 (the SSA was set up in June 1968, replacing the ASLF). For alternative viewpoints on the 1965 Conference, see article by Monash delegate Peter Scherer, *Lot's Wife*, Vol. 5. No. 5, June 15, 1965; Richard Campbell, Present State of Student Radicalism, *Farrago*, June 21, 1965.

¹⁹⁹ SSA Discussion Bulletin, No. 1, op. cit. The NLF motion also established a Medical Aid (to the NLF) program. 1965 had seen a strong growth in the membership of the student Labour clubs in Sydney, which by the end of the year boasted over 300 members altogether. See Brian Aarons, History of the Student Left Movement at Sydney University, Left Forum (Sydney University Socialist Club, formerly Labor Club), March 1966 (McLaren Collection).

²⁰⁰ ALP Club Policy Statement on Vietnam, *Farrago*, September 11, 1963; *Farrago*, October 18, 1963.

²⁰¹ The Debating Union's topic "that we are right in Vietnam". *Farrago*, May 24, 1965.

²⁰² In late July Patrick O'Brien spoke on campus in response to Ian Turner and Cairns. '*Farrago*' expressed its admiration of the Monash 'Teach-in'.

²⁰³ Despite the fact that it was known that the University had sent a list of its 20-year-old students (potential conscripts) to the Government. See *Farrago*, September 20, October 4, 1965. Earlier '*Farrago*' treatments of the Vietnam issue had been satirical. See *Farrago*'s 'The Tasmanian', June 25, 1965, for the Viet Cong offensive in South Victoria.

²⁰⁴ In 1963, four of its members were on the VCND Committee. By early 1966, a Melbourne University VND existed.

²⁰⁵ In May (1965) it urged its members to attend an anti-conscription meeting at the Unitarian Church.

²⁰⁶ Despite 'reservations' about methods. *Shop*, Vol. 2. No. 1, May, 1965. See also Adrian Jones' critical review of Wilfred Burchett's 'Vietnam: Inside Story of the Guerilla War', *Views From the Underworld* (Melbourne University Labour Club), Vol. 1. No. 3, September 1965. The first Melbourne University pamphlet on Vietnam ('Vietnam - Myth and Reality') was produced by the Democratic Socialist Club in 1965.

By the opening of 1966, both solemnity ('Farrago' published an 'In Memoriam' to young conscriptees) and satire were being directed at the call-up.²⁰⁷ In Orientation Week, a Melbourne University Campaign against Conscription (MUCAC) was established.²⁰⁸ The Minister for the Army, Malcolm Fraser, participating in a campus debate, was unable to persuade his audience.²⁰⁹ The Students Representative Council conducted a referendum of Melbourne University students on conscription (which revealed that less than one in five supported the Government's policy)²¹⁰ and took the result as a mandate to endorse the October 5 national (NUAUS) "no conscripts to Vietnam" protest.²¹¹

The effect of Vietnam as a radicalising issue was perhaps most clearly seen in the transformation of the journal "Dissent" which, at the outset, had reflected Cold War priorities. By the winter of 1965, defence of United States foreign policy was becoming increasingly difficult.²¹² Criticism of the carnage in Vietnam occupied greater space; in a period of less than two years "Dissent" became a forum for the 'New Left'.²¹³

SECTION FIVE THE CULTURAL (INTELLECTUAL AND MUSICAL) SOURCES OF THE GENERATIONAL SPLIT IN RADICAL POLITICS—FROM ALIENATION TO COUNTER-CULTURE

Alienation

²⁰⁷ 'In Memoriam', *Farrago*, March 21, 1966. As one letter (*Farrago*, March, 28, 1966) put it - "if they say we should go and get killed in Vietnam, then we should jolly well do just that, and keep a stiff upper lip into the bargain." See also the Editorial, *Farrago*, April 22, 1966, expressing the view that both the U.S and North Vietnam were selfish for interfering in South Vietnam. By the end of May 1966, twenty-nine Australian soldiers had been killed in Vietnam (Hansard, 16.8.66, cited by Melbourne University Labour Club).

²⁰⁸ MUCAC held lunch-time talks and discussed intervening in the coming Kooyong Bi-election. There were disagreements as to whether or not to oppose conscription per se, or only oppose conscription for overseas service. The former position seems to have won out. Some students belonged to both MUCAC and the Youth Campaign against Conscription. The intensity being generated by the issue was revealed when scuffling broke out around Harold Holt on his visit to Wilson Hall, and when a downtown anti-conscription march ended with allegations of police brutality. *Farrago*, March 28, April 1, 1966; *Sanity*, March 1966.

²⁰⁹ An audience of 600 students. *Farrago*, April 15, 1966. Also, in May, at a Debating Union debate, students voted against conscription for Vietnam; and 'Farrago' issued a four-page Vietnam supplement.

²¹⁰ *Farrago*, April 29, July 29, September 23, 1966. The referendum was held on August 7. See also *Shop*, Vol. 1. No. 12, September 1966.

²¹¹ Five hundred Melbourne University students marched down Swanston Street in a protest that had been banned by the Melbourne City Council. *Farrago*, September 23, October 7, 1966.

²¹² Until 1965, "Dissent" was edited by Leon Glezer and Peter Samuel, both originally closely associated with the Melbourne University ALP Club. Glezer eventually moved to a position critical of the U.S over Vietnam but Samuel remained unrepentant. In successive issues of the journal - through 1965-66 - Samuel engaged in a heated discussion over Vietnam with Graeme Duncan. See the opening of the debate, Graeme Duncan, Warring in Vietnam, *Dissent*, No. 14, Winter 1965.

²¹³ Contributors to 'Dissent' No.19 (Autumn 1967) included prominent 'New Leftists' Denis Altman and John Playford.

In the light of reflections on the decline in importance of the Australian 'social-realist' literary school in the fifties²¹⁴, it is worth noting that student literary taste in the early sixties, perhaps reflecting the growing predilection for 'metaphysical humanism',²¹⁵ displayed a preference for those works, especially ones of European 'existentialist' origin, exploring universal moral questions.²¹⁶ Campus intellectual life in the early sixties was marked by a strong interest in the ideas of 'existentialism' - a manifestation of the European-derived 'metaphysical humanism' that had triumphed over the nationalist 'left progressivist' orthodoxy in the course of the fifties. The 'existentialist mood' was indulged in at the jazz clubs; 'existentialist' discourse was infused in the writings of those European authors most popular with students - Sartre, Camus, Genet, Kafka - and it also influenced themes in much of the new American writing.²¹⁷

In a 'Farrago' review of 'The Diaries of Franz Kafka', Bea Faust commented that in a previous decade it had been the 'in-thing' for young intellectuals to be seen carrying this book at Victoria Market in the deserted hours.²¹⁸ Now, in the sixties, the enigmatic condition - the condition of 'alienation' - attributed to Kafka's character 'K' was being recognised as characteristically contemporary and common, and it had become the subject of intense academic debate. At Melbourne University, in 1964, the Student Christian Movement's series of lectures on 'alienation' produced papers by Professor McCaughey, Dr Knopfelmacher and Vincent Buckley, invoking Christ - and Marx.²¹⁹

A Marxist view of 'alienation' eventually became respected and influential, due particularly to the numerous Sartrean interventions of Raimond Gaita challenging the 'liberal' view that alienation was merely a psychological phenomenon of individuals rather than the symptom of a "sick society".²²⁰ Sixties' students were thus likely to have a more sociological view of the Orson Welles film version of Kafka's 'The Trial' than their lonely predecessors at Victoria Market. As the editor of "Lot's Wife" wrote:

²¹⁴ Rowse, *op. cit.*, pp. 231, 234-5.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 235, 237.

²¹⁶ The interest in such authors as Sartre, Kafka, Genet, Camus and Robbe-Grillet, and directors such as Bergmann, while manifesting a vogue for existentialism among students, can perhaps also be partly explained as a function of the almost total lack of Australian-produced films and plays at this time. See Donald Horne, *Time of Hope*, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2.

²¹⁷ The beat poets (Ginsberg etc), but also novelists such as Updike, Salinger, Malamud. See Laurie Clancy, *The Dangling Novelists*, *Farrago*, July 27, 1964; K.J. Walker, *The Beat poets*, *Farrago*, July 27, 1964. For discussion of existentialism at Melbourne University, see Sandy Yule, 'Existentialism', *Farrago*, July 6, 1962; Robin Haak, *An Attack on Existentialists*, *Farrago*, July 13, 1962; Hebe Jones, *Review of 'Wild Cat Falling'* by Colin Johnson, *Farrago*, 1965. For the performance of Sartre's plays at Monash, see *Lot's Wife*, September 14, 28, 1965. For an interpretation of 'alienation' as part of fifties "bomb culture", a culture experienced as a 'nightmare obscenity', see J. Nuttall, *Bomb Culture*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-113.

²¹⁸ *Farrago*, 1965 (?).

²¹⁹ For the report on Knopfelmacher's discussion of the relevance of Marx's 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', see John Helmer, "Alienation... Marx and Fromm", *Farrago*, May 8, 1964. See also *Farrago*, April 24, May 1, 1964.

²²⁰ Raimond Gaita, *Alienation and Modern Man*, *Melbourne Partisan*, No. 2, August 1965, pp. 28-32. See also Gaita, *The Meaning of Alienation*, *Farrago*, March 29, 1965; *Revolt and New Life - Some Reflections on Nihilism*, *Farrago*, March 28, 1966; *Sartre's Marxism*, *Arena*, No. 9, Autumn 1966. The interest shown by Gaita and Michael Hamel-Green in the ideas of such anti-psychiatrists as R.D. Laing and David Cooper led to the establishment of 'Threshold' magazine. See also Docker, in *Head and Walter*, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

“If Welles/Kafka is reducing our society to a nightmarish mechanization of the cut-throat instinct, is this to indicate a disease in our society, or does it imply that we are not yet morally evolved past the level of primitive principles?”²²¹

Mass Society

The sense of powerlessness in an increasingly atomised, bureaucratised and technocratic social universe had given rise to new definitions of the social order that transcended the purely economic paradigm (‘affluence’/ ‘poverty’). The notion of the “Mass Society” (dominated by ‘interlocking elites’) first put forward by the American sociologist C. Wright Mills, and which had been adopted by the New Left in the United States, entered into the lexicon of the Australian student radical as an explanation for widespread social conformity and apathy, and as an explanation for the apparent death of the working class (now massified) as a radical force.²²² Melbourne University radicals related these themes to the pervasiveness of an escapist “mass culture”, particularly pop music’s influence on youth.²²³ The Australian New Left was here striking out in a very different direction from that taken by the ‘new liberalism’. Because the New Left critique focused on the mass suburban disease of quiescence, it therefore sanctioned activism, and this activism was of a kind that was foreign (indeed ‘romantic’) to those celebrants of the popular who merely encouraged ‘permissiveness’.

Music

²²¹ Phillip Frazer, Review of Kafka’s/Welles’ “The Trial”, *Lots Wife*, Vol. 5, No. 7, July 13, 1965. One contributor to the Monash newspaper suggested that the university’s architecture was as inhuman as the sets used in the Welles film (*Lot’s Wife*, October 19, 1965).

²²² D. Den Hartog and R. Gaita, *Mass Society and Alienation*, *Farrago*, May 3, 1965. See also reply from N. Turnbull, *Farrago*, May 10, 1965. The issue of ‘mass society’ was also a preoccupation for the “old” New Left - intellectuals such as Ian Turner and Geoff Sharp associated with the journal ‘Arena’, who had taken up Mills in response to the ‘newer social strata’ (see *Arena*, No. 2, December 1963). In May 1965 these theorists presented papers at a forum in the Education Theatre on “The Individual in Mass Society” (Melbourne University Labour Club leaflet, late April, 1965). For an attempt to link ‘the concern with existential issues in an admass society’ to the dissolution of working class culture, see Editorial (G.Sharp), *Arena*, No. 11, Summer 1966. See also the assertion (referring to the literature of Sartre and Kafka) of “the worth of the individual” in Melbourne University Labour Club newsletter, *Orientation* 1967 (McLaren Collection). For the influence of Mills, see G.B. Sharp, *C. Wright Mills and Student Politics*, *Orbit* (Communist Party teachers journal), Vol. 2, No. 3, 1962, pp. 13-14; *Arena*, No. 7, Winter 1965, p. 25; W. Osmond, *The Dilemma of an Australian Sociology*, op. cit, p. 49; J. Docker, in *Head and Walter*, op. cit, pp. 295-302. Other U.S writers to have some influence on Melbourne students in the early sixties were J.K.Galbraith, and Vance Packard.

²²³ Michael Hamel-Green, *Mass Cult and the Adolescent, Views from the Underworld* (Melbourne University Labour Club), Vol. 1, No. 1, March-April 1965; Michael Hamel-Green, *Discrimination and Popular Culture*, *Farrago*, May 17, 1965. See also the Editorial, *Farrago*, May 24, 1965 castigating “trash-level mass entertainment”. Later, in 1967, the Melbourne University Labour Club was to deepen the analysis of masscult with its application of the Marxist theory of ‘the fetishism of commodities’. See Minutes of 1967 (March 21) Annual General Meeting of Melbourne University Labour Club (McLaren Collection). For a discussion of the rise of ‘pop music’, as a music specifically for youth, in the fifties, see Laurence Zion, *Living in A Child’s Dream - An Anatomy of Pop Music in Australia, 1964-69*, BA Hons, Melbourne University, 1981, pp. 4, 7, 10-12, 16-17.

The initial attitude of radicals towards pop music (conditioned by their 'middle class' preference for the more sophisticated forms of jazz, classical and folk²²⁴) was to be challenged, however. In 1964-5 two dramatic developments shook the respective, and previously separate, worlds of pop music and folk music - the emergence of the Liverpudlian group The Beatles, and the metamorphosis of folk idol Bob Dylan.

The music of the Beatles, who arrived in Australia in June 1964, broke the hold of jazz (and surf music) on Australian youth, and aligned them with youth internationally by transferring their allegiance from American hits to the new English "beat" music (even if the latter was derived from American rhythm and blues). In the wake of The Beatles, an imitative rhythm and blues (or "mod") culture developed, spawning look-alike groups, "mod" fashions, and "mod" dances ("go-go" dances were to become 'discotheques' by early 1966) feigning sophistication.²²⁵ Nevertheless, 'rhythm and blues' heralded the oncoming breakdown of puritan clamps on sensuality, and it made a breach in the culture of masculinism.²²⁶

The appearance of the previously acoustic Bob Dylan with an electric guitar on the stage at the July 1965 Newport Folk Festival in the United States had equally far-reaching implications. Dylan's new "folk-rock" stance antagonised the Folk Establishment (symbolised by Pete Seeger and Irwin Silber²²⁷) and launched the phenomenon of West Coast "counter-cultural" Rock, as former folk musicians rushed to electrify their

²²⁴ For comment on the jazzier-rocker rivalry of the early sixties, see Zion, op. cit, pp. 8-9, 12; B. Clunies-Ross, Jazz in Melbourne 1941-51, in P. Spearrit and D. Walker, Australian Popular Culture, op. cit.

²²⁵ An advertisement in *Farrago* for 'Mod at the Chevron' referred to "Melbourne's first mod dance for adult teenagers" (*Farrago*, March 21, 1966. See also Lots Wife, April 19, 1966). For the significance of the immensely popular Australian 'beat' groups such as The Easybeats, The Aztecs, The Twilights and The Masters Apprentices, see Zion, op. cit, pp. 20-27, 34-5, 53, 56. For the origins of 'mod' culture in England, see Nuttall, op. cit, pp. 34, 120; Hebdige, op. cit, pp. 52-3, 152.

²²⁶ Peter Gilchrist, Adulation of the Half-Sex Beatles, *Farrago*, March 20, 1964. The Eureka Youth League's response was basically positive, seeing the Beatles as healthy-minded lads merely 'bringing out the "mother" in girls'. See Target, Vol. 3. No. 5, June 1964; Vol. 4. No. 8, 1965. See also Zion, op. cit, pp. 7-8, 14-18. On masculinism, and long hair, see Cochrane, op. cit, p. 172.

²²⁷ The debate on 'folk-rock' sparked off by Dylan's iconoclastic gesture was voluminous, and seemingly without resolution. In the holy sanctum, the editorial precincts of 'Sing-Out' magazine, the 'Old Left' Marxist Irwin Silber waxed indignant, attacking the "existentialism" in Dylan's songs; while, on behalf of Dylan (and the "hippies"), the gauntlet was taken up by record reviewer Paul Nelson. For Nelson's initial response to the "new Dylan", see Sing-Out, Vol. 15. No. 5, November 1965. For a "traditionalist" response, see Josh Dunson, Folk Rock - Thunder without Rain, Sing-Out, Vol. 15. No. 6, January 1966. Silber was still fulminating against 'hippies' in April 1967, even after they had begun to assume a leading part in the anti-Vietnam war effort. See Sing-Out, Vol. 17, No. 2, April/May 1967, p. 33.

instruments.²²⁸ In May 1966, Dylan visited Melbourne to give 'electrified' concerts that created disquiet, even though of milder proportions.²²⁹

At anti-Vietnam war rallies and forums, from the very first anti-conscription rallies held in November 1964 through to the November 1966 Federal elections, performances by folksingers had been invariably highlighted for their inspirational content.²³⁰ On Sunday 28th November 1965 a crowd estimated at 10,000 attended a concert - "Folk Songs with a Message/ Songs of Peace and Love" - at the Myer Music Bowl organized by the Vietnam Day Committee, the Victorian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and other anti-Vietnam war protest organizations as a specifically youth-oriented event.²³¹ The Vietnam Day Committee Bulletin suggested, rather optimistically, that the concert would "increase the intellectual and also spiritual understanding of the vistas opening up before youth" and would provide them with "the chance for public self-expression in the idiom which they themselves have chosen - the folk song."²³²

Locally, the attachment of students to folk music, however, seems to have been broken to some extent, at first mainly by the desertion of many (performers and audiences) to rhythm and blues (rather than to politicised folk-rock as in the United States). This new allegiance was symbolised in the initial close link between Monash and 'Go-Set', the new

²²⁸ Groups like The Doors, The Byrds, The Mothers of Invention, The Grateful Dead, Country Joe and the Fish, Big Brother and the Holding Company, and Jefferson Airplane reflected, and helped create, the utopian 'counter-cultural' consciousness of Berkeley and Haight-Ashbury in 1966-7. They were also to play a leading cultural role in opposition to the escalation of American aggression in Vietnam. See John Storey, *West Coast Rock*, in A. Louvre and J. Walsh, *Tell Me Lies About Vietnam*, Philadelphia, Open University Press, 1988, pp.181-93. Nuttall (op. cit, p. 122) suggested the west coast groups represented the coming together of The Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Alan Ginsberg.

²²⁹ For a short review of the concerts, see Mick Counihan, *The Concerts, Lots Wife*, May 17, 1966, p. 13. Also Margaret Mortimer, *Ballad of a Thin Man*, *Australian Tradition*, June 1966. For a local version of the dispute on 'folk-rock', see Adrian Rawlins, *Bob Dylan and the Now Mind Situation*, *Arena* No. 10, Winter 1966 (and Reply by Margaret Mortimer, *Arena* 11, Summer 1966). See also *Target*, Vol. 5. No. 1, 1966. Dylan made a semi-surreptitious visit to Melbourne University (see *Farrago*, May 1966). For further comment on Dylan from the Left, see Ian Turner, *Ten Years of Australian Folklore - Part Two*, *Australian Tradition*, June 1967, p. 17.

²³⁰ In Sydney, Gary Shearston, Kevin Butcher, Jean Lewis, Declan Affley and Philippa James performed at public meetings and lunch-time rallies in late 1964 and through 1965 (Papers of the Youth Campaign Against Conscription, Latrobe Library, Melbourne, MS 10002, Folders 16d, 16e; Letters, pamphlets and newsletters of the Sydney Vietnam Action Campaign, McLaren Collection of Australian Political Pamphlets, Baillieu Library, Melbourne University, Box 9). In Melbourne, folk performers - Glen Tomasetti, Shayna Karlin, Peter Dickie, The Victorian Folk Music Club Bush Band, Phyl Vinnicombe, Ian White, Mick Counihan - played an equally central role on the official platform at city and suburban meetings and demonstrations (and draft card burnings). (Papers of the Youth Campaign against Conscription, MS 10002, Latrobe Library, Melbourne).

²³¹ The concert was chaired by Wal Cherry, the Director of the Emerald Hill Theatre, and featured Dr J.F. Cairns and the Rev David Pope as speakers. It was an "attempt to direct and channel the output of topical and folk songs" and develop the "artistic expression of protest". *Sanity* (organ of the Victorian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), Vol. 4, No. 6, October/ November 1965.

²³² *Vietnam Day Committee Bulletin* No. 3, n.d., (YCAC Papers, MS 10002, Latrobe Library, Melbourne). For a photographic study of the event, see *Australian Tradition*, March 1966, pp 14-5. See also Report by Roger Holdsworth, *Sing-Out*, Vol 16, No. 1, (February/March) 1966. The audience of 200 that had gathered at Melbourne University on October 16, 1965 ('Vietnam Day') after walking from the site of their silent vigil in Post Office Square, were also entertained by folksingers. *Sanity*, Vol 4. No. 6, October/ November 1965 (Papers of YCAC).

pop music magazine for 'teens and twenties'.²³³ Despite the occasional remark of protest in 'Go-Set', the local rhythm and blues/pop scene remained seemingly impervious to political radicalism²³⁴ - just as the folk scene remained 'traditional'. An indigenous politicised 'folk-rock' failed to develop (Barry Maguire's 'The Eve of Destruction' was the first song of the genre to be heard here²³⁵), so that 'straight' performers like Glen Tomasetti, rather than some Australian version of Country Joe and the Fish with an appeal for youth, continued to occupy the stage at political demonstrations.²³⁶ The persistence of the folk/pop dualism in Australia contributed to a decline in the strength and relevance of the folk movement. After 1967, when the more politicised lyrics of the 'counter-culture' (including the Beatles) began to be absorbed, those attending demonstrations were more likely to want to chant a Beatles lyric than 'We Shall Overcome'.²³⁷

To some, it seemed that Pop music had become increasingly sophisticated, that its new propensity for social comment and participatory styles had bridged the gulf between pop and folk, and that the distinction between 'low' art and 'high' art also no longer applied.²³⁸ This was hardly a surprising view from those populist "New Critics" with a positive attitude to the culture of 'ordinary people'. On the other hand, in a rather pessimistic article in *Meanjin* in 1966, Ian Turner bemoaned the 'retreat from reason' that he discerned in the culture of youth (and young intellectuals), and the slide into mindlessness and hedonistic sensationalism ('the drug kick', 'the cult of the orgasm').²³⁹

²³³ 'Go-Set', which began on February 2, 1966 with a philosophy of 'breaking loose from the oldies', had achieved a circulation of 40,000 copies by October 1966. Its first editor, Tony Schauble, had previously been an editor of 'Lots Wife', and its staff included the 1965 'Lots Wife' editor Phillip Frazer. See *Lots Wife*, Vol. 6. No. 1, March 8, 1966.

²³⁴ 'Go-Set' was fundamentally more concerned at this point with fashion and psychedelia. See Zion, op. cit, p. 50. One of the rare anti-war comments was that made by Danny Finlay of M.P.D ('Go-Set', May 25, 1966) - some other pop singers, such as Pat Carroll, sallied forth to entertain the troops.

²³⁵ *Lots Wife*, October 19, 1965. Also York, in 'Staining the Wattle', op. cit, p. 233. 'Go-Set' did carry some material on Bob Dylan in the lead up to his Australian tour. See *Go-Set*, April 6, 13, 27; and Doug Panther, *The Folk Rock Cult*, *Go-Set*, July 6, 1966.

²³⁶ In mid-1965, the Traditional Music Society at Monash had 180 members (*Lots Wife*, June 29, 1965). Melbourne University students, especially those politicised, could indulge their interest at the Young Labor Association's coffee lounge, 'The Whip', in Lygon Street.

²³⁷ As early as 1965 Peter Dickie wrote "the folk music boom is beginning to wane" and commented (with reference to the 'middle class' Newport Folk Festival in Sydney) that "the working class were somewhere else listening to the Rolling Stones". (*Australian Tradition*, Vol. 2. No. 1, May 1965). Gary Shearston cast an envious eye at Billy Thorpe and Normie Rowe (*Australian Tradition*, Vol. 3. No. 1, March 1966). Danny Spooner commented that "interested listeners are attending folk-song clubs in decreasing numbers." Danny Spooner, A Comment, *Folksay* (Monash Traditional Music Society), No. 2, November 1967. For the death of the 'folk boom' and the effect of 'electric guitars', see also *Australian Tradition*, June 1966 (Glen Tomasetti, Some Remarks about Folksinging); *Australian Tradition*, April 1967. For a while (1966) folk music captured a toe-hold in the 'youth culture' with Mick Counihan's regular 'just folk' column for 'Go-Set'. For the decrease in "mass-popular" interest in folk music in the U.S, see J. Dunson, *Topical Singers*, *Sing-Out*, Vol. 15. No. 1, March 1965.

²³⁸ Craig McGregor, op. cit, pp. 56-7, 65-7, 68-70, 74, 76, 78-9. Rowse, op. cit, p. 209. In his commentary on pop music in Britain, Jeff Nuttall suggested that there had been a merging of the three previously separate traditions of Pop, Protest and Art. See Nuttall, op. cit, p. 113.

²³⁹ For the proliferation of drugs in the 'beat' music scene in 1966-7, see Zion, op. cit, p. 51. See also Nuttall, op. cit, pp. 105-6.

Turner's article was significant in that it articulated the disquiet of many on the Left (including those 'left nationalists' previously favourable to popular mores) when faced with the direction being taken by popular culture generally, Turner's most savage remarks were directed at the music that had replaced jazz and blues at student parties - "the immature and mindless lyrics of the Beatles".²⁴⁰ More than aestheticism (or regret over the fate of jazz as a student subculture being swamped by a music that broke down the distinctions between students and other youth) was involved here: Turner's views reflected an uncertainty about the (vanguard) role of intellectuals in the face of youth subcultures,²⁴¹ but also the difficulties the generation of 'old' New Left intellectuals experienced when confronted with the new cultural (and political) styles of those radical members of the younger generation - the 'new' New Left.²⁴² This younger New Left, was itself in flux - increasingly militant, but also (perhaps belying its origins as a movement inspired by 'folk') increasingly imbued with the 'counter-cultural' rock music that was unifying the 'personal' and the 'political'.²⁴³

SECTION SIX VIETNAM - 1966 AND AFTER

Despite the basic anti-war movement orientation in 1966 to re-electing Labor, the tempo of action quickened and became more confrontational. In February the first draft-card burnings began to occur. In March, Harold Holt was physically confronted (over the sending of another 4500 troops, 1500 of them conscripts), and demonstrators intervened dramatically at the Moomba Parade.²⁴⁴ By April 1966, the initially strong public support for conscription had begun to evaporate²⁴⁵ and the Liberal Government's

²⁴⁰ Ian Turner, *The Retreat from Reason*, Meanjin, Vol. 25. No. 2, 1966, pp. 139-40. For a criticism of Turner's position, see McGregor, op. cit, pp. 159-60, 162. See also Rowse, op. cit, pp. 239-45, 250.

²⁴¹ See Tim Rowse, *The Pluralism of Frank Moorhouse*, in Docker and Dermody, op. cit, pp. 254-6.

²⁴² For an explanation of the distinction between 'old' and 'new' New Lefts, see Gordon and Osmond, *An Overview*, op. cit, pp. 12-16; Peter O'Brien, *Some Overseas Comparisons*, op. cit, pp. 220-223. In Sydney, the 'old' New Left included many who had left the Communist Party in the late fifties. It centred on the magazine 'Outlook' and a group called the Sydney Left Club. In Melbourne, the 'old' New Left included those grouped around the magazine 'Arena' in the early sixties, but the term 'New Left' was also applied to a group of social-democratic, anti-communist intellectuals, followers of 'Dissent' magazine and of Melbourne University academic James Jupp. See Gordon and Osmond, op. cit, pp. 15-16; *Farrago*, March 30, 1962 ('Thunder from the New Left'). For Jupp, see *Farrago*, June 17, 21, 1963.

²⁴³ Even the Monash Traditional Music Society displayed an interest in the new 'counter-cultural' rock music. See *Folksay*, No. 2, November 1967. Stephen Alomes, *Arena* 62, op. cit, p. 43. For personal/political, see Altman, op. cit.

²⁴⁴ For the draft card burnings, see Hamel Green p. 208, and see Letter from Barry Robinson (calling for mass draft card burning), March 10, 1966 (YCAC Papers); Rex Hewett, *Why I Burned My Draft Card*, *Target* Vol. 5. No. 2, April-May, 1966. Demonstrators in Brisbane had the slogan - "Light up a Draft Card, You'll Be So Glad You Did". For the Holt demonstrations, at Melbourne University, and at his Toorak home and at Kew Town Hall; and the Moomba intervention, see *Sanity*, March 1966 (YCAC Papers); Ann-Mari Jordens, op. cit, p. 78. Militancy at demonstrations was by this time attracting criticism from more moderate elements of the anti-war movement. See R. Darnley, *Why Demonstrate?*, *Left Forum*, March 1966.

²⁴⁵ The contrast in gallop poll figures for November 1964 and April 1966 was 71% in favour at the former date as against only 32% in favour at the latter date. Jordens, op. cit, p. 72; Editorial, *Comment*, Vol 1, No. 1, 1966.

case for involvement in Vietnam, always flimsy, was being discredited.²⁴⁶ The Government became more repressive. Melbourne police broke up a city anti-conscription parade in March²⁴⁷; conscientious objector Bill White (signaling a new level of resistance to conscription²⁴⁸) was taken into military custody.

1966 also marked the start of serious resistance to the war on the part of student groups in Melbourne. Policy positions in support of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front were adopted,²⁴⁹ and the Vice Squad was challenged on the banned Norden pamphlet.²⁵⁰ Both student newspapers became unequivocally condemnatory of the American and Australian military involvement.²⁵¹ Melbourne University students took the opportunity during the visit to Melbourne in October of Lyndon Johnson, whose cavalcade was scheduled to appear in Grattan Street, to indulge in a vicious satirical attack on the United States President. 'Farrago' was sufficiently secure in its opinion of students' attitudes (to 'LBJ') to run, on the day of the visit, the mock-serious headline - "LBJ Assassination - Student Attempt Exposed" and the Melbourne University Labour Club suggested:

"It'd be nice to welcome LBJ to Australia - after all, he's the best Prime Monster we've had. It's about time we saw the man who rules Australia..."²⁵²

Johnson's visit turned out to be a landmark in the development of radical consciousness amongst many demonstrating students and youth. Stung by the level of violence used against many demonstrators by police and security men in St. Kilda Road, but also shocked by the apparent level of mass support for the President, a major reappraisal of strategies was undertaken by some radicals. The question of the role of the state, which had been raised by the violence, was re-opened with even greater force after the

²⁴⁶ For the importance of the desertion of Gregory Clark from the Department of External Affairs, in giving the anti-war movement a 'pragmatic edge' to its arguments, see Curthoys, op. cit, pp. 141-3

²⁴⁷ The number of those marching was 2000. See 'Editorial' and Report (Ian Carroll, David Nadel), *Lot's Wife*, Vol. 6. No. 4, April 5, 1966. In its editorial on March 28, 'The Herald' dramatically voiced the idea that 'unauthorised street displays' were 'full of danger'. This was hardly expressing concern about the danger to demonstrators ('a rabble') of course.

²⁴⁸ Ann Mari Jordens, op. cit, p. 71; *Target*, Vol. 5. No. 4, September/ October 1966.

²⁴⁹ Ockenden, op. cit, pp. 16, 19.

²⁵⁰ Eric Norden, *American Atrocities in Vietnam*. See *Farrago*, September 9, 1966 ('Cops on Viet-Vice - Rebel Clerics to Sell Again'). Members of the Melbourne University Labour Club sold copies on their campus. See 'Shop', September 20, 1966. For the Vietnam Action Campaign's efforts to produce the pamphlet (30,000 copies) in Sydney, see VAC Papers, Box 9, McLaren Collection.

²⁵¹ *Lot's Wife* used dramatic cartoon material on some of its front covers. One of these - used for the joint *Lot's Wife/ Farrago* edition of June 28/ July 2, 1966 - shows Lyndon Johnson pulling up his pants after having raped Vietnam (depicted as a woman lying on her back). See also *Lot's Wife*, March 22, 1966 for a cartoon in response to Harold Holt's decision to send conscripts to Vietnam. The arguments against the war also became more sophisticated. See Michael Hamel-Green, *The Case for War, Lot's Wife/Farrago*, June 28, 1966; 'The Vietnam War - A Soldier's View', *Lot's Wife/Farrago*, June 28, 1966. In May, Gerald Stone visited the campus at Monash to discuss his recent book 'War without Honour'. At Melbourne, a Vietnam Study Group began meeting in Leicester Street, Carlton. 'Farrago' moved to such a clearly defined anti-U.S position by March 1967 that it even published a series of articles on Vietnam by 'Tribune' (Communist) staff writer Harry Stein (see 'Farrago', March 22, 31, 1967).

²⁵² *Farrago*, October 21, 1966; *Shop*, Vol. 1. No. 15, 1966.

Federal Election (in which the Government GAINED eleven seats) the following month. Those who had campaigned so vigorously for a Labor victory were stunned by the extent of the landslide against it and were forced to reconsider the efficacy, in the struggle against conscription and the war, of reformist, parliamentary-based strategies. In the months that followed, just as the Labor Party (under Whitlam) changed (modified) its position on Vietnam, the organisations of the anti-war movement met in Conference and eventually adopted more confrontative standpoints, while many students previously loyal to Labor moved to explicitly revolutionary political positions and firmed up their controversial attitudes towards the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.²⁵³

Apart from representing the beginning of a 'generational split' in the anti-war movement, the new positions being adopted by student radicals also reflected "an implicit rejection of the framework established in the early sixties - the notion that students are the 'conscience of society'."²⁵⁴

The liberal assumptions that informed the new student radicalism after 1961, such as those which had first been expressed in the inspirational views of Melbourne University's Bill Thomas, were giving way to a much more extreme, and ostensibly revolutionary, movement.²⁵⁵

CONCLUSIONS

An examination of concrete historical evidence from the sixties suggests the falsity of any simplistic notion of the impact of the Vietnam issue as an explanation for the origin of the new forms of cultural and political radicalism. The issue of Vietnam (and the associated issue of conscription) did eventually have a galvanising effect on students and young people in Australia. Opposition to the war was conducted through the most militant and dramatic forms of protest ever seen in Australia, and many students were to develop a more radical or revolutionary consciousness as a result of their involvement. Attitudes towards the anti-war movement were to encourage the process of generational split - in the movement itself, in the Left, and even within the New Left. The questioning and ferment sparked by the war further isolated right-wing and anti-

²⁵³ On the Johnson visit, see Ann Curthoys, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-6; Ann Mari-Jordens, *op. cit.*, pp.77-8; Gordon and Osmond, *An Overview*, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-8; Barry York, *Student Revolt...*, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Horne, *Time of Hope*, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-5; Hyde, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Scates, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18. On the parliamentary defeat in November 1966 and its effect on the attitudes of many students, see Curthoys, *op. cit.*, p. 146; York, *Student Revolt...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8; Gordon and Osmond, *An Overview*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-8; Ormonde, *op. cit.*, pp 88-90; Hamel-Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-111; Hyde, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Ockenden, *op. cit.*, pp. 2,3,5; Scates, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-23, 29. See also 'The Election Results And After', *Vietnam Action Campaign Newsletter*, No. 14, n.d December?, 1966 (McLaren Collection). The optimism prevailing in the anti-war movement, with regard to the anticipated election results, is captured in the VAC leaflets and bulletins issued in October and November (See Box 9, McLaren Collection). For the new direction taken by the anti-conscription movement after November 1966, see also Hamel-Green, *op. cit.*

²⁵⁴ Gordon and Osmond, *An Overview*, *op. cit.*, p. 30 (See also pp. 28-9).

²⁵⁵ Voting patterns at the May 1967 ASLF Conference in Sydney, attended by 94 delegates, revealed the extent to which many of the delegations had moved towards 'revolutionary socialist' positions in the previous months. See *Minutes of May 22-26 ASLF 1967 Conference* (McLaren Collection); *Labor Student*, No. 1, December 1966 (organ of ASLF Victorian Branch, edited by Albert Langer). For 'implicit radicalisation' see Osmond, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

communist students and contributed to the revival of student political life. But the radicalisation represented by these developments was an ongoing one. It did not start with Vietnam. The war was a catalyst - an issue that focused already existing discontents.

The somewhat belated student response to Vietnam built upon those forms of (albeit often derivative) dramatic protest that had already been developed in protests over racialism, aborigines and university conditions. A generational consciousness, and style of political expression, also existed before the Vietnam War and was manifest in student subcultures (jazz, folk music, peace marches, and satire). As early as 1964, some radical students were beginning to move beyond the innocently idealist liberalism that had prompted the 1961 'Student Action' upsurge. The seeds of a radical critique of everyday life were being germinated on campus before the issue of conscription had jolted anyone. In fact those effects often ascribed to Vietnam were just as much the outcome of a student rebellion against their local conditions of life - on campus and in the suburbs - and did not require an 'imported' foreign political issue.

The origins of the rebellion and the consequent cultural/political radicalism can be traced historically with reference to the development of student subcultures from the very earliest years of the sixties. To ignore these earlier developments, as Barry York does when he commences his history of student politics in 1967 on the grounds that the earlier student movements were not yet "sustainable", is to leave out an essential part of the story. It also leads to the tendency to ignore the relatively autonomous historical role of cultural aspects, which both York and Peter Cochrane have done by mechanically attributing the radicalization to a "youth culture" derived from the basically economic concept of the "youth market".²⁵⁶

Because the radicalisation is seen, mechanically, as springing from basically economic causes (the urge towards self-fulfillment as an extension of the urgings of the market) rather than in terms of the cultural impact of new ideas, the demise of radicalism in the seventies can be attributed by Cochrane to the collapse of the boom (and to an associated 're-alignment of forces') rather than in terms of the relatively autonomous histories of cultural and political ideologies.

York points to a brief moment when "youth culture" and political dissent are supposed to have been married. He elevates the "youth culture" to the status of 'matrix of the student revolt'²⁵⁷ This conclusion has no warrant as a generalisation applicable to the sixties as a whole. It may have been the case after 1967 (after the establishment of Latrobe University that year) that students were encouraged to revolt by certain aspects (counter-cultural rock, for example) which York has included under the rubric of 'youth culture', but it would be more accurately representative of the period of the sixties as a whole to reverse the relationship and say that the so-called 'youth culture' (including

²⁵⁶ O'Brien, *op. cit.*, p. 229 denies any cultural radicalism in Australia equivalent to that which had developed in Britain and the United States ('the Beats'). He suggests that this meant the Australian new left was always narrowly political.

²⁵⁷ York, *Student Revolt*, *op. cit.*, p. 9, chapter 3.

the music) emerged from the stirrings of political and cultural rebellion by students. It was, after all, mainly students who rebelled, or who initiated the rebellion.

For York it is politicised pop music which more than any other aspect defines the sixties 'youth culture'. He writes that the music took youth very close to the movement of dissent, and that there was a 'dialectical relationship between pop culture and political rebellion'. Stephen Alomes too has suggested, perhaps too vaguely and with too much generalization, the importance of the 'rebellion in music' as a 'background' to the 'first social and cultural critique associated with student radicalism'.²⁵⁸ Whereas it certainly does seem to be the case that the more politicised and sophisticated pop music lyrics of the late sixties were an important accompaniment to youth and student rebellion, the 'first social and cultural critique' - that of the movements of the earlier sixties years - was accompanied as much by a reaction (partly expressed in the popularity of folk music and jazz) against such music as that mentioned by Alomes (surfing music, the Beatles).

And though it may have eventually ceased to be such an important influence, the background to the first stirrings of cultural rebellion among students was also literary - an expression of a new academic liberalism blowing from the United States and the new Australian liberalism,²⁵⁹ the important role of new magazines and journals, and the effect of satire - quite as much as it was musical.²⁶⁰ The only possible way to sustain the view that the stirrings of political and cultural rebellion emerged principally from a 'youth culture' seen in terms of pop music is to interpret the process of radicalization as beginning essentially in the period after 1967. This is in effect what Cochrane is doing by suggesting that the "sixties" really began in 1966-7, rather than in 1960-1.²⁶¹

The historical case study that has been conducted of Melbourne University seems to illustrate the validity of these conclusions. It was the transformation within specific student subcultures (rather than a generalised 'youth culture') that revived campus political life and radicalised many of the students. And this subcultural rebellion should not be interpreted, in the way that the 'libertarian' Donald Horne has done, as a revolt in the name of permissiveness against a stuffy Menzies/Calwell 'Establishment'. The dubious outcome of Horne's interpretation in 'Time of Hope' is to accommodate the rebellions of the sixties to the rise of the 'new liberalism' and its eventual triumph in Whitlamism.²⁶² The most significant new ideological development in the sixties, the New

²⁵⁸ Alomes, *Arena*, op. cit, pp. 34-5. See also Cochrane, op. cit, p. 169.

²⁵⁹ Hyde (ed.), op. cit, p. 6.

²⁶⁰ As Alomes himself seems to indicate in mentioning the 'seminal role of books and thinkers and activists with old Left backgrounds'. (op. cit, p. 35). Adding to the effect already achieved by the more longstanding journals, such as 'Dissent' and 'Nation', were the new satirical magazines - 'Oz' etc. See 'Lot's Wife', Vol. 5. No. 6, June 29, 1965. Satire with a generational bent included Alan Seymour's play 'The One Day of the Year' (see 'Farrago', March 23, 1962) and the material performed at the Emerald Hill Theatre in Dorcas Street, South Melbourne (see 'Lot's Wife', Vol. 5. No. 11, September 28, 1965). See also Bill Thomas, *Ownership and Culture*, *Dissent*, Vol. 1. No. 2, October 1961.

²⁶¹ Both York and Cochrane fail to mention 'Student Action'. Similarly Hyde also ignores the movement, suggesting the only student activism before Vietnam was that which occurred in 1963 (p. 6).

²⁶² Horne (*Time of Hope*, op. cit) discounts any revolutionary significance in the protest movements of the sixties. He writes that they were middle-class movements seeking an alternative way of running things (p. 98) and that the 'revolutionaries' were basically liberals - 'to be liberal could seem revolutionary in post-Menzies Australia' (p. 60).

Left (called 'romantic' by Horne²⁶³) was, however, one that developed an alternative to both the reformism (and nationalism) of the Old Left and the 'new liberalism' of the 'New Critics'. It started from a quite different standpoint to that of the Andersonian libertarianism that ideologically informed the quest for permissiveness. The revolt of the radicalised students at Melbourne University was against the meaninglessness and aimlessness of Australian culture, and the apathy of suburban hedonism. It was against mass-produced 'permissiveness'. It was an attempt to foster a new culture, a new community, and a new morality in the atomised, privatised, permissive society.

²⁶³ Horne, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

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Michael Hamel-Green, October 19, 1991.
Fran Newell, October 19, 1991.
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