A YOUNG DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE: THE ITALIAN RESPONSE TO THE STUDENT PROTESTS OF 1968

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

Thirty years after the university unrest of the late 1960s, scholars still line up on both sides of the barricades to debate the significance of the student revolts. The majority of works on the university upheavals have focused almost exclusively on the students, but few have charted the public response to unrest. This dissertation deepens the historical understanding of the student movements in Western Europe by analyzing how the larger society beyond the campus reacted to the university protests. Focusing on the student demonstrations in the Republic of Italy, it examines the ways in which political leaders, the media, police, professors, workers, the church, and families embraced, rejected, or ignored the student activists. Italy had experienced a period of fascist dictatorship, military defeat, and a subsequent boom in economic growth following the Second World War. As a nation that did not have a long tradition of democratic government, Italy stands as an excellent example of how student unrest tested the boundaries of democratic culture in the 1960s. Within Italy, this work examines a major center of activism, the University of Turin in order to show how each experience of student unrest was a unique expression of the city's local and national history. Based on extensive use of parliamentary records, the press, university and local archives, as well as oral interviews,
this dissertation explores the relationship between the fascist past, class, the Cold War, and generational conflict in the popular understanding of the student revolts. Ultimately, the public’s response to student protests blended elements from the fascist past, traditional class antagonisms, and contemporary fears of the Cold War.
To My Mother, Constance M. Hilwig
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Historians are often captivated by certain years that mark great beginnings and endings or seem to epitomize the Zeitgeist of a particular era. Most notable among these mystical annum that are celebrated almost to the point of personification are the years of revolutionary upheaval: 1776, 1789, 1848, and 1917. Academics and non-academics speak of a ‘Spirit of ’76,’ the French briefly made 1789 the year 1 in the revolutionary calendar, Italian and German nationalism was said to have been “born” in 1848, and for the Russian and Mexican people, a new society was created in 1917. In the last third of the twentieth century, the year 1968 joined the ranks of the historically magic dates of revolution. During that year, an explosion of civil unrest occurred across the globe. From Tokyo to Paris to Mexico City, protesters flooded onto university campuses and city streets to challenge the reigning order. Politically, this assault on the ruling political systems failed, as the unrest was put down almost as quickly as it arose. Nowhere was this groundswell of youthful unrest more inexplicable than in Western Europe, where stable democratic governments and general prosperity should have been an antidote to rebellious impulses.

This dissertation contributes to the literature on the West European student protests of the 1960s in three key ways. First of all, in contrast to previous works that
have focused almost exclusively on the activists themselves, this study looks at the response of non-students to the demonstrations in Italy in order to analyze the impact of the rebellions. By looking to the other side of the barricades, this dissertation offers a new perspective by which to judge the impact of the West European student movements.

Second, this work seeks to return the student upheavals to their national and local context by focusing on the ways in which the Italian people dealt with student unrest. It will focus on the city of Turin during the tumultuous years 1967 and 1968 and then compare this local case with the national repercussions of protest as seen in Italy’s popular press and through the eyes of its politicians in Rome. This approach differs from much of the literature that has portrayed the student revolts as subsidiary to international events rather than based on their country’s history and its current social and political conditions. By focusing on provincial Turin rather than on more cosmopolitan places such as Paris, West Berlin, or Berkeley, this dissertation seeks to reconnect the events of 1968 to local and national history.

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1 In his comprehensive study of the 1960s, Arthur Marwick found that both ardent supporters of the students and their critics often ascribed much greater weight to their revolutionary potential than a more balanced view would suggest. See his chapter, “Was there a Cultural Revolution c. 1958-974?” in The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-1974 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3-22.


3 E.J. Hobsbawm noted that by the end of the year 1968, over fifty-two books and articles had already appeared on the May events in Paris, see: Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays (New York: Meridian Books, 1973), 234.
Third, this work seeks to deepen our understanding of how the popular press in these tumultuous years not only manipulated the image of the student demonstrations but also goaded activists into more extreme acts of protest. By comparing these press accounts with the local and national responses, this study contributes to current discussion of the role of the fourth estate in contemporary European politics.

The West European student movements of the late 1960s arose from a multitude of causes. Despite a remarkable era of postwar peace and prosperity, a vocal element of the cohort which reached maturity in the mid 1960s was dissatisfied. On an international level, they were appalled at what they considered the United States’ neo-colonial war in Vietnam, the dictatorial Colonels’ Regime in Greece, and the Manichean politics of the Cold War with its possibility of Mutually Assured Destruction at the hands of the superpowers.4 Closer to home, students in Italy, France and West Germany were saddened by the continued poverty amid the growing affluence, epitomized by the poor migrants from the southern reaches of Europe who came to toil in the factories of Turin, Milan, Lyon, and Stuttgart. Italian and West German students in particular, were weary of the politically conservative and sclerotic governments that had arisen after the war to assure domestic peace. Rejecting both the West’s Christian Democracy and the East’s Stalinism, they sought a third way in New Left Marxism inspired by Third World revolutionaries and the counter-culture’s libertarianism.

However disturbing were these external problems, the initial spark that lit the flame of student rebellion in Western Europe in the late 1960s, was a local issue, the overcrowded and outdated conditions of the universities.5 The first serious protests for

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4 Hannah Arendt argued that much of the younger generation’s anger and frustration with their political leaders stemmed from the fact that they were the first people to come of age after the invention of the atomic bomb, see: On Violence (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1969).

university reform in Western Europe occurred in 1965 in Italy and West Germany and continued to flare up until the autumn of 1967 when campuses all over the West experienced the occupations of university buildings and street demonstrations. The unrest culminated in the spring of 1968 with demonstrations and street fighting in every major city of the world, highlighted by the spectacular occupation of the Latin Quarter in Paris by students and workers.

The democratic governments of Western Europe crushed the physical and political threat to the established authorities with police repression. Although the activists failed to topple any governments in 1968, Charles de Gaulle and the Grand Coalition in West Germany were voted out the following year. The revolution, however, could be found most clearly in the realms of cultural and social relations. In Italy, the Sessantotto ('68) helped prepare the ground for the massive labor strikes in 1969 that achieved significant gains for industrial workers, led to the passage of some university reforms in 1969, and marked the beginning of a women’s movement that eventually secured the legal right of divorce in 1974.7

Almost immediately after the barricades had been cleared, academics and non-academics sought to understand the student revolt. For the supporters of activism, such as French sociologist Alain Touraine, the student movement was simply a reaction against the technocratic world of the postwar era, and the students represented the vanguard of a new proletariat that would sweep away the inequalities of mass society.8

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6 In Italian the term “Sessantotto” refers to the year of peak activism, 1968, and the entire period of university protest and counter-culture activity from 1965-69.
For critics such as Raymond Aron, the students seemed to be ridiculous actors in a poorly rehearsed revolution that trampled upon civil liberties. Other writers, with varying levels of sympathy, interpreted the student protests as the symptom of a systemic crisis within western society whereby the youth rejected the conformity and rigidity of the political and social system.

Putting aside political theories for demographic and sociological analyses, another group of scholars argued that the “baby boom” of the postwar period had produced an inordinately large number of adolescent and college-aged youth by the mid 1960s. According to these “generation gap” theorists, the older generation who had lived through the Depression and Second World War shared less in common with their children than any other generational cohort in history. The relative comfort and stability of the postwar years made it possible for the students to turn their natural propensity for rebellion and change against their elders causing the protests at the end of the decade.

By the 1980s, scholars began to realize that the monocausal theories of the past decade could not completely explain the reasons behind the student upheavals. With the twentieth anniversary of the 1968 revolutions, more complex hypotheses emerged, often combining older ideas of political crisis, the outrage against the war in Vietnam, and

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generational cleavage. The year 1988 also saw the appearance of the first revisionist critiques. In an article entitled “Reinterpreting 1968: Mythology on the Make,” historian Paul Piccone argued that most of the earlier literature on the student movements was biased, because it has been produced by former protesters seeking to glorify their youths as they approached middle age. Furthermore, he claimed that the media had not only inflated the importance of student protests, but also created the myth of an international student revolt by connecting unrelated events such as the protests in Paris with those against the Vietnam War in the United States. For Piccone the real source of the student protests was to be found in the separate and unique national conditions in 1968. Although missing the important nexus between national and international events, Piccone’s essay did point out the fact that much of the literature on the student protests was autobiographical and that few national studies existed to test the validity of the global explanations for the student upheavals in 1968. What was still missing in the 1980s, however, was an investigation of non-student sources to ascertain the larger reaction to the students’ challenge to the postwar society.

In the 1990s, scholars continued to posit a variety of theories for the student upheavals, seeking to establish the linkages between global military and diplomatic crises such as the Vietnam War and the slowdown of the global economic miracle with national crises such as the struggles for university reform and political reform. In the third decade

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12 See for example: Ronald Fraser, 1968, David Caute, Sixty-Eight.
14 For example, Italian workers who sided with students in 1968-69 connected the protests against the Vietnam War with their own struggles at FIAT, see Chapter IV “The Workers—A Separate Path to Revolution.”
after 1968, there were also conferences and collaborative volumes. The literature produced in the late 1980s and 1990s has also been more eclectic as scholars have begun to investigate cultural sources such as the cinema, music, and fashion. However, very little work has been done on the non-student side of the 1960s.

The historiography of the Italian Sessantotto has followed these general trends and generated considerable debate among scholars of modern Italian history. Some writers have argued that the political and economic changes in the postwar period, coupled with momentous international events, led to the explosion of the student unrest. Others have claimed that the old, endemic problems of Italian society simply reemerged in the 1960s after having lain dormant during the years of fascism. These “sleeper” theorists claim that the student demonstrations simply reignited old tensions that had existed within Italy since the early twentieth century.

Leading the first group of scholars is the English historian, Robert Lumley, who has studied the civil unrest in Milan, and has stressed the changes since the Second World War, including the large numbers of southern immigrants who participated in the industrial strikes of 1969 and the Catholic Church’s attempt to reconcile its differences with the Italian Left. Another English historian, Paul Ginsborg, has also argued that the Italian student rebellion emerged from the new conditions of the 1960s. These included

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17 See Stuart J. Hilwig, “The Revolt Against the Establishment: Students Versus the Press in West Germany and Italy,” in 1968: The World Transformed, 321-49 for a discussion of the battle between the students and the press; and Marwick, The Sixties, for some examples of the reaction to the counter-culture.
the appearance of New-Left Marxism and of Catholic Action initiatives, the failure of the traditional political parties to break the inertia of parliamentary government, and the impact of international events such as the Vietnam War and the Colonels’ regime in Greece. Combining international and regional analysis, an Italian scholar of social movements and political violence, Donatella Della Porta has claimed that her young countrymen often imitated the American youth counter-culture, but their political protests were uniquely European. For these scholars, the civil unrest in the 1960s was directly related to the expanding economy and demographics of postwar Italy.

The other group, the “sleeper theorists,” have located the roots of the university crisis in the political and economic conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Echoing the voices of the students themselves, the US historian Seymour Martin Lipset has claimed that the Italian students finally revolted against the traditional, “almost feudal” university structure in order to force it to adapt to a modern society.

The American political scientist Sidney Tarrow has placed the upheavals of the late 1960s within a larger historical cycle of “parabolas of protest” that have run through contemporary Italian history. Tarrow claimed that the 1965-75 decade of unrest resembled the years of civil unrest 1919-21, the so-called “Red Years,” when communists

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20 Lipset, Rebellion in the University, 495.
and fascists fought each other on the streets of Italy’s cities.\textsuperscript{21} Another American, journalist Richard Boston, has suggested that “the chaos of the universities, [was] part of the general chaos [resulting] from the legacy of fascism and the weakness, or unwillingness, of successive Christian Democrat and coalition governments.”\textsuperscript{22} These sleeper theorists all emphasize the persistence of pre-modern structures in the Italian universities and the importance of the fascist legacy, which, as we shall see, became a significant issue among the students and the Italian public.

Dominating the historiography of the Italian student rebellion are the former activists themselves, the “Sessantottini” or “68ers. Notable ‘68ers’ who have offered their views on the Italian student rebellion are a group of scholars who were activists at the University of Turin, whose work is autobiographical and highly subjective. In their books, one finds a heavy emphasis on their personal politics and life experiences since the student years. Luisa Passerini’s \textit{Autobiography of a Generation: Italy, 1968} stands as a forceful example of this literature. Combining oral history of former student protesters with her own contemporary diary entries, Passerini has written a work that is both academic and polemic. Its format manifests a “1960s” quality by actively combining the personal and the political. In essence, Passerini has claimed that the acquisition of power and the liberation of oneself from old hierarchies lay at the center of the student rebellion.\textsuperscript{23} Luigi Bobbio, a former leader of the student movement at the University of Turin, gave an intellectual and cultural interpretation of the unrest, arguing that the upheavals

were motivated by the loss of belief in the idea of progress. According to Bobbio, this idea had been dispelled by the atomic bomb and the United States’ war in Vietnam.24 Another former protester from Turin, Marco Revelli has argued that the central issue was the struggle for power in the universities and in the larger national structures.25 Still another, Peppino Ortoleva, who became a historian of the mass media, interpreted the student rebellions first and foremost as efforts to create a new cultural synthesis and social framework, and only secondarily, as movements for political change.26 Unlike other scholars who have cited pragmatic causes for the student uprising located in either the pre- or post-war Italian past, these Turin scholars have offered moral and global reasons for the student protests, suggesting their continued adherence to generational, idealistic, and cosmopolitan interpretations of the 1960s youth rebellion.27

From this survey of the scholarly work on the Italian '68, two trends seem clear. There were undoubtedly several causes for the student unrest ranging from international to national to local concerns. Most scholars have contextualized the demonstrations as expressions of either pre- or post-war Italian developments. However, the existing historiography of the Sessantotto becomes problematic, because of the predominance of the views of articulate and influential former activists such as Passerini, Ortoleva, and

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25 Revelli mentions a feeling of “euphoria and power” experienced by the occupants of the Palazzo Campana during the first weeks of the occupation, in: “Il ’68 a Torino. Gli Esordi: La Comunità Studentesca di Palazzo Campana,” in *La cultura e i luoghi del ’68*.
Revelli, who have achieved positions within the university and public life. Their recollections, which present positive assessments of the movements and exaggerate the role of the student leaders, ignore the views and the responses of non-activist students as well as of the “other side.”

Ultimately, the student revolts in Italy and throughout Europe in the 1960s experienced mixed success, achieving major victories in the cultural sphere and setbacks in the political realm. Students in Italy, as in France, West Germany, and America came out in force to protest the Vietnam War and authority in general. However, Italian students first became politicized by problems within their universities, questions about the Fascist past, and local problems. More work needs to be done on the local causes and repercussions of the revolt in order to balance the older works. By examining the residents of Turin, a city that found itself convulsed by student protests and university occupations in 1967 and 1968, it will be possible to weigh the interpretations of the former Turin activists against the views of the professors, police, workers, clergy, and ordinary citizens. Furthermore, by examining the popular press and the Parliamentary debate over university reform, this study will draw out the uniquely Italian experience of the student revolts of the late 1960s.

27 For similar global explanations of the student revolts, see: Schnapp and Vidal-Naquet, The French Student Uprising; Feuer, The Conflict of Generations; Califano, The Student Revolution; Caute, Sixty-eight; Fraser, 1968; and 1968 The World Transformed.
28 For a critical discussion of the “68ers” hold over the historiography and market of student protest literature, see: Piccone, “Reinterpreting 1968: Mythology on the Make,” 7-43.
CHAPTER 2

THE ITALIAN STUDENT REVOLTS, 1967-68

The Roots of the Crisis: The Italian University and Society since 1945

Although scholars have remained divided on the meaning and significance to the student protests in Italy and have posited a variety of causal explanations for the massive outburst of student discontent at the end of the 1960s, most would agree that the initial spark that ignited the demonstrations came from within the universities themselves. Italy’s antiquated institutions of higher education reflected the nation’s historic problems of underdevelopment. The inadequacies of these archaic institutions were revealed during the student movement’s initial demonstrations for educational reform in the mid 1960s.

Following the Second World War, Italian universities failed to keep pace with the massive economic transformation that had reshaped Italian society. The rapid, but uneven growth of the Italian economy in the 1950s distinguished it from the other West European nations by combining elements of distinct modernity with extreme backwardness. With the help of Marshall Plan assistance, the postwar Republic of Italy underwent a period of rapid economic development similar to the Federal Republic of Germany. Both nations continued to experience growth in productivity of over 4% per

year in the mid 1960s. However, Italy’s "economic miracle" was more radical than Germany’s *Wirtschaftswunder* in that large areas of Italy in the 1950s were transformed from an agrarian economy to an industrial one. Although starting from a lower base level, Italy registered greater gains than West Germany, its per capita income rising 47% from 1950 to 1960 and the national economy producing growth rates of 6-7% per year from 1958 to 1962. Almost overnight, the northern industrial triangle of Milan, Turin, and Genoa ballooned in size drawing on cheap southern labor. After Italy entered the Common Market in 1958, this industrial heartland joined its northern neighbors in a wave of economic prosperity, but the rest of the country remained less affected. Italy's “miracolo economico” failed to improve conditions in the south, the *Mezzogiorno*. In fact, the burst of industrial productivity in this one region exacerbated the age-old division between north and south by drawing large numbers of primarily male laborers from the *Mezzogiorno*. Thus, southern Italy continued to languish in an economic torpor that was exacerbated by political corruption and neglect.

The sweeping social changes brought by the Italian economic miracle had scarcely any effect on the political balance of power. Throughout the 1950s, Italy’s Catholic centrist party, the Christian Democrats, maintained coalition governments supported by conservatives and liberals. Like their German counterpart, the Italian Christian Democrats tied their nation tightly to NATO, championed the emerging united

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31 Giuseppe Mammarella, *Italy after Fascism: A Political History 1943-1963* (Montreal: Mario Casalini, 1964), 344-52. As late as 1969, only 22% of Italy’s university students came from working class homes; in
Europe, and developed a social market economy propelled by several semi-public corporations. Unlike the FRG, Italy was forced to confront the crushing poverty in the south. After the 1962 elections, as part of Amintore Fanfani's famous "opening to the left," the Italian Socialists and Social Democratic Parties joined with Christian Democrats in a coalition government. Despite the PCI continued ability to poll nearly 30% of the vote, the Communists and the Liberals remained in tacit, if unthreatening, opposition. The Socialists' move toward the center and the PCI's inertia drew many students and disaffected socialists to New Left conceptions of socialism. Although the Communist and Socialist Parties had a wide following among middle aged workers and intellectuals due to their historic record of anti-fascism, neither adopted a revolutionary platform, opting to work with government. But, unlike the docile West German trade unions, the anti-fascist legacy had left residues of militancy among Italian labor.

Along with the multiplicity of political parties, Italian politics was beset with constant infighting. Consequently, the ponderous structures of the Italian political system remained in a state Giorgio Galli characterized as "lentocrazia" ("slowocracy"). This "lentocrazia" stemmed from the divisions among the Italian Socialists who periodically battled among themselves and also from the mini cold war between the conservative-centrist Christian Democrats and the opposition Communists.34

32 Giorgio Galli, “The Student Movement in Italy,” 498.
34 For an explanation of the problems of the Italian Left see: Alexander De Grand, The Italian Left in the Twentieth Century: A History of the Socialist and Communist Parties (Bloomington: Indiana University
Consequently, the political leadership ignored the problems of the Italian universities at a time when thousands of middle class families were finally able to afford to enroll their children in institutions of higher education. By 1967, overcrowding had become an acute problem. The University of Rome, originally built for 10,000 students, had 63,000 enrolled in 1968.\textsuperscript{35} In addition to the problems of overcrowding and outdated equipment, the tradition-bound faculty refused to revise the curriculum to reflect contemporary conditions. For example, the political science syllabus at the University of Rome ended with Rousseau. Furthermore, professors in Italy often held political posts far from the university causing them to delegate most of their teaching duties to lecturers and assistants. These problems led to a very low retention rate, and produced students who were ill prepared to face the challenges of the rapidly changing society of the 1960s.\textsuperscript{36}

This growing crisis in the Italian universities forced the government to address issues it had ignored since the end of the Second World War. In May 1965, Minister of Education Luigi Gui offered a series of moderate university reforms.\textsuperscript{37} The Gui Bill was supported by the majority Christian Democrats and their coalition partner, the Unified Socialist Party.\textsuperscript{38} The minority Communists, Liberals, and neo-fascist, MSI, bitterly opposed the coalition's reform bill. The Communists claimed the bill did not make

\textsuperscript{37} The hesitancy of Italian politicians to enact university reforms is well-documented in Giorgio Galli, "The Student Movement in Italy," 494-95. Minister Gui in: \textit{Atti Parlamentari: Discussioni} (Camera dei Deputati) vol. 40 (December 5, 1967): 41233. [Hereafter abbreviated as \textit{AP}].
significant changes, the Liberals argued that Gui’s proposal would limit academic freedom, and the conservative parties feared the government’s plan went too far. The Gui Bill did not propose sweeping changes in the universities but called for modest increases in faculty hiring and more opportunities for working class students, but it also contained provisions that allowed professors to continue to work outside the university. The most controversial point of the Gui Bill was the proposed *numerus clausus* that would solve overcrowding by restricting enrollments in many disciplines. The students interpreted this clause as an attempt by the national government to limit opportunities for working class students. The opposition Communists, Liberals, and neo-fascists successfully blocked the passage of the Gui Bill, and with it, any initiative for university reform from above. As legislators harangued each other in the Chamber of Deputies, the two major student associations, the left-wing, *Union Goliardica Italiana* (UGI) and the Catholic student association, *Intesa*, walked out of the National Union of Italian University Students (UNURI) and formed various protest groups to oppose the Gui Bill.39

When a stalemated government ignored their demands for major university reforms, the Italian students, like their counterparts in West Germany and France, adopted more extreme positions. Throughout the peninsula, students demanded a radical reorganization of their universities to solve the problems of overcrowding, inadequate funding, outdated teaching styles, and the authoritarian, almost "feudal," bearing of the professoriate. They blamed the high attrition rate in Italy on an archaic university system

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38 The PSU was a short-lived union of the old Socialist Party (PSI) and the Social Democratic Party (PSDI).

that placed too much control of a student's curriculum in the professor's hands. At the University of Turin, students attacked the oligarchic university calling the professors “padroni” (masters) or “baroni” and demanding a more egalitarian relationship between students and professors. In this spirit of anti-authoritarianism, many of the student activists also rebelled against the hierarchical structures in their own families.

If some students felt themselves to be isolated in their nuclear families, many more felt abandoned by their political parties. The Right had lost its most powerful spiritual leader when Pope John XXIII publicly refused to endorse the Christian Democrats in the 1963 elections and called for a dialogue between Catholics and Communists, thus reversing over a half century of fervent papal anti-communism. After the Second Vatican Council loosened many other doctrinal taboos, John XXIII’s political initiative encouraged many Catholic students to join with the socialist and communist students in their battle for university reforms. Unlike West Germany or the northern European countries, where Catholic student organizations competed with Protestant student groups, the overwhelmingly Catholic student body in Italy was heavily influenced by the Church.

While the Pope was reaching out to the Left, increasing numbers of Left-wing students were responding to new political leaders and new conceptions of Marxism.

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40 Although the percentage of young people attending universities in Italy was comparable to the rest of Europe, only 44% ever received their degree. See Boston, “The Italian Chaos,” 788; and Galli, “The Student Movement in Italy,” 497-99.


42 Frank P. Belloni, “Dislocation in the Italian Political System,”: 114-35. Also the doctrine of Catholic Action which appeared in works such as Letter to a Teacher by the Schoolboys of Barbiana, trans. Nora Rossi and Tom Cole (New York: Random House, 1970) stressed and active humanist Catholicism to solve the problems of poverty in rural Italy.
Rejecting old Stalinist notions of communism and the polarities of the Cold War, many radical Italian students adopted the ideas of the New Left that posited a third way between the warped Soviet communism of the east and the capitalism of the west. Italian students, in particular, were drawn to Third World communist leaders such as Che Guevara, Mao Tse Tung, and Ho Chi Minh. This was partially because the millionaire publisher and supporter of Marxist insurgencies, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, had further increased his fortune by printing huge numbers of cheap paperbacks on Marxism and Third World revolutionaries. The tales of the Bolivian rebel Che Guevara and of the Chinese Cultural Revolution instilled a romantic “Terzmondismo” or “Third Worldism” in the rhetoric and ideology of the student New Left. Italian students scorned the PCI’s adherence to the Soviet model of communism that had continued to hold sway within the Party since the Second World War. They also found parallels between the neo-colonialism practiced by the West in the Third World and the exploitative relationship northern Italy exercised over the southern half of the peninsula. In 1964, the German-born professor of social philosophy at Berkeley, and ideologue of the New Left, Herbert Marcuse, published his critique of modern society called One Dimensional Man. By 1968, a translated version had become a bestseller in Italy. Marcuse provided the student Left with a neo-Marxian critique of post-capitalist society. He argued that the comfortable nature of consumer society enabled a small elite to manipulate and control the sated masses. He further identified the media as a key instrument in this manipulation

of the masses thus giving student activists a target for their attack on consumer society. After large numbers of Catholic students joined with the Left, socialist and communist students found themselves in leadership roles, and they incorporated many of the New Left ideas in their critical assessments of the university and the larger society. A major target were the Socialists (PSU) who, in joining the government, had allegedly betrayed their revolutionary roots.

Raniero Panzieri and other New Left leaders reworked Gramscian theories of Marxism and developed the doctrines of operai smo, or workerism, and published them in the Quaderni Rossi (Red Notebooks). Panzieri sought to revive the essentials of Italian socialism by calling for a return to direct democracy through the general assembly and for the rejection of the large national unions in favor of shop floor organization. Many of the student activists adopted the ideas of Panzieri in 1967-68 when they occupied university buildings and instituted general assemblies.

This catalogue of student issues clearly shows that the Left-wing students had begun to speak out about broader issues in Italian society and politics. As in France and the United States, the students’ attack on the university oligarchy was linked with a broad criticism of all political authority figures. The students adopted New Left politics in defiance of the traditional Italian Left that had joined the ruling coalition and of the

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45 See introduction for a discussion of the Center-Left coalition of the late 1960s and Caute, Sixty-Eight, 61.
46 For information on Raniero Panzieri and the Italian New Left see: Stephen Hellman, “The New Left in Italy,” in Martin Kolinsky and William E. Paterson, eds., Social and Political Movements in Western
Communist Left that had remained faithful to Moscow. By spurning the mainstream parties of both the Left and Right, the Italian students challenged the reigning political values and practices of the postwar era.

**The University and City Besieged, 1966-1968**

A review of the major episodes will help us trace the spread of the student unrest. The first incident occurred in April 1966 when a young architecture student named Paolo Rossi died in Rome after being caught in the middle of a battle between Communist students and neo-Fascist Missini. The riot had erupted over a dispute between students following the contested student elections at the University of Rome. Many believed that Rossi had been killed by the neo-Fascists. Seventy thousand people, including Pietro Nenni, head of the PSI, attended Rossi’s funeral. Much like the death of Benno Ohnesorg in West Berlin the following year, Rossi’s death provided a cause for student activists, polarized the extreme Left- and Right-wing students, and had a national impact as well.

The following spring, protesters at the University of Pisa drew up their “Theses of Sapienza,” comprising a list of university reforms along the lines of Panzieri’s operaismo. By the autumn of 1967, Communist students began calling for a policy of direct action for reforms in the universities. In November 1967, buildings at both the

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47 For essays describing the conflict between the New and Old Left in Italy in the 1960s and afterward, see: *PCI, Classe Operaia e Movimento Studentesco*, eds. Gregorio Paolini and Walter Vitali (Florence: Guaraldi Editore, 1977).


49 Perhaps the students sought to rankle Catholic consciences by calling their list of demands "Theses," similar to the work of Martin Luther. Sapienza was an old name for the University of Pisa, see: Valdo Spini, “The New Left in Italy,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7(January-April 1972): 60.
University of Turin and the State University of Milan were occupied by student activists. At Turin, the students invaded the Faculties of Architecture, Humanities, and Education after the Rector and Academic Senate had voted to move the science faculties outside of the city to a suburb called La Mandria. This act was seen as an attempt to remove part of the university from its role in civic life.\textsuperscript{50} In Milan, students occupied buildings to protest a proposed increase in fees.\textsuperscript{51} By early December, university buildings were also occupied at Trent, Florence, Naples, Pisa, and Genoa, but, the rebellion remained strongest in the northern industrial cities. In February 1968, students occupied several buildings at the University of Rome, and by the end of the month, nineteen of the thirty-three state universities had been occupied. Although this tactic was repeated by activists throughout Western Europe and the United States, Italian students could trace its origins back to the factory occupations of the 1920s when northern industrial workers had taken over their workplaces in defiance of the Fascist regime.\textsuperscript{52}

To be sure, the student occupants of 1968 such as Laura DeRossi,\textsuperscript{53} were more akin to the activists of 1848 than to those of the 1920s. Most of them were well-educated children of the bourgeoisie who claimed to speak for the masses. Just as Mazzini, claiming to be the father of a New Italy, had attempted to install a populist democracy in Rome in 1848, so the student leaders of the 1960s sought to construct a new socio-political order. Remarking on the wealth and academic credentials of the New Left activists in the 1960s, sociologist Cyril Levitt has argued that the student movements of

\textsuperscript{50} Revelli, "il ’68 a Torino. Gli Esordi," 213, 250.
\textsuperscript{51} Galli, 494.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 500.
the 1960s were essentially revolts of a privileged class against the very society that had provided them with their elite standing, without which no one would have listened to them. In November 1967 the activists in Turin drafted a formal Charter of Demands, the Carta di Rivendicativa. These included the right of student representation in the Academic Senate which governed the university, the right to debate professors in class and take courses outside one's major, the obligation of professors to grade students on collective work, and the establishment of partial control by the students over curriculum and the allocation of funds within the university. Because the professors were accustomed to having total control over their courses and students, these revolutionary demands were opposed by most of the faculty.

The university occupations frustrated university administrators’ attempts to continue normal academic functions. Eventually the rectors called the police in order to remove the protesters. As Seymour Martin Lipset has argued, the forced evacuations signified a drastic change in Italian society’s relationship with its universities, because they destroyed the historic autonomy and sanctity of university buildings and campuses. Even the Nazis had respected the independence of the universities when they occupied northern Italy in 1943. The police evacuations not only confirmed the activists’ claims

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53 DeRossi, the daughter of a wealthy building contractor, admitted, “I come from a bourgeois family, a wealthy family.” See Passerini, Autobiography of a Generation, 24-25.
54 Cyril Levitt, Children of Privilege: Student Revolt in the Sixties, A Study of Student Movements in Canada, The United States, and West Germany (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 4.
that the state was repressive but also strengthened their resolve to continue the occupations.\textsuperscript{57}

In its depiction of the occupation of the University of Turin which lasted from November 27 through the end of December 1967, the local newspaper, \textit{La Stampa}, described the occupation as an act perpetrated by “30 youths who want to oppose the school’s authority” against the wishes of most students who wanted to continue with their studies.\textsuperscript{58} After the activists were forcibly evacuated in January, they continued to reoccupy university buildings. In fact, between November 1967 and February 1968, the rector of Turin called the police five times to evacuate student occupants.\textsuperscript{59}

When covering the university occupations, the press adopted an almost medieval tone. The articles and photographs seemed to suggest that the “fortress” university had been invaded by the occupants. The police were depicted as “liberators.” An excellent example can be found in the Vatican’s \textit{Osservatore Romano’s} coverage of an evacuation at the University of Rome in June 1968. The article described how Dr. Provenza, one of the main chiefs at Rome’s police headquarters raised a megaphone to his lips and shouted, “In the name of the law, open the gates!” When the occupants refused, the police had used wire-cutters to open the gates surrounding the university. Provenza, accompanied by one hundred police wearing tricolor sashes, entered the campus. The students shouted for the police to go away, crying “Viva Ho Chi Minh.” On a signal from

Provenza, the police sounded “the ritual three blasts of the trumpet” and charged the occupied buildings meeting no resistance.\textsuperscript{60}

The occupation of the State University of Milan in the winter of 1968 was also characterized as a siege. Figure 1 printed in the conservative national daily, \textit{Il Corriere della Sera}, shows right-wing student activists attempting to remove left-wing occupants from the university. The caption noted that, “The Bramantesco door turned into a place of battle: in vain the invaders attempt to beat the resistance of the besieged.” The article further claimed that the right-wing students were trying to “liberate” the building so students could return to their lessons.\textsuperscript{61} As the above examples show, the conservative press emphasized the danger of the radical Maoists. Figure 1, reminiscent of a Goya painting, has one menacing figure who appears to be holding a rifle (really a stick), and another student dramatically captured throwing something into the building. Also, the place of the alleged violence heightened the urgency of the event. Because the Bramantesco door was the stately entrance to the university, the students appeared to be attacking the dignity and tradition as well as the physical structures of the university.

Wearing motorcycle helmets for protection, student activists also occupied Milan’s private Catholic university, \textit{La Cattolica} where they erected a crude barbed wire fence and raised banners of the Viet Cong and Communist China.\textsuperscript{62} The use of helmets became more common as students increasingly clashed with police during the spring. It was also common practice for the protesting students throughout the world to either raise

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{L’Osservatore Romano}, June 5-4, 1968, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Il Corriere della Sera}, March 12, 1968, 8.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Il Corriere della Sera}, May 25, 1968, 8.
a banner on the university such as a Vietcong or Chinese flag to symbolize that they had “officially” taken over the building.

This conquest of academic space was often as important to the young activists as the conquest of ideological space. Former activist Marco Revelli remarked that the occupation of the Palazzo Campana in the heart of the university and the city gave participants a sense of “euphoria and power” because they had “carved out a community outside of all traditional groupings.” Passerini has noted that the conquest of a major space within the university was not only in defiance of the professors and an emulation of the factory occupations of the past, but also emerged from practical concerns. The Palazzo Campana was the only building with halls large enough for mass meetings and rooms for committee activities. In the heart of the city, the university was centrally located and also close to activists’ homes.

Diego Marconi, a former occupant of the Palazzo Campana in 1968, recalled the emergence of a counter-culture during the period of occupations:

“I remember one evening when there was a protest committee, it coincided with supper and so you had to set the table there, in a lecture hall. We set the table and started singing: “Our country is the whole world,” and meanwhile they were cooking stuff, dishing out pasta and it was a very beautiful moment.”

Each attempt by administrators to remove students brought increased incidents of violence. In the early spring of 1968, the students in Turin again set the pace of the student revolt by instituting a series of “white occupations” which were copied at several

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other universities. During these “white occupations,” groups of students would disrupt lectures and demand that the professor debate them on certain issues. Both Marco Revelli and Luisa Passerini noted how these tactics turned the student movement into a festival in which the students created “spectacles” that turned classrooms into stages. The white occupations also foreshadowed the violent confrontations between the students and civil authorities that occurred a month later. Serena Nozzoli, a former student protester at the State University of Milan recalled,

“I had already seen terrorism in 1968. ...the feet on the professor’s desk, bringing up Che Guevara as a topic for the economics exam, with this insolent pretense, this arrogance provided by numbers... things slightly reminiscent of Mussolini’s thugs that however, all seemed like revolutionary demonstrations, while I saw in them a type of violence... taking advantage of the mob to do things they wouldn’t have done themselves...”

The attack on the Italian universities that had begun as a series of peaceful occupations eventually gave way to more provocative tactics as continued police evacuations caused students to retaliate. The use of violence by the students was infrequent. The leaders were often torn between their two models of revolution; that of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Civil Rights Movement and Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution. Peppino Ortoleva has also noted how the student movements fused such diametrically opposed concepts as:

“the exaltation of violence with the diffusion of the theory and practice of non-violence, militant atheism with a Christianity in search of the original authentic message of Jesus, the exaltation of ... “liberty,” and the idealization of Stalinism.”

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For Italian students, the industrial workers’ passive resistance to Fascism in the 1940s contrasted with the aggressive guerilla tactics of the Antifascist Resistance of the same time period. For some activists, however, the repressive measures of the police appeared to justify the use of violence in return.

Bomb scares also became part of the university occupations after a rudimentary time bomb was placed in the Faculty of Jurisprudence at the University of Rome in February.69 Another bomb was found in the Faculty of Architecture in the Palazzo Campana at the University of Turin in May 1968 but, like the one in Rome, it did not explode.70 Although the press deemed these “acts of terrorism,”71 none of these devices ever exploded in the universities. Had the students intended to use terrorism, these bombs could have destroyed university buildings all over Italy. The bomb scares of 1968 should not be compared with the terrorism of the 1970s and 1980s when terrorists blew up the Bank of Agriculture and the Uffizi art gallery.72 To be sure, there were reports that activists in Turin, Milan, and Rome had accosted janitors who had been in the buildings during the time of the occupations but there is no evidence that they had ever intended to kill people or destroy public buildings.73

The forced evaucations of the universities through the winter of 1968 also drove the protesters out into the city streets. This movement from the protected sphere of the university into the public spaces of urban life represented a further encroachment on

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69 Il Corriere della Sera, February 20, 1968, 1.
70 La Stampa, May 24, 1968, 2.
71 Il Corriere della Sera, February 20, 1968, 1.
Italian civil society. Scholars of the Italian student movement are in agreement that the invasion of the public space in February and March 1968 was another crucial turning point in the unrest of the 1960s, because the student protests were no longer solely a “university problem” but a real threat to public order. Just as the Parisian students set up the barricades in the Latin Quarter in May 1968 and West Berlin students marched on the city’s main shopping thoroughfare, the Ku’Damm, the spectacle of students in the streets forced the public to take notice. Marco Revelli characterized this shift from peaceful occupations to street demonstrations as the beginning of the “guerilla phase” of the student movements. The period from February to June 1968 witnessed an increasing number of violent confrontations between students and the police. The popular press frequently misrepresented the street demonstrations as chaotic and violent spectacles. Although peaceful street demonstrations had already occurred in Turin and Milan on a small scale through the winter months, the student protests in the streets of Italy’s cities did not receive major press attention until March 1968.

On March 1, students at the University of Rome after being forcefully evacuated from the Valle Giulia, the seat of the Faculty of Architecture, gathered outside the Italian Parliament’s Palazzo Chigi to protest the Minister Gui’s education reform bill and called for the dismissal of their rector, Pitero D’Avack. The protest quickly turned into a pitched

73 L’Osservatore Romano, February 25, 1968, 4.
street battle between students and the police in the Villa Borghese and in front of the
Valle Giulia. The press reported that approximately 3,000 students participated in the
riots and the initial 150 police had to be reinforced by the carabinieri.76

The popular press’s coverage of the Battle of the Valle Giulia turned the event
into a national spectacle. There were negative depictions of the activists and the police
were portrayed either as victims of student violence or saviors of public order. Figure 2,
showing the police battling students outside the Valle Giulia, appeared on the front pages
of both the Corriere della Sera and La Stampa. This photograph evokes images of
peasant rebellion with the makeshift clubs, disorderly mob, and the trees in the
background. The picture was cropped to make it appear that the students greatly
outnumbered the police thus heightening the perceived threat to public order. La
Stampa’s headline read, “Violent battle in the center of Rome between students and the
police: hundreds injured.”77 And the Corriere’s masthead claimed, “Serious new
disorders in Rome with two hundred among the bruised and injured.”78 The article in the
Corriere also carried pictures of overturned cars that had been set on fire by the
protesters. Words such as “violence, brawls, and hooliganism,” dominated articles
describing acts of student vandalism. Using selective bits of evidence the articles in La
Stampa and the Corriere della Sera gave minimal attention to the actual causes of the
students’ demonstration.

76 See Carlo Oliva e Aloisio Rendi, Il Movimento Studentesco e le sue lotte, 28 and La Stampa, March 2,
1968, 1.
77 La Stampa, March 2, 1968, 1.
78 Il Corriere della Sera, March 2, 1968, 1.
Students throughout Italy took revenge upon the press for its coverage of the events at the Valle Giulia and the press’s silence on the subject of police brutality. On March 7 students in Turin gathered to demonstrate for the release of a student named Avanzini who had been arrested for the occupation and vandalism in the Palazzo Campana. When some workers joined the students, the crowd reportedly reached 5,000 participants. Carrying signs entitled “Italia=Spagna,” the crowd made its way through the center of the city with some participants smashing the windows of La Stampa’s editorial office. Although they claimed that they were attacking a symbol of “neocapitalism,” the protesters were also enraged by the newspaper’s steady stream of criticism and ridicule. La Stampa accused the students of breaking their earlier pledge of non-violence and provided descriptions of the pitched battles between the students and the police. Using photographs to portray the students as dangerous threats to civil society, the newspaper printed Figure 3 over the caption, “Corso Vittorio: In the pouring rain, a parade of students reaches the jail for the protest demonstration.” However, the protesters look absurd apparently be fleeing rather than fighting police. Their umbrellas add a note of levity to the descriptions of “brawls and bottle-throwing.”

Other student protesters in Florence assaulted the offices of the conservative daily, La Nazione, which had a major circulation in central Italy. Italy’s largest and most anti-student newspaper, the Corriere della Sera, also did not escape unpunished. Demonstrators from the University of Milan made its press offices a frequent target of attack in the spring of 1968. Throughout Western Europe the battle with the conservative

79 Photo and article in: La Stampa, March 8, 1968, 2.
press became a common feature of student demonstrations. In West Berlin, students attacked Axel Springer’s editorial offices and in Paris they struck the offices of Le Figaro. The mass press, which had become the voice of a consumer society and the so-called “Establishment,” was the students’ chief tormentor and readily available target for their anger.\footnote{David Caute, \textit{Sixty-eight. The Year of the Barricades} (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988), 61-62; for an analysis of the West German students’ conflict with Axel Springer’s press see Stuart Hilwig, \textit{Democracy on the Barricades: The Power of Words and Images} (MA Thesis, The Ohio State University, 1994).}

The students also vented their rage against the centers of political power. On April 28, 1968, university activists staged a massive demonstration in Rome in front of the Palace of Justice. They had gathered to protest the incarceration of two students who had been accused of setting fire to an office of Boston Chemical Company, a producer of the flammable napalm jelly used by the United States in the Vietnam War. The protest of April 28 however, quickly became a demonstration against the Italian government, due in part to the impending national elections. The conservative press reported that the demonstration had suddenly turned violent and that the students had resorted to their usual tactics of throwing bottles, overturning cars, and using tables and seats from a nearby café to build barricades.\footnote{Carlo Oliva and Aloisio Rendi, \textit{Il Movimento Studentesco e le sue lotte}, 28.}

By May 1968 the demonstrations in Italy had grown larger and more threatening. The students took to the streets, seemingly in response to the shooting of the student leader Rudi Dutschke in West Berlin during the Easter holidays and the student-worker protests in Paris. The street battles in Paris during May 1968 were heavily publicized in the Italian press. Parisian students had initially protested for university reforms but
eventually turned against deGaulle’s government and were joined by thousands of urban workers in May 1968. Figure 4, which appeared in the Corriere della Sera, depicts the violent response of the gendarmes to the workers and students of Paris. The headline reads, “The agitation of the students in Paris: Serious violence in the Latin Quarter,” and describes “barricades, fires and devastation.” In this photograph, the French police, armed with clubs, appear willing to use overwhelming force against the students. The Turin newspaper seemed to tell its readers that across the border, there was even more violence, more danger than in Italy.

The students’ attempt to control public space in the cities became an opportunity for press sensationalism throughout the winter and spring months in 1968. An already-critical press jumped on the expansion of the boundaries of the student movement. Insisting that the once-confined “university problem” was now provoking widespread urban unrest, conservatives raised the specter of thousands of protestors disrupting normal life.

In sharp contrast to their reports of students invading university buildings, marauding through the streets of Italy, and taking cues from a mythic international and revolutionary movement, the conservative press portrayed the servants of public order as the saviors of society and victims of student violence. Turin’s La Stampa had already showed its willingness to support police actions against labor strikes in 1962, when carabinieri had attacked the underpaid, mostly southern workers of FIAT during the

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82 Il Corriere della Sera, April 28, 1968, 1.
83 Il Corriere della Sera, May 7, 1968, 1.
Piazza Statuto riots. For the Agnelli family which owned both FIAT and La Stampa and had a controlling interest in the Corriere della Sera, the press was a powerful weapon in its efforts to bolster the image of the organs of law and order against the actions of the student Left which continually sought to mobilize the workers of Turin. It is estimated that by owning the major portions of both La Stampa and the Corriere, Agnelli controlled about 23% of the Italian daily press. The popular press frequently photographed the police courageously battling student demonstrators, helping “victims” of the protests, and presenting them as targets of student violence.

The benevolent image of the police appeared frequently. La Stampa and the Corriere della Sera showed the Italian police in non-threatening, benevolent poses. Figure 5, “Disorders at the university” portrays the carabinieri as gentle servants of public order as they carefully carry a female protester out of the Palazzo Campana. The woman is clutching her umbrella and does not appear upset or harmed, and the four policemen in dress uniform and wearing white gloves, seem attentive to her needs. This image of the police as dutiful public servants contrasted with student experiences of brutality at the hands of the police but did help to swing public opinion to the side of the agents of law and order.

84 For example see: L’Osservatore Romano, March 2, 1968, 4: par. 1, Il Corriere della Sera, March 9, 1968, 1: caption.
85 For a description of the Piazza Statuto demonstrations and the police response see Ginsborg, A History of Contemporary Italy, 251-53.
87 La Stampa, January 11, 1968, 2.
In most of the mainstream Italian press the students were portrayed as the attackers of the police. In March, the Corriere della Sera ran a series of articles describing student violence at the Catholic University of Milan. Offering vivid details of students stoning police agents and vehicles, the police who were better armed than the students, were cast as victims. In April, the Corriere even captured the pain of a policeman who had been hit in the head by a stone after a demonstration of the Filocinesi. Although wounded on the head, the policeman in the photograph was shown raising his hand to his chest making the press image even more dramatic.

The only major newspapers to denounce police violence was the communist L’Unità. In an article from January 1968, entitled, “Savage police aggression against struggling Pisan students,” the PCI’s press organ wrote that,

“Hatred, ferocity, brutality: these are the only ways to define the savage duty carried out by a nucleus of special forces and carabinieri against the hundreds and hundreds of students who have been demonstrating in solidarity with the university students hunted down yesterday by police at the occupied Institute of Physics.”

The article used terms such as “bestial” to describe the police and stressed the students’ non-violent response.

Another example of L’Unità’s critique of the forces of order appears in Figure 6 illustrating a protest in late February at the University of Rome. The photograph on the left showing the vulnerability and anguish of two female students contrasted sharply with the massive, martial show of police force outside the rector’s building on the right. This

\[89 \text{ Il Corriere della Sera, March 26, 1968, 8.} \]
\[90 \text{ Il Corriere della Sera, April 18, 1968, 9.} \]
\[91 \text{ L’Unità, January 21, 1968, 4.} \]
diptych bombards the viewer with a skillful use of space and imagery to evoke sympathy for the students and a simultaneous fear of the forces of order. The photograph on the left reveals the emotion of two victims of a police evacuation; both are female and presumably more vulnerable to violence than male victims. The prone student is in physical pain and clearly needs medical attention. The figure on the left is smaller and cropped vertically, emphasizing the closeness of the two students. On the other hand, the photograph of police on the right is larger and horizontal in orientation, emphasizing the vastness of police powers. The jeeps in the foreground and the line of police standing at attention clearly display the impersonal and potentially bellicose attitude of the forces of order. Even without words, this diptych clearly revealed *L’Unità*'s sympathy with defenseless student victims. However, *L’Unità* was an exceptional voice of criticism within an Italian press that was overwhelmingly anti-student and pro-police.

The last mass demonstration of 1968 occurred in Turin on June 1 when the Proletarian Party of Socialist Unity (PSIUP) invited the students to demonstrate in solidarity with the striking workers and students in France. Left-wing student activists quickly used the rally as a staging point for a long parade through the center of Turin. The protesters carried banners with slogans such as: “Only violence helps where violence reigns” and “No to social peace in the factories.” Clearly this was the rhetoric of social revolution, and *La Stampa*, made certain that it reported the number of stores along the posh Via Roma that had been assaulted by the demonstrators offering many details of the attack on their editorial offices. The writer argued that during times of political unrest, the

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92 Ibid.
press might be obliged to withhold judgment, but the June demonstration was "absolutely a manifestation of hooliganism." The writer, echoing the tone of the other national dailies, dismissed the students’ grievances as being politically illegitimate and simply a pretext for senseless vandalism. The article also mentioned that the protesters had blocked the main streets of Turin. By the end of the day violent scuffles between protesters and the police had resulted in 23 arrests.

The student movement’s decline in the late spring of 1968 was due to a number of causes. In part, the movement died of its own success. By attacking the "sacredness of the professors and the universities," the activists dispelled the magical atmosphere of rebellion that had existed in the autumn and winter. The outcome of the national elections of May 1968 offered little prospect of university reform or broader political changes from above thus causing a large number of students to give up the struggle while a small group turned to organizing the growing labor discontent. The Roman student movement never regained its mass support after the Battle of the Valle Giulia, and in Milan a handful of students organized the remaining activists into an official organization called Il Movimento Studentesco which continued to stage demonstrations into the 1970s. In Turin, a series of student demonstrations in the early 1990s resulted in the occupation of the Palazzo Nuovo, the seat of the Faculties of Letters, Law and

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93 L’Unità, February 24, 1968, 2.
94 La Stampa, June 2, 1968, 2.
95 De Luna, “Aspetti del Movimento del ’68 a Torino,” 192-93.
97 Oliva and Rendi, Il Movimento Studentesco, 37-38.
98 Interestingly, in the autumn of 1968, there was an increase in the number of protests among high school students who demanded many of the same rights as their older siblings had done the previous spring. Caute, Sixty-Eight, 350.
However, the Italian student movement, like its counterparts elsewhere never regained its former size or momentum after 1968. It withered because many of the less committed activists turned their attention away from the university during the summer break. In Turin, the student leaders refocused their attention on the discontented work force at FIAT’s giant Mirafiori plant. By the spring of 1969, the government and press had shifted their attention from the students to the greater problems of labor unrest that culminated in a wave of strikes throughout Italy in the “Hot Autumn.” Ultimately, the disintegration of the center-left coalition that began with the general elections of May 1968 ensured that the Gui Bill for university reforms was put on hold and eventually dropped. No substantial university reform bill was passed by the Italian Parliament in 1968. Despite the massive amount of publicity generated by the student protests and the dramatic incidents of civil unrest in 1968, the students’ failure to attain any significant reforms suggests that forces of the so-called “Establishment” remained stronger than the movement. However, where the students failed on the issues of political change and university reform, they did bring large numbers of the middle class on to the side of the Left, shattered the social conformity of the 1950s, and helped spark the great labor movement that struck Italy the following year during months of industrial strikes known as the Autunno Caldo (Hot Autumn) in 1969.

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99 For a humorous and critical examination of the occupations of the 1990s that were led by a group called “La Pantera” or the “Panther,” see the film, Tutti giù per terra.
100 Ginsborg, A History of Contemporary Italy, 308-09.
Traditional Values under Attack: The Counterculture In Italy, 1965-1968

The student activists not only tried to occupy and invade public space in Italy during the 1960s, they also assaulted traditional values. In particular, the burgeoning youth culture that had spread throughout the west also found its way to Italy. The increased wealth provided opportunities for youth to indulge in new fashions, motor bikes, and Rock-n-Roll music and along with this consumer culture came the ideas and attitudes of a counter-culture born in the United States. Arthur Marwick has pointed out that the word “counter-culture” had been linked to youth since the term first appeared in March 1968 in an article entitled, “Youth and the Great Refusal” written by American scholar Theodore Roszak.\footnote{Arthur Marwick, The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958-1974 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11.} The sociologist Lewis Feuer characterized the protests of the late 1960s as simply another cycle of the younger generation’s attempt to humiliate the older generation.\footnote{Lewis S. Feur, The Conflict of Generations (New York: Basic Books, 1969).} Similar to Freud’s ideas in Totem and Taboo, the university became the gathering place for the tribal sons to symbolically kill their real or surrogate fathers. However, in 1968, many of the tribal daughters also arrived to undermine their elders.\footnote{Psychoanalysts Morton Levitt and Ben Rubenstein have argued that the student leaders came from generally wealthy backgrounds with permissive parents and that once in college they reverted back to an}

Like the other countries of Western Europe, the counter-culture’s relaxed attitudes toward life were expressed in its unique clothing and fashion. According to Marwick, the counter-culture first officially arrived in Italy in 1965 when long-haired youth from
Britain, West Germany and France, who sought to emulate the British rock band, the Beatles, began to gather in the Piazza beneath the Spanish steps in Rome. Older Italians living in the cities generally detested these “capelloni” or “long hairs.” Some younger and college-aged Italians, however, eagerly absorbed the new attitudes of the capelloni, rebelling against traditional society through new forms of dress and dance as seen in Figure 5 which shows two participants in a “hippy dance” at a “flower festival” in Rome. In comparing Figure 5 with the students in Figure 7, we see distinct differences between the activists who continued to dress conservatively and those who adopted the trends of the counterculture. For the most part however, Italian students continued to dress more conservatively than their counterparts in northern Europe, often adopting only small portions of the counter-culture’s dress as seen by the “flower children” of the University of Turin in Figure 8.

The press not only helped to popularize the unusual clothing and appearance of members of the Italian counter-culture but also presented their appearance as symptoms of a youth disease. Compare the benign images of “flower children” in Figures 7 and 8 to the dilapidated “flower child’s car” in Figure 9. Both Figures 7 and 8 portrayed the counter-culture as something harmless and even ridiculous, but Figure 9, accompanied by an article describing how a young “hippy” was arrested for trying to steal whiskey, showed a darker, more dangerous side of the counter-culture. The photograph of a

\[\text{Oedipal phase and their attacks on “corporate liberals, etc…” is merely an attack on their fathers. See Levitt and Rubenstein, “The Student Revolt: Totem and Taboo Revisited,” Psychiatry 34 (May 1971): 156-67.}\]

\[104\] Marwick, The Sixties, 493-94.

\[105\] La Stampa, November 29, 1967, 5.

\[106\] La Stampa, May 10, 1968, 2.

\[107\] Corriere della Sera, January 17, 1968, p. 9.
broken-down, spray-painted, dirty automobile in Figure 9 also conveyed the image of disease in a non-biological way. The car itself appeared to be in an advanced state of decay personifying the social decay heralded by the emergence of a youth counter-culture.

For many of the university activists, the ideas of the counter-culture merged with their political convictions. Commenting on this nexus of politics and life-style, historian Peppino Ortoleva remarked that the revolt of the 1960s was much more than a political protest, it was intended to be a broad cultural revolution in which the terms “Left” and “Right” came to symbolize “Birth” and “Death” respectively. Most of the younger generation sided with the Left, and “Birth,” indicating that the political battles of the late 1960s were intimately bound with generational conflict in Italy. Thus it was inevitable that student leaders who supported the New Left, a movement still in its political infancy, came into conflict with their parents, many of whom had participated in the antifascist Resistance and were partisans of the aging Old Left.

This battle between new and old began first at home. Guido Viale, a leader of the student movement in Turin remembered, “There was a rebellion against the family—against the economic dependence, against the segregation it imposed on the students.” Viale further noted that many activists saw the hierarchy within the Italian family as the building block of an authoritarian society. This rejection of the family took even more

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108 Paul Piccone argued that the counter-culture of the 1960s distinguished itself from past generational conflicts by its metamorphosis into a political movement. See Piccone, “Reinterpreting ’68: Mythology on the Make,” 9.
extreme tones as evident in Fiorella Farinelli’s testimony, “The best poster on the walls of my Faculty (at the University of Pisa) was, ‘I want to be an orphan.’ I shared that feeling, I took a picture of it, I brought the poster home, it was the one I liked best of all.”

The students’ attacks on their families were extremely jarring. As Joseph La Palombara has argued, because the basic unit of Italian society was the family, any attack shook the Italian way of life.

Social theorist Giorgio Galli has argued that the counter-culture was much more disruptive to Italian society than in the United States or northern Europe, because Italian society had an allegedly stricter moral code based in Catholic doctrine.

Members of the clergy also saw the emerging counter-culture as a sign of social ills. A priest named Don Mario Canova was so incensed by reports of the counter-culture and the behavior of the New Left that in March 1968, he reported to *Il Risveglio*, a conservative local paper from a suburb of Turin, the following:

> “In a meeting of New Left-wingers one can find everything: boys dressed like savages, semi-nude girls, bearded people, dirty people, smelly people, beatniks, marijuana smokers, homosexuals. In conversations with these followers of the New Left, one hears all kinds of things: swearing, sexual experiences of all types, obscene discussions…”

Don Canova was not the only one to associate the youth counterculture with ideas of social atavism and disease. Writing in the *Corriere della Sera*, a graduate of the State University of Milan, Mirella Mammano claimed, “The boil of the university has finally

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113 Giorgio Galli, “The Student Movement in Italy,” 495.
burst and the pus is oozing everywhere.”  Such a graphic image not only conveyed her fears of the growing size of the university problem but also forewarned that, like a disease, it might spread. The writers in the conservative press also used words like “malattia” (disease) to describe the students and disparage their political activism. 

According to La Stampa, one of the symptoms of the university “disease” was “Ma-maismo” (subscribing to the beliefs of Mao, Marx, and Marcuse) which was really just a form of “insidious anarchism.”

Even more threatening to traditional society was the small, but well-publicized rise in the use of recreational drugs in Italy in the late 1960s. The Church led a strong attack against the emerging use of drugs and its alleged connection to rock-n-roll music. The Osservatore Romano devoted a three column article to “LSD: God of Bacchanalia” on December 1, 1967 coinciding with the first major wave of university occupations. The article noted that psychedelic drugs were taken by “beatniks, libertines, disoriented students, and rebels” and followed previous use of alcohol, sexual experimentation, and other types of drugs. The article concluded that these drug users dropped LSD to evade their social responsibilities and had lost their faith in God. By casting the discussion of drug use in terms of a crisis of religious faith, the Church’s press organ represented the counter-culture as an attack on the moral bases of society and thus reminded its readers that the problems of the late 1960s went beyond the realm of the political.

117 L’Osservatore Romano, December 1, 1967, p. 5.
Along with the rise of recreational drug use among young people, the Church also connected American Rock-n-Roll music with moral decay. Historian Peter Hebblethwaite has noted that although the Vatican welcomed the American presence in Europe after the war, it always connected the United States with some trends hostile to the Church, such as freemasonry, Protestantism, and a practical materialism epitomized by Hollywood.\(^{118}\) In the 1960s, the Church feared new trends in secular education along with changes in popular music. An article in the Vatican’s *Osservatore Romano* entitled “The Marxism of Progressive Education” linked drugs, rock-n-roll lyrics, and the New Left to the “progressive education” practiced in western universities and high schools. According to the *Osservatore*, this “progressive education” from the New World was leading to a rising number of “hippies” in the Old World. The article claimed that Marxist propagandists had profited greatly from the social maladies afflicting western youth and that well-known American communists had promoted the satanic ideology of the hippy generation. Connecting rock music with Marxism and drug use, the article maintained that beatniks such as Pete Seger and Bob Dylan had used seductive musical lyrics to spread communism and drug use among American and European youth.\(^{119}\) This connection of the counter-culture with a communist conspiracy followed the historic view of the Catholic Church that linked secular communism with a decline in personal morality and the onset of social decay.\(^{120}\)

\(^{118}\) Peter Hebblethwaite, “Pope Pius XII: Chaplain of the Atlantic Alliance,” in *Italy and the Cold War: Politics, Culture and Society, 1948-58*, eds. Christopher Duggan and Christopher Wagstaff (Washington, DC: Berg, 1995), 68.


\(^{120}\) Although Pope John XXIII called for a political truce between Catholics and Communists in the mid 1960s, the Church’s condemnation of spiritual atheism and immorality remained consistent. For the
If drug use, outrageous clothes, and rock music weren’t provocative enough to convince the Italian public that a social disease was festering in the universities, some even believed the students sought to attack the church outright. A reader of *La Stampa* accused student activists in Turin of committing acts of sacrilege after reading that a shattered crucifix had been found in a garbage can outside the Palazzo Campana. To this citizen, the students had transgressed both church law and moral law. Furthermore, the reader claimed that such an act represented a new form of atavism, “Only a primitive and inferior being could undertake an act so repugnant to the human conscience.”121 To this reader of *La Stampa*, the students had not only acted against the university, and the law, but also against God.

In Milan, similar acts of sacrilege involving the image of the crucifix were reported in the popular press. In an article entitled, “Mao at the lectern,” the *Corriere* reported that “filocinesi” had tried to pull down a crucifix in a lecture hall and attempted to replace it with a picture of Chairman Mao.122 By describing the replacement of a sacred, and universally recognizable icon, the crucifix, with a picture of Mao, the newspaper offered “proof” that the student activists were atheistic Marxist thugs. Although extreme, these views suggest that at least some Italians believed that the student movement had moved beyond the boundaries of political debate and threatened to topple one of the pillars of traditional society, the Church.

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One of the most jarring attacks on traditional views came from the women activists whose struggle for sexual and political equality shook the patriarchal bases of Italian society. The sudden appearance of aggressive, politically active women, often marching in the streets without men, came at a time when Italians were also deeply divided over the issue of divorce, thereby intensifying sensitive gender issues within Italian society.\textsuperscript{123} A farcical depiction of gender stereotypes in Italian society, director Pietro Germi’s 1962 motion picture hit, \textit{Divorce—Italian Style}, evinced the continued cultural biases against divorce within Italian society. The film played upon the old notion that it was harder for a husband to divorce a bad wife than murder an unfaithful one. In 1967, the women’s liberation movement had gained enough supporters to find an audience for a journal entitled, \textit{Donna e Società} (Woman and Society) and the counter-culture’s message of sexual liberation encouraged many women, particularly those in the university, to take control over their sexuality.\textsuperscript{124}

For a predominantly Catholic nation with circumscribed economic, political, and personal roles for women, the images of women leading protests undoubtedly shocked bourgeois society. The historian Natalie Zemon Davis has written of the visual power and political impact of gender role reversal in imagery depicting revolutionary mobs. Seeing young women in leadership roles disturbed all traditional elements of western society that defined protest and revolution as activities led by men.\textsuperscript{125} French historian

\textsuperscript{123} The Socialists had first proposed a referendum on divorce in 1965, in 1969, the PCI supported the referendum and in December 1970, divorce was made legal in Italy; see Ginsborg, \textit{A History of Contemporary Italy}, 328.

\textsuperscript{124} Marwick, \textit{The Sixties}, 680-81.

Dominique Godineau noted that during the first days of the 1789 Revolution, “Women sounded the tocsin, beat drums in the streets of the city, mocked the authorities and the military... They played the role of ‘firebrands.’”

The national press featured many young “firebrands.” Figure 10 shows a crowd of “belle ragazze” (beautiful girls) demonstrating in Turin against the arrest and incarceration of a student evacuated from the Palazzo Campana. The smiling group of women in the right background reveals the playful spirit of mocking contempt which Godineau noticed in crowds of revolutionary women and which Luisa Passerini identified as a key component of the Turin demonstrations. Passerini has argued that in order to become emancipated, many of the women activists acted like men and took prominent roles in demonstrations.

The student activists, unlike their elders, embraced the “new woman.” Figure 11 shows another playful example of the students’ assault on the prescribed sex roles in Italian society. The banner on the student union at the University of Rome showed a seductive picture of actress Racquel Welch accompanied with the slogan “No to sexual repression.” The banner revealed the typical blending of humor and politics in the students’ critique of Italian mores as they chose to place their radical message next to a well-known actress who symbolized aggressive female sexuality in the late 1960s.

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127 La Stampa, April 25, 1968, 2.
129 Il Corriere della Sera, May 19, 1968, 15.
Another example of the challenge posed by the new aggressive sexuality of some of the female activists can be seen in Figure 12. This photo of Laura DeRossi waiting to be incarcerated after being arrested at the Palazzo Campana appeared in La Stampa in March 1968. This photograph was strategically snapped to show De Rossi’s devilish grin and miniskirt. In Figure 12, DeRossi seemed to echo the words posted next to the banner of Raquel Welch at the University of Rome. For the popular press in Turin, student leader DeRossi had become the femme fatale of the university’s Left-wing student movement, a designation that was grossly exaggerated. Years later, DeRossi wrote an article in a literary journal acknowledging that even in her years of peak activism and although a proclaimed feminist, she had always had a tremendous respect for her family.130

Despite the gains of women’s liberation in the 1960s, several scholars have noted the continued predominance of patriarchal views within the Italian student movement. The new rhetoric of sexual emancipation frequently became a sophisticated pick-up line, and the leadership of the activists was almost completely male.131 Former Communist Deputy and supporter of student activism, Giorgina Levi recalled that the women usually did the tasks that male activists did not want to do, such as cooking food and running errands. The male leaders even called them the “angeli di ciclostile” (“angels of the copy machine”).132

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130 Personal communication to the author from former activist and friend of De Rossi, Liliana Lanzardo. De Rossi discussed her relationship with her family in a critical review of Passerini’s Autoritratto di gruppo in a literary magazine, Indice.
Rapidly changing gender roles, new styles of clothing and music, and drugs all posed a significant challenge to traditional Italian culture. However, the mass media tended to overemphasize the counter-culture because it was sexy and sold newspapers.\textsuperscript{133} Few Italian student activists grew beards, developed drug addictions or wore outrageous clothing. In the press photographs of large crowds of demonstrators, one also saw many who remained clean-shaven and well dressed even during the height of the protests in the late spring of 1968.

From this survey of the students’ challenges to Italian society in the late 1960s, a few key themes are paramount. The student movement in Italy as in other parts of Europe and the United States had originated in a massive demographic bubble of young people who had grown up in a period of affluence and entered the universities in record numbers in the 1960s. For Italy, this caused acute problems of overcrowding and exposed problems such as the antiquated syllabi and teaching styles of the professoriate. As with the construction of Nanterre outside of Paris, the University of Turin, sought to relieve overcrowding by moving its Science faculties to the suburb of La Manèria and the Minister of Education planned to build a whole new university in Rome.

When the pace of university reform moved too slowly and students felt ignored by the university administrators, they took action. Similar to events at Columbia, the Sorbonne, and the Free University of Berlin, students occupied university buildings throughout northern Italy in 1966, 1967 and 1968. For Italian students however, the university occupations represented a historic genre of protest that could be traced to the

\textsuperscript{133} See Marwick on the media as a cultural industry connected with the youth movements of the 1960s, \textit{The}
heroic actions of the anti-fascist workers who occupied their factories in 1943 in defiance of the Republic of Salo and the German invasion. By the winter of 1968, however, the university administrators began to call in police and carabinieri to forcibly remove students provoking more extreme forms of retaliation from the activists including demonstrations and marches in the city streets. Along with the invasion of public space which occurred in Italy and elsewhere, there also emerged a youth counter-culture that shocked older citizens by its outrageous clothes, music, language, and changing views toward sexuality.

The one entity that served to both harass and publicize the students and their behaviors was the popular press. The conservative dailies in Turin and Milan, La Stampa and the Corriere della Sera, took a special, usually hostile, interest in the student activists and tried to shape popular attitudes by detailing their excesses and minimizing the brutal responses of the police. Although the conservative and popular press frequently denigrated the students, they also served as their mouthpiece. Maria Valabrega, a journalist who had been on special assignment to the University of Turin in 1967-68, remembered that she had been given a copy of the student’s Charter of Demands (Carta di Rivendicativa) to publish in La Stampa. She also recalled students coming to her office and discuss the newspaper’s contents. Thus, the press served not only to disparage the student movement but also to feed its vanity, giving the movement a level of attention that went far beyond the actual challenge it posed to Italian society at the end

_Sixties_, 18.

134 Maria Valabrega interviewed by the author. Turin: June 6, 1997.
of the 1960s. The following chapter will examine the ways in which the university community responded to the student activists by analyzing the university administrators and professors at the *Università di Torino* during the tumultuous years 1967 and 1968.
CHAPTER 3

THE CASE OF TURIN I: DEFENDING THE IVORY TOWER

As discussed in the previous chapter, Italy’s student activists sought educational reform and the amelioration of poor conditions in their universities. They castigated “authoritarian” professors, who, when they were not absent from the university, conducted oral examinations like members of the inquisition.\textsuperscript{135} Although there is evidence of abuses of power by the professoriate and of abysmal conditions in the universities, few scholars have investigated the other side, the professors’ views of the students and of the university in the late 1960s. Guido Quazza, a professor of Education at the University of Turin, wrote in 1970 that, “one notices the poverty of documentation on the part of the professors in this crisis compared with the extensive bibliography of student sources.”\textsuperscript{136}

One way to examine the students’ chief opponents is to follow the debates within the Faculty of the University of Turin during the years of peak activism in 1967 and 1968. During these two tumultuous years, the Rector, Mario Allara, met frequently in both scheduled and emergency sessions with the heads of the university’s departments who comprised a Senato Accademico (Academic Senate). The minutes of the Senato

\textsuperscript{135} For examples of the authoritarian and aloof bearing of the professors, see: Fraser, 1968, 57-59.
provide us not only with the professors’ views of the activists but also reveal the
divisions within the Faculty over the issue of university reform. Also the minutes have
an advantage over discontinuous sources such as the press and student accounts, because
they track events at the university from beginning to end, providing a more complete
description of the university’s reaction.137

The professors at the University of Turin recognized that their university and the
entire system of higher education needed major reforms. Guido Quazza, President of the
Faculty of Education in 1967-70 and a supporter of the students’ demands, quoted his
former teacher, Giorgio Pascuali who in 1941 had written:

“The Italian university, with all of its intellectual freedom, has remained attached
to a system based on the medieval university and the Jesuits’ colleges…”138

In 1967 Quazza embraced the students’ call for a new university and connected it with
his own youthful resistance to the Fascists more than twenty years before. He insisted
that “the leaders of the country have a duty to try to understand the Student Movement
and reform the university, a duty they assumed the day after Liberazione!”139

However, Quazza was practically alone among the faculty of the University of
Turin in his enthusiasm for student-led reforms. Many, such as Professor Athos
Goidanich of agronomy, Professor Pietro Sartoris of veterinary medicine, and Professor
Giorgio Gullini of Arts and Letters, favored a hard line, advocating police intervention
and expulsion of the rebellious students.

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137 In her own work on civil unrest in Italy and Germany, Donatella Della Porta has argued that official
sources provide a kind of “thick description” of events that can not be found in the discontinuous coverage
of the media. See Della Porta, Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State, 18.
138 Pasquali was a noted philologist and linguist. Quoted in: Quazza, Piani di Studio, n. 15, p. 62.
The Rector, Mario Allara, who had been born in Turin and trained as a scholar of the law, favored a more circumspect approach, endeavoring to find a middle way between Quazza’s pro-student enthusiasm and the hard-liners. In this respect, Allara was typical of university administrators in the 1960s who alternated between concessions and repression.\(^{140}\) Although Allara had a reputation for degrading students who failed his examinations by scribbling in their gradebooks, he did not take a completely negative stance toward the activists.\(^{141}\) Ultimately, Allara’s attempt to find a middle way led to an inconsistent policy of concession and crackdown that caused Quazza and the Faculty of Education to break with the university’s main governing body, the Senato, and initiate reforms within their Faculty. The inconsistencies of Allara’s policies also served to heighten student agitation and disruption in the Humanities Faculties, forcing individual professors such as Norberto Bobbio to seek individual meetings with student activists.

Professor Giuseppe Grosso who was both the President of the Faculty of Law and the Mayor of Turin influenced many of Rector Allara’s decisions. Grosso himself appeared unsure of how to deal with the student outburst. As a professor, he had been known to throw the grade books of those who failed his examinations across the lecture hall. He was appalled by the student rebels’ lack of respect and violation of their

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\(^{139}\) Quazza generally agreed with the student movement’s theory that the university system helped maintain the dominance of the elite, see: *Piani di Studio*, 10 and 16.

\(^{140}\) Other examples can be found in the actions of the Rectors of the Freie Universität Berlin, Hans Joachim Lieber and Ewald Harndt as well as the Minister of Education Missoffe’s attempts to alleviate tensions at the University of Nanterre by building a new swimming pool shortly after the first protests at the suburban university in 1967. See Tent, *The Free University of Berlin* and Statera, *Death of a Utopia*, respectively.

professors’ authority.\textsuperscript{142} However, as the head of the local government, he knew that the university’s reaction to the protesters would have city, and even nation-wide repercussions. In an article written for \textit{La Stampa} entitled, “In the universities one defends the freedom of teaching,” Grosso compared the student movement’s demands to control the contents of their courses with the Fascist students’ attacks on the great pre-war Turin professors, Mario Ruffini and Luigi Einaudi, who had refused to bow to demands for a nationalist curriculum.\textsuperscript{143} But, in discussions with his colleagues in the \textit{Senato}, Grosso proved to be less of a hard-liner than the above quotation, intended for public consumption, would indicate, opting for a slow, more conciliatory policy toward the students.

A Professor of Law and a Senator of the Republic, Norberto Bobbio, found himself in vastly different circumstances than his colleagues because his son and pupil, Luigi, had become one of the leaders of the student movement. In 1967 Luigi was the first member of the communist student organization (\textit{Unione Goliardica Italiana}) ever to be elected Secretary of the student government (\textit{Interfacoltà}). He and his fiancée Laura DeRossi, the unofficial leader of the women students, sought to disrupt the very university that had employed Luigi’s father since 1948. Like Quazza, Bobbio had fought in the Resistance and saw the merits of many of the students’ demands, but in 1967-68 student activists including his son, had placed him in the role of the oppressor. Ironically, Norberto Bobbio, had been one of the guiding intellectuals of the Republic, building his

\textsuperscript{142} Guido Viale noted that Grosso was an “esperto lanciatore dei libretti universitari degli studenti che boccia” in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{La Stampa}, December 3, 1967, 9.
postwar career on a continued commitment to, and analysis of, Italian democracy. Indeed, he had an excellent reputation even among the activists for his teaching. In 1964, he published *Introduzione alla Costituzione*, a text for middle school children explaining the Constitution of the Republic, as well as several essays on Italian political parties and democratic government.

The professors in Turin did not aim to crush the students’ efforts for university reform. Nevertheless, most of the hard-liners such as Goidanich, Gribaudi, and Sartoris, who taught in faculties that were relatively unaffected by demonstrations and occupations, attempted to impose their law and order views on the others. For example, during the occupation of the Humanities Faculties in the Palazzo Campana during the month of December 1967, Gribaudi reported to the Senato that only one lesson had been interrupted in the Faculty of Economics. He nonetheless condemned the occupation of the Humanities building, warning that, “foreign elements that foment agitation might enter into the student groups” and “an energetic action with the threat of disciplinary measures must be taken against those responsible for the agitation.”

Unlike other universities such as the State University of Milan where medical students were the first to occupy their faculty, at Turin, the faculties of science, medicine, economics, and

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146 *Verbali del Senato Accademico dal 13 Dicembre 1963 al 15 Dicembre 1969, Università di Torino, 250-51.* [Hereafter abbreviated VSAUT] Gribaudi’s words are filled with disease imagery similar to those of Mirella Mammano in chapter 3, see her letter to the *Corriere della Sera*, February 28, 1968, 5.
agronomy remained relatively calm; though many of these professors tried to influence the university’s policy toward the students.\footnote{147 Lumley, \textit{States of Emergency}, 87.}

Before the tumultuous months between November 1967 and June 1968, there had been demonstrations that had tested Rector Allara’s authority and divided the faculty. In February 1967, student activists meeting in the basement of Turin’s Chamber of Labor had planned to occupy the Palazzo Campana. Student organizations of all political stripes, Catholic, Liberal, Communist, and even Monarchist, had agreed that an occupation of university buildings would be the best way to draw attention to university reform.\footnote{148 Marco Revelli, “Il ’68 a Torino. Gli Esordi,” 219-220.} The occupation of the Palazzo Campana and the Institute of Physics took place on the morning of 9 February and prompted Rector Allara to call an emergency meeting of the Senato the following day. Hard-line professors, Athos Goidanich and Giorgio Gullini, gained the upper hand and convinced Allara to send in the police under the pretext that the occupation of public buildings was illegal.\footnote{149 Rector Allara quoted in \textit{VSAUT} (February 10, 1967): 166.}

Three days later, following a second occupation, Rector Allara again sided with the hard-liners, but began to show a policy of caution that would characterize his responses throughout the period of unrest. Allara immediately telephoned the Minister of Public Instruction in Rome, Luigi Gui, and received assurances that he could do “whatever it takes to restore order.” Although bolstered by Gui’s assurances of unconditional support, Allara still implored his colleagues to “reflect on the most humane way, the responsibility of adopting measures in regard to the students and not violate the...
laws of the state.”150 In the following three days, a graduate assistant presented a list of demands to Rector Allara, and on the sixteenth, the Senato passed a motion demanding that the activists cease the “illegitimate occupations” as a precondition for any discussion of their demands.151 This policy of setting conditions for negotiations with the activists became typical of the university’s reaction to the student movement.

These early demonstrations ultimately led to the temporary closure of the Palazzo Campana on 18 February 1967 and, more importantly, revealed the divided nature of the faculty. In a meeting of the twenty-third, Rector Allara informed his colleagues that the Faculty of Education had unanimously declared the Senato Accademico’s closure of the Palazzo Campana an illegal act.152 Guido Quazza, a professor in the Faculty of Education, later noted that his faculty had voted against the closing of university buildings and voted in favor of allowing the students a role in the administration of his faculty. Furthermore, Quazza claimed that his election as President of the Faculty of Education in June 1967 reconfirmed his faculty’s stance against the “state of siege” adopted by the other professors.153 The Faculty of Education most likely took the most pro-student stance due to its members’ inherent interest in education at all levels in society, as well as their inclination to experiment with new forms of pedagogy.

Factions also bedeviled the student revolutionaries. Marco Revelli recalled that the initial unity achieved during the 13 February occupation quickly broke down in the face of vastly different views on voting procedures. The Left-wing students wanted all

150 VSAUT (February 13, 1967): 167-68.
151 VSAUT (February 16, 1967): 172.
152 VSAUT (February 23, 1967): 175-76.
decisions to be made by the General Assembly in a kind of direct democracy that included only those taking part in the occupation. However, the Right-wing students favored a delegate democracy with decisions made by student representatives from each of the university's faculties.\textsuperscript{154} Clearly, this division over voting procedure represented an underlying struggle for power within the movement. The Right-wing students knew that the vast majority of students who had participated in the occupations were members of the communist student group, the UGI, and would thus dominate the General Assembly formed in the Palazzo Campana during the occupations. The Left, on the other hand, knew that outside of the Humanities Faculties, most of the other students had remained relatively quiet and would probably not elect representatives who favored any bold demands on the university.

By the end of February 1967, the initial protests for university reform had subsided. After the initial shock had worn off, some professors and several assistants saw the validity of student demands and announced their solidarity with the student activists in a letter to the Rector signed by representatives from the "Associazione Torinese Assistenti Università e Politecnico" and the "Associazione dei Professori Incaricati."\textsuperscript{155} After classes resumed in March, an uneasy peace descended upon the faculties of Turin.

Seven months later, on September 27, 1967, the Senato reconvened to discuss the acquisition of a new site for university buildings. The choices had been narrowed to two. The Minister of Public Instruction had been pressing the administration to expedite its

\textsuperscript{153} Quazza, \textit{Piani di Studio}, 10.
\textsuperscript{155} \textit{VSAUT} (February 25, 1967): 178.
decision in order to assure budget approval for the academic year. After minimal debate, the Senato voted to build new university buildings at La Mandria, a suburban location far from the center of Turin where most of the university was located. The Mayor of Turin also favored the decision to build at La Mandria.

Like the French Ministry of Education’s decision to accommodate the rising Parisian student population by building a new university at Nanterre, far outside the center of Paris, the decision to build the new university facilities in La Mandria proved fatal to the tranquility of the University of Turin. Like their counterparts at Nanterre, the Turin students resented any attempts of the university administration to remove them from the center of civic life, and protests swept the university on 22 November 1967.¹⁵⁶ Five days later, student rebels occupied the Palazzo Campana to express their anger over the La Mandria decision as well as the lack of progress on university reform. Lasting an entire month, this was the longest university occupation in Italian history.

In the afternoon of the twenty-second, in his address to the Senato, Allara was unsure of the causes, but speculated that the protests were either connected with those at the Catholic University of Milan, or with the La Mandria decision, or with the Guıı Reform Bill that was presently being debated in the Parliament.¹⁵⁷ He described the occupation as the act of “a minority of unsatisfied students.”¹⁵⁸ Grosso agreed, claiming that the occupants were a “small minority, some not even students,” warned that summoning the police would only “solidify the students on the side of the agitators,” and

¹⁵⁶ For the Nanterre situation see: Fraser, 1968, 146-50.
proposed an appeal to the students to return to their studies. Quazza also called for caution and understanding, noting that the decisions made in Turin could have profound consequences for all the Italian universities. The hard-liner Goidanich implored his colleagues to remember their “duty to impart instruction and culture to the students who pay their fees and should be defended against the ‘moral violence’ of the few.” He opposed dealing with agitators or treating the students as equals which would have “revolutionary” consequences.

Allara closed this tense meeting attempting to steer a path between the hard-liners and the moderates by claiming that he was bound to uphold the laws of the state and acknowledge his duty to report to the police anyone who committed crimes within the university. Throughout the unrest of 1967-68, Allara would be torn between his role as Rector and his personal unwillingness to punish the student rebels. He and the Senato deferred to their colleague Giuseppe Grosso, the Mayor of Turin, who had proposed a moderate line, urging the students to return to normal university life, stop those who disrupt the university, and work with the faculty to promote reform. The pro-student Guido Quazza voted against the proposal.

Grosso’s cautious proposal of appealing to the sensibilities of the students failed to produce a massive defection of the allegedly “sane” members from the General Assembly in the Palazzo Campana. The Senato had underestimated not only the

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159 Ibid, 243-44.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid, 245.
students’ level of politicization, but also the level of merriment experienced by the occupants of the Palazzo Campana. A former participant and historian of the student movement, Peppino Ortoleva recalled,

“the Palazzo Campana was really a lot of fun, it was mostly fun because there had always been a lack of private space in Italy for young people, but now we had it!”

Ortoleva further indicated that the private space offered by the occupied building allowed for unprecedented sexual freedom.\(^{163}\)

While the student activists drew up a list of demands for reform and made love in the occupied rooms of the Palazzo Campana during the month of December, Rector Allara searched for a way to end the occupation and regain control over the university. Receiving assurances from the Turin Court of Appeals that a court order could be used to forcibly open the entrances to the Palazzo Campana, Allara began to contemplate police action in early December.\(^{164}\) On the fourth, in the face of increasing disruptions and continued occupations, the Senate agreed to a vaguely worded proposal of Professor Grosso authorizing the Rector to call the police if the agitation should continue to grow.\(^{165}\) Supported by his colleagues and the local judiciary, Allara phoned the Prefect of Turin, who was in charge of the police, and the Director General of University Instruction in Rome to notify them of his intent to send the police into university buildings. Despite the assurances he received, Allara understood the momentousness of the impending action.

\(^{163}\) Peppino Ortoleva interviewed by the author. Turin: April 18, 1997.
\(^{164}\) *VSAUT* (November 30, 1967): 249.
\(^{165}\) *VSAUT* (December 4, 1967): 252.
Since the activists appeared intent on prolonging their occupation through the Christmas holiday, Rector Allara summoned an emergency meeting of the Senato for 23 December. New developments suggested that the time had come for police intervention. First, Allara noted that the new head of the student government (Interfacultà) had reported that only the students from the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy were still in favor of continuing the occupation and those from Law and Education wanted the agitation to end. Information provided by the janitors indicated that the number of occupants had steadily decreased in the last few weeks, and thus it might be easy to expel the remaining demonstrators. Grosso reported that the mother of one of the occupants had said that, “…short of salvaging their prestige, they [the occupants] would not resist the intervention of the police.” Furthermore, the Rector had received a petition from students who wanted the occupants to be expelled after Christmas.  

The prolonged occupation also forced the faculty to consider canceling classes for the rest of the academic year. Many professors had expressed concern that the quarterly examinations scheduled for the beginning of February would have to be postponed or cancelled. Seeking to establish a return to normal university functioning and quell the fears of his colleagues, Allara announced that the examinations would take place on schedule.  

The meeting ended with a resolution claiming that the Faculties had kept an open dialogue with activists, censuring the radicals, and calling for action:

“The occupation of the Palazzo Campana on the part of a group of students is purely an act of defiance without any apparent justification. [Therefore] The Senato Accademico mandates the Rector to request the intervention of the public

forces at the time which he believes is opportune, and in any case, no later than 9 January 1968.”168

All the members of the Senato voted for the resolution with the exception of Guido Quazza who called for a voluntary evacuation by the students.169

Allara, who did not wait long to use his mandate, called for the evacuation of the Palazzo Campana on the evening of 27 December. The initial evacuation succeeded without incident, but the following day, students evaded police patrols and reoccupied the building. The Rector again called on the police to evacuate the palazzo and had the names of the occupants reported to the police.170 Almost thirty years later Bobbio reflected, “the big turning point was when the police entered the university to evacuate the students. This had never happened before [in Turin]. It was like entering a church.”171

The failure of police intervention to crush student activism caused Rector Allara to take harsher measures in an effort to regain a grip over his university. At another emergency meeting of the Senato held shortly after the first police evacuations, Allara demanded that Vittorio Rieser, an assistant in Sociology be dismissed, and Anna Bravo, from the Department of History, be suspended without pay for six months for their participation in the occupations. Furthermore, he proposed that the students who had

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168 Ibid, 259.
169 Ibid.
been reported by the police be subjected to disciplinary hearings beginning on 15 January.\textsuperscript{172}

Through the months of January and February, the demonstrations and occupations increased as the Rector’s continued use of the police only prompted students to reoccupy the university buildings in greater numbers. Between December 1967 and February 1968, Allara called in the police five times to evacuate the students.\textsuperscript{173} By initiating disciplinary measures against some of the leaders, Allara unwittingly created a set of martyrs for the movement. As police security tightened in January, the movement adopted a new tactic called the “scioperi bianchi” or “white strikes” which disrupted classes without actually occupying any buildings.\textsuperscript{174}

One of Rector Allara’s law classes was disrupted by a sciopero bianco on 13 January. According to Allara’s report to the Senato, during his morning lecture on civil law, a group of students had stood up in class and demanded a discussion of university reforms. When he agreed to meet them later in the Aula Magna, the students returned to their seats but “ostentatiously kept their hats on, read newspapers, or continued to talk among themselves.” Unable to proceed, he called in the police to remove the

\textsuperscript{172} VS AUT (December 30, 1967): 261. At the time of his suspension from the university, Vittorio Rieser was a young graduate assistant in the Department of Sociology who worked on the labor movement in northern Italy. Although he sympathized with the students of the Palazzo Campana, he also took an academic interest in the occupation. Rieser remembered the sense of community in the Palazzo Campana and viewed the occupation as a “laboratory in which previously non-politicized students became politicized.” Contrary to the beliefs of the Senato, Rieser noted that many non-militant students did stop by the Palazzo Campana and voted to continue the occupation. Vittorio Rieser interviewed by the author. Turin: June 2, 1997.


\textsuperscript{174} Oliva and Rendi, Il Movimento Studentesco e le sue lotte, 23-24.
“disturbatori” from his classroom. He later heard from the janitors that one of the students had ripped a crucifix off the wall on his way out of the building.\textsuperscript{175} However, this negative experience plus the growing rumors that some of the agitators planned to disrupt the February examinations did not stop Allara from keeping his promise to the occupants of the Palazzo Campana and distributing the students’ list of demands (\textit{Carta Rivendicativa}) to the Faculty.\textsuperscript{176}

Opposing Allara’s efforts for a peaceful solution with the activists, Giuseppe Grosso demanded that the \textit{Senato} defend its liberty from the “tyranny of a minority” and offered a resolution that favored “all means offered by law” to stop those who used violence to impede university activity.\textsuperscript{177} The resolution passed with only one negative vote from Guido Quazza, who warned that the proposal would only lead to more occupations and ultimately to the closure of all the Humanities Faculties.

Quazza’s admonition proved to be correct as further disruptions occurred through January. Sensing that police repression would not stop the demonstrators, the Rector showed signs of conceding to the students when he called on the \textit{Senato} to end the university’s disciplinary proceedings against the activists (although he supported the continued civil proceedings against the students being conducted by the Turin Court of Appeals). Allara further asked the \textit{Senato} to allow commissions that included professors and student representatives to meet in the university.\textsuperscript{178} Allara’s position of 27 January represented a significant break in his past resistance to all student initiatives, and from the

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
beginning of February through the month of June, the Rector would slowly lose ground to the rebels, despite his frequent threats against them. His concessions of the twenty-seventh also represented a last ditch-effort to save the February examinations.

The month of February witnessed increasing demonstrations at the University of Turin, with students occupying the Institute of Physics and threatening to seize the Mathematics and Science Faculties. The February examinations had become the crucial bargaining point for both the professors and the student rebels. The rebels had hoped that the threat of disrupting the examinations would force the professors to accept their demands, as Allara had contemplated in late January. However, out of frustration and an increasing feeling of powerlessness, the professors considered canceling the examinations in the hope that they might convince the majority of the students to return to their classrooms. With both faculty and activists on a collision course, the Senato sought to buy time and postponed the February examinations indefinitely, hoping to find an accord with student rebels.

As tensions mounted through the first two weeks of February, the Rector began to consider canceling the entire academic year, a decision that he told La Stampa, "would be attributed to the students." However, he was not ready to make good this threat, and on the nineteenth, he allowed student representatives to speak directly with the Senato Accademico. Two students from the occupation, Diego Marconi and Andrea Mottura, claimed that the agitation would stop if the Senato agreed to allow student representatives

177 Ibid, 269.
179 VSAUT (February 19, 1968): 278.
full voting rights in parity with the Faculty. They also asked for the cancellation of some classes so that joint Faculty-student meetings could take place.\textsuperscript{180} This idea of a joint Faculty-student committee derived from the student movement’s demand for “co-gestione” or self-determination originating in Raniero Panzieri’s theories of \textit{operaismo}.\textsuperscript{181} Following Marconi and Motura, the \textit{Senato} heard from a group of five students representing those who opposed the agitation who requested a meeting with professors and agitators in the Aula Magna of the Palazzo Campana for the following afternoon.\textsuperscript{182}

This meeting represented a compromise for both the \textit{Senato} and the rebels. The professors agreed to form the joint student-Faculty committees and cancel classes for the first week of March, and the activists agreed to cease all disturbances and allow the February examinations to proceed. The following day, the \textit{Senato Accademico} resolved to form three committees for the Humanities Faculties (Law, Education, and Letters) and to suspend activity in the Humanities for the week of March 3 to 10, barring any new disturbances.\textsuperscript{183}

The tranquility that settled on the University of Turin following this historic meeting in which the professors had agreed to meet student representatives as equals, a concession that Professor Goidanich had once called, “revolutionary,” was shattered by the students themselves.\textsuperscript{184} One week later, Rector Allara received a new and more provocative set of demands from the student activists. These included radio and

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid, 279.
\textsuperscript{181} For more information on \textit{operaismo}, see Chapter 2, Note 25.
\textsuperscript{182} \textit{VSAUT} (February 19, 1968): 279-80.
\textsuperscript{183} \textit{VSAUT} (February 21, 1968): 282.
\textsuperscript{184} Athos Goidanich used this term in the \textit{Senato Accademico’s} meeting of November 27, 1967, see p. 10.
television links from the meetings to other rooms in the university, the right to revoke and replace student delegates at any time, the authority to designate non-students as representatives, and the right to form a union with assistants and other professors. Allara and the Senato, reluctant to disrupt the momentary peace, offered the following concessions: the publication of the minutes of each meeting, the right of each Faculty to have three alternate student representatives, and the inclusion of assistants in the discussions. Quite reasonably, the Senato refused to allow non-students the right to participate and rejected the activists’ request to raise the number of representatives for each Faculty.\footnote{\textit{VSAUT} (February 27, 1968): 283.}

The Senato’s refusal to accede to all the students’ demands touched off a massive series of occupations and protests on 29 February known as the “occupation of the barricades.” Marco Revelli has interpreted this move to the barricades as a major escalation in the Turin student movement, initiating a violent phase in the Sessantotto. Protesters broke into professors’ offices\footnote{According to Rector Allara some students had broken into professors’ offices looking for examination books, see: \textit{Ibid}, 284.} and carried their protests out into the city streets.\footnote{\textit{Sessantotto}, has argued that the student demonstrations at the end of February were a violent departure} Some students claimed that violence was inevitable, given the repressive nature of the university faculty. Guido Viale, a leader of the Turin student movement, wrote in his memoirs that, “as long as the enemy is recognizable and identifiable, as long as high and low points exist on the pyramid...revolutionary violence seems justified...” On the other hand, Giovanni DeLuna, a historian of the Sessantotto, has argued that the student demonstrations at the end of February were a violent departure
from the historic trend of peaceful protest in Turin. DeLuna’s opinion refers more to the
disruption of civic mores than to actual physical violence. He observed that Turin’s
society was dominated by a belief of “ciascuno al suo posto” (everyone in his place) and
that the student demonstrations represented a violent break from the traditional, passive
place held by the students.\textsuperscript{189}

The occupation of the barricades at the end of February most likely represented an
impulsive move stemming from the frustration of student leaders who realized that the
acceptance of the concessions offered by the Academic Senate would probably spell the
end of their movement. By agreeing to the terms, and working with the professors, these
anti-establishmentarians would become part of the system. Along with their co-optation
by the system, they would also have to surrender the occupied spaces that they had
appropriated within the university and also take responsibility for the university’s future.
In sum, the movement would cease to move.

With the first reports of renewed and more violent protests and vandalism, the
\textit{Senato} voted overwhelmingly in favor of police intervention. Only Quazza argued that
the \textit{Senato} should have conceded to all the students’ demands as an expression of good
faith, and he blamed the Republic’s politicians for the newest outbreak of violence.\textsuperscript{190}
Four days later, he and the entire Faculty of Education denounced the “repressive"
actions of the \textit{Senato}, called for serious discussions of reform, and renounced any
authority to take police action against the students. The Faculty of Education also broke

\textsuperscript{188} Guido Viale cited in: De Luna, "Aspetti del Movimento del ’68 a Torino," 196.
\textsuperscript{189} De Luna, "Aspetti del Movimento del ’68 a Torino," 199.
ranks with the other Humanities Faculties by declaring that the delayed February examinations would proceed despite Allara’s decision to evacuate and close the Palazzo Campana. The defection of the Faculty of Education dealt a severe blow to the unity of the professors and provoked criticism by the local press and right-wing student groups.

With the loss of the Faculty of Education, the appearance of counter-courses in the Palazzo Campana, and continued disturbances throughout the university, Allara began to distance himself from the hard-liners. On March 12, the rector reported to the Senato that he would make a personal appeal to Judge D’Amare for the provisional release of student leader Federico Avanzini who had been detained after his recent arrest. In the meantime, the Senato Accademico at the University of Rome had issued a stiff ultimatum which broke the occupation following the Battle of the Valle Giulia, and by the end of March the students in Rome had returned to their classes.

In Turin, however, no such ultimatum was issued, and Rector Allara and the Senato continued to search for a middle way. At the beginning of April, the Senato considered canceling the entire academic semester due to widespread demonstrations and scioperi bianchi that had spread even to the previously docile Faculty of Medicine. However, Allara still hesitated, mentioning that many parents had called for the resumption of classes at the University, and that nullifying the semester would damage

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192 Guido Quazza, Piani di Studio, 11.
193 VSAUT (March 12, 1968): 293.
194 Oliva and Rendi, Il Movimento Studentesco e le sue lotte, 32-33.
the reputation of the University. Quazza argued for the reopening of all the Faculties, claiming that his Faculty had already achieved some successes by working with the students and implementing new teaching methods. Professors Grosso and Goidanich, on the other hand, maintained a besieged attitude, denouncing the “so-called counter-courses.” Professor Giorgio Gullini of Arts and Letters, who had experienced several disturbances in his lectures, took a moderate position, arguing for a guarantee from the student activists before reopening the Humanities Faculties.

Ultimately, the conciliatory view of Guido Quazza, tempered by Gullini’s caution, won over the other faculty. On 2 April, the Senato Accademico resolved to reopen all Faculties on the twenty-second after meeting with student activists to discuss new pedagogic methods. In light of the uncompromising stance taken by the professors in the early months of the occupations, the April decision represented a victory for the student activists and a serious loss of power to the professors who had originally refused to deal with students as “equals.”

A strange calm descended upon the University of Turin during the month of April as student activists busily jostled for control over the negotiations with the faculty. The Senato had insisted that the student representatives be democratically elected in a secret ballot before serious discussions could take place. Professor Norberto Bobbio, who generally sympathized with the student activists, condemned the General Assembly of the Palazzo Campana as undemocratic. Bobbio recalled,

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197 See page 10, Note 24.
"The assembly of the students was not a democratic assembly. The leaders were always the 'contestatores,' they did not have secret ballots, and only the elite spoke."  

Although Bobbio did not mention his son among the "elite," other professors including Giorgio Gullini referred to student leaders Luigi Bobbio and Guido Viale as two "extremists who had declared themselves contrary to every democratic method!"  

As the month progressed, the professors began to worry about pragmatic concerns such as the payment of fees and the possibility of extending the semester into the summer months. Meanwhile, the students argued over the content of the future seminars and demanded more concessions such as the control of exams, the right to question professors, a permanent space for the movement within the university, and phone and copying privileges. In mid April, the Senato offered the student movement nine important reforms: the right to question professors during class, an increase in the number of seminars, interdisciplinary courses and examinations, more evening classes for working students, abolition of pre-examinations and conferences in the Humanities, elimination of the undergraduate thesis in the Law Faculty, extra examination sessions for working students, removal of attendance requirements in most faculties, and the inclusion of a student observer in all examinations.  

Aside from the global demands of the student activists that called for a reordering of the hierarchical nature of late capitalist society and an end to the war in Vietnam, the movement had scored a tremendous victory

202 Ibid, 317-318. The bold reforms planned by the Senato had, in part, been encouraged by the Minister of Public Instruction in Rome, Luigi Gui, who authorized all university rectors in Italy to make autonomous
in the area of university reform. The concessions offered by the *Senato* went far beyond the hopes of most of the activists who had originally occupied the Palazzo Campana in 1967. Taken at face value, the *Senato's* resolution would have offered the students "cogestione" or self-determination over much of their academic life and represented a substantial defeat for the conservative members of the faculty.

The movement toward reform was halted four days later by a new round of disturbances and a bomb threat in the Palazzo Campana. At 7 pm, on 23 April, Rector Allara was informed of the bomb threat. Reaching the limits of his patience and negotiating skills in dealing with the activists, he announced to the *Senato* that, "today it (the student movement) no longer wants the reform of the University, but only wants the destruction of the University." Allara proposed that they close all of the Humanities Faculties and invalidate the semester. Just as the professors began to discuss the Rector's proposal, an urgent message arrived informing the *Senato* that students were scrawling "obscene words" on the walls of the Palazzo Campana. This news quickly ended all discussion and the *Senato Accademico* voted unanimously to close the Faculties of Law, Education, and Letters for an indefinite time due to the "perpetuation of violence on the part of the students."

The bomb scare of 23 April became the pretext used by the Rector to permanently close the Humanities Faculties. If much of the Rector's hesitation in the past could be attributed to the generally non-violent nature of the student actions, the threat of real

reforms until the federal government passed a comprehensive national reform plan. See *VSAUT* (April 10, 1968): 313.

204 Ibid, 320.
danger posed by the bomb scare removed all doubts. The police did find a device hidden under a podium that appeared to be an explosive device and the local press quickly informed the citizens of Turin that once again the student “filocinesi” had turned to terrorism.\textsuperscript{205}

The closure of the Humanities Faculties lasted through the month of May while the Faculties of Medicine, Science, and Economics continued to hold classes with only minor disturbances. The odd existence of buildings guarded by police only a few blocks from busy classrooms within the University became a divisive issue within the Humanities Faculties in the first week of May. Predictably, the first Faculty President to protest the problem of a selectively closed university was Guido Quazza. In a meeting of the Senato on during the first week of May, Quazza argued that public opinion had forced the closing of the Humanities, and that his Faculty had been making real progress in reforming its curriculum. He asserted that like the Faculties of Medicine, Science, and Economics, his Faculty should have autonomy and informed the Senato that his Faculty had already voted to resume teaching based on a guarantee of cooperation from the activists.\textsuperscript{206}

Initially, Rector Allara and Professors Gullini and Goidanich opposed autonomy for the Faculty of Education, demanding that the Humanities maintain a united front against the activists. Adopting a siege-like tone similar to the popular press, Gullini and Goidanich both voiced their disapproval of Quazza’s renegade position and felt that division among the faculties would be a sign of weakness. However, a speech by

\textsuperscript{205} \textit{La Stampa}, April 24, 1968, 1-2.
Professor Deaglio from the Physics Faculty began to sway Allara away from the hardliners. Deaglio read a declaration from the General Assembly of students at the Institute of Physics that declared itself in favor of Quazza’s reforms. The declaration further claimed that Quazza’s reforms were the “first crack in the front of the academic extremists,” and that the agitation would continue [in the Institute of Physics], “until the last resistance within the Faculty crumbles.”207 Changing his original position, Rector Allara threw his support behind Quazza’s reforms because he felt that opposition to Quazza would only create more division within the professoriate. Allara’s support proved crucial and in the end, the Senato voted in favor of granting autonomy to the Faculty of Education.

Throughout the rest of May, individual professors continued to hold discussions with student activists, and Quazza’s Faculty of Education experienced successes with some of its new seminars.208 On the thirteenth, Allara received reports that the students’ earlier unity had begun to crumble. Sensing that he could still retake control of his university, the Rector informed his colleagues that, in his opinion, the student body could be grouped into three categories: the dwindling “Movimento Studentesco” or agitators, the “Moderati,” and “the mass [of students] who do not fit in the first or second group.” According to Allara, the “mass of students” had expressed concerns about the validity of the academic year and threatened to circumvent his authority by petitioning the judges of

207 Ibid., 326.
208 For a detailed case study of one of the inter-disciplinary experimental courses entitled “Il problema del potere nel Novecento,” see: Quazza, Piani di Studio, 20-59.
Turin to have the agitators removed from the Humanities buildings.\textsuperscript{209} Four days later, Professor Grosso put further pressure on the hardliners within the Humanities by informing the \textit{Senato} that no other university in Italy had closed its buildings longer than the Faculties of Law and Letters. Taking Grosso’s cue and given the apparent weariness of the student rebels, the Rector urged the \textit{Senato} to make one last attempt to open the Palazzo Campana for the month of June.\textsuperscript{210}

By the end of May, a new spirit of optimism had settled among the faculty as the \textit{Senato} listened to positive reports from the Faculties of Education, Medicine, and Pharmacy. Rector Allara added that in meetings with students from Law and Letters, the number of radicals had dropped significantly and many of the extreme demands had been set aside. The \textit{Senato} eventually voted in favor of a new set of 22 reforms that kept many of the concessions offered in April,\textsuperscript{211} but moderated the students’ earlier demands for parity with the faculty.\textsuperscript{212} Although the \textit{Senato} had retreated from its earlier offer of near parity with students in the administration of the university, the proposals of 27 May still offered the possibility of radical reform that far exceeded Minister of Education Luigi Gui’s conservative reform bill. The \textit{Senato}’s resolution also represented a victory for the

\textsuperscript{209} \textit{VSAUT} (May 13, 1968): 328-29.

\textsuperscript{210} \textit{VSAUT} (May 17, 1968): 340.

\textsuperscript{211} See page 21.

\textsuperscript{212} Proposals 1-5 abolished attendance requirements, allowed students to interpolate professors, and set aside up to 6 days a year for discussion of university problems; Proposals 6-7 offered more seminars in place of lectures; Proposals 8-12 regulated exam procedures, allowed for group exams (however each student would receive an individual grade), and allowed students to retake exams; Proposals 13-18 abolished the \textit{sottotesi} (undergraduate thesis), stipulated that synthetic, non-primary source essays could submitted for the \textit{tesi di laurea}, and set aside space within the university for student meetings; Proposals 19-21 established evening courses for working students and proposed the construction of satellite locations throughout Piedmont for students living outside of Turin; Proposal 22 promised students that a joint commission of students and faculty would be formed to “examine due contributions from the students” ---a retreat from full parity requested by the radical students. \textit{VSAUT} (May 27, 1968): 346-49.
reformers like Quazza who felt the students did deserve real university reform. By the end of May 1968, the student rebels at the University of Turin appeared to have won their revolution.

The spirit of conviviality which had infected professors and students in late May was soon clouded by student demonstrations in the city streets on 1 June. This demonstration, during which workers briefly joined the students on a march through the center of Turin, re-ignited the spark of activism among left-wing students. However, a serious backlash from neo-fascist students occurred on 4 June when fistfights broke out in the Palazzo Campana between one group carrying a Black Flag and another carrying a Red Flag. Rector Allara chose to ignore the incident and did not call in the police, opting instead to follow Guido Quazza’s view that the battle showed that student activists were growing tired and divided.²¹³

By the end of June, the student occupations had ended and the vast majority had returned to their studies. Nevertheless, these new disturbances had allowed the faculty to table their reform proposals of late May. The faculty never officially adopted the reforms proposed by the Senato. Instead, each professor remained free to determine the level of student involvement in the curriculum and the classroom. The students did not achieve their goals until they themselves became university instructors in the late 1970s.

Marco Revelli, currently a professor of political science at the University of Turin and a former activist, interpreted the power struggle in Gramscian terms. He has argued

that the occupation succeeded because it struck at the base of the professors’ power.\textsuperscript{214} Without the students’ presence in the classes, the professors lost their power within the university system. By refusing to take the traditional oral examinations and “play by the rules,” the student activists had revoked the professors’ power over the fate of thousands of young people. However, as this case study shows, the suspension of power was only temporary. Time ultimately worked against the students. The university faculty which held lifetime appointments as well as other positions in society, such as the professor and mayor, Giuseppe Grosso, could wait-out the activists until calm returned. The students on the other hand, could not rely on parental support indefinitely and ultimately needed to complete their degrees or leave the university. Only the children of the wealthy could afford to remain at the university for years without completing their degrees. Or as Andrea Liberatori, a journalist for the communist newspaper \textit{L’Unità} remarked,

“The ones who participated in this movement, they were not the masses, they were the elite, the avant-garde, because not many families could afford to keep their kids in the university for 8 or 10 years.”\textsuperscript{215}

Also, simple weariness and the approach of summer holidays weakened the spirit of activism. As Grosso had surmised, the activism and occupation of university space had begun to lose its magic in the late spring and his original view that the “sane” students would seek a return to normal university functioning seemed to hold true.\textsuperscript{216} At the crucial junctures of 20 February, 19 April, and 27 May, the Faculty offered substantial concessions to the activists but later retracted them when student rebels

continued to disrupt classes and occupy buildings. Former protester Marco Revelli came to a similar conclusion as Grosso, noting that by the late spring, the activists had succeeded in destroying the “sacredness” of their professors that had conferred a kind of illicit excitement to their activities and fueled the spirit of rebellion.  

Why had the students refused to accept the faculty’s compromises in 1968? Most likely, student leaders, caught in the sudden limelight of their peers, fueled by political zeal, achieving local notoriety in the press, and reveling in the excitement of anti-authoritarian activities, had found in the movement an end more important than their original goals of university reform. For them, any bargaining with the “baroni” would mean an end to their occupations and scioperi bianchi, which were the modi vivendi of the movement. Had the students accepted these proposals, the movement would have ended. The Turin activist Luigi Bobbio remembered returning to the university in the autumn and discovering that the spirit of militancy had already shifted from the university to the workers.  

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218 Luigi Bobbio in: Fraser, 1968, 222.
CHAPTER 4

THE CASE OF TURIN II: A CITY REACTS FROM PRECINCT TO PARISH

Studies of the European student protests have tended to focus on the cosmopolitan centers of rebellion such as London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome. Few scholars have examined the provincial cities that also experienced severe unrest such as Leeds, Lyon, Stuttgart, and Turin. This concentration on the capitals that has permeated the historiography of 1968 has endowed the student demonstrations with a certain uniform, international quality. They were, however, exceptional cases.

In Italy, for example, thirty-six different universities experienced student occupations in 1968. As most scholars have indicated, the heart of the student movement was to be found in the northern industrial cities of Italy and only later spread to Rome and the south.\textsuperscript{219} With its wealthier population and greater numbers of colleges and universities, the north of Italy felt the first stirrings of student discontent in the mid 1960s. In these northern cities where the anti-fascist tradition had always been strong, the student movements quickly came to be dominated by Left-wing activists who not only built on a local tradition of resistance that traced its origins to the factory strikes of

the 1920s, but also established close contact with the factory workers whom they sought to mobilize.

In almost no other city was this Left-wing, anti-fascist, and industrial tradition stronger than Turin. The birthplace of the Risorgimento, Turin distinguishes itself from other Italian cities by its almost northern European character. It is an eighteenth-century city where the medieval Palazzo Madama is overshadowed by the grand Palazzo Reale that was modeled after Versailles. The streets were constructed on a gridiron, reminding visitors that Turin is a modern, secular city, the ancestral home of the House of Savoy, but also a city of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, epitomized by its giant automobile works, the FIAT company. Although the owners, the Agnelli family, placed their factories at the service of the Fascist government, the workers of FIAT, who were some of the best paid and best organized in all of Italy, maintained a diffident and even hostile attitude toward Mussolini’s regime.\textsuperscript{220}

In the postwar period, Turin became one of the cities most affected by the “miracolo economico” as the FIAT factories rose to meet the needs of the growing automobile market at home and throughout Europe. In order to fill the factories, massive numbers of poor, unskilled workers moved to Turin from the south, and between 1945 and 1970, the city’s population doubled from about 600,000 to 1.2 million.\textsuperscript{221} The influx of southern immigrants changed the city as old urban areas like the Barriera di Milano were turned into tenements to accommodate the workers. Also the workforce at FIAT

\textsuperscript{220} For an excellent collection of Turin workers views toward Fascism, see: Luisa Passerini, Torino operaia e Fascismo (Bari: Gius Laterza e Figli, 1984).

\textsuperscript{221} Giovanni Alasia, former head of the Turin Chamber of Labor, interviewed by the author. Turin: April 24, 1997.
became subjected to worsening conditions such as an increase in the pace of work and longer hours. In 1962, the metalworkers throughout the city struck and were joined by many southern workers from FIAT in a violent series of strikes and street battles known as the Battle of the Piazza Statuto. As Paul Ginsborg noted, the combination of discontented southern laborers and members of the old Resistance made Turin a particularly volatile city in the 1960s.\footnote{Ginsborg, A History of Contemporary Italy, 250-53.}

Outside the factories, the influence of the Resistance tradition was also felt heavily among the well-to-do college students whose parents had participated in the Piedmontese Resistance. These children of the Resistance, people like Luigi Bobbio and Marco Revelli, became leaders of the student movement at the University of Turin and often conceived of their protests as a new form of antifascism.\footnote{Amidst this backdrop of regional distinctiveness, this chapter will investigate the people of Turin’s reaction to the student movement in the late 1960s. In particular, it will focus on three groups outside of the university which had intense contact with student protesters: those responsible for maintaining civic order, Turin’s municipal police and carabinieri; the people for whom the students claimed to emulate and lead, the workers of FIAT; and the spiritual leader of Turin, the Catholic church.}

The Police: “Children of the poor” or “Just following orders”?

The Left-wing student activists held a negative view of the police, seeing them as violent, “servi di padroni” (servants of the bosses) who sought only to repress the
protesters and uphold the Establishment.\textsuperscript{224} On the other hand, many of the police regarded the student movement as a threat to civic order. Their mutual animosity was rooted in fundamental differences based on class, politics, and their personal sense of duty.

Before analyzing the responses of the police, we shall first examine their role in postwar Italian society. Italy has approximately five different police forces that deal with distinct facets of security and public order. Some branches of the police investigate financial concerns; others deal with traffic and the railways. However, the two main branches of the police that came into contact with the students were the Polizia di Stato or the municipal police that were under the control of Turin’s city government and the local units of the carabinieri. Unlike the Polizia di Stato, the carabinieri remain unique to Italy, functioning as a branch of the national army. The recruits of the carabinieri come from all over Italy and are subject to military discipline. King Vittorio Emanuele I originally created the carabinieri to keep order in the countryside. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the carabinieri had enjoyed a reputation as a well-trained and effective police force, but by the 1960s, their professional standing had become significantly tarnished by their link to General DeLorenzo who attempted a coup against the national government in 1964.\textsuperscript{225}

\textsuperscript{223} Marco Revelli’s father, Benevenuto noted that his son’s protest organization \textit{Lotta Continua} had originally been called, \textit{Nuova Resistenza}. Benevenuto and Anna Revelli interviewed by the author. Cuneo: April 11, 1997.

\textsuperscript{224} Guido Viale, one of the leading activists in Italy, noted several incidents of police violence in 1968. See Guido Viale, \textit{Il Sessantotto: Tra rivoluzione e restaurazione} (Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta, 1978), 39, 44.

\textsuperscript{225} General DeLorenzo had been head of the Italian counter-espionage service agency (SIFAR) and had attempted to overthrow the government with the help of the Army and the carabinieri in 1964. The
In Turin, the police had also gained an infamous reputation for their role in repressing labor strikes at FIAT in during the Piazza Statuto demonstrations in 1962.\textsuperscript{226} Therefore, not only the students, but many Left-wing workers also viewed the police as servants of Agnelli and the other authorities in Turin. But what about the police themselves? How did they feel about controlling demonstrations and evacuating students from university buildings? The oral recollections of former police who served during the late 1960s, and official reports from Turin’s chief of the police, the \textit{Questura} and his superior, the Prefect, tell a story of growing tension between the students and local authorities. During the years 1967 and 1968, the police were increasing called upon to intervene in the areas of the university and to control the escalating battle for civic space in Turin’s streets.

The Office of the \textit{Questura} maintained public order and investigated crime and in the late 1960s, Turin’s Questore Catenacci observed and tracked the movements of the activists and dispatched police and \textit{carabinieri} to evacuate the protesters from university buildings and maintain order at demonstrations. According to administrative procedure, Questore Catenacci reported all significant police activities to Prefect Caso who acted as federally appointed governor to watch over the province and report directly to Rome. The reports of the Prefect and the Questura indicated that the student protests were a cause for concern among the police and officials of Turin, but not one as threatening as the local press, \textit{La Stampa} would have had its readers believe.

\textsuperscript{226} See Ginsborg, \textit{A History of Contemporary Italy}, 251-53.
From January to September 1968, Prefect Caso sent twenty-one dispatches to the Ministry of the Interior in Rome concerning student activities. Far from messages of alarm, these dispatches were of an impersonal nature and simply noted the changing numbers of both carabinieri and municipal police deployed in the university area. In Turin, the majority of the police sent to watch and control student activism came from the 1st Reparto Mobile (Mobile Unit) of the municipal police and the 1st Battalion of the carabinieri. These two groups were both housed near the center of Turin.227 Throughout this period, Prefect Caso normally stationed 50 municipal police and 50 carabinieri to watch student activities in the area of the Palazzo Campana.

Although little is known about the origins of these police, it seems likely that the municipal police came from Turin and the nearby provinces, and the carabinieri hailed from more remote sections of Italy. For the most part, the police of all types in Italy were recruited from the poorest classes of society and about 63% originally came from southern Italy.228 For many former southerners like Angelo Gentile, a position in Turin’s municipal police force offered an escape from the poverty of his rural homeland.229 Gentile had grown up under the Fascist regime and even served as a driver for the German Army during its occupation of Italy in early 1943. For the most part, he had accepted the Fascist ideology and supported the Italian invasion of Ethiopia as well as Mussolini’s attempts to modernize the country. Speaking of the student protest years, Gentile continued to believe:

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227 Prefettura di Torino Gabinetto. Mazzo Categoria 9B/1 Busta no. 52: Personale Questura 1966-68. [Hereafter abbreviated as PT. PQ no. 52]
228 Lumley, States of Emergency, 209.
“The student demonstrations provoked a nostalgia for Fascism and the political past, because the citizens felt abandoned by the state which did not defend them against the hoodlums who blocked all of the activity in the center of the city. They [the students] were the absolute masters and no one could object out of fear of surrendering to this bunch of hotheads who as individuals were rabbits but in mass they became lions capable of destroying and harming everything.”

Along with his nostalgia for Fascism, Angelo Gentile, like other members of the police who came from humble origins, believed that the students were simply spoiled rich kids who wanted “l’anarchia generale e totale” (complete and total anarchy), and that, “they did not study, they destroyed.” He claimed that during one incident a group of “hotheads” had attempted to block and terrorize the center of Turin. However, the Prefect had refused to send in the police because he had orders from his superiors in Rome not to authorize any action against the “contestatori.” In Gentile’s opinion the student leaders were all “figli di papa” (daddy’s kids) who were connected to old, elite political circles…”

Although Gentile’s opinions may have represented an extreme form of anti-student antipathy, other members of the Turin police also believed that the leaders of the student movement, such as Luigi Bobbio and Laura DeRossi, came from the upper echelons of society and seemed to be nothing more than lazy, spoiled children. In terms of policing protest however, class may have been less important than the police

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229 Angelo Gentile was born near Reggio Calabria in 1925 and eventually became a telecommunications specialist in the Polizia di Stato in Turin. Interviewed by the author. Turin: May 19, 1997.
230 Angelo Gentile. Interviewed by the author. Turin: May 19, 1997, “Le manifestazioni degli studenti hanno provocato una nostalgia del Fascismo e del passato politico perché i cittadini si sentivano abbandonati dallo stato che non li difendeva dai facinorosi che bloccavano tutte le attività del centro delle città. Erano i padroni assoluti e nessuno poteva reagire per il pericolo di soccombere di fronte a quegli scalmanati che singolarmente erano conigli ma nella massa diventavano leoni capaci di distruggere e colpire ogni cosa.” Translation by the author.
231 Ibid.
officers’ sense of duty as they had shown themselves to be just as resolute in maintaining order against the workers during the labor riots of 1962.\textsuperscript{233}

On the other hand, there were some police who had left-leaning views and even sympathized with the students. According to Benevenuto Revelli, the father of student leader Marco, there were a significant number of young police officers from the province of Piedmont who supported the students. One had warned Marco to wear a motorcycle helmet to the demonstrations,\textsuperscript{234} and some even alerted the activists of impending police raids.\textsuperscript{235} Several former policemen acknowledged that they supported the students initially because the universities needed reform. However, they later lost sympathy for the activists because the students had offered no specific reform proposals.\textsuperscript{236}

Many former Turin police claimed that they were neutral in their views toward the students and had simply followed the orders of their superiors. An ex-captain of the municipal police who had come from Calabria remembered, “My duty was to keep public order and preserve civil liberties. We only entered the Palazzo Campana at the request of Rector Allara, and the majority of the students left peacefully—only a few had to be carried out.” Such an account contradicts \textit{La Stampa}’s dramatic photographs of students dragged from the Palazzo Campana by the police.\textsuperscript{237}

\textsuperscript{232} In a conversation with Senore Patero at the \textit{Associazione 5 Corpi di Polizia}, Patero used the phrase “figli di papa” consistently in reference to the activists. Interview by the author. Turin: June 3, 1997.
\textsuperscript{233} The Piazza Statuto demonstrations in Turin had been directed against the owners and managers at FIAT and prefigured the violent unrest of the \textit{Autunno Caldo} strikes of 1969.
\textsuperscript{234} Benevenuto Revelli interviewed by the author. Cuneo: April 11, 1997.
\textsuperscript{235} Vittorio Rieser interviewed by the author. Turin: June 2, 1997.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{237} This former \textit{Maresciallo di Polizia} asked to remain anonymous. Interviewed by the author. Turin: July 3, 1997.
Many who policed student demonstrations, were shocked by the discovery of student vandalism. The ex-captain remembered his initial reaction upon entering the Palazzo Campana: “The halls were filled with broken chairs and litter, and the restrooms were covered with filth and used prophylactics.”238 These words indicate that despite this policeman’s attempt to be even-handed, he was appalled by the students’ disregard for public property and their sexual immorality. Like Professor Gullini and some of the readers of the popular press, this former police captain appeared to be more alarmed by the filth (“sporcizia”) and immorality of the activists than their physical threats to public order. He adopted the recurrent disease metaphor propagated by some critics of the student movement in their descriptions of the protesters.239

After the first evacuation of the Palazzo Campana in December, there was a steady increase in police intervention in the university. Initially the police were used to protect the faculty at the University of Turin. For example, on 17 January, Questore Catenacci received a report that Professor of Literature Giovanni Getto had entered the Palazzo Campana to give a lecture on Italian literature and found his lectern occupied by two student activists, Luigi Bobbio and Fazio Silvana. Getto then called in the police to remove Bobbio and Silvana. When the activists refused to leave voluntarily, the police officers attempted to physically remove them and, according to the Questore’s report, Bobbio punched one of the police officers and was charged with resistance to arrest and battery. Police later released Bobbio and Silvana without charging them.240 In another

238 Ibid.
239 See Chapter 2, Pages 4 and 29-34.
240 PT: NS no. 184, January 17, 1968.
case the Questore received news from his officers that on the evening of 28 February, 350 students had occupied the Palazzo Campana and were evacuated the following morning without incident by police who arrested 21 activists.241

Along with reporting the movements of the demonstrators, the police also spied on adults who sought to open a dialogue with the activists. On 9 January, the Questore reported to Prefetto Caso that some professors, including Norberto Bobbio, Professor of Law and Senatore of the Republic, and Mathematics Professor Tullio Viola met with students at the headquarters of the Catholic student association (FUCI). A report from 19 April mentioned that Communist Deputy Giorgina Levi, who had been a known supporter of the student reformers, had joined occupants in the Aula Magna of the Palazzo Campana to discuss university reforms.242

From the police officers’ standpoint, the incidents within the university were relatively mild compared to the increasing violence associated with street demonstrations in February and March when larger numbers of police were deployed. In February, police reports noted that the students had widened their zone of activity to include most of the city center. There was a demonstration in front of La Stampa’s editorial offices on 2 February and a protest against the Vietnam War outside the US Consulate on 18 February. Another manifestation of student power and organization was observed by police officers on 8 March when 5,000 demonstrators gathered at the Polytechnic to

241 Prefettura di Torino: Gabinetto Mazza Basta no. 184: Notiziario Sislacale, March 1, 1968. [Hereafter abbreviated as PT: NS no. 184]
242 PT: NS no 184, 9 January 9- April 19, 1968. Levi, who had been a secondary school instructor in Turin, entered Parliament in 1963 and became the Secretary for Public Instruction of the Communist Party. She had supported the activists from the very beginning and felt that the majority of the professoriate, both conservative and leftist did not understand the students.
protest the arrest of Federico Avanzini (one of the signatories of the Carta
Rivendicativa), marched to the Judicial Prison, paraded up town to the headquarters of
the Questura, turned back toward the centro passing by the Caserma dell’ Arma (the
barracks of the carabinieri) and were finally dispersed by police in the centro.243

These demonstrations also became scenes of student violence as activists at an
anti-Vietnam rally vented their anger by throwing stones, coins, eggs, and bags of red
paint at police.244 Niccola Seminara, a retired policeman, recalled with disgust that the
student protesters often threw coins in their faces because they believed that the police
had been hired by Agnelli to put down left-wing protests.245 Police officers often
suffered minor cuts and bruises and some had to be hospitalized after battling with
student protesters.246 However, the Prefect’s reports to Rome and the dispatches of the
Questore omitted any specific references to police violence against the students except
that on four separate occasions, the police were dispatched to control student
demonstrations against “alleged (presunte) violence of the police against the students of
the various universities.”247 The authorities understandably tended to ignore or discredit
charges of police violence, just as the students may have exaggerated their charges of
police brutality.248 Moreover, the police records also indicate that the students were not

243 PT: NS no. 184, March 8, 1968, see Pages 42-43 for a discussion of the press coverage of the
demonstration.
244 See Niccola Seminara’s testimony on page 31-32, and PT: NS no. 184, February 18, 1968.
246 A report from March 6, 1968 noted that two officers received injuries and one had to be hospitalized
after a demonstration at the Politecnico. Another demonstration at La Stampa’s editorial offices led to the
injury of several police officers. PT: NS no. 184, March 6 and 8, 1968.
247 PT: NS no. 184, February 1 and 2, March 9, 1968; and PT: PQ no. 52, March 6, 1968.
248 Benevenuto Revelli, father of an activist recalled seeing a disheveled and bloodied student in the Turin
train station after a police evacuation of the Palazzo Campana, interview with the author. Cuneo: April 11,
passive actors in the upheavals of 1967-1968. Contrary to former Turin activist Guido Viale’s claim that the movement “neither invented nor discovered violence, but received violence,” the student rebels proved capable of violence against people and things.\textsuperscript{249}

As the student manifestations became larger and more threatening in the late spring, the police paid closer attention to the student actions. Police recorded one particularly violent episode on 28 April when 400 activists marched from the Chamber of Labor to the headquarters of La Stampa and burned copies of the newspaper in front of the building. The students then threw stones at the offices of La Stampa and invaded a nearby department store, STANDA, tipping over displays and causing havoc. After leaving STANDA, the students then stormed a nearby exposition room of FIAT motors. Ultimately, the remaining 300 protesters reunited back in the Chamber of Labor where Pietro Nenni, the leader of the Unified Socialist Party (PSU),\textsuperscript{250} was addressing workers and students. For the activists, this march had been filled with symbolic acts of protest. They had first sought revenge against the newspaper that had so often vilified them, took vengeance on the automobile manufacturer that had enslaved their class allies, the workers of Turin, and finally struck out at a political leader who was seen by many activists as a “sell-out” to the government. However, for the police, the students were simply an angry mob, the lambs that Angelo Gentile claimed turned to lions when they gathered in crowds. In his report, the Questore claimed that the majority of the

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\item 1997. For another example of former activists who recalled police violence see: Laura DeRossi in Passerini, \textit{Autobiography of a Generation}, 79.
\item 249 Viale, \textit{Il Sessantotto: Tra rivoluzione e restaurazione}, 43-44.
\item 250 The PSU was a union of the Social Democrats (PSDI) and the Socialists (PSI) formed in 1966, however, it fared poorly in the elections of 1968 and split back into its component parties. See Ginsborg, \textit{A History of Contemporary Italy}, 280 and 326.
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demonstrators were members of the extreme left-wing Party of Socialist and Proletarian Unity (PSIUP) and the filocinesi.\textsuperscript{251}

The police presence at student demonstrations reached its highest level on 1 June when 670 municipal police and carabinieri were deployed for a protest march that was sponsored by the PSIUP to demonstrate their solidarity with French students and workers.\textsuperscript{252} This demonstration, which also included many workers, provoked a major police response. Typically, the Prefect would add an extra 100 municipal police or carabinieri to the existing force at the University to control student demonstrations. In June, 300 police and carabinieri were dispatched to the Teatro Alfieri during a rally held by Communist Deputy Giancarlo Pajetta to stop any disorders caused by “elements of the extremist filocinesi and members of the student movement.”\textsuperscript{253} As far as the Turin police were concerned, the “filocinesi” represented a more subversive element within the larger student movement.

Although the number of officers sent to police student demonstrations steadily increased through the spring of 1968, they did not reflect an unusual threat to public order. In order to place these figures in perspective, it should be noted that even larger numbers of police and carabinieri were sent to control crowds at soccer matches. Turin’s soccer team, Juventus, was one of the top teams in Italy and Europe, drawing thousands of fans to its matches. For example, on 26 February, just three days before the students’ “occupation of the barricades,” the Prefect dispatched 420 mobile police officers and

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\textsuperscript{251} PT: NS no. 184, April 28, 1968.
\textsuperscript{252} PT: PQ no. 52, May 30, 1968.
\textsuperscript{253} PT: PQ no. 52, June 21, 1968.
carabinieri to control crowds at a soccer match pitting Juventus against Eintracht a
“former world cup champion.” The “occupation of the barricades” on the other hand,
elicted no comment from Prefect Caso to his superiors in Rome. In another example, on
13 May, 500 carabinieri and municipal police were sent to control crowds at a game
between Juventus and Benfica Lisbona (also a world champion). Thus, based on the
Prefect’s statistical reports, the student demonstrations posed no greater threat to public
order than that of a soccer match. However, in the broad span of university-police
relations since the Second World War, the number of police deployed to the University of
Turin did represent a drastic change from the more tranquil 1950s and early 1960s; also
the students represented a less predictable threat to civic order than the periodic crowds
of rowdy soccer fans.

From the perspective of Turin’s judges, the students posed little threat to public
safety as indicated by the types of charges and judgments handed down against those
arrested during the period of student protest. In general, student crimes almost never led
to conviction in the courts. The former defense attorney for many of the Turin activists,
Bianca Guidetti-Serra remembered that most of the students she defended were
charged with only minor offenses. The crimes most often attributed to student rebels
were the occupation of university buildings which carried a maximum penalty of two
years in prison, disturbing lessons with a maximum punishment of five years in prison,

254 PT: PQ no. 52, February 26, 1968.
255 PT: PQ no. 52, May 13, 1968.
256 Bianca Guidetti-Serra became a Communist while working as a social worker in Turin during the war and joined the women’s arm of the Resistance, Gruppi nella Defensa di Donna. She received her law degree three weeks before the fall of Fascism in 1943 and made her legal career defending workers at FIAT.
conducting unauthorized demonstrations, and writing slanderous articles against the professors. Among the judges, the socialists were sympathetic to student defendants and the conservatives sided with the police and professors. The courts granted amnesty to nearly all the activists shortly after their arrests and most of the protesters stayed in jail only a few hours. In the mid-1970s, all the members of the student movement received a general amnesty by the Republic.

The Workers: A Separate Path to Revolution

The student activists turned to the working class in the late 1960s as both a source of inspiration and as allies in their struggle against the “Establishment.” The workers, on the other hand, received the students’ approach with mixed emotions. In Turin, a handful of workers joined the students’ struggle against the “padroni” and participated in groups such as the Lega Studenti e Operai (League of Students and Workers), Potere Operaio (Workers’ Power), and Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle). Some workers even attended meetings of the General Assembly in the Palazzo Campana. However, the majority of the workers viewed the student movement as a kind of “auxiliary” to their

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258 Riccardo DiDontao, the national vice-president of Intesa was charged in the Florence Court of Appeals with, “occupation of public buildings” under article 633 of the Penal Code which carried a penalty of 15 days to 2 years in prison, and “interruption and disturbance of a public office” under article 340 of the Penal Code which carried a penalty of 1-5 years in prison. Almost all the charges were eventually dropped. See L'Unità, January 24, 1968, 4.
battle for higher wages and better contracts. In some cases, the workers angrily regarded the student activists as tools of management.\textsuperscript{259}

The relationship between Turin's workers and its university students had never been congenial, particularly because many older workers remembered when students had flocked to the Fascist party. Andrea Liberatori, a former journalist for \textit{L'Unità} in Turin remarked, "The workers of Turin did not forget that nearly all the university students in Italy were thoroughly on the side of the Fascist regime and against the position of labor."\textsuperscript{260} A few of the workers undoubtedly remembered that Mussolini had once given speeches from the Palazzo Campana, the headquarters of Turin's Fascist Party.\textsuperscript{261} However, the postwar years brought significant changes to both the working class and the university as both workers and left-wing students moved closer together in ideological terms. Bruno Manghi, historian of the Turin workers, has argued that the workers and students were brought together in 1968-1969 by the "union past" and the "student present." Manghi interpreted the worker-student relationship as one in which the student activists of the late 1960s had been inspired by the heroic struggle of the Turin workers against Fascism and the factory occupations of the early twentieth century. The students, in turn, helped mobilize many workers who were dissatisfied with the stagnant position adopted by the traditional labor unions by encouraging them to set up workers' assemblies at the shop-floor level in defiance of the usual, more hierarchical, union

\textsuperscript{259} Galli, "The Student Movement in Italy," 503.
\textsuperscript{260} Andrea Liberatori, interviewed by the author, Turin: May 28, 1997.
procedures. This challenge to the big unions may have prodded labor leaders to adopt more extreme measures and helped ignite the explosion of unrest during the “Hot Autumn” of 1969. The labor movement eventually won a tremendous victory over management with the accord on pensions in 1975. Manghi’s hypothesis must be tempered by the fact that many workers also rejected student efforts to mobilize them and, in the case of the southerners in Turin, came to express their discontent in more traditional peasant forms which they had brought with them from the Mezzogiorno.

The students themselves disagreed on the ways in which they could mobilize the workers. Unlike the West German students who believed the working class was hopelessly integrated into the capitalist system, the Italian students, like their French counterparts, did seek an alliance. Just as Parisian students had reached out to workers at Renault, the students of Turin attempted to mobilize the workers at FIAT.

At the outset, the Turin students formed a large Commissione Operaia (Workers’ Commission) within the General Assembly to coordinate their movement with the workers’ struggles at FIAT. By late spring 1968, however, the continued dissension over their stance towards the workers along with growing hostility from the labor unions led to the dissolution of the commission. By the summer of 1968, the student movement of

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264 For examples see: Lumley, States of Emergency, 209-14.
265 Ginsborg, A History of Contemporary Italy, 309.
266 In “Documento 9” of Liliana Lanzardo, Cronaca della Commissione operaia del Movimento studentesco torinese, dicembre 1967-maggio 1968. (Forthcoming in Centro di Documentazione di Pistoia). The Lega Studenti e Operai listed four reasons why the Turin students objected to a major connection with the workers: 1) the movement was too “immature” for this type of work, 2) the movement can really only be an “auxillary” to the traditional union organizations, 3) the movement is not politically homogeneous.
Turin no longer sought to ally with the workers in an official way, opting instead to allow affiliated associations such as the *Lega Studenti e Operai* and *Lotta Continua* to organize small groups of militant workers.\(^{267}\)

The official representatives of Italian labor, the unions and the Communist Party, gave lip service to an alliance with the students while at the same time working to maintain their control over the workers. A Communist Party Central Committee member, Maurizio Ferrara, called the student movement an “avante-garde” and pledged his Party’s support in an editorial to *L’Unità* in February 1968.\(^{268}\) Two days later, amid rising police retaliation against the student protesters, the Direction of the PCI urged its readers to support and join the students in their struggle. “The working class can and must intervene... because everyone should be allowed to study.”\(^ {269}\) The smaller and more militant Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP) argued that despite the students’ membership in the bourgeoisie, they could be an “auxiliary” force to the wider social struggle of the working class.\(^ {270}\)

Privately, the Communist Party members and veteran labor leaders condemned the student movement as “infantile” or “philo-anarchist” and rejected its attempts to join in the social struggles of the working class.\(^ {271}\) A former journalist for *L’Unità*, Andrea Liberatori noted that the student movement’s attack on Italian democracy offended many

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\(^{267}\) Ibid.

\(^{268}\) *L’Unità*, February 26, 1968, 2.


\(^{270}\) Lanzardo, *Cronaca*, 10.
older Communist leaders because their Party had briefly joined the government after the war and had helped draft the Constitution of the Republic. After the Sino-Soviet split and the death of Togliatti in 1964, the Italian Communist Party had sought an autonomous, Italian road to socialism relying on an alliance between the workers and the lower middle class. Thus when the workers heard about the Battle of the Valle Giulia in March 1968, many sided with Pasolini in favor of the police over the “figli di papa” in the student movement.272 A former PCI Deputy and supporter of the students, Giorgina Levi recalled that some members of her party including its leader Luigi Longo, expressed indifference and even outright hostility to the student movement. In particular, Levi remembered a prominent party member Giorgio Amendola telling her contemptuously that, “…those students, with their red flags—they are the flags of the anarchists.”273

The major unions also spurned collaboration with the students, fearing a direct challenge to their right to speak for Italian labor. The former Secretary of the Turin Chamber of Labor, Giovanni Alasia, who had contact with leaders of both organized labor and the student groups during the late 1960s and early 1970s, characterized the labor-student relationship as one of both collaboration and conflict. Unlike the unions which had built a longstanding and systematic relationship with the workers, the students’ support for labor was sporadic and inconsistent. According to Alasia, the erratic position of the students stemmed from their own disunity. He remembered that,

271 Galli, “The Student Movement in Italy,” 503.
“in the late 1960s, when I was at the Chamber of Labor, I had contact with thirteen different student groups—there were three different Chinese groups alone!”274

Despite the unions’ hostility, a few militant activists continued to meet with workers at FIAT. Liliana Lanzardo, a sociologist and a former member of the Lega Studenti e Operai, recounted numerous incidents of union animosity. During the early months of the student revolt from December 1967 to March 1968, labor leaders responded to the students with “evasive and abstract” answers and promoted attitudes of restraint among union members vis-à-vis the student protesters. Lanzardo has argued that the unions resented the students’ challenge to their positions as spokesmen for the workers and questioned the activists’ “legitimacy to join in a general political opposition.”275

Although the unions’ position toward the Turin student movement remained diffident through the spring months, the workers had a chance to meet the activists in March when large numbers of students joined FIAT workers in their strike for better pensions. The activists distributed copies of the journal Voce Operaia (“Worker’s Voice”) that contained an article entitled, “The students also say Enough!”276 According to a former student participant, Peppino Ortoleva, the workers cared little about the ideology of the students, but did appreciate their will to fight. Ortoleva recalled, “I think

275 Lanzardo, Cronaca, 5-6.
276 Lanzardo, Cronaca, 7-8.
they [the workers] liked to see good-looking, well dressed girls who would scream dirty words and wanted to fight.”

The unions never officially recognized the student movement as an ally in the labor struggles, despite their shared rebellion against authority in the late 1960s. Lanzardo recalled that after March 1968, the Turin student movement gave up any major efforts to collaborate with the unions and chose instead to reach out to the workers and apprentices at the FIAT schools directly through the “gruppi di porta” (groups at the gate). Despite union hostility, the student activists were allowed to march with workers from the communist CGIL trade union during the May Day parades of 1968. Conversely, apprentices from the FIAT school turned out in large numbers to join with university protesters in a demonstration on 1 June. The historian Giovanni DeLuna has interpreted the 1 June demonstration as the students’ symbolic recognition of the importance of the workers because the participants gathered and initiated their demonstration in the heart of Turin’s working class neighborhoods, the Barriera di Milano, and marched into the city center.

Although the major trade unions remained tepid in their enthusiasm for university allies, the workers, like the popular press, developed a kind of love-hate relationship with

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278 Vittorio Rieser, a former graduate student in sociology in 1968 and currently an official of the CGIL in Turin, noted that despite vast class differences between the students and the workers, both shared a powerful rejection of authority in the late 1960s. Interview by the author, Turin: June 2, 1997. Giampiero Carpo, a skilled worker at FIAT and militant labor activist also noted that the student movement’s critique of authoritarianism helped spur on the workers’ strikes in 1969, see the testimony of Giampiero Carpo in: Gabriele Polo, I Tamburi di Mirafiori: Testimonianze Operaie attorno all’Autunno Caldo aila FIAT (Turin: Cric Editore, 1989): 116.
279 Lanzardo, Cronaca, 12 and 17.
the student activists. The workers appreciated what Ortoleva has called the students’ “venire alle mani” (will to arms) on the one hand, but rejected student activists as overly pedantic, “figli di papa,” on the other. The testimony of workers from Turin provides an excellent window into their views during the period of student and labor unrest spanning the years 1967 to 1969. One of the key elements that first united workers and university activists in a single cause in the late 1960s was the protest against the West’s involvement in Vietnam. Bruno Manghi has argued that the Vietnam War provided a common ground whereby the workers and students could meet despite the huge social and economic divisions that divided them.281 The recollections of Luciano Parlanti, a FIAT worker since 1959 and former member of Lotta Continua, support Manghi’s assumption. Parlanti recalled that like the student activists, “Ho Chi Minh and Vietnam became a symbol to us (workers), an element of identification.” He further remembered that he and his work-mates had borrowed slogans from the students such as, “HO-HO-HO CHI MINH” and “AGNELLI YOU HAVE A WORKSHOP IN INDOCHINA” during the FIAT strikes of 1968 and 1969.282

In another case, Giampiero Carpo, a young skilled worker who came from a Partisan family in Turin and attended the FIAT school, remembered being drawn to the student demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Like many of the workers who joined with the activists in 1968, Carpo had hoped that the worker-student uprisings in France would provoke a similar unity and revolt among Italian students and workers.283

282 Parlanti cited in Polo, I Tamburi di Mirafiori, 64.
However, Carpo discovered that the majority of the workers did not feel that the students and workers shared the same political and social goals and no equivalent of the tumultuous French May occurred in Italy. The French students and workers were united in their hatred toward deGaulle and his government, whereas the Italian workers who struck in the Hot Autumn of 1969 did so because they despised their bosses, not the national government.

Although the workers and students never achieved the level of unity reached during the French May, many workers did take an interest in the students beginning in March 1968. On 7 March, students turned out in large numbers to join FIAT workers in a strike for shorter hours. After 7 March workers began to attend activist student meetings at the university and one worker from Olivetti even proposed forming a worker-student group in provincial Ivrea to organize workers at his factory. The students again contributed heavily to the FIAT strike of 30 March that called for a forty-four hour week and a slowdown in the pace of work. Naturally, the owners’ La Stampa sought to minimize worker involvement in the strike and subsequently attributed all acts of violence and provocation to the student activists. Moreover, the unions distributed flyers among the workers condemning all “foreign elements” that had participated in the strike. The workers, however, began to take an even greater interest in the students. In a “Letter from a group of workers to the students of Turin,” the authors expressed their gratitude for the students’ recent support in the strikes and expressed the view that, “…the students would be of great use if they would collaborate together with us workers

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284 Lanzardo, Cronaca, 8.
in search of ways to make the combativity of the workers permanent and official.”²⁸⁶ It should be noted however, that the workers wanted the students to help them, expressing again Ortolova’s assumption that the workers appreciated the students “will to arms” but did not consider the students as coequals in the struggles of the working class.

Through the month of April, more workers attended the meetings in the Palazzo Campana despite continued union warnings against collaboration with the students. Dino Antonioni, an unskilled, non-unionized worker remembered the unions and members of the PCI insulting him for attending meetings of the *Lega Studenti e Operai*.²⁸⁷ However, the warnings of the unions did not stop over 300 workers from attending a meeting with student activists in the Palazzo Campana on 12 April. Some workers proposed the publication of an autonomous newspaper written by workers and students, and one after another, they described conditions at FIAT to the students. Liliana Lanzardo recalled the meeting and wrote that, “...for the first time, they [workers] made clear the sterility of the students’ rhetoric.”²⁸⁸

Lanzardo’s words laid bare one of the underlying problems of student-worker collaboration in the late 1960s, that of incongruent discourses. Not that the two discourses were at cross-purposes, but that they revealed the tremendous cultural differences between the workers and the university students. From the students’ perspective, many only knew about the working class from the writings of Marx, Engels, and Gramsci. Thus, their rhetoric was often pedantic with a highly theoretical and

²⁸⁵ Lanzardo, *Cronaca*, 11.
²⁸⁶ Documento 13 in Lanzardo, *Cronaca*, 62.
ideological vocabulary that obscured their discussions with the workers of FIAT. From the workers’ perspective, class-consciousness meant rising at 3 am to catch the train to FIAT, the 6 ½ day work weeks, the lack of work breaks that necessitated keeping a loaf of bread in one’s coat to eat on the line, and restricted lavatory visits which forced them to urinate in old wine bottles during their shifts. Thus, the majority of workers and students could simply not find a common language on which to build a solidarity of interests. Aside from the small student-worker initiatives like the Lega Studenti e Operai and Lotta Continua, the bulk of the university activists and workers remained divided by life experiences that, although parallel, would not intersect.

Another example of these non-intersecting discourses can be found in a flyer distributed by student activists outside the gates of FIAT claiming that since the students were essentially the “proletariat” of the university, they ought to be the natural allies of the working class. Such an argument found few supporters among the workers and served only to underscore the students’ lack of understanding of conditions in the factories. Another flyer distributed by students from the Polytechnic claimed that,

“Whoever commands is always the boss. Whoever works as an engineer according to the will of the boss is only a slave better paid but always a slave.”

Such well-intentioned rhetoric could not change the obvious fact that despite their shared subservience to the owners of FIAT, the workers knew that the engineers of FIAT belonged to a vastly different social class and, at the factory level, these engineers would

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287 Antonioni had migrated to Turin from the poor farm regions near Piacenza and had not been raised in the culture of the urban working class. Cited in Polo, I Tamburi di Miraflori, 82.
288 Lanzardo, Cronaca, 13-14.
290 Documento 1 in: Lanzardo, Cronaca, 21-22.
have been viewed as part of management. Or in the words of one worker, Luciano Parlanti, “The world of the students was a whole different world from the world of the workers.”

In words similar to the language of the popular press, some of the workers ridiculed and criticized the dogmatic rhetoric of the activists. In a letter written by a group of FIAT workers who had attended a joint student-worker meeting in the Palazzo Campana on 2 May, the workers expressed the hope that the students’ interest in the labor movement was not “solely an intellectual mania” concocted by the students who “come from the world of culture.” The workers went on to say that they despised the so-called “people of culture” because their bosses were part of the “world of culture.” The workers further rebuked the students who could spend all night talking about revolution knowing that, “the whole morning they can sleep as long as they want and that it is the mama’s little purse that finances the revolution.” The workers resented the student revolutionaries who threw stones at police and scabs and then drove away in an Alfa Romeo Spider.

In a meeting of the Lega Studenti e Operai on 12 May, the problem of language reappeared in discussions between workers and students. In particular, the workers resented the patronizing political rhetoric of the students. A worker from the Mirafiori plant rejected the students’ view that the workers did not have a political consciousness, exclaiming that, “the workers of FIAT are not babies—even though they treat us like

that.” 294 The workers especially detested the students’ self-proclaimed right to serve as helmsmen for the social revolution. Vito, another worker from Mirafiori, warned, “If ten students carry this thing forward, they will have the support of the workers. But a hundred students who want to guide us, they will never have it.” 295 To the workers, it seemed as if the student leaders had adopted the same didactic and patronizing discourse that they despised in their professors. Thus one could say that despite their rejection of the traditional university, the students had still “learned” a great deal from their professors!

The former Secretary of the Turin Chamber of Labor, Giovanni Alasia also believed that the students failed to win over the workers on a large scale because of their dogmatic proselytizing. Citing an often repeated legend about the students’ attempts to organize the workers in 1968, Alasia offered an anecdote about one young activist who went to organize the FIAT workers at Mirafiori:

Student: “You have never read Marx?”
Worker: “Well no, not really.”
Student: “You have not studied Marx?”
Worker: “Not exactly.”
Student: “You don’t know Marx?”
Worker: “He doesn’t work in my department!” 296

Aside from the pedantic and patronizing quality of the student’s questions, the entire discourse resembled the same interrogative method used by many professors during class

293 Documento 13 in: Lanzardo, Cronaca, 58-59.
294 “…gli operai della FIAT non sono dei bambini—anche se molti li trattano così.” In Documento 12, Lanzardo, Cronaca, 50.
295 “Se dieci studenti portano avanti questa cosa, avranno l’appoggio degli operai. Ma cento studenti che ci vogliono guidare non l’avranno mai.” In Documento 12, Lanzardo, Cronaca, 56.
exams. Ironically, this student appeared to have retained the “style” if not the actual words of a typical dialogue between him and his hated “professori—baroni.”

Although the student groups had managed to reconcile some of their own ideological differences, as evident in the collaboration between the Catholic student organization, Intesa, and the Communists’ FGCI, the workers tended to view all the student activists as radical Left-wingers. One worker from FIAT, named Dino, told Lanzardo that even though the student movement did not claim to be connected to any political party, his impression, along with most of his fellow workers, was that the student movement was connected to the radical Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP). Dino further added that he did not want everybody, including students, to join the PSIUP.297 Another worker, named Dino Antonioni, also noted that many rural immigrants at FIAT feared the communists. Antonioni recalled that although he had an uncle who had been a communist, there were those back in his village who had told stories about communists eating babies.298

Interestingly, these same southerners that shunned both the PCI and the unions, became the explosive force behind the great labor unrest of 1969. Antonioni recognized this irony in his own workshop at FIAT, noting that the managers called his section, “l’officina filocinesi” (the Maoist workshop) when in fact, it was the immigrant workers who had protest experience as rural laborers or braccianti who were the most radical.299

298 For more on Dino Antonioni see Note 150. Cited in Polo, I Tamburi di Mirafiori, 80. Lumley also noted the southern workers efforts to create their own organizations and forms of protest outside the usual union channels at the Pirelli factory, see: States of Emergency, 183-91.
299 Ibid, 83. The braccianti were landless day-laborers in the agrarian regions of Italy, see Ninetta Jucker, Italy (New York: Walker and Co., 1970), 85.
According to Giovanni Alasia and Paul Ginsborg, the great labor unrest of the *Autunno Caldo* had arisen from the severe demographic change in the working class caused by the massive influx of southern, unskilled Italian workers to the north during the 1960s. Alasia has said that, “In 1945, Turin had about 600,000 citizens, by the mid-1960s, we had 1.2 million, and this caused a major rethinking of politics and labor relations.” He further noted that, “…the old unionized workers of Turin learned new tactics from the southern immigrants, they [southerners] brought with them the ideas of the *jacquerie*—the revolt of the *contadini* [peasants].”\(^{300}\) The historian Robert Lumley has recounted an incident during which a southern worker at FIAT led his work-mates through the factory yard with the head of a rabbit stuck on a pole which was an old peasant form of rebellion against the landlord. In this context, the impaled rabbit head served as a warning to scabs and represented the adaptation of a peasant form of social protest to industrial conditions.\(^{301}\)

Although the southern immigrant workers infused the Turin working class with a greater militancy than the student movement ever could, the radical challenge posed to the traditional unions by the student activists in 1968 also revived Italian labor. According to Bruno Manghi, the students challenged the unions to return to their broader mission. As proof, Manghi noted the almost Marcusian sound of the Italian Confederation of Unionized Workers (CISL)’s 1968 Congress slogan, “Power against


\(^{301}\) Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 211.
power.”

Although the students may have begun to mobilize the mass of southern laborers in northern Italy in 1968, the labor unions regained control of the workers by the following year and led them in their most successful strikes of the postwar period, the “Hot Autumn” of 1969.

In the popular memory of the late 1960s the student unrest from the late Autumn of 1967 to the end of 1968 has been separated from the labor strikes of 1969. This schism is implicit in the testimonies of two pensioners from FIAT. Luigi Addari, a non-union, foundry worker at FIAT from 1943 to 1975, recalled many incidents of labor unrest in 1962 and 1969 but had only this to say about the students: “was it 1968... that was the time with the episodes of the students.”

Another worker who had been at FIAT’s Mirafiori plant remembered, “1968--ahh, that was also a good year... they broke everything the students, at that time...” Significantly, these workers do not associate the students with their own struggles at FIAT and both identify the year 1968 with student unrest. In more explicit words, a former member of the student-worker organization, Lotta Continua, Luciano Parlanti declared, “1968 affected us workers very little... the workers had the struggle of the workers and the students’ struggle was the student movement.” Parlanti believed that the students did not really interact with the

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303 Former member of Lotta Continua and sociology assistant at the University of Turin, Vittorio Rieser, also believed that many of the workers organized in 1968 by the radical student groups later were elected as shop floor representatives to the labor unions and demanded greater changes for the workers. Interview by the author. Turin: June 2, 1997.
304 “era il sessantotto... perché poi c’era stato il pasticcio con gli studenti.” Luigi Addari interviewed by Enrica Capussoti as part of an oral history project focusing on the workers in Turin. Turin: December 18, 1995.
workers until the autonomous groups like Lotta Continua and Potere Operaio met with 
workers in 1969.\textsuperscript{306}

Ultimately, the student movement in the large industrial cities of northern Italy 
did affect the workers in the late 1960s. However, the broad mass of the student 
protesters never became an integral part of the great wave of strikes that swept northern 
Italy in 1969. Mostly, the students were viewed as an auxiliary and were respected for 
their “will to arms.”\textsuperscript{307} Nonetheless, autonomous worker-student organizations like Lotta 
Continua and the Lega Studenti e Operaio did instill ideas of radical reform among some 
members of the working class who in turn, pushed for greater union militancy in 1969. 
Some scholars have claimed that the workers utilized protest tactics they had learned 
from the students in their battles with management.\textsuperscript{308} Such assumptions ignore the fact 
that the workers of Turin had used the tactic of the occupation against the Fascists.\textsuperscript{309} 
Furthermore, as the former student activist Vittorio Rieser admitted, the workers had 
already begun moving in a militant direction as early as 1962 with the strikes and riots in 
the Piazza Statuto.\textsuperscript{310} According to Giovanni Alasia, the former head of the Turin 
Chamber of Labor, it was the students who learned the ideas of the occupation and the 
general assembly from the workers.\textsuperscript{311} 

\textsuperscript{307} Peppino Ortoleva interviewed by the author. Turin: April 18, 1997. 
\textsuperscript{308} For example see Spini, “The New Left in Italy,” 66. 
\textsuperscript{309} The workers of Turin struck and remained within their workplaces beginning in March 1943 and later 
after Mussolini’s arrest in July. See Ginsborg, A History of Contemporary Italy, 10-17. 
\textsuperscript{310} Vittorio Rieser interviewed by the author. Turin: June 2, 1997.
The Church: Caught between Obedience and Understanding

From the perspective of the Leftist students, the Church seemed an archaic institution, clouded in superstition and monolithic in its rejection of new social or cultural movements. Daniela Torresini, a former activist at the University of Trent, remembered staging “anti-masses” (contro-messa) outside the Cathedral of Trent on Sundays, mocking the clergy and parishioners. Some Catholic students however, enlisted the ideas of reform clergymen in their protest for school reform in the late 1960s. Chief among the works that inspired Catholic students was a small book, *Letter to a Professor*, written by a priest named Don Milani in a small Tuscan village. Written in the form of a group of schoolboys describing the poverty and educational inequities of their small village, the book inspired many in the student movement to seek educational and social reform. According to Robert Lumley, the language of *Letter to a Professor* had many similarities to Marxist writings and became a common meeting point for Catholic and Left-wing students.

More importantly in the case of Turin, was the region’s unique history of secular rule and tolerance. Unlike Rome or central Italy, the Church had never exercised strong control over Piedmont and the region had even contained a small Protestant community. As noted earlier, Turin had traditionally been a seat of secular rather than ecclesiastical leadership. Therefore, the Church never played as large a role in the Turin events of 1967 and 1968, as it did in the events in Milan where a major Catholic university was

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313 Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 82-84.
located. In Turin, the student movement had its own parallel movement within the Church led by younger priests who questioned the authority of the Bishops and Archbishops. Don Giuseppe Tuninetti, an ecclesiastical librarian and former student at the University of Turin in the late 1960s, remembered that a group of young priests had banded together to form the Comunità del Vandolino (Community of Vandolino) under the leadership of the city’s Cardinal Pellegrino, who was also a professor of Christian Literature at the University of Turin. Formerly the Archbishop of Turin, Don Pellegrino came to be one of the leading supporters of conscientious objectors to military service in Italy, and he encouraged discussion of reform among his students and the younger priests. Some of Pellegrino’s followers demonstrated their solidarity with conscientious objectors. Their banners, announcing that, “Obedience is no longer a virtue,” defied Pope Paul VI’s pronouncements on the need for greater obedience in the late 1960s.314 According to Don Tuninetti the generational split between student activists and their parents and teachers in the 1960s had also divided the Church between the younger priests who sought a renewed sense of spirituality and faith and the older clergy who resisted change.315

Cardinal Pellegrino’s anti-war stance and attempt at dialogue with Turin activists, as well as the Community of Vandolino’s questioning of their ecclesiastical elders belied the student Left’s retrograde image of the Church. Such examples, at least in the case of Turin, provided important corrections to the stereotypical view of the Church in the late

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314 “L’ubbidienza non è più una virtù” cited in Italo Lana, “Senza Vangelo il futuro degli studenti in rivolta?” from the Catholic weekly, Il Nostro Tempo May 19, 1968, 2.
1960s. Pope Paul VI cautiously encouraged a dialogue with youth and recognized the changing role of young people in society when he wrote in a communication delivered by Cardinal Cicognani to clergy meeting in Valladolid in April 1968 that:

"The future is already present in the young people; in them one can read as in a microcosm, the signs of the times. ... In contemporary society, the youth exercise a force (vim exercent) of great importance. Their life circumstances and mentalities and relations with their families are greatly changed. ... The young people have an awareness of real power, accelerating no small transformations and demanding their participation, not as passive subjects of a well-intentioned pedagogy, but as those who create true cultural, social and political change."^{316}

However, Paul VI was more cautious than his predecessor. Although acknowledging the potential of the younger generation, he also warned them to heed their elders to avoid making the mistakes of the past.

"Youth possesses a potential of the greatest value that the adults must recognize and utilize; but, the young people, on their part, can not dismiss from history and from necessity the acquisition of a preparation that, without rejecting the counsel of fathers and teachers, enables them to avoid repeating the same errors of those whom they criticize."^{317}

The Church under Pope John XXIII had encouraged reform and renewal initiatives among young Catholics during the Second Vatican Council not unlike the former Partigiani who had inspired activism in their Leftist children. However, in the late 1960s, these same clergymen faced a serious dilemma when the Catholic youth of Intesa

^{316} "L'avvenire è già presente nei giovani: in essi si può leggere come in un microcosmo, i segni dei tempi. ... Nella società contemporanea, i giovani esercitano una forza (vim exercent) di grande importanza. Le circostanze della loro vita e la mentalità e gli stessi rapporti con la propria famiglia sono grandemente mutati. ... I giovani hanno preso coscienza del proprio potere, accelerando non poche trasformazioni ed esigono una loro partecipazione, non quali soggetti passivi di una pedagogia ben intenzionata, ma quali artisti della propria promozione culturale, sociale, e politica." Paul VI cited in: Vittorio Morero, "L’avvenire è già presente nei giovani ma evitiamo il mito del giovanilismo," Il Nostro Tempo April 14, 1968, 7.

^{317} "La gioventù possiede un potenziale di grandissimo valore che gli adulti devono ricordare e utilizzare; ma i giovani dall’altra, non possono prescindere dalla storia e dalla necessità di acquisire una
joined hands with the Young Communists (UGI) and advocated radical political and social change. Church officials, like other members of the Turin community, often offered qualified support to the students, but drew a sharp line between what they considered good activism based on reform and cooperation and bad activism that appeared to be anti-democratic and violent. According to Tuninetti, the Catholic Church in Turin had supported the students’ demands for change and had only reversed its attitude “when the students turned to violence.”\textsuperscript{318} Such ambivalence echoed the line taken by the Vatican’s \textit{L’Osservatore Romano} which alternated between diatribes against the student counter-culture and positive descriptions of student-Church initiatives.\textsuperscript{319}

Based on this survey of the local police, workers, and clergy of Turin, we can see that response to student protest was neither wholly negative nor consistent among those who came into contact with the student activists. Contrary to Della Porta’s claim that the police were polarized between those on the Left who sympathized with the students and those on the Right who detested them, class differences made the student-police relationship much less clear cut.\textsuperscript{320} Left-leaning police tended to be more sympathetic to the activists, but like many of the workers, they almost all dismissed the student actions as the antics of the children of the rich, the so-called, “figli di papa.” Workers also reacted to student activism with mixed responses. For some, like Andrea Liberatori, the students did become an important catalyst for the wave of labor unrest that swept the

\textsuperscript{318} Ibíd.

\textsuperscript{319} See Chapter 2, “Traditional Values under Attack—The Emerging Counterculture.”

\textsuperscript{320} See Della Porta, \textit{Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State}, 60.
peninsula in 1969, but for many others, the students were simply bored rich kids seeking to spread Maoist rhetoric in a patronizing way. The Church of Turin was divided between some like Cardinal Pellegrino and the Community of Vandolino which supported student pacifism, the protests against Vietnam, and a renewal of spirituality, and those who preached continued obedience to one’s elders and to the traditional positions of the Church.

In comparison with the preceding chapter, the positions of the Church and Professors in Turin appeared to have developed along similar lines with some priests and professors actively encouraging and assisting student activists through personal initiatives and others hoping to wait out the wave of youthful rebellion. On the other hand, the less affluent workers and police, who ostensibly should have been more receptive to the students’ message of change, proved much less willing to engage the activists in a dialogue or support their efforts.
CHAPTER 5

THE NATIONAL DIMENSION I: CONSTRUCTING AN IMAGE OF PROTEST

In this chapter we shall move away from Turin to examine the ways in which the student movement affected other areas of the Italian society. The student uprisings that swept the peninsula in the late 1960s quickly achieved widespread notoriety due in large part to the power of the popular media to create and disseminate words and images that kindled strong emotions among the general population. Twenty-three years after World War II this was possible not only because of the public’s widespread fears of communism and fascism but also because of the nature of the mass media in modern societies.

Social philosopher Pierre Bourdieu has argued that the popular press’s propensity for distortion lies within the very nature of the journalistic process:

Journalists…show us the world as a series of unrelated flash photos. Given the lack of time, and especially the lack of interest and information, they cannot do what would be necessary to make events really understandable, that is, they cannot reinsert them in a network of relevant relationships…This vision is at once dehistoricized and dehistoricizing, fragmented and fragmenting.” 321

The communications theorist Marshall McLuhan has noted the power of the mass media to affect modern history:

“All media work us over completely. They are so persuasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered.”

During the years of peak activism at the end of the 1960s, the popular press throughout Italy created and manipulated their various images of the student activists in order to sway public opinion. Newspapers that opposed the student actions held a major percentage of the daily circulation throughout the country with Turin’s La Stampa and Milan’s Corriere della Sera commanding over a quarter of all daily sales in the 1960s. Although there was no press monopoly in Italy comparable to Axel Springer’s power in West Germany, FIAT did control La Stampa directly and owned a controlling share of the Corriere della Sera. In the 1960s these two dailies shared editorial policies that favored big business and the center-left coalition, and were opposed to labor, the Communists, and the radical students.

The image of the student activists found in the popular press often diverged sharply from the more mundane reality of their non-violent demonstrations, marches, and university occupations. However, the popular press, and in particular the conservative press, often transformed these actions into epic public spectacles with the intention of sensationalizing the protests as serious threats to democratic society. By using words and images drawn from the fascist period, the popular press distorted the generally non-threatening student activities into objects of fear. Conservative newspapers like the

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Corriere della Sera and La Stampa deliberately compared the events of the Valle Giulia in Rome and the June protests in Turin with the early days of fascism despite the obvious historical and political differences and the levels of violence.\(^{324}\)

Along with this misleading historical analogy, the press used the language of the Cold War to increase the public’s fear that a communist revolution led by the adherents of the New Left was imminent. In some instances, two contradictory streams of thought, fascism and New-Left communism, were fused into a model of “Left-wing fascism.” It was the German social philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, who first formulated the concept of Linksfaschismus or “left-wing fascism,” to criticize the radical activists of the 1960s for emulating the fascists of the 1930s.\(^{325}\) In Italy, this charge of “Left-wing fascism” was directed against the supporters of Mao and other Third World revolutionaries. The media dubbed them, “filocinesi” a title which for older, anti-communist Italians “conjured up the red menace and the yellow peril all in one.”\(^{326}\)

The students principal support came from the Communist press. In the late 1960s, the PCI (Italian Communist Party) controlled about 8-10% of the entire Italian press and its official news organ, L’Unità, was second only to Milan’s Corriere della Sera in daily circulation.\(^{327}\) L’Unità consistently depicted student protests as democratic and orderly struggles for university reform. On February 28, 1968, shortly after the first serious police actions against student activists throughout Italy, L’Unità published an article on page two entitled, “A Communication from the Direction of the PCI—The


\(^{325}\) Jürgen Habermas, Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform (Frankfurt aM: Suhrkamp, 1969).
Communists support a renewed and democratic University.” The article declared the party’s support for the students and denounced the recent police brutality toward peaceful activists along with the “press organs of the grand bourgeoisie” that had irresponsibly tried to discredit and slander the students. The article closed with its firm commitment to the student reform movement,

“The direction of the PCI pledges all of its organizations in active solidarity with the battles to renew the Italian university, and denounces the serious repressive action that has taken place during the police intervention in the universities, the punitive measures of the academic authorities, and the rapidly growing number of student arrests by the police.” 328

L’Unità’s defense of the students was an exception among the vast amount of daily criticism in the Italian press. Moreover, it may not have furthered the students’ cause. Just as the conservative press may have provoked student outrage with its inflammatory criticism, L’Unità may have encouraged more extreme action. Also, the newspaper’s praise was never backed by a strong political commitment from the Communist Party.

The students themselves sought to oppose the slanted journalism of the conservative press. Former student activist in Turin, Peppino Ortoleva recalled stealing copies of La Stampa when they were first delivered to newsstands at 3 or 4 o’clock in the morning and writing “corrected” articles in the activists’ mimeographed newspaper, Controstampa (“Anti-Stampa”). 329 In an interview with oral historian Luisa Passerini, Ortoleva noted that the press and television became chief targets of student criticism

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326 Lumley, States of Emergency, 73.
327 Ginsborg, A History of Contemporary Italy, 291.
328 L’Unità, February 28, 1968, 2.
because of their “fake objectivity” and “conformism.” However, a quick glance at the Turin student press reveals its use of provocative and misleading rhetoric. *Controstampa* often reflected the style and tone of its enemy, *La Stampa* by portraying police as violent goons. Also, it expressed its own form of “fake objectivity” by placing *La Stampa*’s version of certain events side by side with, “The Facts” (*I fatti*).331

**The Students as “Left-wing fascists”**

Before examining the historical images constructed by the press during the 1960s, we must briefly consider how the Italian public viewed the legacy of fascism. One of the trademarks of postwar Italian politics was that all the major parties competed in advertising their anti-fascist credentials. Mainstream political opinion stressed the ephemeral nature of the twenty-one-year Mussolini dictatorship. Liberals, following the view of Neapolitan historian Benedetto Croce, called fascism a “parenthesis” in Italian history. The Church regarded it as simply another episode of dictatorship since the Risorgimento. Even the Marxists argued that fascism had been a distorted, if inevitable, form of the capitalist state during a frenzied era of mass mobilization.332

Using public opinion polls in the 1960s, the political scientist Samuel Barnes concluded that fascism appeared to have left little lasting influence on the political opinions of most Italians. Those whose attitudes had been formed prior to the dictatorship were unchanged by the era of fascism. Barnes’ survey did, however, indicate

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331 A partial collection of copies of *Controstampa* can be found in the papers of Marcello Vitale (*Fondo Marcello Vitale*) housed in the Centro Studi Piero Gobetti, Turin.
that pro-fascist sentiments remained most prevalent among older, well-educated Italians, the same cohort that comprised the university faculties during the 1960s.333

Several (but not all) scholars have accepted this interpretation, maintaining that Mussolini’s brand of fascism never transformed Italy’s politics, culture, and society as fully as did the Nazi dictatorship. Most nevertheless, like Barnes, acknowledge that the remnants of fascism did not disappear. Italy, having sided with the Allies in 1943, was never forced to submit to the occupation and de-Nazification imposed on the Germans or the épuration that took place in France. Many Fascist laws remained on the books, and a small but highly active neo-Fascist party, the Italian Social Movement (MSI) was allowed to exist and even won seats in the parliament. Like the other political parties, the MSI had its own university affiliate that mobilized a small but vocal contingent of ultra Right-wing students.334

During the university upheavals of the late 1960s, both sides took advantage of unexamined assumptions and self-serving versions of the past, using images from the Mussolini era to manipulate suppressed memories and emotions. Articles in the popular

333 Samuel H. Barnes, “The Legacy of Fascism: Generational Differences in Italian Political Attitudes and Behavior,” in *Comparative Political Studies* 5(April 1972): 41-57. Some exceptions would be the faculties of Turin and Trent which had a preponderance of Resistance members and younger professors, respectively.
334 On the remnants of Mussolini’s fascism in the postwar era see: Giovanni DeLuna and Marco Revelli, *Fascismo/Antifascismo: Le idée, le identità* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1995); Duggan and Wagstaff, eds., *Italy in the Cold War*, 3-6; Spencer M. Di Scala, who noted that the PCI even allowed former Fascists to join their party after the war, “Resistance Mythology,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 4(Spring 1999): 67-72; James E. Miller, “Who Chopped Down that Cherry Tree? The Italian Resistance in History and Politics, 1945-1988,”*Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 4(Spring 1999): 37-54; and Paul Ginsborg, who noted that nostalgia for the Fascist regime remained strong in the south and had contributed to the electoral success of the Fronte dell’ Uomo Qualunque (Common Man’s Front) in *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 98-100.
press employed terms such as “fascists,” “squadristi,” and “March on Rome,” in their attacks on the students. The students, on their part, linked their occupations of university buildings and their overtures to the workers with the anti-fascist resistance. Each side contested the other’s characterization. What one Left-wing scholar depicted as a violent confrontation in Turin between Left- and Right-wing student radicals, the conservative press reported as a battle between “Left-wing fascists” and the local police.

In another example, after the initial occupation of the Palazzo Campana on November 30, 1967, a group of about thirty neo-fascist students (Missini) attempted to disperse the peaceful student occupants but were repulsed by the left-wing students. La Stampa reported only that a handful of radicals had occupied the Palazzo Campana. It also published a letter by a female student claiming that only 500 of the 19,000 students enrolled at the University had participated in the occupation. The writer deplored the young people’s political apathy and absenteeism, condemned both the Right and Left-wing groups, and warned that democracy was once more menaced by a lack of civic engagement. This student further claimed that there was a “silent majority” who did not support the university occupations and had been pushed aside by the more militant groups who were intent on destroying the university. Former activist Marco Revelli refuted the press’s repeated claim of a “radical minority” pressing its extremist agenda upon an unwilling majority of “sane” students by noting that 815 out of a total of 1,254 students voted to continue the occupation of the Palazzo Campana in November 1967.

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337 Avanti! November 30, 1967, 8.
Ironically, the occupants' "unauthorized" referendum saw a larger voter turn out than the official student elections of the past.\textsuperscript{339}

The father of a student at the University wrote an angry letter to the editors of \textit{La Stampa} that also recalled the years of fascism and connected the Left-wing occupants of the Palazzo Campana to Mussolini's \textit{squadristi}. Identifying himself as "an indignant ex-partisan," he explained that he had worked long hours to send his son to the university and demanded the rector call in the authorities to evacuate the occupants. He characterized the student protesters as participants in an "antidemocratic spectacle" and ended his letter with direct references to the fascist era.

"I do not, in fact, believe that there is a big difference between the March on Rome and the occupation of the University. The weapons remain the same: intimidation and contempt for democratic laws."\textsuperscript{340}

Following a bomb scare in the Palazzo Campana on February 8, 1968, \textit{La Stampa} targeted the Left-wing students for its heaviest reproaches, portraying them as "\textit{filocinesi}" who employed violence much as the fascists had done forty years earlier. An unidentified reader wrote to the editor on February 21 asking if the "kicks and punches given without restraint by the 'cinesi' were part of the 'Charter of Demands'"? The reader declared that such acts were "pure hooliganism."\textsuperscript{341} \textit{La Stampa} also publicized several

\begin{footnotes}
\item[338] \textit{La Stampa}, "Specchio dei tempi," December 3, 1967, 1, 2.
\end{footnotes}
clashes between Left and Right-wing students in which the “cinesi” responded to Roman salutes from neofascist students with shouts of “Mao—Mao—Mao.”\textsuperscript{342}

For readers glancing through the pages of \textit{La Stampa} in the spring of 1968, the photographs of students raising their hands in fascist salutes, even if they were really communist students mimicking neo-fascist intruders, undoubtedly provoked fears among older citizens. For the left-wing students, opposed to fascism but too young to have remembered the regime, the fascist salute could be given to opponents in a spirit of ridicule and derision. However, for the elders of Turin who had lived through the Fascist period, witnessed the public use of Roman salutes, or seen Mussolini during a state visit, the outstretched hand raised at an angle above shoulder level called forth painful memories. Figure 1\textsuperscript{343} taken in March 1968 showed these Roman salutes. In this figure, the students are depicted as rowdy, but not necessarily violent individuals. They even appear to be having a good time, almost as if they are at a soccer match, not plotting to topple the state. It is possible that the press sought also to reassure their readers that these left-wing fascists were really just college students, not dangerous revolutionaries.

Although \textit{La Stampa} may have sought only to sell copy with these provocative symbols from the fascist past, some readers feared a revival of these troubled times. One wrote, “I have the clear impression of living in a period of the affirmation of fascism. It is not important if it is called ma-ma-maismo or something similar (the labels do not matter, the contents do).” He accused the students being an extremist minority who preyed on the weakness of the state as had happened when fascism took control of Italy.

\textsuperscript{342} \textit{La Stampa}, February 21, 1968, 2.
Their hero, Mao was as ruthless a dictator as Hitler and Mussolini.\textsuperscript{344} This reader had absorbed the press’s version of history, conflating the filocinesi with the Black Shirts of 1922.\textsuperscript{345}

Although \textit{La Stampa’s} headlines often denigrated the students with bombastic words, some of its staff held a different view. The newspaper assigned a rookie journalist named Maria Valabrega, to cover the student activities exclusively. Most likely chosen because of her age and journalistic abilities, \textit{La Stampa’s} editors felt Maria would be able to get more information than an older reporter. Former activist Peppino Ortoleva remembered, “Maria was given a very difficult job because she was our age and met with us nearly every day, but she worked for them (\textit{La Stampa}).”\textsuperscript{346} Thirty years later, she claimed that she had tried to report on the activities and developments within the Turin student movement judiciously and accurately. However, the older editors wrote the headlines to her articles which she felt were often too harsh (\textit{troppo duro}) or even erroneous (\textit{sbagliato}). For Valabrega, the generational conflict of the late 1960s had invaded her work place. She remembered reassuring some of her distressed colleagues who had children involved in the occupation and had not seen them in a week but whom she had seen almost every day. \textit{La Stampa}, she claimed, had at first taken an overly harsh line toward the students because, like the rest of society, its editors did not understand the movement, she also noted that the newspaper became, in effect, the main

\textsuperscript{343} \textit{La Stampa}, March 3, 1968, 2.
\textsuperscript{344} \textit{La Stampa}, “Specchio dei tempi,” March 14, 1968, 2.
\textsuperscript{345} Police and legal records in Turin have indicated that very few of the university activists resorted to the levels of violence as suggested by this analogy, see: Chapter IV on the police.
\textsuperscript{346} Peppino Ortoleva interviewed by the author. Turin: April 18, 1997.
publicist for the activists. Valabrega’s testimony indicated that similar to the workers at FIAT or some members of the Turin police, the staff at La Stampa may have been divided between young workers who felt sympathy for the students, the parents who worried for their children’s safety, and the older workers who feared them.

La Stampa was not the only major newspaper to promote the image of left-wing fascism, Milan’s conservative Corriere della Sera also adopted a similar tactic in describing student demonstrations at the State University of Milan. In Figure 14 “The failed march of the Filocinesi,” we see students dressed in full battle gear with helmets, clubs, and bandanas to protect them from tear gas. As indicated by the student on the right, the “filocinesi” appear to be on the march and intent on violence. The students were protesting against Socialist Party leader Pietro Nenni’s decision to collaborate with the governing majority. Coupled with the headlines and captions, the article blends the imagery of the past with contemporary Cold War fears. The article explains that the “Chinese” students were dispersed by a group of ex-Partisans thus merging recollections of the struggle against fascism at the end of the Second World War with the fear of Chairman Mao’s cultural revolution.

In March, following the events of the Valle Giulia in Rome, the popular press selectively highlighted the politicians’ condemnation of the students and praise for the police. Turin’s La Stampa, Milan’s Corriere della Sera, and the Vatican’s Osservatore Romano all headlined Minister Taviani’s declaration that “The police do not defend the

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348 Valabrega characterized the protest years as “wonderful,” “full of strong ideals” that were all lived in “good faith” and that only a small number had taken dangerous paths like the Red Brigades. Interview with the author. Turin: June 6, 1997.
position of the government, they defend the legal state. They defend democracy.\textsuperscript{350}

Although the more conservative \textit{Osservatore} gave less coverage to the remarks by Communist and Socialist politicians than did \textit{La Stampa}, both newspapers reproduced Taviani’s remarks almost entirely, particularly his laudatory depiction of the police and his warning that the weakness of the state had been one of the causes of fascism.\textsuperscript{351}

This selective reporting created a distorted image for many Italians. For northerners, the main source of news came from the anti-student \textit{Corriere della Sera} and \textit{La Stampa}.\textsuperscript{352} Readers saw the student demonstrators depicted as violent extremists. Provocative words, such as “disorder, confusion, and hooliganism,” were used to describe university unrest. Added to these glimpses of chaos in the Italian universities were the references to the early fascist period. There was a simple formula, that student unrest $\rightarrow$ filocinesi $\rightarrow$ fascist methods.

\textit{L’Unità} continued to defend the students, evoking the heroic legacy of the \textit{Resistenza}. On 21 January 1968, the newspaper printed a full-page pictorial article entitled, “From the Resistance to today.” By placing a photo of student anti-Vietnam demonstrations next to pictures of the anti-neo-fascist demonstrations in Genoa in 1960, and the protests for land reform in southern Italy during the late 1940s, \textit{L’Unità} implied that the student demonstrations fell naturally within the continuum of the Communists’ historic and continual struggle against Fascism.\textsuperscript{353} Most likely, \textit{L’Unità}’s positive

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{349} \textit{Il Corriere della Sera}, May 18, 1968, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{350} See \textit{Il Corriere della Sera}, March 2, 1968, 1; \textit{La Stampa}, March 2, 1968, 1; and \textit{L’Osservatore Romano}, March 3, 1968, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{351} \textit{La Stampa}, March 2, 1968, 1 and \textit{L’Osservatore Romano}, March 3, 1968, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{352} Mazzoleni, \textit{The Media in Western Europe}, 124-30.
\item \textsuperscript{353} \textit{L’Unità}, January 21, 1968, 10.
\end{itemize}
depiction of student activities helped feed the protesters self-image as contemporary members of a New Resistance to the remaining elements of fascism in Italy and the rest of the western world. However, as one former partisan and labor organizer noted, “the student movement praised the anti-fascist Resistance too much, they (the activists) were embarrassing to us.”

The Students as Figures of Ridicule

Along with these menacing depictions of student activism, the conservative press and some public figures of both the Left and Right, tended to present the student activists as figures of ridicule. The conservative press alternated between frightening images of Left-wing fascists and caricatures of naïve middle class kids who had been bamboozled by a romanticized view of Marxist revolution. To be sure, university students had eagerly bought thousands of cheap paperbacks about the lives of Third World revolutionaries such as Che Guevara and Fidel Castro from the self-styled Marxist publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. Their critics in the press styled them a group of young, bourgeois malcontents who claimed to represent the working class, but in reality, they were a privileged people in search of excitement, a view adopted by some of the workers of Turin.

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357 See Chapter IV, “The Workers: A Separate Path to Revolution”
The editors of the conservative press were not alone in viewing the students as spoiled kids out for a lark. Prominent members of the Communist Party would also heap scorn on the students and even sympathize with the police. This patronizing characterization underscored the conflict of generations between young people who had experienced the affluence of the postwar years and their parents and grandparents who had lived through the Depression and the Second World War. In some respects the characterization of protesters as naughty children served two purposes; it reproached an ungrateful youthful cohort for not respecting the sacrifices of their elders, and reassured parents that the New Left radicalism was little more than a passing fad.

The public ridicule of the students highlighted the activists’ dilemma of wanting to both have fun and to have their politics taken seriously. In her observations of student protesters, political scientist Barbara Myerhoff noted that they were caught in a paradoxical situation because their political goals demanded hard work and asceticism, but their cultural goals of hedonism, “grooving and turning-on,” contradicted the seriousness required of their political goals. However, the students’ outrageous clothes, Marxist slogans, and partying did make a political statement by simply outraging the administration and surrounding community.358 Luisa Passerini has acknowledged that the students often used mockery and ridicule to subvert authority.359

Turning to the first form of ridicule, the characterization of the students as misguided followers of the New Left, the press tried to convince the Italians that the

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“Maoists” had been misled by a bogus form of communism. The Italian Communists and Socialists, similar to their comrades in France, continued to support the traditional organs of the Left, the official trade unions. Furthermore, the Italian Communist Party was the largest in Western Europe and could claim strong ties to the anti-Fascist resistance. To traditional Marxists, the New Left, inspired by Third World revolutionaries and the German-American philosopher Herbert Marcuse, represented a bourgeois deviation from the old Left. Ultimately, these supporters of the Old Left bolstered the view of the professors, politicians, and the popular press that the Left-wing students were dupes to the “infantilism” of the New Left.\footnote{For a scathing criticism of the student Left see: Raymond Aron, \textit{The Elusive Revolution; Anatomy of a Student Revolt}, trans. Gordon Clough (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969).}

In a notorious incident at the University of Rome in May 1968, one professor turned his examination in Latin literature into an attack on the ideology of the New Left. Professor Ettore Paratore asked his students to translate the “Thoughts of Mao” into Latin. According to the \textit{Corriere della Sera}, the young activists initially declared the examination, “too difficult” and, “useless and superfluous,” and forced Professor Paratore to reschedule the examination for a later date. Supposedly, a group of 100 “moderates” later arrived at the University demanding to be allowed to take the exam on the scheduled day. One reader in Milan asked why the student Maoists would object to translating the thoughts of their leader into Latin.\footnote{\textit{Corriere della Sera}, May 15, 1968, p. 5.} The following day, the \textit{Corriere} ran a larger article describing how the fanatical Roman activists had burned a copy of the Latin examination and called for Paratore’s head. The students later invaded Paratore’s lecture hall and
disrupted classes in the Faculty of Letters.\textsuperscript{362} Clearly some of the professoriate and the popular press used this incident to not only ridicule the political sincerity of the “filocinesi” but also to depict activists as lazy students in comparison with the “moderates” who were willing to take the examination. These same students who refused to translate the “Thoughts of Mao” into Latin at the University of Rome were the part of the same group who had chanted such slogans as “Viva Mao!” and “We are not with Dubcek—We are with Mao!”\textsuperscript{363}

Prominent intellectuals also questioned the earnestness of the students’ commitment to communist revolution. The poet and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini, who was a member of the Communist Party, lampooned the student rebels who had fought with police during the Battle of the Valle Giulia in a poem that was published in the weekly newsmagazine, \textit{L’Espresso}. In his piece, “The Communist Party to the Young!” Pasolini lambasted the New Left as nothing more than spoiled children of the bourgeoisie who had adopted Marxism out of boredom. He wrote,

\begin{quote}
“\textit{It’s sad. The polemic against the PCI should have been made during the first half of the past decade. You are late children. And it doesn’t matter at all if then you weren’t born… Now the journalists of all the world (including those of television) kiss (as I believe one still says in the language of the Universities) your ass. Not me, friends. You have the faces of spoiled children. Good blood doesn’t lie. You have the same bad eye. You are scared, uncertain, desperate (very good!!) but you also know how to be}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{362} \textit{Corriere della Sera}, May 16, 1968, 5.
bullies, blackmailers, and sure of yourselves;
petit-bourgeois prerogatives, friends.
When yesterday at Valle Giulia you fought
with policemen,
I sympathized with the policemen!
Because policemen are children of the poor…”

Pasolini’s poem not only mocked the students for believing they could represent the working class but also expressed his regret for the Communist Party’s lack of a vigorous political opposition to Christian Democracy in the 1950s.

Pasolini’s view was echoed by the French philosopher Raymond Aron. In June 1968, at a conference held in Paris that included Aron and Jean Paul Sartre, Aron caustically characterized the university demonstrations as a crisis of utopianistic delirium. The Corriere, which printed Aron’s scathing criticism of the Paris “dilettantes” and Rome’s “Mussolini-Marxists,” branded the student ideology as a type of “anarchofascism.” Aron’s Liberal and Pasolini’s leftist criticism insisted that the students did not understand their own Marxist rhetoric, did not represent the lower class that they wanted to “liberate,” and were playing a dangerous game that had led to real violence both in Rome and Paris. That similar criticisms came from two different sides of the political fence also suggests that a generational conflict may also have played a role in both Pasolini and Aron’s attacks on the students.

Ordinary citizens also ridiculed the students’ attachment to the New Left and concurred with Pasolini’s contention that the university protesters were spoiled children

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365 *Corriere della Sera*, June 28, 1968, 3.
of the bourgeoisie. Amedeo Chiarpotto from Turin wrote a letter to *La Stampa* noting that he had heard that Chairman Mao had called the young Chinese students out to the rice fields to help bring in the harvest and asked, “What are our young ‘Maoists’ waiting for...let’s go help the farmers bring in the grain.”

Form the other side of the political fence; *L’Unità* continued to affirm the legitimacy of the students’ commitment to Marxism. In an editorial by Maurizio Ferrara, one of the PCI’s Central Committee members, the students were applauded as allies of the Communist Party’s struggle for real university reform. Ferrara, while admitting that some of the student leaders had used extremist and outdated material, they had learned from Lenin the importance of the battle for freedom, autonomy, and social openness. Ferrara also criticized the “anti-student montage” found on the pages of the *Corriere della Sera* and Rome’s *Il Messaggero*.

Although it is impossible to gauge the students’ true attachment to the New Left, Raymond Aron’s contention that the rebels were performing a poorly rehearsed revival of the Revolutions of 1848 and had turned campuses into carnivals had an element of truth. Political Scientist Barbara Myerhoff also noted that the revolution was supposed to be “fun.” Myerhoff argued that although the students’ final aims were serious, the methods to draw attention to their cause demanded that the protests be antic and spontaneous. One of these students told Myerhoff that the zaniness of the demonstrations was deliberate, to draw media attention to their demands; “If we don’t provide a good

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366 *La Stampa*, June 18, 1968, 2.
368 Raymond Aron, *The Elusive Revolution*. 

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show, we won’t get on the air.” 369 This image of the students “playing at revolution” stands in stark contrast to the portrayal of the students as dangerous left-wing fascists and further highlights the Italian press and public’s equivocal relationship with the protesters of the late 1960s.

In Italy, the transition from quiet protest to revolutionary carnival occurred at the beginning of 1968 with the “white occupations” (scioperi bianchi). 370 Former activist Marco Revelli noted that with the white occupations, the classrooms became “stages” and the movement became a “spectacle.” 371 Although they failed to spread the ideology of revolution, these occupations did turn professors into objects of ridicule and helped undermine their authority. Peppino Ortoleva remembered one occasion when he and other activists went to a class carrying giant paper flowers that blocked everyone’s view of the professor and elicited giggles from the entire classroom. 372

Similar to the press’s attempt to construct an image of student activists as misguided followers of the New Left, the popular press succeeded in depicting demonstrators as playing a game of revolution. Returning to Figure 8 which appeared in La Stampa in May 1968 and captured female students giggling and laughing as they escorted the newly freed Guido Viale from prison. 373 Dressed informally, these “flower children” seem more like players carrying their hero off the soccer field than dangerous revolutionaries. Such playful imagery suggested that young people were naturally

370 For a description of the scioperi bianchi form the perspective of a professor, see Chapter III.
373 La Stampa, May 10, 1968, 2.
rebellious and was perhaps meant to reassure readers these incidents would eventually subside once the demonstrators became more mature.

In sharp contrast to *La Stampa*’s image of ridiculous revolutionaries, *L’Unità* consistently depicted student activists as orderly and alert members of a democratic movement. Figure 15 shows a peaceful, well-organized demonstration of students held at the University of Trent in November 1967. The students appeared well dressed, attentive, disciplined, and committed to reform. The article’s headline read, “An Important Moment of Democratic Action in the University,” and reported that the sociology students wanted a profound reform of the methods and contents of their courses and that they comprised a new “avanguardia.” Such a description also reflected the self-image of the PCI, which had always considered itself a “civil” opposition to the Italian government since the inception of the Republic.

*L’Unità* remained a lone voice. The *Corriere* and *La Stampa* continued to depict the students as disorganized, lethargic rebels pretending to lead a revolution under an assortment of banners, flags, and slogans that originated from one of their Marxist heroes of the Third World. *La Stampa* declared on July 9 that, “The student ‘rebels’ will promote actions in the piazza after summer vacation,” mocking those activists who put the revolution on hold until after they returned from the beach.

Linked to this image of bourgeois students playing at revolution was the related image that portrayed student demonstrators as simply ill-bred children. Some members of the general public, politicians and some of the popular press played upon class rivalries to

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foster the image that the most radical student activists were the spoiled offspring of wealthy parents. A reader from Perugia complained about the “unbelievable” act of 100 high school students who had occupied their liceo in Milan. Enzo Bagnolini expressed shock that these “young kamikazes of occupation” would disturb authority and “trample democratic freedom under foot in the schools.” Chastising the ungrateful students, he suggested that they should go down to Sicily to help victims of a recent earthquake. Like Aron and Pasolini, this writer reproached the ungrateful students who he felt should drop their fantasies of proletarian revolution and become more involved in the immediate problems of Italian society.376

One of the most striking visual examples of press ridicule directed against spoiled student activists appeared in La Stampa on March 26, 1968. Figure 16 shows Turin student leaders, Laura DeRossi and her fiancée, Luigi Bobbio meeting with DeRossi’s parents after their release from jail.377 The DeRossis were portrayed as concerned, bourgeois parents, and Laura is depicted as a “daddy’s girl” rather than an “extremist” student leader. In this picture, La Stampa hinted that many of the activists like Laura DeRossi were simply bored, wealthy kids who had been swept up by the demonstrations. Laura’s father, a wealthy building contractor and owner of a metalworking business in Turin, was clearly a member of the upper middle class and had provided his daughter with a classical high school education and money for the university. His social standing was indicated in the photograph by his overcoat and dress shirt and patronizing attitude.

375 *La Stampa*, July 9, 1968, 3.
376 *La Stampa*, February 1, 1968, 5.
377 *La Stampa*, March 26, 1968, 2.
by the gentle expression of patting Laura. The photograph suggested that Senore
DeRossi was more concerned than angry that his daughter had been detained in jail for a
day. Years later, Laura admitted her bourgeois origins and expressed regret for upsetting
her parents during the protest years.\textsuperscript{378}

The Communist press chose a much different photograph for its article on the
release of Bobbio and DeRossi. Unlike the repentant Laura and sheepish Luigi in \textit{La
Stampa}’s Figure 16, \textit{L’Unità} captured the two activists in a loving embrace as seen in
Figure 17\textsuperscript{379}. The engaged couple were portrayed as overjoyed after their release. Their
experience in the city jail seemed to have not only strengthened their cause but also their
love. Furthermore, the picture emphasizes the support of their student companions,
rather than DeRossi’s parents, indicating the solidarity of the students rather than \textit{La
Stampa}’s seeming reproach for the misbehavior of “daddy’s little girl.”

\textit{La Stampa}’s depiction of students as spoiled rich kids stirring up trouble elicited
an emphatic response from its readers. As seen in Figures 15 and 16, the clothing of
nearly all of the student activists indicates that they came from bourgeois families and
were not the children of the workers. These apparent differences prompted some Italians
to echo Pasolini in comparing students with the workers. A reader of the \textit{Corriere della
Sera} in Milan, Adele Vittoria De Vecchi, wrote that the vandalism caused by student
demonstrations should be paid for by increasing the tuition for university students. De

\textsuperscript{378} Laura DeRossi interviewed in: Luisa Passerini, \textit{Autobiography of a Generation}, 24-25. Laura DeRossi
later wrote a critical commentary on Passerini’s book in a periodical called \textit{Indice} in which she claimed
Passerini had taken much of the interview out of context. DeRossi claimed that although she came from a
wealthy family, her father was not a repressive, conservative “padrone” as may have been implied in
Passerini’s work.
\textsuperscript{379} \textit{L’Unità}, March 26, 1968, 2.
Vecchi further argued that the students could express their views without resorting to “absurd acts of vandalism” and the “student ‘signori’ (lords) ought to learn from the workers who protest...but always behave properly.”\(^{380}\) The text of the letter conveyed two messages: the students were affluent destroyers of university property, and the students should follow the example of the workers who not only behaved decently but also have, by implication, legitimate reasons for protest.

We have seen how the popular press, politicians, intellectuals, and some members of the Italian public constructed a dual image of university demonstrators. One image depicted the activists as dangerous Left-wing fascists resorting to tactics reminiscent of the early years of fascism. Such an image provoked fear in the viewers and magnified the tensions between the student protesters and the larger society in the late 1960s. Rekindling old and personal memories among many Italians, the characterization of student demonstrations as a new version of *squadrismo*, attempted to foster the belief that the student protest movement was a genuine threat to Italian society.

The second image portrayed student activists as figures of ridicule. In stark contrast to the Left-wing fascist image of the “Filocinesi;” the student “Maoisti” became humorous caricatures of middle-class kids playing a game of revolution. These faux-revolutionaries waved the Vietcong flag and carried posters of Chairman Mao similar to the *tifosi*\(^{381}\) at a soccer match. The press also represented the activists as spoiled children of the bourgeoisie in order to play upon class tensions within Italian society and sell copy

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\(^{380}\) *Corriere della Sera*, April 10, 1968, 5, the word “signori” in Italian denotes more than simply gentleman, in this case, it also implies in a sarcastic manner that the students are part of the city’s elite.

\(^{381}\) In Italian, “*tifosi*” refers to crazed soccer fans. The word comes from the Italian word for typhoid because these fans often act like they have a kind of illness.
with their sensational stories. From the student Left’s perspective, the workers would eventually reap benefits from the initial uprisings in the universities, but from the perspective of the press and the Old Left, the student New Left was no more than a brief period of disobedience among the children of the bourgeoisie.
CHAPTER 6

THE NATIONAL DIMENSION II: ITALY’S POLITICIANS CONFRONT THE ISSUE OF UNIVERSITY REFORM

While Italy’s youth marched in the city streets demanding an end to the old university carrying the banners of Mao Tse Tung and Che Guevara, the national politicians arose from their legislative torpor to deal with educational reform. In the previous chapter, we observed some of the theatrical discourse found in the popular press with its numerous references to democracy, the Resistance, academic freedom and anticommunism, but the real story of university reform is much less spectacular. Although many politicians echoed the rhetoric of the popular newspapers in their speeches before the Italian Parliament, the movement toward university reform was ponderous and spasmodic. Similar to the university professors in Turin, the politicians in Italy’s lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, paid serious attention to the students only when they took over city streets in the spring of 1968. In his study of the students’ impact on politics, Guido Quazza, a professor of education and supporter of the student reforms in Turin, believed that Italy’s political leaders, including the communists, had been taken
completely by surprise by the events of 1967-68. In the end, however, the protracted battle for university reform yielded limited results.\textsuperscript{382}

The historian Giuseppe Ricuperati, has argued that the failure of reform in Italy during the 1960s stemmed chiefly from the weaknesses of Aldo Moro’s center-left government. The Socialists’ decision to join with the Christian Democrats created an untenable political constellation that ended the previous corporatist political process of Italian governments, but ultimately led to political gridlock. Ricuperati disputes the students who blamed capitalist conservative forces, claiming that it was the factiousness of the center-left majority that stalled all attempts at university reform. He blames the Unified Socialist Party for breaking with its Christian Democratic partners, because Minister of Education Luigi Gui’s reform bill did not go far enough.\textsuperscript{383} Four other factors should be added: the inherent weaknesses of education reform bill number 2314, the strength of the political opposition on both the Left and Right, the vested interests of politicians who also held university posts, and the actions of the students themselves.\textsuperscript{384}

In the immediate postwar period, many Left-wing members of the Resistance had called for a radical reconstruction of the educational system to match the rebuilding of the Italian economy. However, the concentration of political power in the hands of the conservative Christian Democratic Party ensured that no radical experiments would take place. The DC’s first Minister of Public Instruction, a professor of law at the Vatican’s


University di Laterano, Guido Gonella, resisted any expansion of the role of the state in Italian education, fearing that this would strengthen the forces of atheism and communism. He also tried to maintain the power of the Catholic Church’s parochial schools at the expense of public institutions. The DC’s opposition to state intervention in public education inhibited the growth of public schooling during the late 1940s. A survey from 1951 revealed that 12.8% of Italians were illiterate and a staggering 46% had only an elementary education. Pope John XXIII’s drastic departure from the Church’s earlier: political support of the DC, along with the growing power of the Left, forced the Christian Democrats to take a new look at education in the early 1960s.

In 1961, the national government opened access to all the university science faculties to the graduates of technical high schools. The following year, compulsory public education was extended to fourteen years of age, a reform that the Left had advocated since the founding of the Republic, and in 1965, the university entrance examinations were abolished, opening access to all graduates of the liceo. The government also created a non-partisan “Committee of Inquiry” to work on the reform of higher education.

By July 1963, the committee submitted its findings to the Minister for Public Instruction, Luigi Gui, recommending many far reaching reforms and a massive

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384 For an example of how the students sabotaged reform themselves at the University of Turin, see Chapter III.
386 Based on a 1951 survey, in Ginsborg, A History of Contemporary Italy, 410.
expansion in the number of teachers and schools at all levels. The universities, in particular, required a massive overhaul with the reorganization of the old labyrinthine bureaucracy into departments along the lines of the English model. The Committee also envisioned a semester system, a reduction in the number of examinations, greater coordination of graduate training with the needs of industry, a massive increase in the number of professors, and the construction of new universities in the underrepresented South. The Committee of Inquiry’s recommendations, if implemented, would have eliminated overcrowding, cleared obstacles to graduation, and opened university admissions to working class Italians. Had some of these ideas been implemented in the early 1960s, the student revolt may have never reached the explosive level it attained in 1968.

From the beginning, Minister Gui obstructed the Committee of Inquiry’s bold visions of a renovated Italian university. Before joining the Parliament in 1946 as a member of the Catholic Action Party, Gui had taught history and philosophy at a liceo in Padua. A devout Catholic, he has been described as a conservative, neo-Thomist, who had been educated in Catholic schools and maintained close relations with professors at the Catholic University of Milan. Like his predecessor Guido Gonella, Gui held a negative view of secular education, writing in the journal Civitas in 1956, that the young

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388 It is important to note that only a minority of students continued on to the liceo. Canestri, “Scuola e politica in Italia dalla Resistenza al Sessantotto,” 299.
391 Gui received his laurea in history and philosophy from the Augustinianum dell’ Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in 1937 and later attended the Scuola di perfezionamento in Filosofia of the Università Cattolica. See Tra Ragione di Stato e Ragione dell’ Uomo: contributi per una cultura della pace offerti a
Republic should continue to support parochial schools. He manifested his anti-communism openly, publishing a book entitled, *Il sole non spunta ancora in Russia* (The Sun still does not Rise in Russia) in 1948. Thus, any educational reform penned by Gui would be conservative in scope and carry his party’s bias against extensive state involvement.

In March 1964, Minister Gui appointed his own Commision for Scholastic Programming to devise a university reform bill. The Commission was chaired by Maria Badaloni, a former school teacher from Rome, and president of the “Association of Catholic Teachers.” Like Gui, Badaloni was a Christian Democrat who strongly supported parochial schools. At this early stage of the legislative process we can see how the extensive reform proposals originally formulated by the multi-party Committee of Inquiry came to be filtered through a conservative lens by Gui and Badaloni. The commission’s work was also hindered by a budgetary impasse. The result was the Pieraccini Plan which proposed a *numerus clausus* or limitation on the number of university enrollments similar to that in West Germany. According to Communist Deputy Rossana Rossanda, the plan would have limited the university system to granting

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394 Ricuperati, 18.


396 Gaetano Pieraccini, a Socialist, had been appointed Minister of the Budget to help keep the fragile center-left coalition together and had advocated a more systematic, long-term plan for the federal budget. The Pieraccini Plan for the economy ultimately died with the center-left government in 1968. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 280-81.
only 40,000 diplomas a year. Such a restriction would have created a significant bottleneck, because 44,163 students had enrolled in Italian universities between 1960 and 1963 with an annual average increase in enrollments of over 20,000 new students per year. Nevertheless, Gui’s plan, like that of the West German government, came to include a numerus clausus.

On May 4, 1965, Minister Gui presented his university reform bill to the Chamber of Deputies. Reform Bill number 2314 or the “Gui Bill” was to be shepherded through Parliament by Gui and the powerful Giuseppe Ermini, who had been a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1945. Gui, who planned to defend his bill at all costs, mistakenly expected an easy victory based on the combined votes of the coalition Socialists and the Christian Democrats. Along with the restriction on enrollments, the bill proposed a three-tiered structure of degrees, from a one-year diploma to the traditional university laurea. The plan would also have preserved the traditional powers of the professors, allowing them to continue to hold positions outside the

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398 Gui presented this data on university enrollments to the *Camera dei Deputati*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollments</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>176,193</td>
<td>71,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>191,790</td>
<td>76,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>205,965</td>
<td>82,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>225,796</td>
<td>86,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>240,234</td>
<td>94,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>259,338</td>
<td>101,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>297,783</td>
<td>107,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67*</td>
<td>329,326</td>
<td>115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68*</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Projected

Data from *AP* 41 (January 17, 1968): 42427


400 The Italian laurea is basically equivalent to a Master’s Degree in the United States, although there is no Italian equivalent to the American Bachelor’s Degree.
university. Overall, the plan’s conservative measures fell far short of the Committee of Inquiry’s bold vision for reconstructing the Italian university.\footnote{On the conservative nature of the Gui Bill see: Ginsborg, \textit{A History of Contemporary Italy}, 303 and Ricuperati, “La Politica Scolastica Italiana dal Centro-Sinistra alla Contestazione Studentesca,” 421-22.}

Both the Left and the Right criticized Gui’s plan. To the Communists and many of the Socialists, Bill 2314 was an inadequate solution. To Catholics and Liberals, it went too far, threatening the traditional freedoms of the professors. Ironically, in light of Gui’s efforts to preserve the independence of Italy’s parochial universities, the plan was sharply criticized by a Committee of Catholic Professors as a state intrusion into academic life.\footnote{Ricuperati, “La Politica Scolastica Italiana dal Centro-Sinistra alla Contestazione Studentesca,” 420.}

The issue of university reform moved through the Italian Parliament in fits and starts from 1965 to 1968. The Christian Democrats along with the majority of their coalition partners the Socialists (PSU) initially defended the Gui plan as the most practical solution to the problems of the university. However, Aldo Moro’s center-left coalition grew increasingly fragile. The news of police repression against student demonstrators in February 1968 and the public outcry following the Battle of the Valle Giulia in March drove a wedge between the two disparate partners. The Socialists denounced the police brutality in Rome, while the Christian Democrats, including Gui, attempted to use the student explosion at the Valle Giulia to call for immediate passage of the reform bill. Gui’s main opponent within the government was an ex-Partisan and historian named Tristano Codignola.\footnote{Socialist Deputy Sanna was severely critical of the government’s behavior during the Valle Giulia incidents, claiming that Gui had conspired with the Rector of the University of Rome to call in the police and force immediate passage of the Gui Bill. Socialist Tristano Codignola also charged the Rector of the}
Along with these fissures within the governing majority, the Communists and the conservative Liberals voiced steady and ascerbic criticism of the Gui Plan. The Communists, the second most powerful party in the Italian Parliament, viewed the plan as nothing more than an attempt by the DC to maintain the old university with its hierarchical structures and restricted access. A young Sardinian deputy, Luigi Berlinguer, proposed a much more radical reform bill that resembled the Committee of Inquiry’s proposals. His plan called for greater access to the university for the children of the working class, democratization and reorganization of university structures, a closer relationship between the university and industry, and a massive increase in the number of professors and universities in the neglected regions of Italy. The Communists concurred with the students’ view that the traditional university served only to perpetuate Italy’s social inequities. A group of female Communist deputies, Rossana Rossanda, Giorgina Levi, and Angiola Massucco Costa, became the spokeswomen for the students, denouncing police brutality and championing student ideas for reform. These women challenged the negative image of the students voiced by the conservative members of the Parliament.


404 AP 40(December 7, 1967): 41319-41334. In an article entitled, “La riforma Sullo e i problemi dell’ Università,” a PCI work group articulated the theoretical basis of the Communists’ reform plans, noting that access to schools and universities should be opened to all so that the education system would no longer remain a system of perpetuating class hierarchy, see: Rinascita 5(January 31, 1969): 12. Berlinguer was born in Sassari in 1932 and had been a Controller in Sardegna before his election to the Camera in 1963. Later he became a Professor of Legal History at the University of Siena in 1968. In the 1990s, he was
The Liberals also challenged the Gui Bill throughout the course of the sixth legislature. The leader of the Liberal opposition was a pugnacious, sixty-year-old southerner named Salvatore Valitutti who had once been the chancellor of the University for Foreigners in Perugia and rivaled the Communists as one of Gui’s bitterest foes.\textsuperscript{405} The Liberals opposed both the Communist and the Christian Democratic proposals, arguing that the Marxists wanted to demolish the old university and make all institutions state-run and laic, while the DC wanted to allow the state universities to decay at the expense of the free (parochial) universities.\textsuperscript{406} The Gui Bill, claimed Valitutti, lacked the drastic measures required to reform the universities while the Communists’ vision of a mass university would destroy the quality of public education. Sharing Max Weber’s conviction that the university had to be shielded from politics, he emphasized the relationship between democracy and higher education, asserting that, “Democratic society is both egalitarian and competitive. If it is forced only to be egalitarian and not competitive it will stagnate and disintegrate. In the long run, it must always be competitive…”\textsuperscript{407} Although the Liberals opposed the proliferation of Catholic “free” universities and the Marxian mass university, they offered no distinct alternative of their own.

\textsuperscript{405} Salvatore Valitutti was born in 1907 near Salerno and taught history and politics before becoming the Vice-Chancellor of the University for Foreigners in Perugia. Valitutti was elected a deputy to Parliament in 1963 and under the Andreotti and Cossiga governments in the 1970s and 1980s he held the position of Minister of Public Instruction, see Who’s Who in Italy 3rd Edition, ed. Otto J. Groeg (Milan: Who’s Who in Italy, 1980), 507. According to Giuseppe Ricuperati, Valitutti was instrumental in constructing an anti-Gui Bill alliance within the Chamber of Deputies, see Ricuperati, 421.

\textsuperscript{406} See remarks of Antonio Capua in: Atti Parlamentari: Discussioni (Camera dei Deputati) vol. 40 (December 11, 1967): 41412. [Hereafter abbreviated as AP]

Having outlined the parties’ views on university reform, we now turn to the Parliamentary debates in Italy’s lower house, the Chamber of Deputies. Although Minister Gui put his reform plan before the Chamber in May 1965, very little debate occurred until one year later after the death of Paolo Rossi at the University of Rome.⁴⁰⁸ Seventy thousand people, including Pietro Nenni, the leader of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) attended Rossi’s funeral, and the student and public outcry forced the Deputies to call for the dismissal of the aged Rector Giuseppe Papi⁴⁰⁹ and dust off neglected plans for university reform.⁴¹⁰

The parliamentary debate over Rossi’s death, which lasted from April 27 through June 1, 1966, pitted politicians of all political stripes against each other. Although the speakers debated the legacy of fascism and its threat to the postwar democracy, they paid little attention to the need for significant university reforms. The debate also showed a generational rift within Italy’s governing class, as older politicians from the Right and Left sought to display their anti-fascist credentials while younger deputies focused on other issues. The Socialist deputy Francesco Cacciatore, who had been a member of the PSI since 1923, along with his colleagues, blamed the violence at the University of Rome on “fascist hooligans,” emphasized that Rossi was a member of a democratic student organization, and demanded an investigation.⁴¹¹ Liberal deputy Aldo Bozzi, who was only five years younger than Cacciatore, connected the events directly with the menace of

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⁴⁰⁸ One month prior to Rossi’s death, a group of Communist deputies had attempted to renew the debate on educational reform following protests at the Liceo Parini in Milan. See remarks of Deputies ‘ngrao, Rossanda, Berlinguer, Natoli, Levi in: AP 22(March 25, 1966): 21616-21617.


⁴¹¹ Oliva e Rendi, Il movimento studentesco e le sue lotte, 16.
fascism when he shouted, "It is truly unthinkable that in 1966, after such experience with democracy...there can be manifestations of this type, which exalt nazism and the uncivil manifestations of fascism..." Bozzi also denounced the communists whom he claimed had likewise used violence to force political change, and he declared his party's opposition to all forms of totalitarianism and dictatorship.\footnote{Translation by the author. \textit{AP} 23 (April 27, 1966): 22578-79.}

The culmination of the Rossi debate occurred on 18 May, when the Chamber spent the entire day debating the incidents at the University of Rome. Minister Gui blamed the violence on overcrowding, noting that 16.2\% of all university students in Italy were enrolled at the University of Rome and claiming that his Ministry planned to build a second university in the capital.\footnote{\textit{AP} vol. 23 (May 17, 1966): 23246-47.} Gui's colleague, the Minister of the Interior and former member of the anti-fascist resistance in Genoa, Paolo Emilio Taviani (Christian Democrat) presented the government's official version of the events surrounding Rossi's death. Taviani upheld the Rector's decision to call the police and declared that, "the state must preserve democratic order." He also reminded his colleagues of the Law of December 3, 1947 and the Scelba Law of 1952 which formally outlawed the Fascist party and Fascist demonstrations.\footnote{The modern parts of the University of Rome had all been constructed during the Fascist period. \textit{AP} 23(May 18, 1966): 23322-23327.}

The radical left-wing deputy Sanna of the Italian Party of Proletarian Socialist Unity (PSIUP) criticized the government's characterization of the left-wing students as "undemocratic" and blamed the Right for the violence it had imposed throughout most of

\footnote{\textit{AP} vol. 23 (May 18, 1966): 23328.}
Italian history. Sanna’s remarks immediately provoked an angry reply from thirty-five-year-old MSI deputy Raffaele Delfino who claimed that the police had protected the left-wing students, blamed the Communists for threatening democracy, and pledged that the MSI would “help the government in this moment of general crisis of the state.” Another young MSI deputy, Angelo Nicosia, who dismissed the protests at the University of Rome as internecine battles among leftist groups, was the first parliamentarian to use the term “filocinesi” (“Maoist”) in a political debate.

Liberal deputy Valitutti accepted the government’s report on the events surrounding Rossi’s death but urged his colleagues to take immediate steps to reform and expand the universities. His colleague Giovanni Palazzolo voiced the Liberal call for an educational system shielded from politics, arguing that the Italian word for university, “ateneo,” derived from the Greek word “atheneum” which had been temples of science and culture, “Today,” he explained, “the atenei had been transformed into places of battle.” A group of Christian Democrats and Socialists led by Giuseppe Ermini and a former member of the Florentine Anti-fascist resistance, Tristano Codignola, submitted a written statement affirming their support of the government’s interpretation of the Rossi incident and calling for speedy passage of the Gui Bill. The Ermini/Codignola statement’s emphasis on the values of the Resistance struck a chord with a member of the parliamentary opposition, Communist deputy Pietro Ingrao. A former member of the

416 Ibid, 23331-33.
417 Ibid, 23333-23334.
418 Ibid, 23343.
419 Ibid, 23346.
Roman antifascist resistance, Ingrao offered his support for the Ermini/Codignola statement and appealed to his fellow deputies to democratize the universities, comparing his plea for reform to the partisans’ heroic struggle during the Second World War.\textsuperscript{420}

In its official report on Rossi’s death, the coalition government evoked the values of the Resistance, reaffirmed the autonomy of the universities, but also upheld the right of university administrators to take action if constitutional rights were in danger. The report blamed “fascist violence” for the tragedy that had occurred at the University of Rome and included only a cursory mention of the need to pass Bill 2314.\textsuperscript{421} The government’s statement thus underscored two contradictory aims. It ostensibly intended to do battle against the remaining vestiges of fascism in public life, but to do so, it supported police intervention in the universities. Before Rossi’s death, university autonomy had meant that campuses had been relatively free of any intrusion by outside authorities.

The battle between Left- and Right-wing students in Rome pushed the student demonstrations into the foreground of Italian political life. Although the Rossi debates had skirted the problem of university reform, they revealed a consensus among all the deputies that something had to be done.\textsuperscript{422} As indicated by the Liberal and Communists’ acceptance of the government’s position, the bitter divisions between the Left and Right had not yet manifested themselves in 1966.

After May 1966, the issue of reform lay dormant for nearly another year. In April 1967, the state visit of US Vice President Hubert Humphrey touched off a round of

\textsuperscript{420} AP vol. 23 (May 18, 1966): 23346-52.
\textsuperscript{421} Ibid, 23366.
\textsuperscript{422} Ibid, 23366.
student-led anti-Vietnam demonstrations throughout Italy followed by a wave of police repression. These demonstrations exposed a division within the center-left coalition as well as a growing level of political opposition. Most Liberals and Christian Democrats supported US policy, while the Communists and Socialists repudiated America’s war in Indochina.  

Except for the pleas for university reform by the Communists Rossana Rossanda and Giorgina Levi that followed a police assault on a night school student in Milan, this issue remained conspicuously absent from the April discussions.

The Parliamentary minutes of April 1967 revealed a few key characteristics about the government’s response to the students and to the issue of university reform. During the debate, the government, like the professors in Turin, remained passive, reacting to calls for reform but preferring to ignore the issue when the streets were quiet. Second, the Ministries of the Interior and Public Instruction frequently blamed student radicals or the political opposition for failings in educational policy. Third, the violence both at home in Italian universities and abroad in Vietnam, became divisive issues between the Christian Democrats and their partners, the Socialists. During this time of tension, the Christian Democrats (often seconded by the neo-Fascist MSI) usually sided with the forces of law and order and supported the US. The Socialists, on the other hand, found themselves on the side of the opposition Communists denouncing police brutality in the universities and the American intervention in Southeast Asia. The Socialists’ break with their coalition partners over the issue of police violence corrects Donatella Della Porta’s claim that the minority partners in the Center-Left governments of the late 1960s

consistently sided with the conservatives' “law and order” position. Della Porta’s view of coalition unanimity is more valid for the Grand Coalition in West Germany than for the Moro government in Italy.425

The new wave of university protest that struck Italy in the autumn of 1967 again forced educational reform to the top of the parliament’s agenda. Taking their typically reactive stance, the deputies reopened the debate in the wake of the occupations of November 1967. One day after the occupation of the Palazzo Campana, a Communist deputy from Turin, Giorgina Levi, implored her colleagues to take up the issue of school reform, noting that students were striking in the licei as well as the universities. Evoking the Resistance’s dreams of social reform, she declared that, “Democracy in the schools is still an abstract concept that has not been translated into the legal codes!”426 Levi was right, the Gui Bill had been placed before the Deputies two and a half years earlier.

The handful of Communist voices within the Chamber of Deputies that had called for serious university reform were unable to move the center-left coalition to action, but the students of Milan, Turin, Pisa, Florence and Trieste who seized university buildings in 1967 prompted the government to respond. On December 5, 1967, the first major debates on bill number 2314 began in the Chamber of Deputies. Now, however, Gui’s bill had to compete with three other reform plans: a communist bill proposed by Luigi

425 Della Porta may have made this claim in an effort to draw stronger parallels to her corresponding case study of political violence in West Germany, see: *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*, 192.
Berlinguer, a Liberal reform authored by Deputy Montanti, and even a plan from the neo-Fascist deputy Cruciani.427

In the debates over these various proposals, two visions of the university emerged. The conservative Christian Democrats, many Socialists, and a few neo-Fascists favored the traditional, meritocratic university that allowed the professors to maintain their leading roles as educators and public figures. These deputies felt that increased access to the universities for students who had not received a classical education at one of Italy’s licei would lower the quality of higher education. They also believed that Italian scholars should be allowed to remain in political life without relinquishing their university posts as did professors in the rest of Europe.428 The Communists, PSIUP, some Liberals and a handful of Socialists, called for a modern and democratic university that opened its doors to all classes and allowed the graduates of non-classical licei to enroll. Communist deputy Luigi Berlinguer argued that the question of whether professors should be allowed to work as politicians and continue teaching was a minor issue. What was needed, Berlinguer exclaimed, was a massive increase in the number of teachers and buildings.429 Angiola Massucco Costa echoed the students’ charges that the archaic Italian university was “notionalistic,” offering little room for creative thought and innovation. Similar to the West German students’ concept of the “Fachidiot” or “technician-idiot,” a scholar who had been narrowly overeducated in an obscure discipline, Massucco Costa implored her colleagues to listen to the protesters and recreate the Italian universities in partnership

427 AP 40(December 5, 1967): 41214.
428 See remarks by Deputies Grilli (MSI), Vedovato (DC), Ferrara-Cariota (PLI), and Barba (DC) in: AP 40(December 5, 1967): 41215-41236.

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with the emerging technological society. “They [the students] do not want to remain
closed in an ivory tower connected to conservative and abstract ideas, they want to utilize
the methods and techniques of research to ends relating directly to the social, cultural and
economic reality of the country.”\textsuperscript{430}

Returning to the more bombastic rhetoric typical of earlier debates, conservative
Deputy and Law professor, Giuseppe Bettiol (DC) characterized the students as
misguided communist revolutionaries, claiming that “compared to the unfree universities
in Eastern Europe, the Italian universities were not that bad,” and further adding that
those who “struggle against the university barons” were attacking Italy’s cultural leaders.
Bettiol agreed that the universities needed reform, but his rhetoric clearly reproached
student activists for their ignorance about the conditions in the universities of the
communist bloc.\textsuperscript{431}

The chamber’s debate over university reform continued into January 1968
punctuated by an increasing number of university occupations. The factious nature of the
Italian political system became evident in the cacophony of divergent voices and the
pompous pronouncements. Minister Gui’s conservatives sought to push Bill 2314
forward, while the Communists and Socialists demanded explanations for the increasing
acts of police violence against the university demonstrators,\textsuperscript{432} and the Liberals sought to

\textsuperscript{429} AP 40(December 7, 1967): 41319-41334.
\textsuperscript{430} AP 40(December 11, 1967): 41398.
\textsuperscript{431} AP vol. 40 (December 12, 1967): 41433.
\textsuperscript{432} Deputy Maria Cinciari Rodano (PCI) passionately defended the students of the Palazzo Campana and
demanded an explanation for the police repression. AP 41(January 10, 1968):42129.

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derail the Gui Bill before the May elections.\textsuperscript{433} By 11 January, the term “university crisis” could be found in the discourse used by both the Left and Right.\textsuperscript{434} Added to this parliamentary rancor, a devastating earthquake struck northwestern Sicily in the first week of January, forcing the government to turn its attention to the refugees. The Moro government proved as incapable of helping the Sicilians rebuild their shattered villages as it was of leading in the reform of the Italian university.\textsuperscript{435}

On 17 January 1968, the Liberal Salvatore Valitutti called for a vote that would block the Gui Bill from passing to the amendment phase of the Chamber’s debates hoping to keep alive further discussion of competing reform plans. However, this attempt to force the vote backfired, because the governing majority easily defeated the minority Liberals and their unlikely allies the Communists.\textsuperscript{436} The defeat of the Liberal motion ended the discussion of any alternative reform plans and opened the debates on various amendments to the Gui Bill.

During the last two weeks of January, the Deputies debated the first eight amendments to the Gui Bill and eventually accepted the plan to restructure the universities into departments along English lines.\textsuperscript{437} However, much of the deputies’ time was spent discussing the wave of police violence associated with the first university evacuations in Turin, Milan, Padua, Florence, Genoa and Naples. Members of all

\textsuperscript{433} Deputy Biaggi Francantonio (PLI) hinted on 9 January that the issue of university reform would probably have to wait for the next legislature. \textit{AP}\textsuperscript{41} (January 9, 1968): 42095.

\textsuperscript{434} \textit{AP}\textsuperscript{41} (January 11, 1968): 42216-42247.

\textsuperscript{435} On the earthquake and its aftermath, see Ginsborg, 345-47.

\textsuperscript{436} The Liberals’ vote to stop passage of the Gui Bill no. 2314 to the amendment phase was defeated by 291 nays (PSI, CD) to 183 yea (PCI, PLI, PSIUP), \textit{AP}\textsuperscript{41} (January 17, 1968): 42459.

\textsuperscript{437} On the amendment debates, see \textit{AP}\textsuperscript{41} (January 18, 1968): 42503-42539. On the passage of Article 8 on university departments, see Luigi Gui, \textit{Libro bianco sull’ università} (Rome: Abete, 1973), 376.
political parties questioned the government on police violence including a group of Christian Democrats who denounced the violation of university autonomy and the incursions on the students’ civil liberties.\textsuperscript{438}

This concern for the students would not last long. When the students adopted more aggressive tactics and invaded the city streets in February, the DC returned to its uniformly negative position. Minister Gui maintained a hard-line approach to the students, commenting in the journal \textit{Politica} at the end of January that, “the occupations of university offices… cannot be accepted, as any forms of violence can not be accepted.”\textsuperscript{439}

The Communists, on the other hand, praised the students’ actions. Rossana Rossanda, one of the leaders of the PCI’s cultural section and later founder of the radical newspaper \textit{Il Manifesto}, in an article in \textit{L’Unità} described the student demonstrations in positive terms. In late January 1968, she wrote:

\begin{quote}
“Today the relationship of power is characterized by a spontaneous movement in the universities. The universities are zones of civil battles at the highest level of tension. Not a legal, but a cultural and social battle is liquidating the old university…”\textsuperscript{440}
\end{quote}

During the month of February, the Deputies again brushed aside the issue of university reform in favor of budgetary matters and a debate over the Tet Offensive.\textsuperscript{441}

Despite the parliament’s disregard for university reform, the Turinese Communist

\textsuperscript{440} Translation by the author. \textit{L’Unità}, January 27, 1968, 1.
Giorgina Levi continued to argue the students’ position, calling for an amendment to the Gui Bill that would allow the students a role in course planning. Voicing his frustration at continued student demonstrations and stalled reform plans, Gui denigrated the student activists at a public speech in Verona on 12 February. Characterizing the protests as “nonspecific political demands,” and repeated Pasolini’s view of the student activists as spoiled “figli di papa.” Gui claimed that the student leaders, who often came from wealthy families, “[had] disrupted less well-to-do students who needed to finish their studies quickly.” Evidently, the minister sought to use the widespread agitation to reignite the debate on university reform before the final meeting of the Chamber in March and the impending legislative elections.

The decisive moments in the Moro government’s long and spasmodic struggle for university reform took place in March 1968. The Valle Giulia disorders at the University of Rome and the impending adjournment of the sixth legislature at the end of March, caused the Deputies to scramble for some type of reform before the national elections. The Battle of the Valle Giulia had brought the street fighting of the 1960s to the doorstep of the politicians and focused their attention on the civil unrest in the universities. Hoping to use this incident as the impetus for immediate legislative action, Gui rushed to pass an interim version of his reform bill. However, the Christian Democrats’ unconditional support for the police caused a break with their Socialist partners at a time when coalition solidarity was required to pass any kind of bill.

Minister of the Interior, Paolo Emilio Taviani opened the debate. According to Taviani, about 1,500 students who had been evacuated by the police had marched down one of Rome’s busiest streets, the Via Nazionale, disrupting traffic. The following day, about 2,000 students had gathered in the Piazza di Spagna and thrown bottles and stones at the police provoking a pitched battle between students and police. Taviani concluded, not unexpectedly, that Rector D’Avack had the legal right to evacuate the students, and that the police had “defended the liberty of the democratic state.” Further, he warned his “Honorable colleagues,” that the, “weakness and uncertainty of the forces of order were one of the causes of the sunset of democracy and the advent of fascism.”

Minister Gui followed, urging his colleagues to pass his reform bill without delay.

The Communists attacked Taviani and Gui’s positions, accusing Gui of encouraging Rector D’Avack to call in the police and forcing the Deputies to accept a reform bill “known to be rejected by most students.” Communist Deputy and former prisoner of the Fascist regime, Aldo Natoli angrily criticized Taviani’s version of events and called him the “Minister of a Police State.” Natoli claimed that the day before the evacuation, many students and professors had been involved in an “open occupation” which included new types of exams and seminars. “The students,” Natoli shouted, “have made mistakes, but only because they have tried to do in three months what the government has not done in more than twenty.”

443 L’Osservatore Romano, February 12, 1968, p. 7.
444 Oliva and Rendi, Il movimento studentesco e le sue lotte, 28.
446 Ibid, 44576-44577.
447 See Deputy Aldo Natoli (PCI) in: Ibid, 44577-44580.
448 Ibid.
police of being repressive, and willing to employ methods similar to the fascists, and he dated the beginning of the student unrest with Paolo Rossi’s violent death twenty-three months earlier.

Many Socialists joined the Communists in denouncing the government’s role in the Valle Giulia episode, agreeing that there had been successful, if unauthorized, experiments with new teaching and examination methods. Socialist deputy Sanna seconded the Communist charge of a premeditated crackdown against the Roman students and urged his colleagues to support the Left’s version of university reform over the conservative Gui Bill. Another Socialist, the former Partisan Tristano Codignola, denounced the government’s response to the student protests as reactionary and repressive but also accused the Communists of politicizing the issue of university reform to such a degree that no reform would be possible. Codignola’s plea that the bloodshed at the Valle Giulia should bring the politicians together in a unified search for honest and far-reaching reforms was in vain. Instead, the Battle of the Valle Giulia became the Waterloo for university reform, because the Right hardened its views. Christian Democratic deputy Magri, stung by the criticism of the Left, vigorously defended the Rector of Rome’s actions and attacked the Left’s attempts to belittle Gui’s reform bill, claiming it was “the best possible plan under the circumstances.”

Seeking a middle position, the Liberal leader, Valitutti, argued that Gui’s reform bill would not effect any major changes but also criticized the extremism of the

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449 AP vol. 43 (March 1, 1968): 44582.
450 See Deputy Sanna (PSI) and Codignola (PSI) in: Ibid, 44581-44587.
Communists and Socialists. Valitutti applauded the Rector’s decision to call in the police reminding his colleagues that in the period 1919-1923, “no one would defend the state and a dictatorship arose.” Deputies Valitutti, Sanna, and Minister Taviani’s words all tried to merge the events in 1968 with those of the early 1920s. After living through at least part of the fascist dictatorship, they had developed by themselves and with the help of the mass media, an image of democratic collapse that included masses of young people, demonstrations in city streets and battles between police and political groups. Like the popular press’s attempts to link fascism with the protests in order to sell newspapers, these politicians used their versions of history to sway the national debate over the future direction of Italian politics.

In the wake of the Valle Giulia, the government was forced to listen to the students’ demands. On 9 March, hundreds of Italian university and liceo students gathered in Rome’s Palazzetto dello Sport and called for a national rally on 15 March to protest the Gui Bill. Faced with massive student rejection of the government’s reform plan and the defection of his Socialist coalition partners, Gui formulated an interim reform plan. This included the establishment of university departments, reform of examinations, creation of “structural spaces for the students,” and gave students a consultative role in the faculty councils. Although Gui’s emergency plan would not have satisfied the Communists or the most radical students, the Socialists probably would have supported it. However, time had run out for the sixth legislature. Gui circulated his emergency plan to all the rectors of the Italian universities in the hope that it would serve

452 *AP* vol. 43 (March 1, 1968): 44593-94.
as the basis of an official reform that would be passed after the center-left government was returned to power.

The Moro government was not re-elected in May 1968, and the coalition gave way to a short-lived conservative government dominated by the Christian Democrats under Giovanni Leone. Many students left the protest movement when the hated center-left combination was replaced by an even more conservative leadership. The Leone government offered to make peace with the students and gave lip service to some more daring reforms, but a vote of no confidence brought the government down within six months.454 The Mariano Rumor government, which took power in November 1968 with a coalition of the Christian Democrats, the PSI which was no longer united with the Social Democrats, and the tiny Radical Party, also fell victim to political instability. Ultimately, on 9 December 1969, the parliament voted to accept Tristano Codignola’s university reform plan which became Law 910. This law formally removed all barriers to university admission and offered a wider range of curriculum choices.455 Codignola’s bill represented at least a partial victory for the student movement’s goal of opening universities to the working classes. However, the law fell far short of changing teaching methods, and in practice, the numbers of students entering the universities from technical high schools remained low.456

In his reflections on the Moro government’s halting progress toward university reform, Giorgio Canestri has argued that the battle for scholastic reform was a microcosm

453 Oliva and Rendi, Il movimento studentesco e le sue lotte, 29-31.
454 Ibid, 37-38.
of Italian politics in 1967-68. It revealed the weakness of the center-left government, in which the junior partner, the Socialists, suppressed their social and cultural goals in order to remain in the coalition.\footnote{Spinì, \textit{The New Left in Italy}, 64.} On the other hand, Guido Quazza believed that the coalition might have succeeded; but that the final deathblow came after the May elections with a new government whose attitude toward reform was “fragmentary, reticent, ambiguous, and substantially elusive.”\footnote{Canestri, \textit{Scuola e politica in Italia dalla Resistenza al Sessantotto}, 36.} Paul Ginsborg wrote that the history of university reform showed that the “minimalist” vision of reform had triumphed and that political factiousness led to emergency half measures that were never followed by substantial reform.\footnote{Quazza, \textit{Sessantotto, scuola e politica}, 248.}\footnote{Ginsborg, \textit{A History of Contemporary Italy}, 280-281.}

Such assessments interpret the tortuous path of university reform through the Italian Parliament but leave out the role of the activists. It is clear from Minister Gui’s hostile attitude to the university occupations of the winter months 1967-68\footnote{See Gui’s comments in \textit{Politica}, page 18.} and from Taviani’s denunciation of the students after the events of the Valle Giulia,\footnote{See page 20.} that the students’ increasing militancy in the spring of 1968 played a decisive role in hardening the positions of the conservatives as it had done with many professors at the University of Turin. Furthermore, the students’ political allies, the Communists, never completely supported the students, despite their statements in the press and in the Parliament. Some like deputy Giorgio Amendola castigated the students as “irrational and infantile” and even called on the PCI to widen its struggle against capitalism to include a battle against
student extremism.\textsuperscript{462} Aside from the efforts of Rossana Rossanda, Angiola Masucco Costa and Giorgina Levi, the party only belatedly appreciated the political importance of the student movement.\textsuperscript{463} In the 1970s, a senior deputy of the PCI, Giorgio Napolitano reflected, “It is quite striking that at the time, we did not understand the significance and implications of the growing tumultuousness of the student population…”\textsuperscript{464}

Throughout Italy, the students, incited by their opponents, took extreme positions that excluded compromise with their professors and the forces of order. The activists’ challenge to civic order in the spring of 1968 provided the university authorities with a reason to suspend negotiations and disregard serious attempts at reform. At the national level, the increasing violence alienated the conservatives, and the Old Left, and failed to convince the politicians of the urgency of meaningful legislation.

From a distance, the story of Luigi Gui’s ill-fated university reform bill presents a drama typical of Italian politics and society in the postwar era. Such a drama was played out many times with the Communist heirs of the Resistance dreaming of a radically different, modern university that would bring Italy closer to the new Europe that was growing and expanding north of the Alps. Meanwhile, the political leaders of the country, the Christian Democrats, were torn between a desire to pull Italian education up to the level of their northern neighbors and their traditionalist beliefs in the Church and the family, as well as their fears of state run schools.

\textsuperscript{463} See page 8.
Luigi Gui had tried to finesse the issue by offering a plan that would satisfy both sides, and in the end, he failed. The student activists won the battle against the Gui bill, but lost the war for a reconstructed university. Contrary to the students’ belief that the politicians did not listen, their protests had echoed in the halls of the Parliament, but each deputy had heard what he or she wanted to hear, twisting the students’ pleas into distorted shapes that fed the old political feuds between the Left, Right, and Center, producing very different visions of a modern Italian university.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The student protests that rocked the Italian peninsula in 1968 have provoked a lively popular and academic debate. Most analysts have interpreted the Sessentotto as a caesura in the postwar history of the Italian republic. Focusing on the motives and goals of the activists, they have stressed their links with the protests that swept across Western Europe and the United States. This study diverges from previous works in its methodological approach. By concentrating on the city of Turin, this dissertation investigates the potential allies and targets of the student demonstrations from a local perspective. At the national level, it analyzes the response of Italy’s politicians and the effect of the popular press on both the students and their opponents. Thus, it differs from other inquiries by focusing on the objects of the student rebellion, the so-called “Establishment.”

From the case of Turin, there emerges four significant contributions to the literature of the student revolts of 1968. First, it shows that for university activists, local and national concerns usually took precedence over global issues. Second, it reveals that the people whom the students dubbed the “Establishment” were never united in their opposition and frequently reacted to the student protests in seemingly ancharacteristic
ways. Third, it illustrates how the reactions to the student demonstrations were often filtered through personal memories and popular myth about the legacy of fascism and antifascism. Finally, this study draws attention to the ways in which the press interpreted the Italian student movement and also provoked the activists to fit its images.

Giovanni DeLuna, an historian of the Sessantotto, remarked that Turin’s upheavals were similar to other rebellions around the globe, but there was also a strong stamp of localism. The students in Turin opposed the proposed Gui reforms in 1965, but it was the decision to move the Science Faculties out to a suburban location, La Mandria, that mobilized the great numbers in 1966. Similarly, the demonstrators at the Catholic and State Universities of Milan came out in force the following year to protest a 50% increase in fees and the high examination failure rate, respectively. On the other hand, the medical and science students of Turin had remained relatively quiet during the years 1967 and 1968, while the medical students at the State University of Milan were the first to occupy their faculty in 1967. Such a comparison suggests that although many activists in Italy shared a general commitment to university reform, each university had to respond to very particular protest demands.

The student movement in Turin was distinguished by its overwhelmingly secular and anti-fascist rhetoric during the Sessantotto. The protests at the Università di Torino were truly homegrown in the sense that several of its leaders were children of the Piedmontese anti-fascist Resistance: Luigi Bobbio, Marco Revelli, and Massimo

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465 Defined by this study as the professors, police, press, workers, politicians and parents of the activists.
467 See Luntley, States of Emergency, 79 and 87.
Negarville. One of their action groups, *Lotta Continua*, originally had been called *Nuova Resistenza*. In other places where conservative forces were strong, such as the University of Perugia, neo-fascist students violently expelled and took over the occupation of their university. At the Catholic University of Milan, religious affiliation played a larger role as bitter infighting occurred between Right-wing students who invoked Pius XII and Left-wing students inspired by John XXIII.

The student movement in Turin revealed its northern Italian character by its attempt to connect with the workers of FIAT. Throughout the course of the movement, the Turin student activists formed numerous collectives such as *Potere Operaio* (Worker Power) and *Lotta Continua* (Continuous Struggle) to mobilize the workers for whom the activists hoped to be the revolutionary vanguard. The students vented their anger against FIAT by attacking the company’s newspaper, *La Stampa*. In these respects, the Turin student protests mirrored those of Milan where activists attempted to mobilize the Pirelli workers and attacked the offices of the conservative *Corriere della Sera*.

Turin was also marked by the exceptional leniency of its university administrators and police when dealing with student occupations and demonstrations. Protesters succeeded in occupying the Palazzo Campana for longer than any other university occupation in Italy, and Rector Allara never employed the harsh repressive measures like

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468 Giancarla Cicoletti, Professor of Sociology at the University of Perugia, interviewed by the author. Perugia: March 17, 1997.


those utilized by Rector D’Avack at the University of Rome.\textsuperscript{471} Although violent acts were committed by police and students, the level of violence in Turin never reached that of the Battle of the Valle Giulia.\textsuperscript{472}

Moving to the second point of this dissertation, the “Establishment” and non-students of Turin never completely reacted to the students in the ways the student leaders anticipated. Far from a “university mafia” who ruled over their students with an iron fist, the faculty of Turin became sharply divided by the activists’ challenge for reform.\textsuperscript{473} Some like Guido Quazza of the Faculty of Education embraced the students’ reform proposals, while others like Giorgio Gullini and Athos Goidanich wanted to crush the student initiatives. The Rector Mario Allara, and Giuseppe Grosso, a law professor and the Mayor of Turin, favored a moderate approach and eventually offered major concessions.\textsuperscript{474} The response in Turin contrasted sharply with the university administration at the Catholic University of Milan (\textit{La Cattolica}) where the professoriate remained uniformly hostile to the student activists and called upon the nearby police barracks to disband occupations and eventually destroy the movement.\textsuperscript{475}

The Catholic Church of Turin also did not follow the typical hostility toward Left-wing students of the authorities at the \textit{Cattolica} or the Vatican as expressed in the \textit{Osservatore Romano}. In a city with a stronger secular tradition and a small but significant Protestant minority, the Catholic Church’s hold over the university students

\textsuperscript{471} See Chapter III, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{472} For examples of police and student violence, see Alessandro Portelli’s chapter, “I’m Going to Say It Now: Interviewing the Movement,” in: \textit{The Battle of the Valle Giulia}, 183-98.
\textsuperscript{473} For the charges that the professors in Italy represented a group of oligarchs or university \textit{Mafiosi}, see: “Youth who complain but do not rebel,” \textit{The Economist} 222(March 18, 1967): xxix.
\textsuperscript{474} See Chapter III, “The Case of Turin I: Defending the Ivory Tower.”
was never strong. Cardinal Michele Pellegrino, the former Bishop of Turin and a professor at the university, backed the student protests and was recognized as a leader in the Italian pacifist movement. Cardinal Pellegrino found supporters among a group of young priests in the city who favored reform within the church known as the Community of Vandolino. 476

At the national level, the survey of the debates within the Chamber of Deputies revealed the inaccuracy of the students’ claim that the Center-Left coalition of the late 1960s represented a reactionary bloc of Christian Democrats and Socialists who had sold their Marxist souls for a taste of power. Although the Socialists showed their lack of commitment to major university reform by initially supporting Minister Gui’s moderate plan, they later broke ranks with their conservative partners when the students became victims of police repression in February and March 1968. If anything, the students helped sow further discord between the PSU and the CD thus hastening the fall of the coalition in June 1968. However, student acts of violence, magnified by the conservative press, also distorted perceptions of the student movement and helped harden the conservatives’ anti-student stance as indicated by Minister Taviani’s view of the incidents at the Valle Giulia. Thus university reform failed in 1968 due to the divided nature of the coalition rather than the united anti-student forces of the Center-Left

475 Lumley, States of Emergency, 84-85.
476 See Chapter 4, “The Case of Turin II: A City Reacts from Precinct to Parish.”
government. In France and West Germany, on the other hand, the student protests of 1968 led to major university reforms.

By analyzing the local and national reception of student protest, we can see that the people of Italy interpreted the events of 1967 and 1968 in ways that sought to place the student demonstrations within an historic context. For the Italians, this meant defining student actions within the frameworks of class and of fascism and antifascism. For conservative and the upper middle class people, who were critical of student actions, the students had simply revived the tactics, if not the ideology, of fascism. The disruptions in the universities, verbal attacks against professors, crowds of young people in the streets, and attacks on property all seemed to mark the activists as promoters of a new kind of fascism. Even Norberto Bobbio, a former Resistance fighter and a Socialist Senator, was critical of the student actions. He noted that the students used open ballots in the assemblies at the Palazzo Campana and that only the elite spoke in the meetings. “They were against representative democracy,” he remembered, “they wanted democracy of the piazza.”

Furthermore, what Robert Lumley called the “moral panic” caused by students who followed Mao rather than the established Italian Communist Party led to a fusion of fears producing the notion of “Left-wing fascism.” According to the conservative

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477 See Chapter VI, “The National Dimension II: Italy’s Politicians Confront the Issue of University Reform.”
478 In France, a major reforms in university teaching were passed on November 7, 1968; see PCI, Classe Operaia e Movimento Studentesco, eds. Paolini and Vitali, x. Major reforms were also enacted for the Free University of Berlin offering the students parity with professors in planning the future of the university; see: Tent, The Free University of Berlin, 344-45.
480 Lumley, States of Emergency, 73-74.
press and politicians, the student “filocinesi” were the chief agents of this Left-wing fascism.\textsuperscript{481} As one reader of La Stampa wrote, there was no difference between fascism and “ma-ma-maiismo” as the tactics were the same.\textsuperscript{482} Conservative newspapers such as La Stampa and the Corriere della Sera, promoted this image of Left-wing fascism through their provocative headlines and photographs which frequently focused on student attacks against property and the police. Furthermore, the conservative press portrayed student demonstrations as chaotic events but also menacing ones, as shown by the pictures of Left-wing students giving Roman salutes.\textsuperscript{483} The press’s blurring of boundaries between the extreme Left and Right in its coverage of the student movement led some scholars in the 1970s to reject these traditional ideological terms that seemed to have lost their meaning in popular practice.\textsuperscript{484}

The Left-wing supporters of the students counteracted these views by arguing that the old enemies remained, and the cause was worth sacrificing for. The police brutality meted out upon unarmed protesters represented the true revival of fascist tactics and attitudes. The Communist daily, L’Unità, praised the student activists as democrats and heirs to the anti-fascist Resistance legacy.\textsuperscript{485} Communist and Socialist politicians in Rome also praised the students for their political engagement and demanded that their colleagues work for major university reform.\textsuperscript{486}

\textsuperscript{481} See Chapter V, “The National Dimension I: Constructing an Image of Protest.”
\textsuperscript{482} La Stampa, “Specchio dei tempi,” March 14, 1968, 2; see Chapter V, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{483} La Stampa, February 21, 1968, 2, and March 3, 1968, 2; see Chapter V, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{484} Lumley, States of Emergency, 342-43.
\textsuperscript{485} L’Unità, January 21, 1968, 10; see Chapter V, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{486} See Chapter VI, “The National Dimension II: Italy’s Politicians Confront the Issue of Reform.”
Along with the attempt by the Italian people to contextualize the student revolt within their established notions of fascism and antifascism, they also viewed the activists in terms of class. In our analysis of the Turin case, we saw that class interpretations of the students became more evident among the workers and the police, two groups that shared very little in common with the students. While the Left-wing students derided the police as violent “agents of the bosses,” the police, on the other hand, reacted in seemingly unexpected ways. According to the Turin police, the students did pose a menace to public order, but certainly not on the scale of the fascists at the beginning of the twentieth century. The police, who usually came from very modest origins, saw the students as spoiled “figli di papa,” (daddy’s kids) who were merely wasting time when they should be studying. Rather than the dangerous threat to civic life that was portrayed in the local press, the student demonstrations and occupations were merely nuisances to the police who were more often shocked by the evidence of sexual immorality and vandalism than the possibility of major insurrection.487

From the Left-wing students’ viewpoint, the FIAT workers of Turin should have been most receptive to their message of social revolution and notions of direct democracy. Some of the workers like Luciano Parlanti heeded the students’ call and joined worker-student groups such as Lotta Continua. However, the broad mass of workers either rejected the students as “figli di papa” or regarded them as “auxiliaries” for strike actions. The workers appreciated the students’ willingness to fight but considered them unequal allies in their labor struggles in 1968 and 1969. Most workers, who felt

487 See Chapter IV, “The Case of Turin II: A City Reacts from Precinct to Parish.”
that they lived in a world apart from the middle and upper middle class students, simply wanted better wages, shorter hours, and a slower work pace, not a Maoist revolution. Some workers resented the patronizing and pedantic rhetoric of students who met them at the factory gates. As the Turin case showed, the activists unconsciously adopted the overbearing tones and attitudes they had despised in their professors at the university. Furthermore, in Turin more than any other northern industrial city, the labor movement’s surge at the end of the 1960s was propelled by the massive influx of southern migrants who brought their own brand of radicalism which diverged from the traditional unionism of the northern workers and had little in common with the student protests.488

In sum, this analysis of the interaction between the students and members of the working class suggests than on both sides, the events of the late 1960s represented a collision between perception and experience. The students perceived Italian society to be rigidly hierarchical and authoritarian, which was willing to employ its police force to destroy all challengers. Although the majority of the police disliked the activists and saw it as their duty to control student demonstrations, they mostly viewed the young protesters as spoiled brats rather than dangerous Marxist revolutionaries. The general lack of alarm on the part of the police and judiciary is supported by the fact that most of the protesters were released shortly after their arrests and very few received prison sentences.

The students naturally viewed the workers as their willing allies in their movement to overthrow one of the pillars of the regime, Giovanni Angelli’s FIAT

motorworks. The workers, on the other hand, did not see the university students as liberators but as objects of curiosity who had temporarily played hooky to break class ranks and join them in a strike. Most workers correctly assumed that these bored children of the upper classes would eventually return to their studies and join their parents in the upper ranks of the social hierarchy. An opinion poll published by Guido Martinotti in 1969 found that among the working class, most people surveyed showed indifference to the student protests with 74% offering no opinion and only 9% who approved of the protests.  

Finally, this study returns to the words of Paul Piccone who noted that the media transformed the unique local and national events of 1968 into a global youth revolution. As seen in the case of Turin, La Stampa and the other major press’s portrayals of the students as dangerous revolutionaries, hell-bent on the destruction of society hardly matched the personal perceptions of those who actually dealt with student activists on a daily basis, their professors, the police, and the workers of FIAT. The former journalist of the Turin protests, María Valabrega, noted that she often sympathized with the students and disagreed with her superiors who wrote caustic and catchy headlines for her articles. Although some members of the “Establishment,” like former police officer Angelo Gentile, Professor Goidanich, and a few conservative politicians sincerely accepted the press designation of the protesters as “left-wing fascists” and “filocinesi,” most citizens were more balanced in their judgments of student

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activism. However, the press’s alternate tactic of mocking the demonstrators as spoiled, lazy kids proved to have a greater resonance among Turin’s working classes.

The group on which the press had the greatest impact was the students themselves. For Turin students as for the protesters throughout Western Europe, the press became the object of a “love-hate” relationship throughout the years of peak activism.\textsuperscript{491} The activists loved the attention but hated the critical, mocking articles and photographs in the conservative presses. In Turin, the students stole copies of \textit{La Stampa} before they could be circulated and published their own “\textit{Controstampa}” using words and crude cartoons that differed little from their rival. Furthermore, students in Turin, Florence, and Milan, like their counterparts in West Berlin and Paris often vented their rage against the offices of the local press. Maria Valabrega recalled that she made sure that \textit{La Stampa} published the students’ \textit{Carta Rivindicativa}, and yet they attacked her offices as well.\textsuperscript{492}

More than three decades later, the legacy and meaning of the student revolt continues to have its critics and defenders on both sides of the barricades. Most scholars agree that politically, the student revolt was a failure; however, the broad cultural transformation that flowed out of the revolt of 1968 changed attitudes about social tolerance, class, the status of women, and the environment. This dissertation shows that at the local level, the clear distinction between protesters and their alleged opponents in the older generation, made famous by the phrase, “don’t trust anyone over thirty,” rarely held true. By examining the reaction to protest in provincial Turin, this study has shown

\textsuperscript{491} See Hilwig, “The Revolt Against the Establishment,” 321-49.
that local and national issues overshadowed the supranational causes of student mobilization such as the United States’ war in Vietnam, the slowdown in the western economy, or the Cold War. In so doing, this work supports those who have argued for the primacy of national and local concerns.⁴⁹³ On the other side of the barricades, the non-students sought to understand the sudden explosion of the late 1960s by invoking history and memory. The chief references were fascism, antifascism, and traditional notions of class. Thus the Sessantotto was not a foreign import, but a home-grown phenomenon that was loosely linked to global issues by the popular press and the student activists. Fortunately for Italy’s young republic, the press’s “Left-wing fascists” of the late 1960s bore little resemblance to the Fascists of the 1920s and only a few Sessantottini turned to terrorism in the 1970s.⁴⁹⁴ Most of the activists entered careers in the very same fields they attacked in their youth, as many of the former Turin protesters became professors, and one former sympathizer of the student movement, Massimo D’Alema became Italy’s President of the Council of Ministers.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Maria Valabrega interviewed by the author. Turin: June 6, 1997.
⁴⁹³ Piccone, “Reinterpreting 1968: Mythology on the Make,” 40-43; Ricuperati concluded that as far as the student movement was concerned, “in each country they battled with social realities and political responses that were very diverse,” in: “La Politica Scolastica Italiana dal Centro-Sinistra alla Contestazione Studentsca,” 426; and Lipset’s final view that, “the small minority of them [student activists] that is impelled to be activist has concentrated the fire of its attack on domestic ills,” in: Rebellion in the University, 509-10.
⁴⁹⁴ Former Communist Deputy Rossana Rossanda called the Left-wing terrorists of the 1970s, such as the Red Brigades, the “unwanted children” of the protests begun in the 1960s; see: Della Porta, Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State, 23.
⁴⁹⁵ Marco Revelli is a professor of political science. Luisa Passerini is a professor of history. One of the former writers for Controstampa, Peppino Ortoleva, now writes books on the mass media, and Luigi Bobbio is a lawyer in Turin.
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