



Written by [Beverly K. Eakman](#) on June 23, 2010

Kent State and the Perfect Coup

Today, we know a lot more about Kent State than the cult event celebrated in song lyrics, anti-war heroes and angst-filled photos. Nonetheless, recently declassified and previously unpublished reports about Kent State are surprising only to those who ignored the testimonies of whistleblowers already available at the time. [Recently declassified accounts point to meticulous pre-planning](#) (three days' worth, to be exact) that was too sophisticated to have been the work of mere collegiates. It involved "a roving mob of earnest anti-war activists, hard-core radicals ... and others [who] smashed bank and store windows, looted a jewelry store and hurled bricks and bottles at police." At the time, nothing much was published about the injuries sustained by officers — or about a "pre-dawn conversation ... between two men overheard inside a campus lounge later [that night, who exulted]: 'We did it! We got the riot started.' "



Nor was anything reported concerning a certain ROTC cadet's interview with FBI agents, during which he gave a "precise first-hand account" with a "credibility not easily dismissed." Taken together, the heavily redacted FBI documents indicate that the now-infamous shootings by National Guardsmen were not simply "unprovoked attacks." In fact, they were the natural consequence and outgrowth of a cultural milieu suffused and enamored with revolutionary radicalism.

Background to Turmoil

Though noteworthy for the violence and death attending the protests, Kent State was not the only scene of uproar and protest. The groundwork had been laid for a period of significant unrest and instability by a bevy of radicals that had been working behind the scenes for years, setting the country up for a fall: "Progressive educator" A.S. Neill encouraged food fights and other chaotic behaviors in school cafeterias ([Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing](#), 1960). Erich Fromm propagated his thesis that capitalism created social orders that bred sado-masochists like Adolf Hitler ([Escape From Freedom](#), 1941). Fromm, in fact, initiated the lucrative market in pop psychology, including the notion that all authority should be based on persuasion, manipulation and suggestion rather than be practiced overtly by parents and teachers, so that a child's "consent is obtained, as it were, behind his back, or behind his consciousness" ([The Sane Society](#), 1955).

The Institute for Social Research (a.k.a. The Frankfurt School) helped George Lukacs and Herbert Marcuse launch the most successful psychological warfare operation ever against the West. From it



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came new ways of fomenting revolutions (“wars of liberation”) and inducing “cultural pessimism” (feelings of hopelessness and alienation).

Herbert Marcuse produced the founding document of the sixties counterculture ([Eros and Civilization](#), 1955), pages from which were copied and literally pressed into the hands of young American anti-war activists. An esteemed fixture at the ISR/Frankfurt School, Marcuse immigrated to the U.S. in 1933 and became a citizen in 1940. He continued to promote the anti-authoritarian, free sex, pro-communist message (he advised skipping the transition from capitalism to socialism), leading to a violent proliferation of such dogma among America’s college campuses that trickled down to K-12 institutions via educators trained by himself and other leftists at Columbia University’s Teachers College.

Yet, unbelievably, Marcuse was recruited during World War II at the [U.S. Office of War Information](#) (OWI) for anti-Nazi propaganda projects — perhaps because, as a Jew, his academic career had been cut short under the Third Reich. Ironically, he had [collaborated in Germany with Martin Heidegger](#), the “[Nazi philosopher](#)” who had supported the Nazi program and Hitler himself. In 1932, this collaboration resulted in the publication of their joint study, [Hegel’s Ontology and Theory of Historicity](#).

In 1943 Marcuse was transferred to the [Office of Strategic Services](#) (OSS), the precursor to the [Central Intelligence Agency](#), where he learned the ins and outs of American intelligence. His work for the OSS ostensibly involved de-Nazification projects. After the dissolution of the OSS in 1945, Marcuse was employed by the [U.S. Department of State](#) as head of the Central European section, retiring in 1951. The following year, he took up teaching as a political theorist, at none other than [Columbia University](#), where he influenced prospective teachers at its Teachers College. He transferred to both Harvard and Brandeis Universities between 1958 and 1965, where he taught philosophy and politics. Having thoroughly absorbed by that time the peculiarities of American campus life and the weaknesses of American youth, he put in one final round of teaching at the [University of California, San Diego](#). Marcuse insisted that the only way to overcome the “one-dimensional social order imposed by the modern industrial society” was to instigate what he called an “erotic liberation” that would in time create a “rejection of the capitalist monster and all its works ... [including] reason and ritual-authoritarian language.”

Marcuse helped train dozens of revolutionary organizers, knowing full well that the easiest marks were idealistic, college-age Americans. All the “make love, not war” signs, the rejection of nuclear power for peaceful purposes like energy production, the unbridled sexual activities and feminist extremism of the 1960s were in large part his doing. His larger agenda, compliments of the ISR/Frankfurt School, was the “abolition of culture,” to be replaced by “a new barbarism” — new cultural icons and ideas that Marcuse knew would increasingly alienate younger and older generations till there was nothing left.

John Dewey, the much-idolized “father of modern education,” another staple at Columbia’s Teachers College, told prospective educators that the ability to read, write, and calculate was vastly overrated. His disciple, George S. Counts, followed suit with his 1932 book [Dare the School Build a New Social Order?](#) In it, he preached that “teachers should deliberately reach for power and then make the most of their conquest [so as to] influence social ideals, attitudes, and behavior of the coming generation.” Capitalism, he said, would have “to be displaced altogether...or radically changed.” Popular authors with an irreverent streak, (such as Henry Miller, [Tropic of Cancer](#), 1934), piled on with endorsements for the likes of A.S. Neill: “the only worthwhile revolution not by politicians or militarists but by educators.... [The aim of] Summerhill is to create happy, contented people, not cultural misfits dedicated to war, insanity and canned knowledge.”



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And so it went — a veritable avalanche of revolutionary “wisdom” raining down upon students of the fifties and sixties, without the knowledge, much less the consent, of their baffled parents.

Reap the Whirlwind

The violence at Kent State and the turmoil throughout the nation in the 1960s and early 1970s was an outgrowth of the propaganda spread through the nation’s schools and universities over the previous three decades. This might have been more clearly revealed in the aftermath of the violence, but much was held back and kept under wraps. Just why documents like the FBI investigations from Kent State were held back, and why key passages were overlooked or classified when the media was disseminating the impression that campus violence was spontaneous, impulsive and unprovoked, is unknown. Perhaps the FBI assumed the media was already infiltrated — many employees from the once-highly secretive “psychological warfare branch” of the War Department (G-2) and the Office of War Information (OWI) had already become liberal-socialist media executives once the war was over (among them CBS’ William Paley, Time/Life’s C. D. Jackson, and the editors of high-value publications like *Holiday*, *Look*, *Fortune*, *Coronet*, *Parade*, the *Saturday Review* and Viking Press). Handing over damning material to a “closed club” like that might have been deemed counterproductive.

Yet, not doing so provided a window of opportunity for now-infamous “community activist” groups like ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), founded in the same year as the Kent State incident, and the ever-present ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), formally established in 1920 but by 1970 wreaking havoc. These organizations — mimicking the writings of Marcuse, Counts, and Neill — portrayed themselves as defenders of the helpless, while simultaneously hastening the death of the American Dream.

It was a horrid miscalculation on the part of the FBI. *Community activism*, for example, was once a positive term applied to any collective activity toward a social, moral or political good, in the mold of our nation’s founders. But under the transplanted mentor/philosophers of the Left, [the term morphed](#) into the “use of direct, often confrontational action, such as a demonstration or strike, in opposition to or support of a cause.”

Early Investigations

Still, at least one publication attempted to get to the bottom of things. Just four years after the Kent State incident, a revealing article by Alan Stang — television writer, producer, best-selling author, consultant and former business editor for Prentice-Hall, Inc. — wrote a piece for *American Opinion* magazine (the forerunner of *The New American*) entitled “Proof to Save the Guardsmen.” In it, Stang alluded to much of what has recently been revealed. “Today the phony ‘revolution’ which is trying to destroy America deliberately arranges for its own martyrs by conning victims into serving as cannon fodder,” Stang wrote in the article. He wrote similarly of the “1968 Democrat National Convention, where students got their skulls fractured when their leaders attacked the police.”

Notice he said “their leaders,” not the students themselves. Even from fuzzy 1968 media footage, one could tell that many among the perpetrators were not young college students, but adults. Many were later exposed as a semi-trained mix of foreign radicals and professional agitators.

Stang already had a reputation for doing his homework. Of the Kent State affair, he wrote:

“The way the national press tells it [in the 1970s], Kent State University was an idyllic Shangri-la of contemplation until the moment of the shooting. The *New York Times* of the following day explained that “until recently the school’s most serious demonstration was a 1958 panty raid on



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two women's dormitories." But the fact is that the killings on the campus were the predictable result of almost two years of Communist agitation by such terrorist gangs as Students for a Democratic Society.

"For instance, in the fall of 1968, Kent State was treated to two appearances by Mark Rudd, the S.D.S. leader who had led the seizure of campus buildings earlier that year at Columbia University in New York. Another frequent visitor was Bernardine Dohrn, an S.D.S. official who calls herself a "revolutionary Communist," and who according to James Michener, in *Kent State*, (...Fawcett World, New York, 1972) told the students: 'They've shot blacks in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and they're certainly going to shoot whites here.' "

Remember Bernadine Dohrn? Leader of the [Revolutionary Youth Movement](#) (RYM), a radical wing of [Students for a Democratic Society](#) (SDS) in the late 1960s as well as the October 1969 [Days of Rage](#) riot in Chicago, a founder of the Weather Underground that bombed federal buildings and police stations? A stated goal of the Underground was to help achieve world communism, synthesized in a long-forgotten book entitled *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism*, written and published in 1974 by William Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn and other Weather Undergrounders. The book became the Underground's ideological manifesto, with Ayers declaring himself a communist, and the promise of inaugurating a bombing campaign aimed at overthrowing the American government. Dohrn and Ayers became fugitives when one bomb — designed to kill army officers in New Jersey — accidentally exploded in a New York townhouse. In other sworn testimony of the 1970s, former FBI informant Larry Grathwohl [implicated](#) Ayers and Dohrn in planning the bombing murder of San Francisco Police Sergeant Brian V. McDonnell. [Metal staples from the bomb](#) had ripped through the sergeant's body, killing him after several agonizing days in the hospital.

Of course, if Marcuse could be hired by the State Department, it should come as no surprise that Dohrn, even with her violent rap sheet, managed to find employment with a prestigious law firm in Chicago (1984-88), to be hired by the [Northwestern University School of Law](#) in Chicago, and to serve as an advocate for, of all things, human rights, at the international level. Stang continues:

Members of the staff at the regional S.D.S. office in Cleveland constantly made the short trip to Kent, where they propagandized and recruited. A student revolutionary told Michener: "We established our communes in three Ohio cities, one in Columbus, two in Akron, two in Cleveland. The idea was to teach severe discipline. Every single decision - was a girl member entitled to buy an ice cream cone? - was decided by group discussion. The object was to produce revolutionaries programmed to obey orders...

...In November of 1968, S.D.S. forced Oakland, California, police officers to postpone interviews with prospective police recruits on the Kent State campus. On February 27, 1969, S.D.S. hustler Joyce Cecora told an audience that "if the university does not stop politically repressing S.D.S. they would burn and level the campus." At about the same time, S.D.S. distributed copies of the *Organizers' Manual For The Spring Offensive*, which explained: "During the course of the struggle it will probably be necessary and helpful to carry out a series of escalating 'mini' actions to help build consciousness and dramatize the issue. Beginning with guerrilla theater actions in dorms we can escalate to disrupting classes, street marches, quick assaults on buildings, *etc.*, before moving to the major confrontation of the struggle."

We have learned a great deal since Stang's article about how American and British elites — government officials, diplomats, journalists, scientists, engineers, and especially academics — spied for the Soviets,



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and how surprisingly widespread such activity was. Among other sources, the most illuminating have been the Venona decrypts, intercepted cable traffic from operatives working for the Soviet Union that reveal the true stories of behind-the-scenes double-agents, moles, plants, recruiters and undercover operatives. Among high-level traitors revealed by Venona like Alger Hiss and Harry Dexter White, it was revealed that outfits like the aforementioned OWI employed Soviet agents.

Violent demonstrators and hate-filled rabble-rousers, like Bernadine Dohrn and Bill Ayers and their Weather Underground companions, got a free pass (or slaps on the wrist for PR purposes), followed by cushy jobs as attorneys, professorships and government consultants. And their radical activities and connections continue to have an impact on the present political landscape.

[Many sources](#) now place the Obamas in cahoots with Dohrn and Ayers. In fact, in 1995, [as recounted by Wikipedia](#), "Obama and Ayers first met in 1995 when Ayers and Dohrn hosted a small gathering at their home ... at which then-state Senator Alice J. Palmer introduced Barack Obama to the group as her chosen successor for the 1996 Democratic primary." Remember, this is the future President of the United States meeting with a pair of domestic terrorists who had remained underground for years, hiding to avoid arrest for their crimes. The pair still consider themselves radicals. As recently as 2006, for instance, [Ayers was in Venezuela for the "World Education Forum."](#) There he lauded Chavez and his "Bolivarian Revolution" and announced: "We share the belief that education is the motor force of revolution...."

But Dohrn, Ayers, the Obamas and now Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan are but a handful among the Boomers who cut their teeth on socialism and Marxist philosophy, then aspired to positions of trust and authority where they eventually gained legitimacy. This brings new meaning to the question of who won the Cold War.

Today, Alan Stang's 1974 conclusions on Kent State stand as a stark rebuke: "the purpose of all this agitation at Kent State was to recruit as much cannon fodder as possible, and then to provoke a 'major confrontation'. When it came, it would be neither accidental nor spontaneous."

We can see the proof every morning in the news: What it was is a coup — the perfect kind that no one noticed until it was over.

Beverly K. Eakman is a former educator and retired federal employee who served as speechwriter for the heads of three government agencies as well as editor-in-chief of NASA's newspaper (Johnson Space Center). Today, she is a Washington, D.C.-based freelance writer and columnist, the author of five books, and a frequent keynote speaker on the lecture circuit. Her most recent book is *Walking Targets: How Our Psychologized Classrooms Are Producing a Nation of Sitting Ducks* (Midnight Whistler Publishers).



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