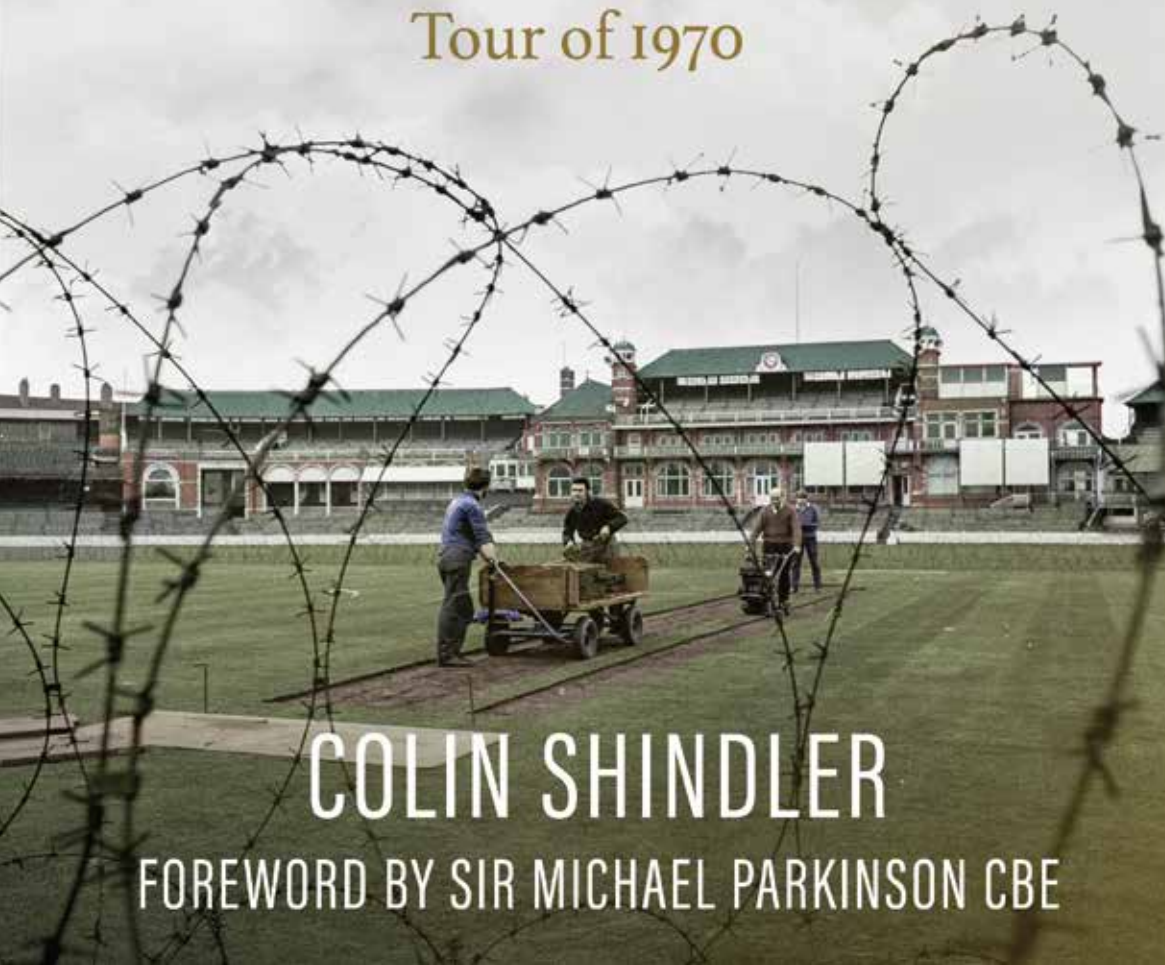


BARBED WIRE

AND CUCUMBER SANDWICHES

The Controversial South Africa
Tour of 1970



COLIN SHINDLER

FOREWORD BY SIR MICHAEL PARKINSON CBE

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1968 TIMELINE

5 January Alexander Dubcek elected First Secretary of the Czech Communist Party.

The reforms known as the Prague Spring begin.

30 January Tet Offensive begins in Vietnam.

16 March Robert Kennedy announces his decision to run for President.

17 March Anti-Vietnam war riots in Grosvenor Square, London.

31 March Lyndon Johnson refuses to run again for the Presidency.

4 April Memphis, Tennessee. Martin Luther King assassinated. Violence erupts nationwide.

11 April German student leader Rudi Dutschke shot in the head by an anti-communist. There follow riots by West German youth aimed at the pro-war Springer press.

23 April New York City. Students barricade themselves into Columbia University buildings and lock the dean in his office. Police beat up and arrest hundreds of students.

25 April Spain. Students start protesting anti-Franco and pro-democracy for the first time since the Civil War. The University of Madrid is closed for 38 days.

2 May The University of Paris closes its Nanterre campus following weeks of protests.

3 May Students migrate to the Sorbonne. Latin Quarter riots as French police advance.

13 May French trades unions announce General Strike. Public transport stops. Petrol stations close.

21 May Ten million workers in France now on strike in solidarity with students.

- 30 May** De Gaulle dissolves the Assembly and calls a general election.
- 5 June** Robert Kennedy assassinated in Los Angeles.
- 23 June** De Gaulle wins an overwhelming majority in the new Assembly.
- 8 August** Miami Beach. Richard Nixon nominated as Republican Party's candidate for President.
- 20 August** Russian tanks invade Czechoslovakia and occupy Prague.
- 23 August** Protests begin on the streets of Chicago. 'The whole world is watching!'
- 24 August** Mayor Daley's police react with unprovoked brutality transmitted live on TV.
- 27 August** MCC selectors omit Basil D'Oliveira from the party to tour South Africa.
- 28 August** Hubert Humphrey nominated Democratic Party candidate for President.
- 16 September** Tom Cartwright withdraws from the MCC squad to tour South Africa.
- 17 September** Basil D'Oliveira announced as replacement for Cartwright.
- 17 September** John Vorster announces D'Oliveira will not be allowed to play.
- 24 September** MCC announces cancellation of its tour to South Africa.
- 26 September** The office of Lord Chamberlain is abolished.
- 27 September** The musical *Hair* opens in the West End.
- 2 October** Police open fire on student protestors in Mexico City. Hundreds reported dead.
- 12 October** Olympic Games open in Mexico City.
- 16 October** John Carlos and Tommie Smith give the Black Power salute after the 200m.
- 5 November** Richard Nixon elected President of the United States.
- 5 December** Motion of no confidence in MCC defeated by 4,357 votes to 1,570.
- The scheduled 1970 tour of England by the South Africa cricket team is reconfirmed.

CHAPTER ONE

1968

IT is impossible to understand the passion that consumed both sides in the first six months of 1970 until the events of 1968 have been appreciated. As the timeline demonstrates, in September 1968 the South African government decided to cancel the tour of their country due to be made that winter by the England cricket team (still known outside the Test matches as MCC) in the wake of the decision to include, belatedly, the South African exile, Basil D'Oliveira. This was in line with government policy as stated in the House of Assembly in Cape Town by the South African Prime Minister B.J. Vorster on 11 April the previous year which had reaffirmed that there would be no mixed sport played in the country, no matter who the participants were. The Worcestershire all-rounder was categorised in the country of his birth as a Cape Coloured and as such was therefore ineligible, according to the laws of apartheid, to play cricket with or against white men. Vorster was simply stating the law as it applied to all South Africans and in his view MCC, persuaded by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, was breaking the law by including D'Oliveira in its touring party.

More importantly, the passion of 1970 cannot be understood without setting it in its wider cultural and historical context. The battle that raged at Lord's, the headquarters of MCC where the selectors met to choose the England cricket team and to defend its subsequent decision to extend its invitation to the South African Cricket Association to tour in 1970, was in many ways a similar

battle to what had taken place elsewhere. The disturbances at the Sorbonne in Paris in May 1968, on the streets of Chicago during the Democratic National Convention in August, in Grosvenor Square, London in March, in Rome, in Spain and on the streets of Mexico City before the start of the 1968 Olympics all fed off each other. The three astronauts of Apollo 8 which had orbited the Moon over Christmas 1968 returned to Earth as heroes. NASA and the Nixon White House immediately sent the astronauts on a good will tour round the world during which they received uniformly enthusiastic welcomes everywhere – except on American university campuses where they were jeered, heckled and jostled because they were seen as symbols of an Establishment that was responsible for the continuing prosecution of an unpopular war.

In May 1970, the month when the Stop the Seventy Tour movement finally succeeded in its aims, four young students, who had been protesting about President Nixon's decision to escalate the war in South East Asia by sending armed troops into Cambodia, were shot dead by the National Guard on the campus of Kent State University in Ohio. The following month the *Washington Post* published what became known as the Pentagon Papers, documents from the Defense Department which showed that as early as 1965 Robert McNamara, the Secretary of Defense, was telling President Lyndon Johnson that the war in Vietnam could not be won. President Nixon tried to prevent publication but the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 in favour of the newspaper. The result was a national outcry and a feeling that the people had been lied to by their government. It wasn't, of course, the first time that had happened but it was the first time so many Americans had been made aware of the bare-faced mendacity of the men they had elected into power.

When Bob Hope made one of his many trips to Vietnam to entertain the troops, as he had been doing to American soldiers since 1942, he told the assembled crowd of GIs that he had a message for them from President Johnson who wanted them to know that their President was doing all he could to bring the boys home. The cheerful atmosphere that tended to accompany the indefatigable but now elderly entertainer changed abruptly to be replaced by booing. Hope looked shocked. This had never happened to him before. The soldiers knew they were being lied to, knew that Johnson had

no intention of calling a halt to the war. Hope's idea of cheerful optimism belonged to World War II, possibly also to Korea but in Vietnam in 1968 the vast majority of the soldiers were there because they had to be there, not because they believed in a cause. There was considerable respect for those who had dared to burn their draft cards and fled to Canada. Nancy Sinatra went to Vietnam and found herself in instant sympathy with the troops who responded empathetically to her big hit "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'". She returned home to a big row with her pro-war father.

It took till 1968, by which time 300 Americans were dying each week in Vietnam in pursuit of a war that could not be won, for the tide of support at home to turn. In 1966 there was still a widespread belief that the President told the truth to the American people, that American democracy was good, that Soviet and Chinese communism was evil and that the war could and would be won. That year the best selling record was the song "The Ballad of the Green Berets" sung by Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler at a time when the charts were usually headed by Motown, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and the Beach Boys. It propagated the myth of American exceptionalism that was to dominate John Wayne's flag-waving film *The Green Berets* released in 1968. It was the reason Richard Nixon won, however narrowly, the Presidential election which took place in 1968.

It was 1968 when the tide of support for the war finally turned. In February that year, with the Tet offensive still in operation, America's most trusted newsman, the anchor of the CBS nightly news, Walter Cronkite, went to Vietnam and reported back to a stunned nation that the war was unlikely ever to be won and it could be ended only by negotiation. Allegedly, President Johnson grimly predicted that if he had lost Cronkite he had lost America. A month later Johnson announced he would not run in that year's presidential election. In Chicago in August, Cronkite opened the CBS coverage of the convention that elected Hubert Humphrey as the Democratic candidate for president in the midst of the infamous street riots, provoked and prosecuted by Mayor Richard Daley and his brutal police force, with the withering observation, "The Democratic Convention is about to begin in a police state – there doesn't seem any other way to say it."

The street protests both in America and in other countries were part of an ongoing war between the haves and the have-nots, between authority and the counterculture but above all between the young and the old. In America, the anti-war protests gathered pace in the late 1960s and then spread rapidly throughout Western Europe. America, which had been a beacon of hope to oppressed people throughout its history, now appeared to be sending young men who didn't want to be there halfway across the world to kill people they didn't know for no reason they could understand.

America's failure to win the war in Vietnam in rapid time against what many Americans believed to be a raggle-taggle army of ill-prepared peasants came as a shock to everyone. President Johnson's response was to widen the draft and to send more and more young men to fight in the jungles of South East Asia. Although Johnson was horrified by the numbers requested by General Westmoreland and rarely sent him all the recruits he asked for, the Pentagon Papers revealed that it was administration practice to announce a lesser figure to the American public than the number of troops actually shipped overseas.

On the first day of February 1968 South Vietnam's chief of police fired a revolver into the head of a handcuffed Vietcong prisoner at point blank range on a street in Saigon, an act which was filmed by an NBC cameraman and photographed by an Associated Press photographer. The image of the executed youth who looked about 12 years old horrified the world, never mind Americans. Fifty years on the images of death and dying on the nightly television news have become depressingly familiar but in 1968 the impact was devastating. Dr Benjamin Spock, whose books on baby and child care had influenced the mothers of the children who were being sent to fight in Vietnam, made a passionate denunciation of the war and advised that half a million of 'his' young men refuse the draft. Many of those peaceable mothers now turned against a war they had previously acknowledged had to be supported as mothers had supported all previous wars in which the United States had been a combatant.

This might all seem a long way from Lord's, from a summer of Test cricket and even further from South Africa, a country ruled by apartheid. In fact it isn't. The narrative of the Stop the Seventy

Tour is intimately bound up with the contemporaneous worldwide struggles for civil rights and the anti-war protests in America which, when they joined up with the traditional idealism of youth, created the atmosphere in which the Stop the Seventy Tour campaign developed.

Martin Luther King had initially wanted to keep the issue of Civil Rights separate from the anti-war protests because he needed Johnson's Congressional support to pass legislation, in particular the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act the following year. Eventually the pressure became too much and he spoke out against the war, bringing his supporters into line with the anti-war protesters. On 4 April 1968 King was shot dead outside a motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Despite appeals for calm from Bobby Kennedy, there were riots all over the country. The National Guard was sent in to restore order. In Washington DC alone 12 people were killed, over 1,000 were hurt and more than 6,000 arrested. King's Christian philosophy of non-violence was starting to feel outmoded to black Americans in 1968. The future to them now appeared to belong to Stokely Carmichael, Bobby Seale, Angela Davis and the Black Power movement. They saw the impact of the marches and the street protests on Lyndon Johnson's decision. The whole world now understood that direct action worked.

Just over two weeks after Martin Luther King was assassinated, Enoch Powell delivered his notorious 'Rivers of blood' speech at a hotel in Birmingham. The problems for black people in Britain were by no means as bad as they were for African Americans suffering under the Jim Crow laws or for the Africans in South Africa but they demonstrated that British society struggled to assimilate recently arrived, particularly non-white, immigrants into the mainstream of society. Lord's might not want to concern itself with the problems of apartheid, however much it claimed to look on racial discrimination with distaste, but it could not bury its head in the sand for much longer. The colour problem was everywhere apparent.

MCC remembered that even in the peaceful far-off days of 1960, the South African cricketers had arrived for their tour of England just five weeks after the massacre outside the police station in Sharpeville, Transvaal, when 69 protestors had been shot dead by white policemen and a further 180 had been injured. The massacre

had so outraged the civilised world, that the South African touring party had been met at Heathrow airport by 200 demonstrators carrying placards. Others were waiting for them when they arrived at the Park Lane Hotel as the players disembarked from the coach. Small scale picketing had occurred spasmodically throughout the tour but as far as the British news media were concerned, such events were less interesting than the English umpires Frank Lee and Syd Buller's consistent no-balling for throwing of the young South African pace bowler Geoff Griffin.

The 1970 tour would bring MCC, the Cricket Council and the Test and County Cricket Board into direct conflict with those who regarded playing cricket against a white South Africa team as condoning apartheid. Racial tensions in some British cities were growing, fanned by Powell's deliberately provocative outburst. East End dockers in London marched, carrying banners proclaiming 'ENOCH WAS RIGHT'. In South Africa, black cricket lovers knew that their government would never permit D'Oliveira, their local hero, to return and play on the hallowed turf of Newlands. In America during the long hot summers of the 1960s the black ghettos in Watts, Detroit, Chicago and Newark continued to burn. Their occupants similarly had no stake in white society.

A disproportionate number of the 58,000 Americans who were eventually killed in the war in South East Asia were young black men. In 1967, the world heavyweight boxing champion, Muhammed Ali, was fined \$10,000 and risked imprisonment when he refused the draft. Ali wouldn't fight a white man's war when his own people had their own struggles for justice and freedom. He pointed out the absurdity of black men being sent to Vietnam to kill other people of colour when they were subject to so much discrimination and violence at home.

My opponents are white people not Viet Cong or Chinese or Japanese. You are my opponent when I want freedom, you are my opponent when I want justice, you are my opponent when I want equality. You won't even stand up for my religious beliefs in America and you want me to go somewhere and fight when you won't stand up for me at home.

When Ali made his charge in 1967 he was not widely supported outside the black community and his refusal of the draft led to his being stripped of his world title to general approval. At the Mexico Olympics the following year two African-American sprinters, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, won gold and bronze medals respectively in the 200 metres final. When the American national anthem was played on the victory rostrum they each raised a fist encased in a black glove in recognition of their support for Black Power. The response at home from white America was one of overwhelming fury and far from being welcomed home as Olympic heroes, the two men were ostracised.

At the start of 1967, certainly amongst white Americans over the age of 30, there was still a strong belief in the concept of 'My country right or wrong'. The government had fought two world wars and the Korean War on the side of truth, justice and the American way. If the government said 'Go', young men went. It was their sacred duty to do so. Young people who protested the war by burning the American flag were a disgrace, they spat in the faces of the noble dead who had given their lives for the exact same cause in earlier wars. What made these young people think they knew better? It was young people who were the target of this ire because they were most at risk of dying for a cause in which they did not believe. The men who excoriated them were frequently men now middle-aged who had fought fascism and Nazism in Europe and the South Pacific, who had watched their friends die, who had emerged from the heat of battle ever more certain that democracy had to be fought for. If Hitler had been stopped in 1936

It was a familiar refrain among the generation that had fought World War II. It led to Anthony Eden's decision to invade Suez in 1956 and it led successive American presidents from Truman to Nixon to believe that Communism must be resisted wherever in the world it threatened to spread like a contagion. In the 1960s, the battlegrounds were Berlin and Vietnam. The former was comprehensible, the latter was not. Americans found themselves in the uncomfortable position of supporting and dying for a corrupt 'democratic' regime in South Vietnam and fighting an enemy looking for national self-determination. Robert McNamara later observed ruefully, 'We thought we were fighting Hitler or Stalin; in fact we

were fighting Tito. We thought we were fighting communism; in fact we were fighting nationalism.' It was a mess and young people simply did not recognise that the government had the right to call on them to die in a cause that was anathema to them.

The world was changing but the old men who ruled the world were not. In April 1968 the 'hippy' musical *Hair* opened on Broadway and mesmerised audiences watched young men and women taking off all their clothes on a public stage for the first time. In *The Producers*, a film made the previous year, Mel Brooks portrays the first audience to see 'Springtime for Hitler' as literally staring at the stage with their mouths wide open in shock. Something like that must have happened at the Biltmore Theater when Joseph Papp moved his off-Broadway production there in April 1968. The musical of course became instantly notorious for the nudity and the hash it unashamedly displayed but just as significant as the bare flesh and the spliffs was the 'desecration' of the American flag on stage which now sent Broadway audiences into paroxysms of rage. Their theatre had moved on from Rodgers and Hammerstein, even from Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, as it became the arena for protest politics. *Hair* was a musical that placed the 1960s counterculture on stage. It thrust bisexuality, interracial relationships and the rejection of monogamy in front of audiences who had previously been 'protected' from such taboo subjects.

In 1968 students all over the world saw direct action in the form of street protests as the most effective means open to them. It applied not just to the draft in America but to every aspect of life in which young people and their aspirations were being frustrated by an older generation who exhibited no interest in their grievances. It wasn't just a question of rich against poor. It was a generational existential anxiety which the older generation simply could not grasp. At the start of *The Graduate*, along with *Bonnie & Clyde* the hit film of 1967, Dustin Hoffman in his first starring role plays a recent college graduate who has worked hard in school all his life and has achieved all the academic honours his parents had wanted for him. Flying home into a wealthy middle-class suburb of Los Angeles, he tries to explain to his proud father the unease that is gnawing away at him. He is worried about his future. He wants it to be different from the life his father had led, different from what had been mapped

out for him. His parents have arranged a celebratory party for him from which he does his best to escape until he is cornered by one of his parents' friends:

Mr McGuire: I want to say one word to you. Just one word.

Benjamin: Yes, sir.

Mr McGuire: Are you listening?

Benjamin: Yes, I am.

Mr McGuire: Plastics.

Benjamin: Exactly how do you mean?

Mr McGuire: There's a great future in plastics. Think about it. Will you think about it?

Embarrassed by the affair he is having with Mrs Robinson, the wife of his father's business partner, he drifts for days on an air mattress in the pool outside the family home until his father looms over him.

Mr Braddock: Ben, what are you doing?

Benjamin: Well, I would say that I'm just drifting. Here in the pool.

Mr Braddock: Why?

Benjamin: Well, it's very comfortable just to drift here.

Mr Braddock: Have you thought about graduate school?

Benjamin: No.

Mr Braddock: Would you mind telling me then what those four years of college were for? What was the point of all that hard work?

Benjamin: You got me.

It was a problem for the baby boomers, particularly in the United States and Western Europe. Their parents had known depression, war and austerity. Their solution was a passionate belief in material prosperity, early military action to defend any threat to democracy and a determination to ensure that their children benefited from all their sacrifices. The problem was that not all of those children

wanted those benefits and those who did not utterly rejected the philosophy behind them. They wanted to make love not war. They wanted, in Timothy Leary's words, to 'turn on, tune in and drop out' of the society their parents had created in the post-war world. It was obvious the authorities were not going to give their passive approval to the counterculture which they regarded as a threat to everything they believed in. If young people wanted a more caring, a more just society with fewer material values, they were going to have to fight for it.

British culture changed visibly after 1963, the year that sexual intercourse began according to Philip Larkin and the year that the Beatles found themselves with four successive number one hits. It was the start of 'Swinging London', James Bond, Carnaby Street, Mary Quant, Terence Stamp, Julie Christie, BBC2, *The Avengers*, the white heat of Harold Wilson's technological revolution and of course the introduction of the Gillette Cup in cricket. The political turmoil which occurred in the aftermath of the MCC selectors' decision not to pick Basil D'Oliveira in August 1968 was part of this change in the culture.

One of the justifications for the maintenance of sporting links with South Africa was that it was 'only' the government in South Africa that was the problem, the implication being that all the white cricketers and all their supporters were opposed to the policy of apartheid. Yet immediately after John Vorster decided to cancel the 1968/69 tour the veteran South African sports journalist Louis Duffus wrote an article for the *Star and Argus* group of newspapers in which he made clear the essential logic of the government's action.

D'Oliveira was for so long a dagger directed at the heart of South African cricket that surprise and shock at the cancellation seems synthetic.

Most of all D'Oliveira must have known the conditions as they affected his whole life. The law of the land says you drive on the left. D'Oliveira was told to come out and drive on the right.

Was it to be expected that the South African Government would change its whole policy for a cricketer?

Because of one cricketer the great players produced in this country and the game itself have been victimized.

Posterity will surely marvel how a player, helped to go overseas by the charitable gestures of White contemporaries, could be the cause of sending the cricket of his benefactors crashing into ruins.

Had he read the article, D'Oliveira would have been surprised to learn that his passage to England had been facilitated by the charitable gestures of white contemporaries. Duffus's sentiments were repeated in his book *Play Abandoned* published in early 1970 and reviewed with withering contempt in the March edition of *The Cricketer* by the poet and cricket writer Alan Ross.

All posterity is likely to marvel at, I'm afraid, is the gutlessness, self-interest and downright subserviency of 'sportsmen' who underwrite a vile policy without so much as a squeak of protest, though many in private claim to detest it. [Duffus's] book, quite apart from its inadequacy as literature and general slipshod quality, is yet another indictment of terrible South African inadequacy. When will a South African cricketer or sporting journalist stand up and be counted? For then, and only then, will there be signs that the idiocy will ever stop.

Duffus's book and article might have been a fair reflection of the white South African reaction but it is important that the cricket authorities in England are not portrayed simply as reactionary fools, insensitive to the demands for change in many aspects of society. In November 1962, only four years after the last investigative committee had come to the conclusion that the anachronistic status of the amateur cricketer should be preserved, a new committee looking into the same problem recommended that it be abolished. The recommendation was approved by the full MCC committee and from the start of the 1963 season there was no longer a formal divide between amateur and professional cricketers. During that same season the first one-day limited-overs knockout competition was introduced into county cricket. It proved to be an enormous commercial success. In 1969 the Test and

County Cricket Board introduced a 40-overs league whose matches would take place every Sunday even if it meant a team that had begun a three-day County Championship match on the Saturday had to travel a hundred miles to fulfil the Sunday engagement and be back in time to continue the Championship game on the Monday morning. The point is that MCC, which considered as a fundamental part of its job the guardianship of what is now called the spirit of cricket, found it perfectly compatible with this new commercialism. When confronted with the politics which were inevitable if England continued to play cricket matches against South Africa it should be clear that the cricket authorities were not ignorant of the world outside St John's Wood. The problem was the difference in political and social philosophies which were ranged on either side.

Britain had long been used to street protests, from the Jarrow marchers in the 1930s to the Eastertime CND marches from Aldermaston to Trafalgar Square. They were essentially peaceful, although the speeches in Trafalgar Square could get inflammatory and certain CND members had been arrested including the 91-year-old Bertrand Russell and the playwrights John Osborne and Robert Bolt. Osborne and Bolt spent the night in prison, appeared in front of the magistrate next day and were fined £1. It was serious and well-intentioned of course but it read largely like Bertie Wooster stealing a policeman's helmet on Boat Race night. What happened in Grosvenor Square on 17 March 1968 was entirely different.

A march from Trafalgar Square to Hyde Park was planned to demonstrate against the war in Vietnam. It was to stop at 10 Downing Street on the way to hand in a petition. It must have been somewhat galling to the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, who, although unwilling unequivocally to express the opinion in public, was equally opposed to the war and was trying desperately to resist the efforts of Lyndon Johnson to drag Britain into it. It was a manoeuvre made particularly difficult by the weakness of sterling and Britain's dependence on American financial support. The marchers were variously estimated at between 10,000 and 30,000 and although most of them followed the prescribed route, a significant minority broke away just before the march reached Hyde Park and headed for Grosvenor Square, the site of the American

Embassy. A strong cordon of police, anticipating such an event, was waiting for them.

Police horses charged the crowd, the officers laying about them with their truncheons. Inevitably, innocent people were badly hurt and the press photographs and television newsreels made it look like another Peterloo. For students, young mothers with toddlers in push-chairs and middle-class pacifists who were caught up in the violence, that was exactly what it felt like. The public was deeply shocked by the images of faces streaming with blood caused by overt police brutality. British police had traditionally been the envy of the world precisely because it was widely believed that they did not behave like that. After 17 March 1968, to a generation of British youth, the police became 'pigs' just as they were referred to in America and the rest of Western Europe. To the law and order generation the police were defending the rule of law and the noisy, unruly mob got what it deserved. Battle lines were being drawn up.

Much of the political and social agitation was the result of actions taken by students. The mid-1960s was the time when the first baby boomers, those born immediately after 1945, reached university age. In most cases they were the first members of their family to achieve such an exalted state. Their parents had left school at 14 and gone into jobs, if they could find them, because money was so tight at home or they had joined the armed forces as the tide of war consumed them. When they were demobbed they went back to their jobs or, in the case of most women, they returned to domestic duties. Their children were not subject to the same economic and political forces so when they returned home during university vacations they took back with them social and political attitudes their parents struggled to understand. As tertiary education expanded in Britain and student numbers increased after the government accepted the recommendations of the Robbins Report in 1963, this gap widened significantly.

In other countries the problem was much the same although there were national variations. In France in the decade up to 1966 the student population trebled but French society was still in the grip of the Catholic Church and the position of women, who were legally prohibited from wearing trousers to work, was seriously circumscribed. President Charles de Gaulle, who was 78 years old in

1968, might have been the hero of liberation to the Free French but to the intellectuals and students of the 1960s he ran an old-fashioned paternalistic regime that symbolised everything that was backward and repressive about the country. It was somehow appropriate that the challenge to his authority which climaxed in May 1968 began at the start of the year on the rather more prosaic battleground of young men wanting to sleep with their girlfriends.

A German student called Daniel Cohn-Bendit was the youthful articulate leader of a student revolt which began on the Nanterre overspill campus of the University of Paris, whose authorities had refused their male and female students' request to share accommodation. The men now in authority hadn't been allowed to sleep with their girlfriends when they were 19 so they were unlikely to approve the idea of this generation, who hadn't been through the war, being permitted that sort of sensual pleasure on a campus designed to promote higher intellectual aspirations. Nanterre's buildings were new but its administration was traditional and autocratic and it pointedly refused to listen to its students' requests.

The Nanterre protests inevitably assumed some input from militant anti-Vietnam war demonstrators who had been influenced not only by a visit from Stokely Carmichael (when he had been immediately arrested by police) but also by events in New York where, on 23 April, students at Columbia University had begun a sit-in to protest at the university's blatant hypocrisy at announcing a tribute of respect for the dead in Vietnam whilst continuing to do weapons research for the Pentagon. In addition, it had compulsorily purchased neighbouring land in Harlem for further expansion and had evicted the black tenants and demolished their houses. The police, summoned by the university authorities, arrested 700 students and hauled them away to jail.

On 2 May the University of Paris closed its revolting Nanterre campus and Cohn-Bendit's supporters descended on the Sorbonne in Paris. The following day the police arrived and the clashes that were to be such a feature of the month began in earnest. Cohn-Bendit was ordered to appear before a disciplinary hearing at the Sorbonne. When hundreds of students came to give him their support, de Gaulle ordered riot police to arrest them and then closed the Sorbonne itself. The students marched through the Latin Quarter

singing the 'Internationale', the anthem of world communism. They were opposed to capitalism but they were not traditional communists because they were only too aware of the reality of Soviet totalitarianism. Their revolutionary imagination was seized by Mao and Che Guevara, not by Lenin or Trotsky. When they learned in early May that Czechs had poured on to the streets of Prague to celebrate Dubcek's reforms, French students cheered. In response the police confronted them with the threat of force.

Adopting tactics from previous French revolutions, the students began to rip up the cobblestones in the streets outside the Sorbonne and used them as weapons. Cars were overturned and shops ransacked. Barricades which would have been recognised by the Parisians of 1848 were erected, sealing off the area. By now there were 40,000 students on the streets and every street leading to the Sorbonne was blocked by waves of riot police. In the early hours of the following morning the police were ordered to attack. The Prime Minister, Georges Pompidou, tried to calm things by reopening the Sorbonne. The students swarmed in and claimed a permanent occupation.

Les Evenements as they became known were French in particular circumstances but they were an international defining moment of the year. The students were supported by respectable intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. France's best known stage actor Jean-Louis Barrault, who had transformed L'Odeon into a great theatre, came out on the students' side and invited them to occupy L'Odeon, which they did. They then trashed it, much to Barrault's mortification. Sartre also helpfully advised the students to smash their universities and join forces with the workers. It was this alliance with the workers that turned a student revolt into a nationwide industrial paralysis.

On 13 May the French trade unions announced a general strike. Despite long working hours, French workers found that their wages were the second lowest in Western Europe. Unemployment was growing. By 16 May, 50 factories were occupied and by 21 May ten million workers were on strike. The Cannes Film Festival came to a halt. The director Jean-Luc Godard harangued the festival crowds, complaining that he wanted to talk about solidarity with the workers and the students but the festival-goers, perhaps predictably, only wanted to talk about tracking shots and close-ups. 'Dix ans, ca

suffice', cried the anti-Gaullists as they marched, referring to the time since 1958 when de Gaulle had become President. Theatres closed, public transport stopped, petrol stations ran out of petrol. The country ground to a halt.

On 22 May the French government deported the Jewish Daniel Cohn-Bendit back to Germany which inevitably evoked memories of events 25 years previously. On the 24th, students set fire to Le Bourse. Now de Gaulle had had enough. He called a referendum promising that if he lost it he would resign. Students celebrated, chanting 'Adieu, de Gaulle' and waving white handkerchiefs like football supporters eagerly anticipating the sacking of an unpopular manager, but a week later the President abandoned his plans for a referendum. The violence that erupted in response that night, however, killed off widespread general sympathy for the students, although the strike continued for another fortnight. De Gaulle might have been brought down by the trade unions but ultimately they shied away from striking the fatal blow and, after de Gaulle consulted secretly with the army, he broadcast his refusal to resign or change the Prime Minister. Instead he dissolved the old Assembly and announced plans for a general election.

De Gaulle feared that the anarchy in the streets was the prelude to a takeover of totalitarian communism which he alone could prevent. The students believed this was effectively a *coup d'état* with de Gaulle seizing more power. The Gaullists, fed up with revolting students and striking workers, marched into the Place de la Concorde singing 'La Marseillaise' to demonstrate that the student protesters did not represent their idea of France. Their chants included a call to send Daniel Cohn-Bendit to Dachau. The revolution of 1968 was running out of steam. Petrol stations began to reopen, trains started to run, workers drifted back to the factories and the girls at the Folie Bergere, who had also expressed their solidarity with other workers and the students, started to take off their clothes again. Three people had been killed during the May riots. On the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May, 70 people were killed on the roads. By the end of June, de Gaulle emerged with the greatest electoral victory in French parliamentary history. He ordered the cobblestones of the Left Bank, which had proved such handy missiles, to be paved over with asphalt. The revolution was over.

The workers had gained a 10% pay increase, a rise in the minimum wage and shorter working hours. The students got a grudging acceptance from university authorities that some reforms were necessary. In Cambridge, the author of this book struck his long-planned blow for revolution when he sat on a student committee calling for a reform of the ludicrously outmoded syllabus in the History Faculty and failed miserably to achieve almost anything of significance. However, despite his victory, de Gaulle's public support started to weaken and in 1969 he lost a referendum in which he asked the French people to support his intended reform of the parliamentary system. Immediately after the result he retired to his rural retreat in Colombey les Deux Eglises. Like Lyndon Johnson, he eventually accepted that he could not win the battle against the tide of history.

The utopian dreams of May 1968 were not realised but then utopian dreams very rarely are. However, despite the Russian tanks rolling into Prague in August 1968, presaging the destruction of Dubcek's Prague Spring, this re-imposition of Soviet repression on the suffering people of Czechoslovakia lit a torch that was to be held proudly aloft for 20 years by successive generations of students and young people. Amidst the inevitable reverses as the Old Guard tried to suppress the agitation for changes of which they disapproved, there emerged some of the great liberal triumphs, widely recognised as part of the social transformation of the 1960s. Out of the Stonewall riots surfaced the movement for gay liberation. The second wave of feminism grew out of the realisation that even in a revolutionary movement promoting egalitarianism the fact remained that it was the men who talked about politics and went on television, the women who did the typing, made the tea, washed up and went to bed with the leaders of the revolution. By the end of the 1960s they had, understandably, had enough.

In England, Parliament had already passed legislation permitting gay sexual relations between consenting adults over the age of 21 and an Abortion Act that ended some of the dire consequences facing women whose lives were threatened with physical or mental devastation when they discovered they were pregnant. In 1968 the office of Lord Chamberlain was abolished and theatres were thereby permitted to stage any political or sexual work of a radical nature that

did not transgress the law. The following year the Divorce Reform Act was passed, permitting couples to divorce after a separation of two years. The old certainties were disintegrating.

In the light of these and similar events it was perhaps unsurprising that the mandarins of English cricket found that the tidal waves of social revolution were now crashing against the Grace Gates. It was no longer possible for Gubby Allen, Billy Griffith and the other men whose influence dominated the MCC and hence English cricket to dismiss the demand to stop the 1970 tour with lordly disdain. Their desire to continue playing cricket against their old white friends from South Africa was to be confronted by an entirely new and seriously armed opposition.