



Isabelle Sommier, Graeme Hayes, and Sylvie Ollitrault

# Breaking Laws

Violence and Civil Disobedience  
in Protest

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

## Breaking Laws

# Protest and Social Movements

Recent years have seen an explosion of protest movements around the world, and academic theories are racing to catch up with them. This series aims to further our understanding of the origins, dealings, decisions, and outcomes of social movements by fostering dialogue among many traditions of thought, across European nations and across continents. All theoretical perspectives are welcome. Books in the series typically combine theory with empirical research, dealing with various types of mobilization, from neighborhood groups to revolutions. We especially welcome work that synthesizes or compares different approaches to social movements, such as cultural and structural traditions, micro- and macro-social, economic and ideal, or qualitative and quantitative. Books in the series will be published in English. One goal is to encourage non-native speakers to introduce their work to Anglophone audiences. Another is to maximize accessibility: all books will be available in open access within a year after printed publication.

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*Violence and Civil Disobedience in Protest*

*Isabelle Sommer, Graeme Hayes, and Sylvie Ollitrault*

Amsterdam University Press

Originally published as:

Isabelle Sommier: *La violence révolutionnaire* (2008)

Graeme Hayes & Sylvie Ollitrault: *La désobéissance civile – 2e édition augmentée et mise à jour* (2013)

© Presses de la Fondation des Sciences Politiques

Translated by Marina Urquidi (Part 1)

Cover illustration: Occupy La Défense, Paris, November 2011

Photo: Graeme Hayes

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Typesetting: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 90 8964 934 8

e-ISBN 978 90 4852 827 1 (pdf)

DOI 10.5117/9789089649348

NUR 740

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# Acknowledgements

The authors would particularly like to thank Jim Jasper and Nonna Mayer for their guidance and encouragement throughout the process, and to the editors and editorial teams at both Amsterdam University Press and the Presses de Sciences Po for their creative input and organization. Isabelle Sommier would like to thank the CNRS (Centre national de recherche scientifique), the CESSP (Centre de sociologie et de science politique) research centre at Paris 1 University, and the TEPSIS (Transformation de l'État, Politisation des Sociétés, Institution du Social) research centre for translation support, and of course to Marina Urquidi for her painstaking work translating the original French, as well as to Graeme Hayes for preparing the final text. Graeme Hayes and Sylvie Ollitrault would like to thank colleagues at Aston and at the Arènes research centre Rennes, and above all to the activists who gave their time, effort and energy talking to us and allowing us to observe their actions.



# List of Abbreviations, Organizations, and Parties

40 Days for Life (United Kingdom, 2011-)	
Aarrg!!	Apprentis Agitateurs pour un réseau de résistance globale (France, 2001-)
ACNV	Association pour la communication non violente (France, 1991-)
AD	Action directe (France, 1979-2004)
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa, 1912-)
Anpo	Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan (1954)
APO	Außerparlamentarische Opposition, or Extra-Parliamentary Opposition (Germany, 1966-1973)
Army of God (United States, 1982-)	
AutOp	Autonomia operaia, or Workers' Autonomy (Italy, 1973-1979)
B2J	Bewegung 2. Juni, or the June 2 <sup>nd</sup> Movement (Germany, 1971-1980)
BAC	Brigade activiste des clowns (France, 2005-)
BAe	British Aerospace (United Kingdom, 1977-1999)
BI	Brigades internationales (France, 1974-1976)
BLA	Black Liberation Army (United States, 1971-1981)
BPP	Black Panther Party (United States, 1966-1982)
BR	Brigate rosse, or Red Brigades (Italy, 1970-1987)
BR-PCC	Brigate rosse per la costruzione del partito comunista combattente, or Red Brigades for the Construction of the Combatant Communist Party (Italy, 1981-1988)
BR-PG	Brigate rosse-Partito guerriglia del proletariato metropolitano, or Red Brigades-Guerrilla Party (Italy, 1981-1982)
BR-UdCC	Brigate rosse-Unione dei comunisti combattenti, or Red Brigades-Union of Combatant Communists (Italy, 1985-1987)
BWSF	British Workers Sports Federation (United Kingdom, 1923-1935)

CADAC	Coordination des associations pour le droit à l'avortement et à la contraception, or Coordination of Associations for the Right to Abortion and Contraception (France, 1990-)
CCC	Cellules communistes combattantes, or Communist Combatant Cells (Belgium, 1983-1985)
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, or Christian Democratic Union of Germany (Germany, 1945-)
CFDT	Confédération française démocratique du travail (France, 1964-)
CGT	Confédération générale du travail (France, 1895-)
CIMADE	Comité inter mouvements auprès des évacués (France, 1939-)
CIRCA	Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (United Kingdom, 2003-)
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (United Kingdom, 1957-)
CNPF	Conseil national du patronat français, or the National Council of French Employers (France, 1945-1998)
COINTELPRO	An acronym for the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (United States, 1956-1971)
Colonna 2 agosto, or 2 <sup>nd</sup> of August Column, splintered off the BR (Italy, 1981-1982)	
Colonna Walter Alasia, or Walter Alasia Column, splintered off the BR (Italy, 1980-1983)	
COLP	Comunisti organizzati per la liberazione proletaria, or Communists Organized for Proletarian Liberation (Italy, 1981-1984)
Committee of 100 (United Kingdom, 1960-1968)	
Communauté de l'Arche (France, 1964-)	
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality (United States, 1942-)
CP	Confédération paysanne, or Farmers' Union (France, 1987-)
CSO	Community Service Organization (United States, 1947-)
DC	Democrazia cristiana, or Christian Democracy (Italy, 1942-1994)
Déboulonneurs (France, 2005-)	

Den plirono, or I Do Not Pay (Δεν πληρώνω) (Greece, 2012-)	
DKP	Deutsche Kommunistische Partei, or German Communist Party (Germany, 1968-)
EU	European Union
Faucheurs volontaires (France, 2003-)	
FEN	Fédération de l'éducation nationale, or Federation for National Education (France, 1945-)
FLN	Front de libération nationale, or National Liberation Front (Algeria, 1954-)
FN	Front national, or National Front (France, 1972-)
FNSEA	Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles, or National Federation of Agricultural Holders' Unions (France, 1946-)
FSM	Free Speech Movement (United States, 1964)
FSU	Fédération syndicale unitaire (France, 1993-)
GANVA	Groupe d'actions non violentes anti-nucléaires (France, 2007-)
GAP	Gruppi di azione partigiana, or Partisan Action Groups (Italy, 1969-1972)
GARI	Groupes d'action révolutionnaires internationalistes, or Groups of Internationalist Revolutionary Action (France, 1977-1979)
genetiX snowball (United Kingdom)	
GISTI	Groupe d'information et de soutien des immigrés (France, 1972-)
GP	Gauche prolétarienne, or Proletarian Left (France, 1969-1973)
INRA	Institut national de la recherche agronomique, or National Institute of Agricultural Research (France, 1946-)
JAC	Jeunesse agricole catholique, or Young Catholic Farmers (France, 1929-1965)
JCR	Jeunesse communiste révolutionnaire, or Revolutionary Communist Youth (France, 1966-1969)
JEC	Jeunesse étudiante chrétienne, or Young Christian Students (France, 1929-)
JOC	Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne, or Young Christian Workers (France, 1925-)
JRA	Nihon Sekigun, or Japanese Red Army (Japan, 1970-2001)



Kakumeito	Revolutionary People's Party (Japan, 1991-2001)
Keihin Anpo Kyoto	Tokyo-Yokohama Anti-Security Treaty Joint Struggle Committee (Japan, 1968-1970)
LARF	Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Factions (Lebanon, 1979-1988)
LC	Lotta continua, or Continuous Struggle (Italy, 1969-1976)
MAN	Mouvement pour une alternative non-violente (France, 1974-)
May 19 <sup>th</sup> Committee	(United States, 1977-1980)
MIA	Montgomery Improvement Association (United States, 1955-)
MIL	Movimiento Ibérico de Liberación, or Iberian Liberation Movement (Spain, 1971-1973)
MLAC	Mouvement pour la liberté de l'avortement et de la contraception (France, 1973-1975)
Movimiento 15-M	(Spain, 2011-)
MSI	Movimento sociale italiano, or Italian Social Movement (Italy, 1946-1995)
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (United States, 1909-)
NAP	Nuclei armati proletari, or Proletarian Armed Nuclei (Italy, 1974-1977)
NAPAP	Noyaux armés pour l'autonomie populaire, or Armed Nuclei for Popular Autonomy (France, 1977-1979)
NCLC	Nashville Christian Leadership Council (United States, 1958-)
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, or National Democratic Party of Germany (neo-Nazi) (Germany, 1964-)
NRP	Nouvelle résistance populaire, or New People's Resistance, underground branch of the GP (France, 1970-1973)
ONF	Office national des forêts, or National Forests Office (France, 1964-)
Operation Rescue	(United States, 1986-)
Ordre nouveau	(France, 1969-1972)
OWS	Occupy Wall Street (United States, 2011-)

PAH	Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca, or Platform for People Affected by Mortgages (Spain, 2009-)
PAS	Pennsylvania Abolition Society (United States, 1775-)
PCI	Partito comunista italiano, or Italian Communist Party (Italy, 1921-1991)
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Palestine, 1967-)
PG	Partito guerriglia del proletariato metropolitano, or Guerrilla Party of the Metropolitan Proletariat, splintered off the BR (Italy, 1981-1982)
PL	Prima linea, or Front Line (Italy, 1976-1981)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization (Palestine, 1964-)
Ploughshares	(United Kingdom, 1996-)
Plowshares	(United States, 1980-)
PLP	Progressive Labor Party (United States, 1962-)
PotOp	Potere operaio, or Workers' Power (Italy, 1969-1973)
PSU	Parti socialiste unifié, or Unified Socialist Party (France, 1960-1989)
RAF	Rote Armee Fraktion, or Red Army Faction (Germany, 1970-1988)
Religious Society of Friends	(Quakers)
Republic of New Africa	(United States, 1968-1980)
RESF	Réseau éducation sans frontières, or Education without Borders Network (France)
Revolutionary Armed Task Force	(United States, 1980-1981)
Rote Zora, or Zora the Redhead, feminist branch of RZ	(Germany, 1977-1995)
Roya citoyenne	(France, 2016-)
RTE	Réseau de transport d'électricité, or Electricity Transmission Network (France)
RYM	Revolutionary Youth Movement (United States, 1969)
RZ	Revolutionäre Zellen, or Revolutionary Cells (Germany, 1973-1995)
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference (United States, 1957-)
SDS	Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund, or Socialist German Student League (Germany, 1946-1970)

SDS	Students for a Democratic Society (United States, 1960-1969)
Sekigun	Red Army (Japan, 1969-1970)
SFIO	Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière, or French Section of the Workers' International (France, 1905-1969)
SLA	Symbionese Liberation Army (United States, 1973-2002)
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (United States, 1960-1970s)
SNCF	Société nationale des chemins de fer français, or the French National Railway Company (France, 1938-)
SOS Tout-Petits, or Save the Little Ones	(France, 1986-)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, or Social Democratic Party of Germany (1863-)
SPK	Sozialistisches Patientenkollektiv, or Socialist Patients' Collective (Germany, 1970-1972)
Transcendental Club	(United States, 1836-1844)
La Trêve de Dieu, or Truce of God	(France, 1988-)
Tute bianca, or White Overalls	(Italy, 1994-2001)
UdCC	Unione dei comunisti combattenti, or Union of Combatant Communists, splintered off the BR-PCC (Italy, 1985-1987)
UEC	Union des étudiants communistes, or Communist Students Union (France, 1956-)
UFW	United Farm Workers of America (United States, 1962-)
UGS	Union de la gauche socialiste, or Union of the Socialist Left (France, 1957-)
UJCml	Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes léninistes, or Union of Marxist-Leninist Communist Youth (France, 1966-1968)
UN	United Nations
UNEF	Union nationale des étudiants de France (France, 1907-)
URA	Rengo Sekigun or United Red Army (Japan, 1971-1972)
Vaincre et vivre, or Conquer and Live	(France, 1974-1976)
VLR	Vive la révolution!, or Long Live the Revolution! (France, 1969-1971)

White Citizens' Councils (United States, 1954-)	
WPC	Women's Political Council (United States, 1946-)
WTO	World Trade Organization
WUO	Weather Underground Organization (United States, 1969-1977)
YCL	Young Communist League (United Kingdom, 1921-1988)
Zengakuren	Japanese League of Student Self-government (1948)



## Introduction to *Breaking Laws*

This book brings together two volumes initially published in French in the Presses de Sciences Po's *Contester* series: Isabelle Sommier's *La Violence révolutionnaire*, here translated from the original by Marina Urquidi, and Graeme Hayes and Sylvie Ollitrault's *La Désobéissance civile*, here revised and translated by the first author. Both focus on the emergence and evolution of new and radical modes of activism in what we might call the 'long 1960s', from the emergence of the civil rights movement as a mass movement in the USA in the mid-1950s through to the protest cycle of 1968 and its aftermath, in which movements adopting forms of armed struggle, and movements adopting forms of non-violent direct action, challenged state power.

In the first part of this book, Sommier discusses the 'Years of Lead' that followed the revolutionary moment of 1968. Sommier's account provides a fascinating overview of the key groups in Europe, North America, and Japan, with particular focus on the Red Brigades in Italy, the Red Army Faction in West Germany, Action directe in France, the Japanese Red Army, and, in the USA, the Weather Underground Organization. She argues that there is an 'unsolved crisis of memory' concerning these groups, and more generally concerning the relationship between 1968 and the subsequent development of movements espousing armed struggle in these countries, noting that these groups cannot simply be delegitimized as terrorist, insofar as they refused to carry out indiscriminate attacks (privileging instead a form of action centring on political assassination) and recognized in their ideology and group culture the importance of public accountability. Sommier's analysis thus has wide conceptual importance for the study of social movements in general: where social movement theory developed from (and arguably continues to privilege) instrumentally and rationally based accounts of movement organizations operating within highly structured political contexts in order to explain their patterns of emergence, mobilization, and demobilization, Sommier argues that the contrasting trajectories of armed movements can best be understood through the cultural lens of clandestinity, and thus of group identity.

In the second part, Hayes and Ollitrault focus on the multiple and various legacies of the civil rights movements of the 1960s, charting the emergence of civil disobedience as a historicized form of 'heroic' social movement action in Western (post)industrialized democracies. Adopted by citizenship, anti-nuclear, and environmental movements in particular as they sought to differentiate themselves from class struggle in the post-1968

period, civil disobedience has more recently developed into a familiar form of action in counter-globalization, migrant rights, climate justice, and professionally based campaigns espousing a civic politics opposed to the entrenchment of neo-liberal, post-democratic political and economic arrangements. The authors argue here that the predominant normative focus on civil disobedience in liberal political theory obscures the performative significance of movement work, particularly concerning its discursive justification and legitimation, the contrasting movement understandings of accountability, and, crucially, the importance of boundary-marking between what constitutes violence and non-violence. Combining historical overview, theoretical discussion, and detailed discussion of movements (such as the French *Faucheurs volontaires* campaign against GM crops), they argue that the adoption of civil disobedience is emblematic of the frustration of activists with the failure of the 'classic' repertoire of social movement action to produce change faced with a widening democratic deficit.

Though the focus of their studies is very different, together these two analyses therefore ask us to re-address normative accounts of the relationship between radicalism, the use of violence, and collective action. Both privilege contextual understanding, placing their accounts of movement development and strategic choice within the situated histories of the emergence of these movements; both focus on the importance of discursive legitimation, and on the interpretive work that social movement actors do, in order to produce political and social challenge.