

CHAPTER 5

SAYING YES TO POOR COUNTRIES

In the village school, I was outraged when teacher Teglgard taught us that an Indian worker earned only 10 kroner a year. And when my classmate Verner Puggaard's father and a group of other local farmers drove their Opel Kadets down through Algiers, the Sahara, Ghana, Nigeria and Sudan, they later showed their moving slides at a big meeting at the village pub organized by my father. I was deeply moved by their photographs of poverty, and so I felt ashamed that my drawings of Africa's poverty in my school workbooks were not as good as those of Verner's older brother, the boy Henning. Together with Teglgard's stories about Albert Schweitzer's hospital for the poor in Africa, it gave us children strong guilt complexes, and because most African countries in our childhood were under Western colonial rule, we were instilled with a sense of responsibility.

I particularly remember one day being shocked by the front page pictures of the newspaper my mother always put over the toilet when she cleaned it with toilet cleaner. When I removed it to read the text under the picture of the white South African policemen beating up a bloody black African, I myself was verbally beaten for pissing on her work. And I remember being scolded for falling over while washing dishes in the kitchen for Radioavisen and, in the spirit of the new era of decolonization, following the reports of the rebellion in Algeria against 130 years of French occupation, so soon after France itself had been occupied. Only later was I shocked that we had never been told that not only had the Algerians revolted from the beginning of the French conquest in 1830, during which



From my duties in 6th grade in 1959. Today you can smile at especially my description of the plight of the Chinese. But it's important to remember that this was our worldview back then, when everyone was talking about the coming famines in poor countries in the days before their Green Revolution.



nearly a million, or a third of the entire population, were murdered, but that a Western democracy which now, in its convulsive final phase of holding on to something that rightfully did not belong to it, had killed another million and a half resistance fighters and consented to the bloody torture of an unknown number in a protracted war that brutalized both sides. There was peace and tranquility all around us in Europe, and I had already been on summer vacations with my parents in France, so it was completely impossible for me to understand how the French could commit so much evil against people of color so soon after the Nazi mass murders. It was only when I was 15 that the Algerians got their freedom from "us". And my left-wing history teacher at Esbjerg Statsskole shook us by revealing that it was the United States, through NATO, that had financed Europe's colonial wars because we had been so impoverished after the war.

Although in school we discussed all these bloody injustices and were affected by them, today, when words like "democracy" and "freedom of speech" have taken on a whole new weight, it is scary to realize how long we could blindly continue to passively live with the injustices. While our parents' generation understandably praised the United States for having

saved our democracy after Nazism, my generation of such teachers was brought up to think critically and gradually to see the hollowness of all the American declarations of democracy, while the United States everywhere elected legally elected governments. The examples are many - from the 1953 coup in Iran, when the progressive government in power made land reforms and nationalized the West's oil companies, to the first one I remember vividly myself. I was on the living room floor at the age of 13, eating oranges, when I heard on the radio that Africa's great freedom hero Patrice Lumumba, who had shortly before won Congo's first free elections in 1960, had been murdered under mysterious circumstances. It has since emerged that he was assassinated on the direct instructions of the Belgian government, which has since apologized, but received US support for the mission.

I remember it so clearly because of my father's fine ivory napkin ring, which I still have. His uncle Christian had sent it home from the Congo shortly before he himself was killed as a captain in the Belgian colonial army. To me as a child, the stories about Christian sounded like exotic Tintin adventures, and for a while I swapped rings with my father, as I felt more drawn to the dark Africa than to the darkened Kierkegaard - until the violent guilt of adolescence, when I could not use Kierkegaard's concept of guilt for anything at all decisive. So forever I did away with the bourgeoisie's clinging serviette-holding, which in the Holdt family could not hide my co-responsibility and my blood ties to this huge country, where 'we' had only employed and educated three Congolese to take over the state apparatus. For years, we in Europe had enriched ourselves through the unimaginable plundering of the country by the Belgians, which is why Lumumba believed that political independence was not enough: The continent must also cease to be an economic colony of Europe. Although Lumumba was not a communist and had appealed for help from the United States, the CIA decided - after first attempting to poison his toothpaste - to overthrow this young democracy and replace the murdered president with one of Africa's bloodiest kleptomaniacs, Mobutu, who continued to plunder the country for his own benefit and for the benefit of Europe.



The newspaper picture on the left was the one I fished out of my mother's toilet cleaning. In my early school days, I was far more affected by the atrocities of the apartheid regime in South Africa than the slightly milder version in the United States.

and poorer, the wars and violence have escalated endlessly until today, when its refugees are streaming towards the EU.

The search for truth

My first memory of the USA is probably the large gift package "that some Americans had sent us". It must have been after 1950, when we had moved to the vicarage in West Jutland, because that's where we unwrapped it on the living room floor, I remember. In the years after the war, Denmark received 385 million dollars as part of the Marshall Aid, and of course we were deeply grateful for this generosity. The aid was conceived by the Americans from a deeply selfish motive, partly to ensure that the devastated European countries would not vote Communist, and partly to get the US economy going by making us once again purchasing power in Europe. But the media didn't report much about this at the time. In any case, it was a brilliant idea, in line with my own thoughts that we should integrate with each other - if only for selfish reasons. For Marshall Aid did indeed lead to European integration by creating a fertile ground for both NATO and the EC. This would not have been the case if impoverishment had led to the rise to power of the major Western European Communist parties at this critical juncture, as happened in Eastern Europe.

But whether such gift packages to European families had anything to do with Marshall Aid was a mystery to me for many years. I remember that when my brother Niels Jørgen and I eagerly unwrapped them, especially the toys and candy, we were told only that the packages came from a nice American family. But our parents had no friends or acquaintances in the US, so how had the American family found us? It was only many years later, when I became a CARE ambassador during my further integration with poor countries, that I realized the truth. For in all probability it was in fact "my organization" that first gave the US government the clever idea for the Marshall Plan, since CARE was formed as early as the fall of 1945 to help the needy in the ruins of Europe by sending us food,



Even the new Ferguson tractors that revolutionized farming from the horses of the past were very much a part of Marshall Aid. Here I am in 1968 bringing in the hay for Morten with Lisbeth and my little brother and Morten's granddaughter on top. We had hitchhiked home with our black cat, so that I could proudly present my "red" girlfriend.

clothing and medicines in gift packs. CARE was a voluntary organization that received no government funding, but financed the packages by asking American families to donate \$10 for each package they sent to European families, whose addresses CARE gave them. In other words, there was no selfish motive behind this aid, which started before the communist scare in the United States. And the result was that the Americans won the hearts and minds of not only my family, but hundreds of thousands of far more needy families with their enormous generosity. This was possible at a time when returning American soldiers could soften the hearts back home with their harrowing descriptions of the devastation they had witnessed in Europe. And at the same time, by liberation, they had won our hearts too. Over 100 million parcels were sent through this big-hearted initiative.

In trying to understand the reasons for my gradual radicalization, it is interesting to note that while some left-wing teachers may have helped me to think more critically, I don't remember them being able to get us to buy into their ideological project. I myself remained fundamentally

conservative and even going to UCPH meetings. The conflicts that made me turn against the West emotionally were not those that were put into an ideological framework of understanding by the media. When, as a 15-17-year-old at Statsskolen in Esbjerg, I had to write essays on the Cuban Missile Crisis, which we feared would turn into a nuclear war, I followed the general indignation that Fidel Castro had been so impudent as to introduce communism right next to the America of freedom, while I was completely blind to why the Cubans had risen up in rebellion. Not a single word of justification did I write about the fact that the United States had given support to a long line of bloody dictators, the last of whom, Batista, had used censorship, torture and public executions of up to 20,000 Cubans in order, together with the American mafia, to maintain the country as his and the Americans' preferred drug, prostitution and gambling paradise, while the Cuban people themselves became increasingly impoverished.

If it was so easy for us here to cling to a blind ideological defense of bloody oppression, it was of course because Cuba received support from the totalitarian systems in Eastern Europe, which we had learned were evil. Not least when, after the Soviet Union's bloody invasion of Hungary in 1956, we had had a dear refugee, Bela, staying in the rectory.

The same was true of the long war of repression in Vietnam, which had rumbled like an almost natural background noise ever since my birth, but which was to change much for my generation. From my school days I vaguely remember the images of first the French and then, much more clearly, the Americans, rampaging through poor rural towns and burning down the palm leaf huts of the peasants. But we were told that it was all right, 'because they were communists'. Later I realized what was going on, and I was shocked to think how one-eyed and willing a tool this Western demonization had made me. But also that it was by and large not red Danish teachers or the increasing number of "red mercenaries" (as critical voices were already then called in the media) that slowly made me aware. No, it was mostly the Americans themselves. The first was Steve Washburn, who had escaped from military service in Vietnam. In the ensuing reckoning with his patriotic values, he not least

from his conservative father, a patriotic veteran of the 2. World War, he had become increasingly critical of his country's role in Vietnam through the American youth movement. I myself was a victim of the argument that permeated the West, that it was a matter of fighting a brutal communist regime (North Vietnam) that had attacked a democratic country (South Vietnam). And if we didn't stand up for democracy, the domino effect would cause communist aggressors to topple country after country. If I had heard any contrary explanations up to that point, they might have been more easily dismissed because they came from 'Red' critics, but I was stunned to hear them now in non-ideological terms from an American who had in no way been exposed to Red propaganda. At the same time, one day I got Preben Dollerup and Ebbe Kløvedal Reich's book Vietnam - the war in perspective from 1965, where I learned for the first time about the background of the war. I clearly remember the shock of learning that throughout my childhood the United States had financed the French colonial war, which cost half a million to a million Vietnamese lives. I had been brought up to see the United States as a freedom-loving country that supported independence and decolonization.

I learned that the leader of the Vietnamese rebellion, Ho Chi Minh, as a young student in Paris just after World War I, had tried to persuade the French to grant freedom and democracy to their distant Indochinese colony. His inspiration was the freedoms and constitution of the United States, where he had lived for two years before the war. Impoverished France initially agreed, but then the US persuaded France to resume the colonial war and he went to the communist countries for support. So in seeking American-inspired freedom and democracy, we had forced the Vietnamese directly into the arms of totalitarian forces. And with the simultaneous Soviet colonization of Eastern Europe, it then became easy for us to justify our fight against a poor country by entangling ourselves in the lies of a one-eyed black and white worldview.

It was only by identifying personally with a young American's painful realization of his own country's failure to live up to its highly professed ideals of freedom that these found a very different resonance with me. Steve's starting point was perhaps selfish in its attempt to avoid

to return home in a body bag himself. But to avoid the feeling of betraying his country and his father's ideals of sacrificing himself for his country in the fight for democracy and freedom, he had begun to dig into its lies to justify his escape. All the while, obsessively, he kept saying: "I've got to find the truth." Observing the enormous and difficult journey of realization he went through in Denmark, I could see how massive the indoctrination from childhood in the United States was, with phrases like "the land of the free and the home of the brave".

In retrospect, I wonder how quickly my radicalization took place. Let me just mention here the more embarrassing things I got into when Steve moved with me into my coffin shop in the summer of 1967. The Russell Tribunal - also known as the International War Crimes Tribunal - wanted to hold its major investigative meeting in Denmark, but with the US-sympathetic bourgeois government we had at the time under Prime Minister Hilmar Baunsgaard, there was enormous resistance to providing both land and premises for something so "anti-American". The debate about how to keep the Tribunal out of the country by refusing to host it raged in the media



I could surely house a lot of people in my slum collective in Dannebrogsgade, but not as many as Fjordvilla. Go ahead and laugh.

for months. I thought it was a pity that so good an attempt to educate about the war crimes I myself was just beginning to know about had to be nipped in the bud. If everyone knew the truth, no one would support the war any longer. And when I had my own place to live for the first time in my life, I dared to write to the Tribunal to offer to house it. I no longer have a copy of the letter to amuse me, because I have no idea today what I imagined in my bottomless naivety in my backyard slum of no more than 50 square meters. Had I thought that the Tribunal was no bigger than the philosophers Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre? Or was it simply an attempt to show in solidarity that not all Danes were hostile? After all, the tribunal was composed of at least a hundred internationally renowned writers and artists, including James Baldwin, Simone de Beauvoir, Sara Lidman and Alice Walker, as well as a huge press presence. Fortunately, it was finally allowed to take place in Teatret Fjordvilla in Roskilde, from where the pictures of the packed rooms clearly showed how naive I had been.

Behind enemy lines

My memory of when in my transformation process I stopped going to meetings in Conservative Youth and Conservative Students while Viggo Fischer was chairman is probably as poor as his own famous and 107 times repeated "I don't remember" during the later Tamil case. However, he earned my unreserved respect when, 42 years after me, he left the party in protest against its (even today) reprehensible treatment of poor countries. Because in protest against my own previous attitude, which had been shaped to a large extent by the party, I now felt a special obligation to inform my old party comrades about Vietnam. That very summer, therefore, I became embroiled in something far more controversial. Before I confess to the crime, I would just like to emphasize that on the plus side of my life's work, I would like to be remembered for always looking at my own responsibility rather than seeking enemy images and scapegoats in others.

That was also the reason why that summer I took a very determined job as a messenger at Berlingske Tidende to work on the monster

from the inside. For Berlingske Tidende was the main organ of misinformation about the Vietnam War, and the newspaper supported US policy in everything. I had particularly resented their pro-American foreign correspondent, Anders Georg, who always made the Americans' point of view his own with phrases like North Vietnam "claims" or "asserts", while the Americans were content to "establish" or "deny". Anders Georg wrote of the partisan defense as "the disturbing scale of enemy action", while the US and South Vietnam had "agreed to take appropriate retaliatory action against targets in North Vietnam". Everything was distorted in this way, with no attempt to empathize with the Vietnamese motives.

It was now my job as an internal messenger to bring the articles up from the editors on the fourth floor down to the typesetters, before their laboriously leaded castings had to be carried down to be set up on the rollers in the printing plant. So there were many opportunities for sabotage along the way. But I was particularly in awe when I visited the otherwise quite appealing Anders Georg in his office. As soon as I walked in the door, I was struck with guilt about my undertaking when he confidently and with a warm glint in his eye handed me his - in my eyes murderous - articles. I wanted to talk to him about them, but I was far too young and naive at that point and would have given myself away immediately. My idea was to read through the articles quickly on the way to the printing office, and if there was anything in them that I could recognize as distortions of the truth or outright lies, I would quickly make the article "disappear". This was very easy in those days, before computers and before newspapers made copies of their short articles, which were often simple rewrites of the American press agencies' articles. And if they did discover it, they would only suspect the elves, who, as you know, were red, because the deeper you went into the building, the redder it became - like much of the class society outside.

Today's overworked journalists would be shocked by the work ethic of the time, because most of the time, after one or two hours of work in the morning, journalists would sit around drinking beer in the canteen, getting more and more drunk as the day went on.



An anti-human product. Anders Georg from Berlingske Tidende.

Incidentally, there was a strong class division with the jacket-clad journalists in one clump and the blue-clad printers in another.

Today, I don't remember how much of freedom of expression I managed to sabotage, and fortunately it is impossible to ever prove it. For the most part, I chose, somewhat childishly, to cover Berlingske's building from the inside with posters about their attacks on freedom of expression. But it wasn't easy to put them up, as there were eyes everywhere. That's why I focused on the elevator in particular, as it was open to a sliding wooden back wall. I found some glue that was almost impossible to get off once it was dry. The problem was that the posters had to be applied on the fly between stops where the elevator could not stop. And every time I smuggled the posters in so that it looked like something I was delivering to another floor, someone always ended up sneaking in at the last minute.

So I decided to wait for a day when I knew the whole building would be packed, namely for Princess Margrethe's wedding on June 10, 1967, when everyone was watching on television. So while our later beloved queen rolled down Strøget in a golden carriage with her new husband in front of a cheering crowd just two blocks away, I rolled up and down in the elevator. Not just once, but many times, because it was certainly not so easy to get the posters unfolded without the elevator ceiling tearing them. So they had to be smoothed out completely with the palm of my hand. But I succeeded, and I just hoped that they were allowed to sit for so long that the paste could become rock-hard and impossible to get off for the summoned red mercenaries from the lower floors before the guilty mini-terrorist rushed out to hide in the royal masses. This was before I started printing Vietnam posters of the horrors of the war, but

I remember one of my posters was of such a deformed, napalm-burned face that everyone in the elevator would be uncomfortable. But there was more to celebrate on this day, the end of the Six Day War in Israel, with the Israelis' incredible victories in the north, east and south, which we also celebrated. I won't forget how excited Steve and I were, and it says something about how non-ideological our commitment to the Vietnamese struggle was that we were simultaneously living in complete darkness and blindness to the Palestinian struggle for freedom. Here, too, we had strayed into thinking that an enlightened democracy cannot, by definition, be oppressive. A blindness that allowed Israel that day to launch a colonial occupation, which at the time of writing has lasted for over 50 years.

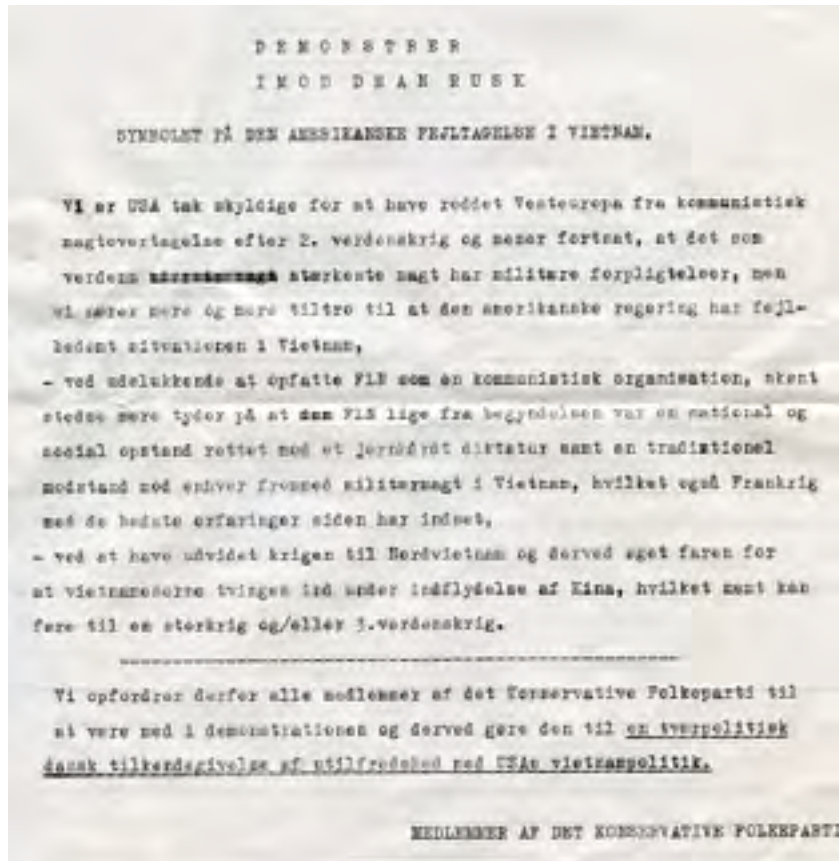
I have since apologized for my behaviour in a large article, "Self-reckoning after the Vietnam War" (Berlingske Tidende, 5 May 2000), but at the same time asked the newspaper, with its enormous monopoly of opinion at the time, to apologize for its responsibility for the deaths of four million Vietnamese. Berlingske Tidende also violated freedom of expression and assembly by leading the chorus of howls about refusing to allow the intellectuals, writers and artists of the Russell Tribunal to meet in Denmark.

Red mercenary

That my moral outrage over the Vietnam War was in no way parallel to that of the left, I also discovered a few months later, when Kristen sat crying silently on October 10. "Over what?" I asked. "Well, haven't you heard that Che Guevara was executed in Bolivia yesterday?" I answered immediately: "Who is that?" He was one of the greatest icons and heroes of the left, and until his death I had never heard of him and his struggle against the same Americans I was now going to war against. My shame that Che's self-sacrifice had gone completely over my head - but not that of an 18-year-old Canadian girl - was relived 25 years later when, while working with the poor in Bolivia - including in the jungle town of Vallegrande, where Che Guevara was executed - I heard the peasants ashamed that they had not then joined his guerrilla war.

That my rebellion was moral and not ideological - and very much a rebellion against my own bourgeois thinking - is evidenced by a flyer I made that same year when the US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was visiting Denmark. Rusk was one of the hawks behind the Vietnam War, and I can still be amused by the text in which I thanked the United States for saving Western Europe from communist takeover after World War 2. World War II. However, I also urged other members of the Conservative People's Party to join the demonstrations against the US suppressing the freedom struggle in another country "and thereby increasing the danger of the Vietnamese being forced under the influence of Communist China".

My flyer is easy to smile about today. Also because that summer, Dean Rusk, the architect of President Johnson's bloodbath, offered Johnson the opportunity to resign as Secretary of State. Not because of the Vietnam War and all its millions of victims, but because of the scandal that his daughter had married a black classmate at Stanford University and that he therefore did not feel he could place such a "political burden" on the President. The President who did more for America's blacks than anyone else. It was important for me to see this liberating side of Johnson as well, because I have always desperately tried to see the good sides of people when they were hated for their oppressive sides. Even when he and



From one of my many attempts to reach conservatives in particular.

CIA the year before, on April 21, 1967, helped to overthrow a European democracy - in Greece - I may have been active in the demonstrations at the Greek Embassy, where I admired Mogens Camre for stepping in and speaking out against the generals - and have praised him for it in our debates in the years since we parted ways. But I did not understand why the left ran around calling this worldwide American pattern of oppression "imperialism", a word I instinctively reacted against as strongly as the use of "Zionism", which I understood even less. For such words smacked of conspiracy theories which deprived man of responsibility and the possibility - like Mogens Camre at the time - of entering into it in order to talk sense into it.

Even when I heard that former Attorney General Robert Kennedy had protested the previous year that the US's simultaneous involvement in assassinations in Indonesia "is inhuman, like the Nazis and Communists", I did not see this as a major pattern, even though here the US had similarly overthrown the beloved father of the nation, Sukarno, to install a military dictatorship to crack down bloodily on his leftist supporters. Thick-headed as I was, it was three years before I too began to believe the rumors of this genocide and wrote about it in my great Canadian Rebellion as one of the main reasons why I, like so many other '68ers, was now convinced that the US was heading towards fascism.

And were these rumors pure left-wing paranoia? No, many years later, the United States admitted this unforgivable and carefully planned genocide of between half a million and a million innocent people - even in a peaceful country that was not at war like Vietnam. This happened in 2017, when it released all the 35,000 secret documents, which made me quite proud. It was all because my friend Helle Hansen, as a film consultant, had believed in and provided support and advice for two Oscar-nominated documentaries about the massacre, *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence*.

When I saw the harrowing films, I was ashamed to admit that I had been far too credulous towards the United States at the time, and therefore partly complicit. For I think only the most paranoid among us '68 rebels could have imagined how methodically the Americans actually went about the Indonesian bloodbath, like the Gestapo with lists of all the peaceful leftist schoolteachers, artists and intellectuals the US wanted murdered. These were people like ourselves, at a time when much of the intelligentsia around the world voted left-wing. In the film, members of the death squads of the time showed how they had long tortured, killed and raped them "because the United States had told us that they, our neighbors, were communists", as one of the executioners says today. A top-secret CIA report in 1968 described the massacres as "ranking as one of the worst mass murders of the 20th century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930s, the Nazi mass murder of World War 2, and the Maoist bloodletting. World War II and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950s'.

One must not to relativize crimes against democracy, yet also not to forget that we '68ers - children of both Marx and Coca-Cola - unlike the youth of the Stalin era, were shaped by the fact that while in our youth the United States was involved in such "crimes against humanity", the Soviet bloc had now become quite "human" in this respect by now only imprisoning its dissidents.

From today's perspective, it was probably only in the spring of 1968 that I myself became a real '68er - or "red mercenary". Like much of the American youth, we began to openly take the side of North Vietnam. True, it was a communist country supported by the Soviet Union and China, but it was not, after all, a country so at odds with its own people that it was necessary to call in foreign troops - unlike the 550,000 American troops needed to maintain the unpopular South Vietnamese dictatorship. If it was so easy for us to romanticize the North Vietnamese struggle, it was precisely because of their stubborn resistance to even allowing Communist "red lieutenants" into their country. They saw their struggle as a two-decade struggle for independence against Chinese, Mongolian, Japanese and other foreign aggressors, and in this long perspective regarded the brief hundred-year occupation by the French and Americans as a mere flash in the pan, which they would have to take care of themselves. Although they literally bled to death themselves in the greatest accumulated genocide against a country since the Nazis, they refused to accept the support of a single Russian or Chinese soldier.

I often had Ole Wivel's black cat sitting on my back at demonstrations, meowing "mao", in order to keep a humorous distance and not to get excited about throwing cobblestones. My beloved "black panther" had moved in with Lisbeth and helped to bind us together despite our political differences. After my psychological defeat against Lisbeth in the exam period in 1968, I remember how one thing kept us together in the late summer. We were devastated by the Soviet defeat of Czechoslovakia's freedom uprising on August 21st, and so I participated in the hunger strike in front of the Russian Embassy for a whole week. Of course, going on hunger strike in the face of a totalitarian power with no freedom of the press is equally pointless like throwing cobblestones, but on the one



One of the now old executioners shows in the film how they tortured and killed the leftist victims the Americans had designated for them.



After so many years of believing that in the anti-Americanism of the past paranoia might have just convinced myself that the USA in Indonesia committed the biggest deliberate genocide since Hitler, it was all the more a huge experience that it was my friend and neighbor, Helle Hansen here, who provided the evidence that 52 years later prompted the Obama administration to apologize. Perhaps because Obama himself had heard rumors about the killers while growing up in Indonesia. The American director Joshua Oppenheimer could not get funding for his two films, *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence*, in the US, and it was only because Helle, as a film consultant, believed in him that he was able to get the truth out in the US.

hand it was too far to throw cobblestones over the iron railing around the embassy towards the no doubt equally unhappy Russians behind the rolled-down curtains, and on the other hand we knew in our powerlessness that we would not be listened to at all - unlike the sound through the large inviting glass windows of the American embassy. In a democracy, the more trouble we could make, the more we would be listened to. However, when I later came to the United States, I discovered how we were also naive.

There was so much more violent opposition to the war at home in the United States that the Americans and their media had hardly ever informed them about our little pinprick operations in Europe. Indeed, their primary purpose was to reach our own right-wing domestic collaborators. Or, in the Soviet case, in the Communist Party of Denmark. In all the years since then, I have had on my desk the press photo Dagbladet Aktuelt took of me when I stood in front of the Soviet embassy for a week with my large, home-painted banner on which I compared the collaborators of Vietnam and Czechoslovakia.

I also remember that when the Czech history student Jan Palach set himself on fire shortly afterwards as a protest against the Soviet invasion, I seriously considered that if I again found myself in a personal despair and crisis like the one I had been through with Lisbeth, there was no way I would commit suicide in my unhappy state. No, there had to be a higher purpose in my burning myself in front of the American Embassy in protest against the genocide in Vietnam and in solidarity with all the Buddhist monks who had sacrificed their lives in the same way in protest against the United States. With a small smile, I realize today that with such a great cause "to burn for" - or rather "to live for" - my unrequited love would probably not have become so self-effacing.

Reading my diaries from that time, I am struck by the extent to which these repeated demonstrations had become such an integral and natural part of our youth that I barely mentioned them. I wrote about my friends, schoolmates, lovers and so on, and the same, I can see today, was true of the diaries and memoirs of the Vietnamese freedom fighters, many of whose bloody struggles have been suppressed in favor of their longing to return home to loved ones, friends and family. Some of the battles I myself remember most clearly are those where friends were involved. A good example is my friend Jens Nauntofte, with whom I frequently exchanged views on Vietnam in the free-warters of my student course. When he was somewhat older and more experienced, I was always impressed by how calm, reasonable and analytical he seemed when I could stand and get very upset about the continued mass killings by the Americans.



I look like a one-eyed fanatic, but there was a balance to the madness. Nguyen Huu Tho was president of the FLN and a democrat, Huynh Tan Phat president of the provisional government of South Vietnam, and Nguyen Van Hieu founder of the Liberation Front. Alongside the self-immolator Jan Palach, the young Buddhist girl Dao Thi Yen Phi, who burned herself, is mentioned. Next to Rudolf Slánský was Vu Ngoc Nha, who was executed by Colonel Rhead. Underneath "Fight Soviet and US imperialism" and "Long live democratic socialism". The incarcerated US dictators, Nguyen Van Thieu, Nguyen Cao Ky and Tran Van Huong, speak for themselves. Gustáv Husák I found it a little difficult to call a quisling, as I had previously been enthusiastic about his support for Dubcek's reform policies, but now he had opportunely turned into the Soviet Union's red hireling.

But one evening, after one of our big Vietnam demonstrations in front of the embassy, I remember that afterwards many of us were gathered in the Student Association's premises, where one after another took the floor with suggestions as to what we should do next, as it was apparently not enough just to demonstrate peacefully to stop the carnage. Suddenly Jens Nauntofte jumped up and gave a fiery speech, dividing us here and now into three teams to attack the embassy so vigorously that we would be heard in Washington itself. One team was to make a barricade at Østerport, stopping the eastbound traffic on Dag Hammarskjölds Allé, and another at Triangeln the westbound. I myself was on the team that was to stop the traffic at Østerport, while the actual attack team came running down the street that was later named after the first Western prime minister who spoke out against Washington and even joined our Vietnam demonstrations, Olof Palme.

Everything went according to plan. At exactly 9.30 pm everyone was in place, and five minutes later the throwing team came running and in a few minutes smashed every window in the embassy, where we knew no one was on such a late Saturday night. Within a few minutes we heard police squad cars all around us, but as far as I remember, no one was caught and we were soon back in the Student Society rooms drinking beer. It was all so playfully innocent and, as always, provided more work for our closest allies - the Danish glaziers.

After the student course, I had no contact with Jens Nauntofte until many years later, when I now saw him as a calm, sensible and analytical commentator on Danmarks Radio, like all the other old 68'ers who now sat in high positions as the new youth's alpha-fatherly role models. Eventually, he even sat as a commentator during the US war of aggression on Iraq, where he, like most of us, was now mostly on the side of the US against Saddam Hussein. Since then we often met as old men in the Adventure Club and talked about the adventures of our youth. Ah, yes. Many other activists from the Vietnam War, I noticed in the years that followed, received great recognition.

"US out of Vietnam"

In 1968, I decided to host the Association of Danish Vietnam Volunteers, which aimed to send volunteers across the globe to fight alongside the Vietnamese. It sounded as beautiful as the Danish volunteers who, like Gustaf Munch-Petersen, had gone to Spain to fight Franco's fascism, although today, with our radicalized Syrian volunteer terrorists in mind, I see it in a slightly different light. Again, though, it was naive, as the Vietnamese quickly replied that they wanted no foreign troops. They only wanted our help to make the West realize its mistakes. However, even then, I quickly a bit of a bad taste in my mouth and

Og kærlighed til jordens undertrykte såvel som tilgivelse af undertrykkere var også det, der gjorde Jens Nauntofte og mig til tidlige kamptæller. Jeg kendte ham egentlig aldrig som menneske eller egentlig ven - 8 år ældre og langt mere erfaren som han var end jeg. Men vi gik på studenterkursus sammen i 1967-69 og stod altid i frikvartererne og delte en dyb moralsk forargelse over USA's folkemord på 4 millioner vietnamesere (i en befolkning som dengang i størrelse svarede til Iraks). Jeg husker ikke af hans engagement var specielt ideologisk som det var for så mange på den yderste venstrefløj dengang, men vi kom alligevel i fastes moralsk opposition til den borgerlige danske regering, der støttede dette folkedrab i en blind ideologisk navn uden spor forståelse eller "empati for fjenden", som Robert McNamara så smukt udtrykte det i sit eget senere opgør med hans egen blodige rolle som USA's forsvarsminister. Jens og jeg var så dybt forargede at vi ikke nøjedes med demonstrationer, men var sammen i rudekrusningsaktioner mod ambassaden i et naivt håb om at amerikanerne så måske ville lytte - netop fordi vi følte at det måtte være muligt at nå menneskene indenfor et demokrati, som havde forvildet sig ud i undertrykkelse.



Excerpt from the long memoir I wrote about Jens Nauntofte for his funeral, where I told him for the first time about our action in 1968. Here he is at dinner with me just two moons before his death.

should have smelled danger. It was the same two members of the group, Per and Alex, who had previously almost landed me in jail by getting me to store their hashish, who arranged the contact. Now it turned out that I would soon be storing something far more dangerous in the front room, where I threw out the art in favor of the fight. But what bedfellows I made in the process! For when they first negotiated with me, they seemed to me like nice university students. Soon, however, they donned leather jackets and transformed themselves into rabid Maoists. In addition to Per and Alex, who now also felt that it was more important to fight the USA than to sell hashish, there was Peter Laursen, who also sat on the communist-controlled Vietnam committees, and the more notorious Finn Ejnar Madsen and Holger Jensen. I will return to the latter, but it was mostly Finn Ejnar Madsen I negotiated with. And he did it well with his manipulative, fast-talking Copenhagen eloquence, as he, as a psychology student, quickly realized that I was a naive West Jutland redneck who was easy to run around corners with. For every time I objected to the wilder and wilder activities I saw them engaging in on the sidewalk, where red paint soon flowed everywhere, he always called me a "reactionary housing shark" when I allowed myself to demand as much rent from them as from the artists who had previously rented space.

Nothing was more hurtful to be called at a time when there was a major housing shortage and growing awareness of the causes, so Finn Ejnar quickly shut me up in embarrassment at being so sensitive. In fact, he kept talking to me like that. When I returned from the USA in 1976 with the successful production American Pictures, he reluctantly got me to show it for free "for the sake of our old comradeship" in an indifferent, cold tent at his "socialist festival" in Valbyparken, where after the five-hour performance he got some brainwashed children to run onto the stage with banners, which they tore off the white crosses on command. This left me again suddenly completely surrounded by the red flags, which I felt betrayed my entire message. And when he came to my 50th birthday party and gave a speech, he said: "Unlike the rest of us, you took a more moderate line, for you were always reactionary, as I said. Even then you were already selling out to the

USA." Now, however, he had changed himself as a psychologist in Greenland and did not destroy any of my round birthday's many Danish flags.

The fact that I had become so "reactionary" indignant about his activities in 1968-69 probably had something to do with the fact that they used me as a cover for their increasingly violent revolutionary actions. I wanted to be the one responsible, while they themselves were over the hill. I won't forget the first time a neighbor woke me up with an issue of B.T., the front page of which was covered with pictures of S-trains that had been painted over during the night with "USA out of Vietnam" and "Fight US imperialism". The action even made the radio news. "Do you have anything to do with it?" I shouted to Holger and Finn Ejnar, who still had paint stains on their leather jackets. For now, for once, there was white paint all over my shop, as it was not such a good idea to paint the red S-trains with the color of the revolution. I was deeply indignant, as I could immediately figure out who was behind it. And such a mess was simply not done in those years.



With Finn Ejnar at my 50th birthday party in 1997, where he entertained the other guests about how "reactionary" I had always been.

It was not until 1976 that I returned from the USA with the first images of graffiti painted on trains. In fact, I have always claimed that it was American images that first inspired Danish graffiti painters. However, I could applaud the slogan "USA out of Vietnam" and secretly feel a little proud that someone in my shop had dared to spread it to a huge audience all over the city. But again I felt that Finn Ejnar's group betrayed the whole message, as the next big project in my shop consisted of making large Maoist wall newspapers with red color. As I remember, they made them as silkscreen prints. They now began to paste them up all over the city - but especially around the university - with their silly Marxist-Leninist-Maoist texts for the benefit of a working class that couldn't understand them at all. What did this have to do with Vietnam's just struggle? I asked, as everything about Mao's China smelled to me far away of unified masses in blue uniforms with little red books in their arms. Rubbish, I thought, every time I saw them in the streets of the city, even though I was impressed by how skillfully they were made, and began to think that if it was so easy from my small premises to make such large wall newspapers with such a meaningless message, why not try to make some myself with a positive educational message about Vietnam's suffering? Although we frequently talked when I entered their mysterious workshop, Finn Ejnar and Holger rarely informed me of their upcoming actions - a secrecy that later made Holger in particular widely notorious. I think they simply did not trust that I, with my reactionary views, could keep my mouth shut.

That is one of the reasons why it came as a total surprise to me when, shortly after they moved in, I saw Finn Ejnar Madsen all over the front pages. It was when he pushed university rector Mogens Fog down from the rostrum at the annual party at the University of Copenhagen on November 22, 1968, and took the floor himself in front of a dumbfounded king and queen, the young successor to the throne, Margrethe, and lots of other rich bourgeoisie covered with crosses, ribbons and stars. "Why can't the students themselves speak at their annual celebration? And why are only the highest classes of society invited?" he asked in his speech. Although at the time I knew

nothing about university matters and did not understand the meaning, I was immediately completely hillbilly amazed to know the man, who was obviously doing something that many young people supported. Not being able to graduate myself, it has amused me ever since, with a certain pride and irony, to tell the story of "the time when I almost started the student rebellion", since it was at least prepared in my living rooms.

In retrospect, I am glad that these fast-talking, Maoist city people with their "great leap forward" so thoroughly humiliated and bullied me with my "reactionary", peasant thinking. It was a mirror image of the Maoists' simultaneous assault on the rural population in China during the Cultural Revolution with its disastrous violent consequences. With their misanthropic, cold ideology, they ended up thoroughly alienating me, precisely at a time when, with a little human empathy, they could easily have integrated me into their revolution.

I was completely turned off when they started collecting light weapons like sticks and helmets, and Holger in particular talked about fighting the police in real street battles. I strongly objected to their growing arsenal, but the more I complained, the more they shut me out of their premises.

Tuesday meetings

Nevertheless, in May 1969 they got me to join the violent demonstrations they organized against John Wayne's film *The Green Devils*, which was one long glorification of the US war against the Vietnamese. Saga Bio was the largest cinema in the Nordic countries at the time, and as it was only 500 meters from Dannebrogsgade, I was shocked to see "my" Maoists running back and forth with ever larger weapons against the police. I myself was absolutely furious about the movie, which was about using propaganda and specially trained Green Berets to force the Vietnamese peasant population into "strategic villages". However, these were nothing more than regular concentration camps where the locals could be "protected" from the resistance movement, which by its very nature could only thrive through the support of the peasants. I didn't know that Holger and Finn Ejnar were controlled by higher powers, so I remember that it was basically just our attempt to inform the Danish population in order to get them to boycott the movie.

But as more people naively began to attack the police, who were just as confused as the population, the situation escalated night after night with counter-demonstrations from the right-wing rockers, the Wild Angels, who came to defend their tjubang movie. And suddenly it became a full-blown battle between right wing and left wing, or as it came to be known, between "angels and devils". When Finn Ejnar Madsen's Maoists showed up with their big sticks (at first camouflaged as poster holders) and in the same kind of leather jacket gear as the rockers, in the heat of the battle I eventually couldn't tell the difference between angels and devils - let alone figure out which side I was on - as I had equal loathing for both and slowly realized that there was no difference. No matter how angelic their opposing goals might be, both sides were equally corrupted by the violence.

When I later participated in many much more violent Vietnam battles in the United States, I often romanticized the battle to the Americans. We had overturned cars and trams back home in the duck pond, I told them, but I honestly could not remember how violently I myself reacted in the heat of battle, when I "distanced" myself like a sanctimonious devil from



'The Green Devils' ran for only four days at Saga Bio. Because "there was a good reason why we demonstrated against John Wayne", as Christian S. Nissen later told Information. He was one of the many later leaders (the Director General of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation and my own chairman of the board of CARE) who were active in Finn Ejnar Madsen's violent demonstration at the time, and who himself took his clubs, but also disagreed with his methods.



I tried to keep my distance from the violence, but I can see from my diary that I was more active than I remember. Already on May 5, I had entered Saga Bio "to sell programs with 'Vietnam Volunteer' and got into a bloody fight with Wild Angels in the foyer ... but I got into a talk with the director after which we were driven out with violence and turned all the way up to the Freedom Support ... ran home and changed clothes and took paint in plastic bags to climb over a wall into the cinema ... didn't succeed... at 12 o'clock we went home to read all the newspapers about the action."

Finn Einar's and Holger's rearmed troops. When, three years later, wearing a short-hair wig, I snuck into Nixon's headquarters during the Republican convention, I couldn't resist asking John Wayne himself what he thought about it, as I watched him struggle with a devilish red watermelon hidden under an angelic green rind. I hadn't yet gotten a tape recorder and so I mostly remember his resigned "holy cow!"

But if I have deluded myself over the years that I was completely non-violent in these struggles, my diary recently revealed otherwise. The demonstrations took place in the last days before my final exams at my evening class on Mynstersvej, which is why I skipped half of my classes to attend Saga - and cycled the three minutes back and forth by bike. But on the fourth day of the games, things went wrong. It coincided with our final party, so I had put on my best suit. In my diary from May 9, 1969, it says that we drank beer with the teachers and the principal gave a speech. In the meantime I passed around Vietnam flyers, but in the middle of the ceremony I slipped down to Saga Bio,

where it was thick with people all the way up to Tivoli, and continued on to the university. When I cycled back at 23.30, I stopped next to the ABC cafeteria, where there were about 100 "wild angels".

"Suddenly a small, lone, long-haired demonstrator rushed across the street to the Palladium Bio at Tivoli Gardens with a swarm of



John Wayne when I met him four years later at Nixon's headquarters and asked him about the Saga demonstrations. However, I was equally fascinated to meet him because my film teacher, Niels Jensen, at Krogerup was a big John Wayne fan, which is why he forced us through several of even the most racist of his Indian war films - or westerns, as they are more innocently called. These atrocities against the Indians were especially present for me because I had hitchhiked to Nixon's convention in Miami, 6,000 kilometers directly from Guatemala, where I experienced the continuing bloodbath against the Indians, which Nixon as vice president under Eisenhower had started when they overthrew Jacobo Árbenz's government in 1954 - the only elected government in Guatemala's long, bloody history.

leathernecks following him. He hid in the newsstand, but the others caught him and beat him with iron chains. He was shouting and screaming for help, but no one helped. I ran over to see if I could do anything. I was yelling something like "vigilante justice", "lynching" and so on. Some of them just pushed me out of the way and told me to be careful not to get the same treatment. As I turned around, I muttered something about "little Nazis". Immediately there were 50 men on top of me. They hammered away in the most horrible way. Several times I did a somersault (in my new clothes). Then I hit my head on a lamppost, then I fell into a dollar bill and rolled under it to protect myself. Soon I was pulled out of the oil slick and tried to run, but my legs were strained, so I hit my forehead on the ground, and then I was beaten madly with bicycle chains. In the end I was completely dazed and staggered and crawled away from the place shaken. Everywhere it hurt. I sensed that the crowds were staring anxiously at me, but I did not realize it and staggered past Tivoli Gardens, where crowds of people poured out at midnight without help, and further down Vesterbrogade, where the fighting still undulated between howling ambulances. When I showed up slightly late for the big, final party, where both teachers and students were in their finest clothes, they were amazed to see me arrive like a bruised and battered lazarón."

I was relieved to find this section of the diary, as I have always felt a hidden accusation that I was photographically exploiting my weak victims rather than helping them. Here, at least, I have the proof that I did, after all, once in my life step in to help a person in need. But whether it was genuine compassion is debatable, because as I vaguely recall, my Jacob's struggle with the angels was perhaps more about the fact that I still felt guilty about the time in first grade when I myself had beaten up the weak-willed Viggo.

That diaries can also be good at revealing our later repressions is shown by this funny passage from the day after the dramatic Saga battle on May 10:

"I cycled to Marius' house to get some peace and quiet to study for the exam there. Since he was not at home, I went down to DSF's offices. On the way I met Finn Einar Madsen on Strøget, who was reading a newspaper about himself.

I exchanged a few words with him and went on my way. On my way up to the accounts I met Peter Wivel, who came running with a sign saying: "Wivel's speech was silenced when in the cellar he growled". He had been imprisoned during the demonstrations. We found that the offices were empty, so we sat down in the meeting room and had a beer and a chat. Then at about four o'clock we went down to Berlingeren to eat roast pork and read the newly established Berlingske Aftenavis."

I had forgotten this passage when my old activist friend Peter Wivel, later as editor-in-chief of Berlingske Tidende, on the 25th anniversary (April 30, 2000) of Vietnam's liberation from 132 years of Western occupation, wrote what was for him an astonishingly one-eyed editorial about how South Vietnam had that day been "conquered by North Vietnam." I couldn't resist teasing him by writing an opinion piece in the paper to remind him how quickly and conveniently one can forget the whole historical perspective when, like him, one reaches such lofty heights. In good bourgeois terms, I laid particular emphasis on the United States' betrayal of democracy, since the whole Vietnam War had started after the elections promised by the Geneva Accords in 1956, which Eisenhower had canceled on the frankly expressed grounds that "80% of the South Vietnamese will vote Communist".

In the Danish media, our informative Saga demonstration at the time, especially in Berlingeren, was immediately interpreted as an attack on freedom of expression, as the film was stopped after five days of violent fighting. But perhaps a little naively, I don't remember that this was the purpose. On the contrary, it is always the sad result when both sides begin to engage in violent escalation and demonization of the other side. And unlike my Maoist tenants, I did not believe that our opponents were the Danish police, but rather our compliant government. Nevertheless, in my youthful mind at the time, I must have seen it as a kind of childish victory that we got the movie stopped. I still had so much bourgeoisie in me that I intuitively knew that fights with the police would destroy our deeper message just as much as the stupid red flags and inflated rhetoric. Perhaps it was my perpetual intellectual inferiority to these "smart" and

fast-talking psychology students that was the deeper reason why I couldn't bring my soul with me. But what annoyed me most was all their platitudes about fighting for the "working class", when all the time I saw them distancing themselves from it or harboring an easily recognizable contempt for it. It must be said, however, that some of them - among them the worker's son Holger - took jobs at B&W at that time to give as much money as possible to the Vietnam work, which I could only applaud. So perhaps my irritation came from the fact that I myself, as the son of a dockworker, had had a certain romanticization of being a dockworker in Esbjerg while I was in high school, but otherwise felt no need to make a revolution for the workers, who in the 60s had had unprecedented wage growth and now increasingly lived in nice detached houses. It seemed to me that all of us in the welfare state were united in exploiting the poor in the Third World. Although I once in my life, in the fall of 1969, voted as far to the left as SF, it was not out of any desire for a different redistribution in Denmark, but because SF was the party I felt most supportive of the struggle for the poor countries. When, out of guilt over my political backwardness, I tried to imagine making a movie about what Denmark would look like after a socialist revolution of the kind the others were shouting about, it always ended up, however much I used my imagination, as a kind of script showing exactly the society I already lived in and loved. And actually with very good reason, I must conclude today, as we had never before in history had a more equal society than we had in the 60s. It was precisely the equality that I myself was so much a product of and took for granted, which meant that I later (unlike the Americans themselves) could see the enormous inequality in the United States, which I was so shocked that I had to depict it photographically.

So all the Marxist rhetoric was ringing in my ears, while I increasingly understood and supported the desperation of the poor countries in seeking this path. I found it really hard to imagine that Holger and Finn Ejnar themselves believed in the content of all those pamphlets by the Marxist theorist Gotfred Appel (1923-1992) that they were devouring, as absent-mindedly as young people today are infatuated with their iPhones. Just looking at them, I felt the same dizzying "dyslexia" that I had in my school days towards Latin and math textbooks.

Perhaps precisely because I had so overexposed the sophistries of these intellectual students on my doorstep, I unconsciously reacted by seeking out some of the workers they were constantly preaching about. I wanted to go out and educate people (and not "the people") about our responsibility for the horrific scenes we were seeing night after night, precisely because America's own democracy was so incredibly effective at informing us about them. At one of the many meetings I went to, I met a guy, Kai Folkmar, who afterwards had the same wide-eyed look on his face after hearing all the platitudes flying around the room. We agreed that it was now time for action rather than empty words about some utopian caliphate - or whatever such fantasies were called back then. We began to meet regularly, and since my fellow Maoists had a machine-gun-talking "Wednesday group" at Gotfred Appel's house, we also called our group the "Wednesday group" in the beginning. However, it was quickly changed to the "Tuesday group", where we busy "workers" found it easier to find time. During the day, I myself was completely black from making webs of tarred cardboard in a factory - among other things for Havana - while the other workers sat and drank up to 36 of the strongest tar-black beer every day.

Kai Folkmar had trained as a cook, but had now gone on some of the welfare benefits that were so easy to get in those days in order to work full-time at "revolutionary work". Shortly afterwards, however, he switched without difficulty to the better-paid "job" as an invalid pensioner, which he continued to do for the rest of his life. Soon the toolmaker Per Jacobsen also joined, before he went sailing with Maersk, and occasionally a couple of girls, Ulla Lykkegård and Jette Panduro, came along. Our slogan in the group was: "Marry a bourgeois. Then there will be twice as many of us." The motto is interesting to think about today because it stood in total contrast to the Maoists, who contemptuously sought confrontation and enemy images in "the reactionaries" and "the capitalists' henchmen", while we saw the bourgeois as people who, at least as far as Vietnam was concerned, were merely temporarily misinformed and needed to be enlightened. But also by revealing our fanatical belief that our cause was the only right one and that everyone could be easily convinced if only we took enough time - or, better still, married them.

In other words, in the midst of our revolutionary activities, we were deeply democratic by believing in and making use of the free market place of arguments. While Maoists like Holger believed that the time had come to "go into direct confrontation with the police and prepare for street fighting", and Finn Ejnar Madsen gave speeches about the main thing being "to beat up a cop", we did not seek enemy images in the police and police agents, but on the contrary regarded them as our potential followers. I had nothing against throwing cobblestones at empty windows, although I never really practiced it. But throwing them at people in the flesh was unthinkable to me. The pictures of demonstrators in the US winning over soldiers and police by putting flowers in their rifles had long since reinforced my intuition that only by thinking kindly of your opponents can you easily win everyone over to your side in a cause as compelling as ours was. And "fellow runners" they truly were, these Danish police officers, for whom I gained deep respect.



I have no pictures of Kai Folkmar from that time, and only during the research for this book did I find this picture of him in the archives of the PET Commission - as a leader in the Saga demonstrations to the left of the Vietnam flag with Lars Hutter and Finn Ejnar Madsen on the far right I first met Kai that autumn and therefore probably contributed to de-radicalizing him a little. The doctor and politician Lars Hutter died on June 26, 2019 in the middle of my research.

Counterparts and followers

Feeling that the Danish left's educational material was not fit for anything other than making people run away screaming, I immediately argued that we should produce something ourselves that was as convincing as anything coming from the US anti-war movement. It spoke to the emotions of people with a heart, whereas the Danish nonsense spoke to people who had lost their heads in the process. At first we ran around with American pamphlets in bars and nightclubs in the late hours of the night, where it was easy to talk to drunk people and enlighten them with our different, sober arguments. Many had instinctively started to feel the same as us, but still had half a foot in the swamp after a long period of fear-based misinformation about "communist aggression", "dominoes falling" and so on. I now felt that I had the power of the word, because I could use moral and often Christian arguments. Our inspiration came partly from the idealistic Cuban barefoot teachers who, with oil lamps, had gone among the formerly illiterate peasants and in a short time brought them into an enlightened age. Of course, it was not always easy to unfold posters and pamphlets and manage to enlighten "the people" among beer chatter and loud drunks before daylight, and this was probably also a contributing factor to the fact that I always ended up going home with the women no one else wanted. They were always the most eager to receive continued home schooling and were therefore counted among my converted disciples.

I think I reached my own bourgeois target group in particular because I consistently used "bourgeois" arguments about how the US had betrayed its democratic ideals. And because, unlike in school, I had really done my homework, as many in the target group were far better educated and more gifted than me. The completely different red arguments of the left, which they themselves have conveniently suppressed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, naturally bounced off those they were intended for. That is why I myself have never felt ashamed of my involvement in Vietnam.

Is it now a fairy tale so many years later? No, it isn't. I only recently realized how well I had actually understood things. I had



The big day in 1994, when I celebrated both the fact that I had graduated the day before AND my 25th anniversary with my old class at my home. It was Kirsten Thinggård to the right, who thought that all eight of us had passed out of a class that started with 25, so naturally I should be present at the anniversary. My frequent visiting friend in the Dannebrogsgade days, the researcher Lars Alstrup in a striped shirt, was later murdered in Africa.

believed and said all these years that the reason why I was not student in 1969, was my strong commitment to Vietnam. So when my old classmates called me in 1994 for the 25th anniversary of my graduation, I asked in astonishment why I should go, because I hadn't graduated. But they thought everyone had. When I therefore cycled out to my old student course and went into the office to ask if it was really true, the office lady said in surprise: "Hello, Jacob, are you here again?" (How had she remembered me all these years?). "Yes, I have an embarrassing question. Can you check if it's true that I graduated in 69?" The next day she sent me the diploma, after which I celebrated my graduation 25 years late - now with my wife and children. But it was only in 2018 that I discovered this interesting diary entry from May 12, 1969.

"Got up at 7.30am. Ate well and then went to school, where I was greeted everywhere with: "Well, you're here on time today." It was for the Danish essay exam. I chose for a long time between the historical style and the interpretation of a Riffbjerg poem, but chose the historical, where I could write about the Vietnam War. I wrote no less than 23 pages."

That I had been ignorant for so many years is also evident from the diary on the last day of the exam, Thursday, June 19: "Got up early. Math exam. Before the teacher came out with this, my last grade, I hitchhiked off to Italy, as I knew it was too low for me to pass my school leaving examination. 23 o'clock in Hildesheim. Drank in disappointment all night there. In the morning the driver had left."

But when I now in 2019 examined my diploma to see what I had actually received for the long-forgotten exam essay on the Vietnam War in historical perspective (written six years before the war ended), I discovered that I had received top marks and that it was the one that had saved me just above the failing grade. In my self-deception, I had all these years said that it was Vietnam's fault that I did not graduate, and then it is funny to conclude that the reverse was actually the case. My vast knowledge of Vietnam was of incredible benefit to me in my following years in the United States, where the even more ignorant population often thought I was a "professor" when I explained to them why their brothers and sons died in vain on a lie.

In the endless discussions, we in the Tuesday group quickly learned what worked, after which the desire to start printing more effective information material in Danish arose. When I had seen how easily Finn Ejnar and the Maoists had produced their posters, I started working on several drafts myself. After all, the youth of the United States had been shocked when press photos revealed the Americans' torturous use of burning napalm against the poor peasants, so I designed an all-black poster with a large picture of a grotesquely deformed boy burned beyond recognition by napalm. The headline was simply "Boycott ESSO" because I felt that the companies that manufactured such cruel tools, which were intended to inflict maximum pain on the civilian population by burning them beyond recognition, should be held accountable. Today, under the name Exxon, the same company is being sued by poor countries for the climate destruction they cause with their CO2 emissions and for having poured billions into so-called climate-denying "research". So in that sense, perhaps I was ahead of my time?

At the time, color printing was expensive, but I insisted that ESSO's

logo should be in the right three colors - red, white and blue - and was willing to pay for it myself. We had several meetings with the graphic designers at Dansk Tidsskriftstryk in a basement in the city center, and when they, as graphic designers, supported our message, they offered to stand after working hours and run the posters through the rotary press with the two extra colors of red and blue. I have always boasted that I paid for the posters myself - even to the Vietnamese, even when I visited Vietnam 42 years later - but Kai Folkmar recently claimed that we never paid the bill. But what does he know about what I, a hard-working "worker", was doing behind the back of a poor invalid pensioner?

What we hadn't imagined was how popular our advertising was with ESSO, who I believe owned the majority of gas stations at the time. They felt compelled to spend months hiring people and sending them around to paint over the logo, which to anyone who saw it elsewhere almost confirmed their guilt. With the subtle psychological power of advertising, napalm was quickly burned into people's minds and associated with ESSO. They might have been able, with the help of the police, to identify the perpetrators of the Tuesday group, but probably did not want the subsequent legal action and even more publicity. We covered the Copenhagen area extremely effectively on foot, by train and on bicycles. How effective our advertising campaign was, I could also see in my own mind, which slowly fell in love with ESSO's sexy, round logo. So in love that I was deeply disappointed when it changed its name and logo in the US in 1972 to the ugly, square EXXON sign.

Everywhere we now saw the police as our faithful companions as they chased us through the streets. And I thought I had been a good 100-meter runner in the athletics club? It may be that I quickly gained respect for our well-trained Danish police officers when they chased us on long night-time runs. I have since frequently impressed the Americans with my account of how fast runners Danish policemen are, as opposed to the fat American ones who only understand six runners - why trying to outrun a policeman in American eyes shows either admirable courage or hopeless stupidity.



Our first informative poster had too much information for people to read on the streets. It was best suited to universities, which were not our target audience, as we thought that most people there would be too red to accept our - or rather my - text, which emphasized the democratic failures of the United States. There was even a reading list of Armenian books that we encouraged people to read in order to learn the truth about Vietnam. Apparently a little priest's son came up in me with the final salvo: "Truly I say to you - read these books - read - the history of Vietnam - and you will be unable to vote for a bourgeois party again."



The power of advertising was demonstrated in the years that followed, as I repeatedly photographed poor blacks in their slums right next to Exxon signs or Exxon refineries, and it helped me to live with the very owners of the dynasty, the Rockefellers. When the two-year-old girl in the photo, Valerie Rockefeller, saw my show at Stanford at the age of 20, she was at first angry that I portrayed her father as a "mass murderer" and "alcoholic", but then gave me her business card saying, "If you ever need help, please contact me." She went on to help black ghetto children in Harlem with learning disabilities, and today she runs The Rockefeller Foundation. In her last email to me in 2015, she wrote that she was now distancing herself from the billions her family business spends on climate denial. That's how, with a little long-suffering enlightenment, you can get even (some of) the "oppressors" on your side!



Strangely enough, I only have this film still of the poster today. Later, when I was hitchhiking around the United States, an American doctor who had worked in Vietnam with napalm victims gave me his pictures. I used them in the picture books I traveled with to educate Americans about the crimes they were committing without even knowing about them. The pictures were also used in my later slide show in the "No more genocide" section, where they often made my students faint.

Here it is important to point out to today's readers that there was very little crime back then, so the few police officers on the streets were bored a lot of the time and thought it would be fun to have a little diversion. One freezing December night in Nørrebro, where after a long chase down Jagtvej I had run into a side street, I thought I could shake off the officer by climbing high up in a tree. Unfortunately, he had seen it and called his partner in the patrol car, and then they sat there laughing in the warmth of the car and waited for me to come down. I wouldn't give up and sat up there shivering and chattering my teeth for half the night until they gave up after shouting, "Yes, yes, we'll get you another night." I remember that we calculated from the frequency of the patrol cars that there were at most 20 in the streets at a time in the whole of Greater Copenhagen, so the risk of being spotted by them was not very great, even though we ran around with large glue buckets and rolls of posters under our arms.

One night, however, they caught me unfortunately in Christianshavn, when I came running with a policeman right on my heels along the ramparts of Langebrogade. But when I turned the corner into a side

street, I ran headlong into an oncoming policeman and slammed his forehead right into his, with the result that we both fell down and lay sore. I don't know if that was what Finn Ejnar had meant by "banging a cop", but there was nothing else to do but to go "to morning coffee at the station", which I remember was always one of our most pleasant moments. Because there we had plenty of time to win the officers' sympathy for our cause through peaceful dialog, which to our surprise was not particularly difficult, as an incredible number of them told us that they had also become opponents of the Vietnam War. I have since wondered whether our apparent agreement was because we were so convincing in our righteous cause, or whether the Danish police at the time were so well psychologically trained in "understanding" and "empathy" that they actually got us on their side by letting us believe that they were on our side.

I have long since forgotten most of these police chases, but one night I will never forget. There we walked with a paint bucket and a stool we had brought with us the 900 meters from Dannebrogsgade to the corner of Tivoli, where at that time there were the sad "bomb craters" after the beautiful, historic Wivex (a crime against my old Copenhagen greater than the schal- burgtage Tivoli had been subjected to by the Nazis during the war). Across the street was our Nordic SAS hotel, since taken over by the Americans as the Radisson, but where American travelers stayed or were bussed to the airport. Around the building site of the demolished Wivex, an enormous, irresistible and inviting railing had been erected, consisting of light-colored plywood sheets, which quite frankly thirsted to be decorated with some welcome signs for the Americans. There I climbed up on my stool on the busy Bernstorffsgade and began to write some long sentences in English with blue paint, which Kai was holding in a bucket under me. I have forgotten what I wrote, but it was not the primitive, short slogans, but rather something profoundly addressed partly to the Americans about their destruction of Vietnam, partly to Copenhagen's social democratic city government about its corresponding destruction of Copenhagen. In any case, it was such a long sentence - and I readily admit that mine can be long - that before I had reached the first or

second commas - and I freely admit that I often forget to put them as I still don't know where to put them and especially not on a long, confusing fence with no spell check - well, suddenly there were a couple of policemen standing outside their patrol car with their hands at their sides making some comments.

I don't remember if they were friendly, but only that I was immediately seized by the same paranoia as when my English teacher interrupted my thoughts of escape. Without a moment's hesitation, I dropped down from the shame support and rushed with Kai in the direction of the SAS hotel with first two and soon four police officers running after us. In the parking lot behind the hotel we parted, he with two officers following him in one direction, and I with two others in the other. I aimed for the glass doors into the foyer, but crashed brutally into a swinging door that would not open, with such a bang that all the waiting guests, who were asleep inside waiting for their buses to the airport, were instantly awakened. Then, with what little head start I still had, I managed to open the side door, and then, in front of perhaps 50 sleepy passengers, I made my escape with two police officers with raised batons right on my heels. An incredibly impressive sight for American tourists, whose terrified eyes I will never forget.

We ran towards Hammerichsgade, down Bernstorffsgade and through the Central Station. Here I think my pursuers picked up their patrol car, so that for a time I felt out of danger, while I tried as naturally as possible to walk on along Istedgade to get home. But suddenly a patrol car pulled up beside me and asked sweetly if they could see my hands. I refused, as they were completely blue with paint, whereupon, after a little polite parleying, I ran up Gasværksvej. There I quickly found an open door and ran into hiding inside, as I was sure they had not yet come around the corner. Phew, I thought with relief, as I tried to hide behind some plates in the backyard around three o'clock in the morning. But suddenly an early morning baker appeared with a huge club because he thought I was breaking and entering. He was so threatening that I quickly thought that the two policemen were actually much nicer to go for morning coffee

with. I took the chance and rushed out and through some side streets around Vesterbro Torv and safely reached the last 300 meters home to Dannebrogsgade.

Kai had indeed managed to reach safety there, but if he had expected to get morning coffee, he would soon have to think again. For after having recovered a little, I was determined to return to Tivoli to finish my sentences. Such unfinished sloppiness would not make sense to anyone, but would only be regarded as messy and vandalism. Besides, I wanted to take my stool home with me. Kai didn't dare, as he knew that the streets would now be full of policemen with nothing else to do. So while he trudged home to Nørrebro, I sneaked back alone and completed my long, English sentence in peace and quiet.

But before I had finished at about four o'clock in the morning, I was interrupted by a voice behind me: "I agree with you and feel exactly the same." There stood a figure I had never seen before, a handsome Indian Sikh with a huge red turban on his head and an equally large bushy beard. He told me that a moment earlier he had arrived at the SAS hotel directly by plane from India. There, as a student leader, he had led some major protests against the Vietnam War, but after demonstrations against the US Ambassador, Averell Harriman, he had been expelled at the request of the US. "Where do you plan to live in Denmark?" I asked.

"I have no idea. I don't even know how I got down in Denmark," he replied. "Well, then you can stay with me, I also have American deserters living with me," I said. Whereupon we trudged the 900 meters home with paint bucket, stool and suitcase.

Joginder Singh Johar ended up staying with me until I left for the US six months later. I was very proud to have such a handsome guy with such an interesting religion and history living with me, and I learned a lot from him about Sikh religious customs and why he was not allowed to cut his hair and beard. When he washed his turban at night, he would unwrap it between the posts across the room, so getting into bed was an obstacle course. There was only room for him in the bunk above the batting bench I had built, and high up there under the ceiling he would lie and tell stories to me and the others at night.



I'm arguing with Joginder Singh Johar on the battle bench under his bed, with my Chinese friend Ejnar Chang's Vietnam-inspired engravings of shooting Vietnamese behind us. On the right, Joginder is reading Capital for what must be the 17th time.

I didn't have a camera at the time, but some of the few stills I made with my camera, which I had received as a confirmation present, were of him. Probably because he was more exotic than all the others I had had living in my slum.

We struck up a deep friendship, but as an intellectual he made me feel in some ways as much of a peasant as the Maoists had done. He had read Karl Marx's *Capital* at least 16 times, as it was one of the only things he had been allowed to take with him into his enforced exile. Or was it 50 times? I don't remember, but only his astonishment that I had not read this 'bible' which, like Lenin's analysis of imperialism and colonialism against poor countries, had given him an understanding of why India had become so poor. In my short short film, I also ride along impressed with his world view by letting myself be filmed at the desk, where I take his pamphlets down from the shelf and sit deeply concentrated and study their "truths", which I still unconsciously reacted against, as it looked so much like the gibberish my Maoists in the front house were handed by Gotfred Appel.

Just as I listened more to the interpretation of the Vietnam War when it was told by my American deserters, I also listened with a much more empathetic ear when the analysis of the situation of poor countries came from its own refugees. Joginder Singh Johar was therefore also far more complicit in my radicalization than the entire well-fed Danish left wing. But in the process of integrating in

Denmark, I saw him over the years I saw him throw away his Marxism-Leninism with the same speed as the same Danish left wing. He did well, but disappointed me when, sometime in the 80s and 90s, I visited him at the big disco he now owned on Gammel Køge Landevej. He had shaved off all his great hair and beard, and in his mad assimilation he looked like any other pork roast Dane. While he had had no trouble integrating Marxism-Leninism with religion, he had failed to integrate it with his Danishness.

Mercenaries

Often my role as a "worker" was to be a driver for various companies, and once I was hired by a paper company to deliver paper products throughout Greater Copenhagen. But often my thoughts were elsewhere, and on my very first drive I crashed at the traffic lights between Roskildevej and Tårnvej in Rødovre. I had little respect for red lights and at full speed drove my big Ford Transit into a small Peugeot from Hobro, who stupidly thought that you also had to stop at red lights outside the dark Jutland. Thank God both the little stationmaster and his wife survived, and I apologized that I also came from Jutland and had not yet learned to drive in Copenhagen. But both cars were totaled. So I went over to the Kentucky Fried Chicken that was at the intersection (and is still there today) to call home to the company. "I'm very sorry, but I've accidentally totaled your car," I told them in a very offended tone, expecting a meltdown. But the boss replied immediately in a cheerful voice: "Never mind, hurry home on the bus and we'll give you a new car right away."

This was the first time I really got into the spirit of things, so instead of driving around with boring paper advertisements, I immediately set about covering the whole wagon with my own ESSO advertisements. I was convinced that once I was protected by these fearsome napalm faces, no car would dream of hitting me from behind. However, it wasn't more than a week before I was fired.

The boss was very sorry, but there were so many complaints from both customers and ESSO that there was nothing else to do.

The moral of the transformation I was slowly undergoing must surely be that even without a heavy ideological influence, young people can become entangled in dangerous totalitarian thinking. Although we were enjoying ourselves over tea at the Tuesday club when we made it home safely around four or five in the morning, we were also devising increasingly sinister plans. It was not so wild when we operated in Vesterbro and ended up at my place, as there were too many listening ears in my commune. But at home in Kai Folkmar's small apartment in Fensmarksgade 25 in Nørrebro, only his wife, Annelise, had long ears. However, she was so repressed by the male chauvinist Kai, who always knocked her out of bed at that time to make tea, that we did not fear her.

With the bloody escalation in the United States, we agreed that it was no longer enough to educate the Danes. We had to start with the Americans as well. Therefore, we now devised plans to go directly to the American soldiers, who at that very time in the fall of 1969 had a large joint NATO exercise on South Zealand. We hired two vans and drove down there with printed matter in English, which we distributed to the American soldiers, who, to our delight, we also felt were our allies (if only because they found us more peaceful than the Vietnamese they feared being sent down to). We stayed with some long-haired hippie friends, Pia and Kurt, on a farm outside Vordingborg, from where it was easy to do needle-prick operations. At night, using Vietnamese guerrilla tactics, we used pincers and other heavy weapons to sabotage their communication lines and any other technical equipment we could find. And we painted the police station in Vordingborg with equal parts slogans against US and Soviet imperialism, so the police must have thought we were Maoists when they called for us. In our confused feelings of impotence, I think we probably inflated ourselves to be much bigger terrorists, but it didn't degenerate into anything more than a bit of military sabotage. If I had ever demonized American soldiers, these few encounters with them were enough to cure me.



With Kurt and Pia on their farm, Vindhøj, which later became a collective - and still is today with its own website. Kurt died early, but Pia and her sister Erni and the children I have had a lifelong friendship with and have had with me in the car to the US Buddhist headquarters in Woodstock, as they are Buddhists.



One rainy night, when our car was stuck awkwardly in a ditch after we had painted a railroad bridge with slogans and spirits were at their lowest ebb, an American jeep appeared out of the darkness. An officer jumped out and shouted: "Hey, do you need help, buddies?" to us, who were sitting in the muddy ditch, and before I had even managed to utter a squeaky "yes", he had already called on his radio for a large armored personnel carrier, which with long chains pulled us out of the muddy ditch. We were so shocked that we let the soldiers do all the dirty work in the mud, while we ourselves stood with our hands in our pockets for fear that they would see them, overpainted as they were with blue paint, as in those years before spray paint "painted with big, wide brushes". We were tremblingly nervous that they would discover the bridge through the rain, but before they left, the officer suddenly put his arm lovingly around me, turned his eyes to the bridge and said: "Nice work you did. I feel just like you. If you ever come to the States, look me up." Wow, that was the moment my love for America started. I was instantly sold.

I don't remember how they found us, but after a long time I suddenly received a huge claim for damages from DSB for having destroyed the bridge. As it was an unprecedentedly large and insignificant claim of DKK 35,000 by the standards of the time, it was a strong contributing factor to my decision to spend a considerably smaller amount to flee to Canada instead and then forget all about my freedom-fighting time as a railroad messenger. It was the Americans we wanted to "get at", so why it was the state railways that suffered, I have never fully understood.

Suddenly I found myself active in groups I would never have dreamed of in my long resistance struggle against the Maoists in my house. I'm pretty sure it was Kai Folkmar who got me to at least one meeting of Revolutionary Action at Jan Michaelsen's house. I had previously noticed this boyish postman with the long, blond hair as one of the more violent in the demonstrations, including at Saga Bio, about which he later said: "In the longer term, the use of revolutionary violence will produce results and promote tensions in society, which are the objective conditions for a revolution", and "Since revolutionaries

have the right and duty to demonstrate, we must learn to defend ourselves against attacks, it has we have learned. Next time we will bring weapons and they will be used to defend us against concerted attacks from both the police and the angels. We are not pacifists. If it is necessary to use violence, we will use violence." The quote comes from Peter Øvig Knudsen's Blekingegadebanden.

So underneath his innocent long hair there was obviously dangerous explosives. The meeting was in Politisk Revue's premises at Dronningensgade 14, where I still go because the Peace Foundation lives there today. It was about the fact that we now had to use much stronger methods - worldwide - to stop the insane bloodbath of the United States. As the frail but powerful leader of the meeting, Jan competed with Kai and several others to come up with the wildest actions. I myself wanted nothing to do with anything that could degenerate into violence against people, and since I had for a long time been very upset by what I had read about the Americans defoliating the forests of Vietnam with Agent Orange, I proposed an action to educate and protest against it. I do not remember whether I had heard at that time how dangerous the toxin dioxin was to human beings, but I was still appalled that the West, and not least the Danish government, could support such war crimes. 2.4 million American veterans later sued their government for having had their lives destroyed by these toxins, which first and foremost affected millions of Vietnamese, crippling them generation after generation with severe birth defects, deformed limbs and cancer. If, with such non-violent action, we could have helped to start a worldwide protest against this creeping genocide, then with due diligence we might have stopped it and at the same time helped the guerrillas to better hide in the forests. My suggestion was that we should, in nightly actions, start defoliating the trees around the American Embassy and the Ambassador's residence, Rydhave in Hellerup. Simply by cutting off a strip of bark all the way around. "As a side benefit, it will also be easier for us to smash the windows of the embassy with cobblestones when the trees are defoliated," I added to incite the more violent elements in the group. If the "naked tree policy" caught on and vandalized all American buildings around the world, the United States would surely keep



To this day, I find it hard to understand how the conservatives who supported the United States' insane warfare in Vietnam at the time can look themselves and their victims in the eye - generation after generation in the years that followed. Because we already received enough information from the Americans themselves at that time that we should have spoken out. Perhaps we could not have cleared the trees of the Clearing Garden as effectively, but we could possibly have prevented some of the children of the victims who had Agent Orange poured into their heads from becoming as crippled as the child here and those on the next page.

stop laying waste to Vietnam's vast jungle with the 50 million liters of poison they ended up pouring on it. Because what else can you do when you realize that you have been totally misinformed and tacitly complicit in the killing of millions of innocent people? As I remember it, Kai, at least, backed the idea, while Jan Michaelsen, to my amazement, sat mumbling something about bombs in his young beard. That's all I remember, as I felt I was getting too far out. So before I go any further with this bomb case, I would like to describe how the increasing brutalization of the Vietnamese themselves sometimes caused me great anguish in my identification with their struggle for freedom.

As a result of my naivety, for a long time I only supported South Vietnam's struggle for freedom against the brutal dictators imposed by the United States. North Vietnam had gained its



freedom, but what freedom? The country's land reforms had distributed land from rich landowners to poor arm workers, but the subsequent forced collectivization had been carried out so brutally in my school days that I reacted against it and was glad to hear that the popular Ho Chi Minh himself had early on apologized for the communist excesses. I associated forced collectivization with the bourgeois newspapers' frightening ads about the "big red hand of the state" that would take it all away from us in my West Jutland childhood, when Jens Otto Krag had tried to implement a parliamentary majority's land laws to prevent speculation. Laws that have long since been implemented, also for the sake of nature.

The sickening executions of Quislings who had collaborated with the French occupying forces was easier for me to understand, as only 10 years earlier we had executed many of our own traitors in Europe.

We were horrified when we saw the pictures of the Americans' public executions of South Vietnamese freedom fighters, among them my personal freedom hero Nguyễn Văn Trỗi, who had attempted to assassinate US Secretary of Defense McNamara. Before his execution, he shouted: "You are journalists and should be well informed about what is happening. It is the Americans who have committed aggression against our country. It is they who have killed our people with planes and bombs ... I have never acted against the will of my people. I have not committed any sin. It is the Americans who have sinned. Long live Vietnam!" I later put his memorial stamp on all my letters in the US, just as Jane Fonda named her son, the actor Troy Garity, after him.

The more I immersed myself in the Vietnamese freedom struggle, the more brutal my own feelings became. Yet, as I said, in my initial civic-mindedness I could initially identify only with the South Vietnamese Liberation Front, the FNL, formed in 1960 in response to the democratic elections stolen by the United States in 1956. Although US government propaganda portrayed the resistance movement as communist, calling it Viet Cong, "Vietnamese communist", I learned - again from critical US sources - that it was in fact a broad coalition of 23 parties, like the Danish resistance movement during our own occupation. It also consisted of religious groups, not least the Buddhist monks who throughout my childhood had shaken the world with their self-immolations in protest against the American-imposed dictatorship. What they all had in common was that as nationalists they were opposed to foreign domination, exactly the same thing that had been the driving force behind Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh anti-colonialist movement during the first Indochina War against French colonial rule. I completely fell in love with the flag of the Liberation Front, which I felt symbolized the red North and the blue democratic South united with a yellow star in the middle, while I disliked the all-red flag of North Vietnam with a yellow star. It reminded me of Mao's China flag and all the red flags that I hated in the domestic demonstrations. Soon, like much of the youth, I began to proudly wear the beautiful FNL colors. I will never forget our jubilation during the great uprising of the Liberation Front in more than 100 South Vietnamese cities during the



The pictures of me in my Viet Cong sweater with my brothers and at the demonstration in front of Christiansborg. However, it was first knitted by my girlfriend Marly Sockol in the USA, while on the trip to the USA I wore a five meter long Viet Cong scarf knitted by my former American girlfriend, Linda Freeman. One cannot help but be entangled and seduced by such wonderful, generous and understanding Americans.

Buddhist Tet New Year - which coincided with our own May 1968 uprising in Europe - and with the unveiling of the hundreds of underground tunnels, young people around the world really began to romanticize this incredible guerrilla movement against the world's strongest military power.

But with my moral commitment, I also remember the anguish of the Tet Offensive. For afterwards, the Americans told me how the resistance had executed thousands of citizens who had supported the Americans, just as the South Vietnamese forces later executed numerous citizens who had supported the rebellion.



The road to realizing that all the values you have been brought up to believe in can be hard. I experienced this with Steve Washburn, who was responsible for my own awakening. He went off the deep end psychologically and disappeared without a trace one day in 1968. His father later wrote that his family had brought him home and had him committed to a psychiatric ward, thus avoiding being sent to Vietnam. When I hitchhiked to LA just after the fall of Nixon in 1973 and visited him here in his birthplace, he spoke as if he had undergone a deep brainwashing. Now he proudly displayed a letter of thanks from Nixon for his support and had become an arch-reactionary Republican like his family. When I invited him to my first slide show in Los Angeles in 1978, he refused to come because it was at the home of Jane Fonda, whom he called a "traitor". I had frequently demonstrated with her during the war, but even in the 80s I often gave lectures at universities where they refused her because of her role as the 'Rose of Hanoi'. "I have got to find the truth about my coun- try," Steve had always said in Denmark. He helped me find it, but he sacrificed himself in the process.

It was unsightly. But I excused it by saying that it was probably North Vietnamese soldiers who had sneaked across the border and done it - and certainly not "my" beloved FNL guerrillas, who I was pretty sure would not do such a thing for fear of offending all of us in the West who supported them. Again, a manifestation of my boundless naivety.

So every time I was disgusted by the violence of the Buddhists, it strengthened my bourgeois side, and every time I was disgusted by the violence of the Christian Arameans, my revolutionary consciousness grew. It was not a bad balance to empathize with human beings with all their weaknesses. But it was a difficult balance to maintain when the monopoly of violence was so insanely on the side of the rich world and turned against some of the world's poorest peasants - who even had the struggle for free elections on their side. My bourgeois-revolutionary balancing act went horribly wrong when so many of the South Vietnamese resistance movement were killed during the Tet Offensive in 1968 that the US almost wiped it out. Only then - the Americans have since admitted - did the Liberation Front get a gigantic helping hand from North Vietnamese forces, making the whole thing look like "communist aggression" from the outside.

Today's Danish right wing has often portrayed us 68ers as naive because of our support for the Vietnamese. But the blind naivety lies with the right wing itself. For in the light of the Vietnamese's historic struggle for independence, one should ask whether we should instead have supported the Americans' continued attempt to murder another million Vietnamese, on top of the millions they had already murdered in a country with a total population of then 27 million, like Iraq's. 160,000 were killed in the Iraq war. To put this in perspective, imagine the outcry today if three or four million had been killed in Iraq. How many thousands of American soldiers would have to be sacrificed uselessly, in addition to the 58,000 innocent lives lost in the war? How long do today's Nazis really want all this carnage to have continued? I think it was in 1968 - seven years before the war ended - that six times as many bombs had already been dropped on this small, poor country as were dropped during the whole of World War 2.



After Anker Jørgensen became Prime Minister and openly supported Vietnam, I could now proudly travel around the United States and continue my work over there, speaking out against the enemy with my homemade enlightenment books.

You simply could not have looked yourself in the eye as a decent moral human being if you had not, together with the "other" America, actively opposed the American war - no matter what rotten bedfellows you temporarily made in the process.

That Vietnam itself was corrupted by such a long and violent struggle for freedom, was all the worse seen in the lack of freedom in the end result. When I worked for CARE in Vietnam in 2011, it was not difficult for me to find dissidents who were openly critical of the autocratic regime. But all as one, they praised me for being "on our side" during the American war.

Trotyl terrorists

With this sense of our shared brutalization, I guess it was the right time to run away. In the documentary about my life, Kai Folkmar asked me, to my great surprise, if I remembered the trotyl bomb that he helped me get rid of. This statement came as a bolt from the blue, because I honestly had no recollection whatsoever of such things. However, his description seemed so accurate that I had to do more than just dismiss it as his imagination. I asked him a long time later, as I was writing these lines, where on earth we were supposed to have gotten this bomb from. "Well, don't you remember that it was Jan Michaelsen who gave it to you for safekeeping?" he replied. Not if I remember a bit of it, and I would think that walking around with a bomb on me is probably one of the few things in life that should have burned itself into my memory. If I, as the least revolutionary and red of them all, should have been entrusted with something so violent by Jan Michaelsen, he must either have tried to have it hidden with me because he sensed that I would be the one the police would least suspect in all my guilt. Or maybe he had tried to blackmail me into the more violent part of his group (to which I did not belong at all). Most likely, he must have thought that I was so naive that I didn't even realize that the gift in the package he was supposed to have given me was a trotyl bomb.

If there is any truth to Kai's statement, the latter is probably the most likely, because even the word trotyl bomb has been so far from my consciousness for 45 years that I had to Google it to find out what it meant. In the movie, he angelically tells how one day he came to my house to remove the bomb, which he then threw in a garbage bin on Istedgade, while the fuse seems to have been thrown somewhere else.



The Vietnam pin that I wore everywhere back then, and my last visit on April 24, 2019, to the now almost blind Kai Folkmar in his care home in Mjølnerparken, the day someone had stolen his disability scooter. "Too bad, because now that it's about the fight for immigrants, I can't go around putting up posters anymore."

But can this be true? Because Berlingske Tidende revealed on October 1, 1969, as far as I can research, "that a collaboration between PET and FE had led to the successful arrest of strongly left-wing youths who had stolen about five kilos of trotyl from a military depot. The plan was apparently to detonate the dangerous explosive at a military facility or an industrial plant producing military equipment."

But I remember that our meeting with Jan Michaelsen first took place during my most radicalized time, just before I left for Canada. Around On October 1, I was still so relatively "peaceful" that I was elected to the board of Vietnam 69 together with later Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen, later Minister of Culture and Church Bodil Koch and the actor Berthe Quistgaard. Vietnam 69 was an offshoot of the Russell Tribunal with the declared aim of 'activating the population more broadly and preferably in

such a way that the trade union movement and the parliamentary parties, including the Social Democratic Party, also become seriously involved'. In other words, that was exactly my own thinking at the time, and incidentally a reason why Anker Jørgensen, in his old age, faithfully continued to come to all my and American Pictures' round anniversaries.

Unfortunately, my own diaries end with almost no mention of political activity just after the Saga demonstrations in May 1969, so I don't have much to go on in the matter. But funnily enough, I have been given a certain alibi by the bourgeois journalist and debater Bent Blüdnikow, who otherwise has not been friendly to me over the years, although in his book *Opgøret med den kolde krig* from 2003 he actually printed, with my permission, an article I had written about "Mit selvopgør efter Vietnamkrigen" in *Berlingske Tidende*. In his book *Bombeterror in Copenhagen*, he writes with an unusual understanding of the youth of the time: "Perhaps the Trotyl case was serious, but the activists were quite young, and this kind of thing was so new in Denmark that one senses a certain surprise on the part of the authorities. Were the activists really serious, or were they just boys' pranks, you seem to hear the policemen say. But if they were convicted under section 114, as mentioned, it could mean up to six years in prison, so the case was serious enough. The trotyl was found buried in a backyard, and then the police started the rest of the excavation work. In the end, a month later, the serious charge under section 114 was dropped, and they were instead charged under more lenient sections for theft and receiving stolen goods. Gone was the serious talk of subversion and the like, and Jan Michaelsen was released."

In comparison with today's exposure of potential terrorists, it is also interesting to note how much sympathy the activists received from their surroundings at the time. In addition to the fact that Jan Michaelsen, the later well-known recipient of the Cavling Prize for exposing the Jan Bonde Nielsen case, was awarded DKK 2,000 in compensation for unjustified detention, several of the activists made considerable efforts afterwards to convince the surrounding community that they had been subjected to miscarriage of justice.

In January 1971, Jan Michaelsen wrote in *Søndags-Aktuelt* about the "Kafkaesque nightmare" it had been to live through the Trotyl case. And one of those convicted subsequently received a prize from Viby Amtsgymnasium, whose headmaster, Jens Ahm, said that the prize should be seen in the light of the recipient's "energetic efforts" on the political left.

So when apparently all five kilos were found intact in a backyard in Aarhus, how would Jan Michaelsen have had a bomb transported to Copenhagen, and why would he then have handed it over to a completely unknown follower like me with all the great revolutionary plans he did not - even in court - hide the fact that he himself was harboring?

As I began to search myself about this story, I also wrote to Jan Michaelsen himself, asking if he could remember something I couldn't. He replied: "It's a real tall tale. The trotyl never left Aarhus, where it was buried in a garden until the police dug it up again. And neither I nor anyone else in Copenhagen had anything to do with that case. I was acquitted and got compensation - and what happened in Aarhus was just a prank. Nobody wanted to blow anything up. That's why the trotylene was buried."

So Kai's statement is a mystery to me, and at first I thought it must be about removing one of the bombs and Molotov cocktails that the Maoists in the front house always boasted that they made and kept there. I don't remember seeing these objects with my own eyes, because if I had, I would have been an accomplice to terrorism if I hadn't revealed them in my usual conflict-averse manner. I simply put it down to their usual teasing that I was "too reactive", because it was my basic feeling that if you were lucky enough to live in a democracy, you were also obliged to engage in thought-provoking educational work, while you should only perhaps drop bombs if you, like Claus von Stauffenberg, were unlucky enough to live in a dictatorship.

However, the film director, who did a lot of research on my past for the documentary about me, pointed out to me that I had used the phrase, "Now we have to use bombs and trotyl to show our revolutionary comrades in the United States that we are with them" in my manifesto, which I wrote during my most radicalized time in Canada.

I have long since tried to forget this 150-page embarrassing piece of writing, but I must have known something about trotyl bombs at the time. But this turgid sentence, written in the fall of 1970 during the violent demonstrations against the World Bank and street fights back home against former US "Secretary of War" Robert McNamara, was probably mostly to say that they were fighting over here, too.

However, I am not trying to shirk any responsibility. Quite the contrary. I try as objectively as possible to form a picture of who I was at that time as a 22-year-old. Therefore, it is also interesting to look back at my relationship with the Maoists in my front rooms, which PET at that time kept under observation, and which has since been described in detail in the PET Commission's report and in Peter Øvig Knudsen's book about the Blekingegade gang. The Holger mentioned in the thick volumes is the same Holger Jensen who had rented a room in my coffin shop together with the four other Maoists, Finn Ejnar, Per Bonde, Alex and Peter Laursen. Today they are almost all dead. Holger first in a car accident. Finn Ejnar a few years after his speech for my 50th birthday, Peter Laursen died of lung cancer, and Alex (who almost got me in jail for dealing hashish) committed early suicide by jumping in front of the train at Valby Station. In 2006, only Per Bonde was alive when I visited him in his antique shop in Vig, where he said that he now (again) totally disagreed with me on everything - because now he had become a member of the Danish People's Party and an opponent of "all those immigrants you run around defending".

Peter Øvig Knudsen described Holger as the most violent of them all, and together with Finn Ejnar he began to escalate the activities under Gotfred Appel's influence and go in a different direction. In any case, it was Holger who then took the initiative and was the driving force behind the Blekingegade gang. Peter Øvig Knudsen's book also concludes that the Vietnam movement died out after the extremely violent World Bank battle, where both Finn Ejnar and Holger went to prison for their violence and Molotov cocktails. I myself feel that the deeper reason was that Anker Jørgensen shortly afterwards became prime minister and recognized North Vietnam and had the courage - like Olof Palme in Sweden and contrary to the bourgeois government in Denmark - to speak out against the United States.



A last visit to Anker Jørgensen at the Saxogade nursing home shortly before his death.

That took the wind out of the explosive escalation. In other words, the peaceful path I represented on the board of Vietnam 69 was not only the winner, but also the much more influential and effective voice.

It is difficult to analyze yourself as a young person, but I cannot help but lean towards the interpretation that as the insecure loser I felt like, it has meant infinitely much to me that a strong, charismatic father figure like Anker Jørgensen showed me confidence by getting me onto the board of Vietnam 69. Imagine where I could not have ended up if the 25-year-old psychology student Finn Ejnar Madsen had shown the same edifying confidence in me as he gave the charming and gifted 18-year-old Holger? That is why I also praised Anker Jørgensen many years later in my 60th birthday speech as one of my saving angels and for his courage as the first Danish politician to do away with the previously so deadly "cooperation policy" - after which the 200 birthday guests gave the now bent old man a spontaneous five-minute applause.

Nevertheless, I must also thank Finn Ejnar for his help in ensuring that I never became part of the ideological left wing that soon after came to plague universities, and of which I am probably here making him and his Maoists a somewhat distorted image. And for the fact that ever since (often with ideological fanaticism) I have reacted against all ideological people - both right and left. For without Finn Ejnar's ideological blindness, I could easily have slipped into the Blekingegade gang, who shared my Robin Hood idealism of transferring as much money as possible from the rich to the oppressed, poor world.

Towering ambitions

Today, I am surprised to see how much of my diary is taken up with the petty problems of my own youth, while I only peripherally mention the problems of the wider world. Particularly the Biafran War, which was the first hunger catastrophe in which the Western world saw starving Africans with distended stomachs on television. From my diary, March 6, 1969: "At school I saw a horrible movie from Biafra. Immediately went downstairs and gave all my money to Biafra." Today we are bombarded with images of misery, but at the time it was something completely new and I remember how shocked I was and how I saw them as proof that things were going very wrong in poor countries. We in the rich countries had to take responsibility. Not through a distant government, but each of us in each family.

This led directly to the event which, both in my own mind and by psychologists, has been attributed a seminal importance for much of what I later embarked upon. Apparently I had planned the event very well, because already a week before I can read in the diary that I started working on the plan. Because why not create a little enlightenment out in darkest West Jutland, where my father's parish council had just decided to spend - I think it was 300,000 kroner - on something as superfluous as building a tower on the only one of his three churches that did not have a bell tower. It was grossly unfair, I thought, that they could even think of such a thing while people were dying of starvation in Africa. And their decision had to be changed so that they sent all this money down to the starving children instead.

I did not see it as an attack on my father at all, but solely as my attempt to play Robin Hood, where I felt that through my father's reputation I would have the best chance of robbing an enormous amount of money for the poor. To reach the hearts of these people in the midst of their faulty disposition, I thought I must address the congregation with the church's own rhetoric. Therefore, in the weeks before my action, I tried to find all sorts of Bible quotations - "not to build huts for yourself like Peter" (Matt. 17:1-9) - and hymn verses, especially by Grundtvig, which said something about "not building towers for God when men are suffering on earth". That was how I had understood the essence of Grundtvig at that time. My big problem in those days, before Google searches were possible, was that I had always been sleeping in church and dreaming my way through the world, so it was a huge task to find the right and most powerful verses. The ones I found I have long since forgotten, except for a few I wrote down that were not from the Bible or Grundtvig.

Here is an excerpt from the diary:

Friday, March 28, 1969: "During the day I wrote poster texts for Agerbæk Church ..."

Maundy Thursday, April 3: "About half past nine Kristen (Godfrey) came. We had breakfast and then left. We took the S-train without buying tickets to Taastrup. I was not free from being a little nervous, but nothing happened. We hitchhiked off, but had to wait a long time in Taastrup. We came up with a car to Roskilde and from there with one that drove us to the ferry. Here we came up with a soldier who drove us to Lillebælt, and then a farmer to Kolding. We walked through all of Kolding and then came with an Esbjerg wagon that took us all the way home. At home we ate immediately and looked after (my little brother) Steen in the evening while they were at the wedding. However, we both fell asleep quickly and slept well into the next day."

Good Friday, April 4: "... in the evening we ate hamburger and red porridge and made Biafra posters for the church together with Steen (hidden in the basement). I worked on them until 4 o'clock in the morning."

Saturday, April 5: "We borrowed the car to do some shopping, among other things for mother in Tatol. Then we drove to Agerbæk and to the

church to look at the conditions. We found that there was a ladder. In the evening mom and dad were at a wedding, and I wrote stencils for the posters. Just finished the stencils when mom and dad came home. Then watched Brothers Karamasov on television. Then we went to a ball at the inn and got in for DKK 10, because Marius' little brother was sitting at the cash register. In the taproom sat Søren (Nymand, my brother's classmate) and several others, so we sat down there. One of them gave us more beer. In the end we went out and danced. Then we drove home to print the posters and mix glue. Around half past nine we left. It was moonlight down in the cemetery and dew cool. At first we were not entirely happy about the situation, but soon we were in high spirits. We fetched a wooden cart from the chapel and a rotten wooden bench from somewhere else in the cemetery and set about setting up. The glue was very cold, but it all went easily enough. Then we got the eight-ten meter ladder and started the installation on the gable, as high as we could reach. This poster was almost 10 meters long, so we had to tear it into one-meter pieces. Still, it was incredibly difficult to put them up, as the ladder was almost vertical and the paper kept crumpling and breaking and I could only put it up with one hand. But in the end it was there: "Here shall stand the monument to thousands of dead Biafrans!" and we were able to take the ladder down again with difficulty. Then we drove into town and put up posters. By half past six we were home and in bed."

And then, of course, there was the big sign I painted over the church door that people had to pass through on Easter morning: "Father! Forgive them, for they know not what they do." Well, yes, but at least admit that it is reassuring and proof that from the very beginning I have been the forgiving terrorist and not one of those who exterminate their opponents without the possibility of dialog.

My father and the people in the church that Easter morning had actually initially thought that the vandalism had been carried out by some of Agerbæk's left-wing teachers, until my little brother told them that we had been down in the basement painting something the night before.

Easter Sunday, April 6: "I was awakened by an enormous noise. There was a phone call for Kristen, and then I was called down to mom, who was completely hysterical. When Dad came home, it didn't get any better. He saw it as directed at himself. It was impossible to say anything.

Eventually they said, that I was gonna disappear. So I went up to Kristen and we packed. But I didn't want to leave, they kept making noise, and I didn't want to leave (in the same way) as grandma. Both mom and I were crying. While father was in church, I helped with the washing up. Then I had soup, and finally even Kristen was allowed to come in and get some food. We got a lot of food, and around five o'clock dad drove us out to the highway. There we walked for a couple of hours and kilometers before we were picked up. We drove to Vejle, where we were at half past midnight."

Throughout my life, I have had a moral requirement towards my audience that one should start by changing oneself and one's own. That's why I probably concluded even then that it was easier to get popular support for this relief project by engaging in dialog in bourgeois West Jutland than if I had tried to raise funds for the far more politically inflamed Vietnam. In any case, I remember that while the older people naturally thought it was a "damned mess" I had made, many of the young people in the parish later praised my primitive attempt to rob the poor from the church box. So it is nice to be able to conclude that I was also a visionary pioneer as a church terrorist. This was a year and a half before some freaks from Thylejren, during their Woodstock-inspired music festival, got the crazy idea to occupy Hjardemål Church, where they nailed some - for the local population incomprehensible - theses on the church door in a similar Lutheran way. Just listen to their unpopular, unfounded, unreasonable words: "The purpose of the action is to demonstrate the extent to which state power is based on false authority and is traditionally accepted and obeyed by the politically alienated inhabitants of Denmark." When the parish priest had to climb up a ladder to negotiate with the occupiers, they simply smashed the tower window and shouted through the windows: "The revolution has begun!"

So was it all a manifestation of my own genuine indignation, or perhaps - as later psychologists have often concluded, and my father himself proclaimed it to be that very morning - an attack on him? The latter really shook me and was the point I most defended myself against in the arguments that day, for I would not apologize for the act itself. Was it really merely an attempt to reach him in his failing love by trying to put his "empty" sermons and love rhetoric into practice and show that

I was a more real priest than him? But how can you possibly think that this was an attack on my own father when you scrutinize the words in the notices I posted on the church that night and still have lying around - apparently paraphrases of some poems I must have read?

Starvation in Biafra - Bell tower in Agerbæk

No, what scares me is not the war. A time for sowing and a time for reaping.

I am frightened by the God who divides equally his great mercy between north and south.

O Lord, divide and separate! Let the unbelieving world perish. Shatter the black clay. Drive out satan! Deliver us from evil!

- No, what frightens me is not the war. Its loss is bearable - like a scratch on the cheek is the wound of war against the nails of Christ.

He suffered for us. But in his deep wonders is hidden the sweetness of victory. When the camp of Biafra is laid in ashes, a greater wonder shall confirm our victory and the victory of Christianity:

for black money - - - - of black bones - - - -
----over black corpses ----we will build----
----a BELL TOWER.

Let this statement posted on Agerbæk Church in the year of our Lord 1969 stand as the final proof that at least this activist - unlike the distant Thy occupiers - had fully understood how to integrate with both the black inhabitants of West Jutland and the blacks in the poor countries. For here was a clear announcement of a work about the blacks, which was soon to come to the region and have its world premiere in my father's church.