

1968 Around the World

THE AMERICAS

Mexico

- Military and police repression in educational institutions sparks the movement.
- **August 2.** The National Strike Council (CNH) is formed to coordinate student and academic protests. By this date, there have already been 12 deaths and 100 arrested or disappeared.
- **October 2.** Thousands of students go to the Three Cultures Plaza in Tlatelolco to present their six demands to the Gustavo Díaz Ordaz administration.
- **October 2, 6:12 p.m.** An army helicopter launches a flare signaling the order to commence firing. Soldiers, paramilitary, and snipers fire into the crowd of 5 000 demonstrators, mostly students.
- The crowd seeks refuge in nearby buildings.
- In the following hours, soldiers and police raid homes and illegally detain people in Tlatelolco apartments.
- The unofficial death toll is between 300 and 500 and more than 2 000 arrested.

Panama

- Before 1968, workers, peasants, indigenous groups, and students hold protests due to a profound economic, political, and social crisis.
- **October 11, 1968.** Major Boris Martínez stages a coup d'état against Arnulfo Arias, initiating what has been called the Panamanian Dictatorship. That night, union, community, and student leaders are hunted down.
- **October 13.** The military government officially takes office and is recognized

by the United States and several Latin American nations.

- More detentions, torture, murders, and forced disappearances. Constitutional guarantees are suspended.
- The University of Panama and the National Institute are closed. The University Student Union calls for general opposition to the regime, underlining the violation of the university's autonomy.
- **October 20.** A 72-hour general strike is called.
- **November 3.** The regime represses a student march and arrests its leadership. Disturbances and protests continue for several years.

United States

- **April 4.** Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights leader and activist against racial discrimination, is assassinated in Memphis.
- **June 5.** Democratic presidential candidate Robert Kennedy is shot and dies the next day.
- **August.** Groups of young people, like the Youth International Party (or "yippies"), demonstrate at the National Democratic Convention in Chicago against the war in Vietnam. Mayor Richard Daley sends in riot police to quell the protest, causing what was later called a "police riot." Seven event organizers are charged with conspiracy.
- **October 14.** Almost all university campuses erupt in protests against the war in Vietnam.
- **November 26.** South Vietnam agrees to peace talks in Paris.

Canada

- **Spring.** Six black students from Sir George Williams University (today, Concordia University) ask for an investigation into failing grades they received because of the color of their skin.
- Students organize sit-ins when the grades are not overturned and on February 11, 1969, the police clash with students in the most violent student disturbances in Canadian history.

Argentina

- **March.** Under a military dictatorship, the unions, with support from students, artists, and intellectuals, found the General Confederation of Labor of Argentina (CGTA).
- **September.** The CGTA and the Student Struggle Front organize protests in Córdoba and are violently repressed by police. The student struggle re-emerges in 1969 with a strike against the privatization of university canteens, which meets with harsh repression, but that does not immobilize society.

Brazil

- 1957-1968. Huge marches against the military dictatorship.
- **March.** The National Student Union of Brazil mobilizes. In its first public activities, the police murder one young man and wound others. Indignation spreads nationwide.
- This sparks marches in all of Brazil's major cities with bloody results. The demonstrations start again May 1, expressing the alliance of the student movement and workers' struggles

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NORTH AMERICA

Canada



United States



Mexico



Panama



Brazil



	Protests
	Military Dictatorship and/or Government Repression
	War and/or Armed Conflict

Peru



Uruguay



Argentina



SOUTH AMERICA

“to build a new Brazil” and against the dictatorship of Artur da Costa e Silva.

- June 26. 100 000 march in Rio de Janeiro to repudiate arbitrary arrests and murders.
- The dictatorship’s most repressive period begins, the “Years of Lead.”

Peru

- October 3. General Juan Velasco Alvarado stages a coup d’état to depose Fernando Belaunde Terry.
- Despite a strong political and ideological campaign, the student movement, most of which opposes Velasco, does not prosper in the universities.
- Given firings of workers and factory closures in important sectors of the economy, more and more students join workers’ movements.

- The crisis speeds up political radicalization, heavily influenced by Maoist positions.

Uruguay

- May 1. The National Workers’ Convention (CNT) celebrates International Workers Day in Montevideo, but the event is violently broken up by the Republican Guard. This spurs the unions to call a general strike.
- A hike in student bus ticket prices and the reduction of the budget for education spark the mobilization of the Secondary Students Coordinating Committee. By May 13, 12 high schools have been occupied in protest.
- Despite the government cancellation of the price hike, the mobilization continues, and workers join in with their demands, creating a popular movement.

- Universities join in, demanding better budgets and that the government pay its debts to the university.
- June 18. The University Students Federation of Uruguay (FEUU) organizes a general work stoppage.
- June 24. President Jorge Pacheco declares a state of emergency and orders the armed forces to repress the strikers.
- August 9. Pacheco orders the police enter the University of the Republic, violating its autonomy, using firearms against students and academic and administrative personnel. One student is killed, thus increasing the tension.
- The student’s funeral is the largest gathering in Montevideo on record until then, showing society’s rejection of the dictatorship.

EUROPE

France

- March 20. The National Vietnam Committee demonstrates against the U.S. occupation of Vietnam; several students are arrested.
- March 22. 142 students (anarchists, Trotskyists, Communists, libertarians, and a group called “The Indignant”) protest, taking over the central tower at Nanterre University.
- May-June. Revolt, not to take power, but for a substantial change in society, in defense of freedom in the private sphere and questioning the public sphere.
- May 3. The protests spread to the Sorbonne. Police evict them and detain about 600 people. Demanding the police withdraw and freedom for detainees becomes routine.
- May 6. The so-called “Nanterre Eight” are brought before a university disciplinary committee; when they exit, a demonstration and another clash with police sparks solidarity from most of French society.
- May 10. “The Night of the Barricades” in the Latin Quarter. The clash, the

harshes of the month, leaves hundreds injured.

- May 11. Armored cars circulate in Paris.
- May 13. Ten million workers respond to a union strike call. The shut-down of train service, airports, and factories paralyzes France.
- May 27. The unions pact with management and government to end the strike in exchange for a higher minimum wage, a shorter work week, and a lower retirement age.
- June. Despite the violence, all workplaces go back to normal

Poland

- March. Numerous student protests against political repression and the concomitant government anti-Zionist campaign. At least 2 700 people are arrested.

Finland

- Demonstration against Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and in support of Dubček.

Germany

- Student demonstration against appointment of former Nazis to high government posts and anti-democratic legal reforms.
- February. International congress against Vietnam War with thousands of participants from West Berlin.

United Kingdom

- October 27. During protests against the Vietnam War and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, students take over the London School of Economics. More than 100 000 participate in the demonstrations.

Italy

- November 1967-early 1968. Most universities join together in protest because the economic boom only favors the Italian bourgeoisie.
- Students mobilize against rate hikes and Ministry of Education plans to restrict access to a university education.
- February 1968. University student occupations, starting in Milan, Turin,

EUROPE



and Trento, spread; democratic assemblies coordinate the movement.

- Late February. The police evict students from university buildings and expel thousands nationwide.
- March 1. The government decides Sapienza University of Rome “must be recovered.” The Battle of Valle Giulia leaves wounded on both sides and the students are forced to retreat.
- Summer. Numerous revolutionary groups promote the idea that the use of violence is necessary.

Czechoslovakia

- January-August. The Prague Spring begins, a peaceful movement to eliminate Soviet abuses and move toward “socialism with a human face.” Communist Party General Secretary

Alexander Dubček heads the reforms, recognizing the right to strike, legalizing multiple political parties and unions, and promoting freedom of expression and the press.

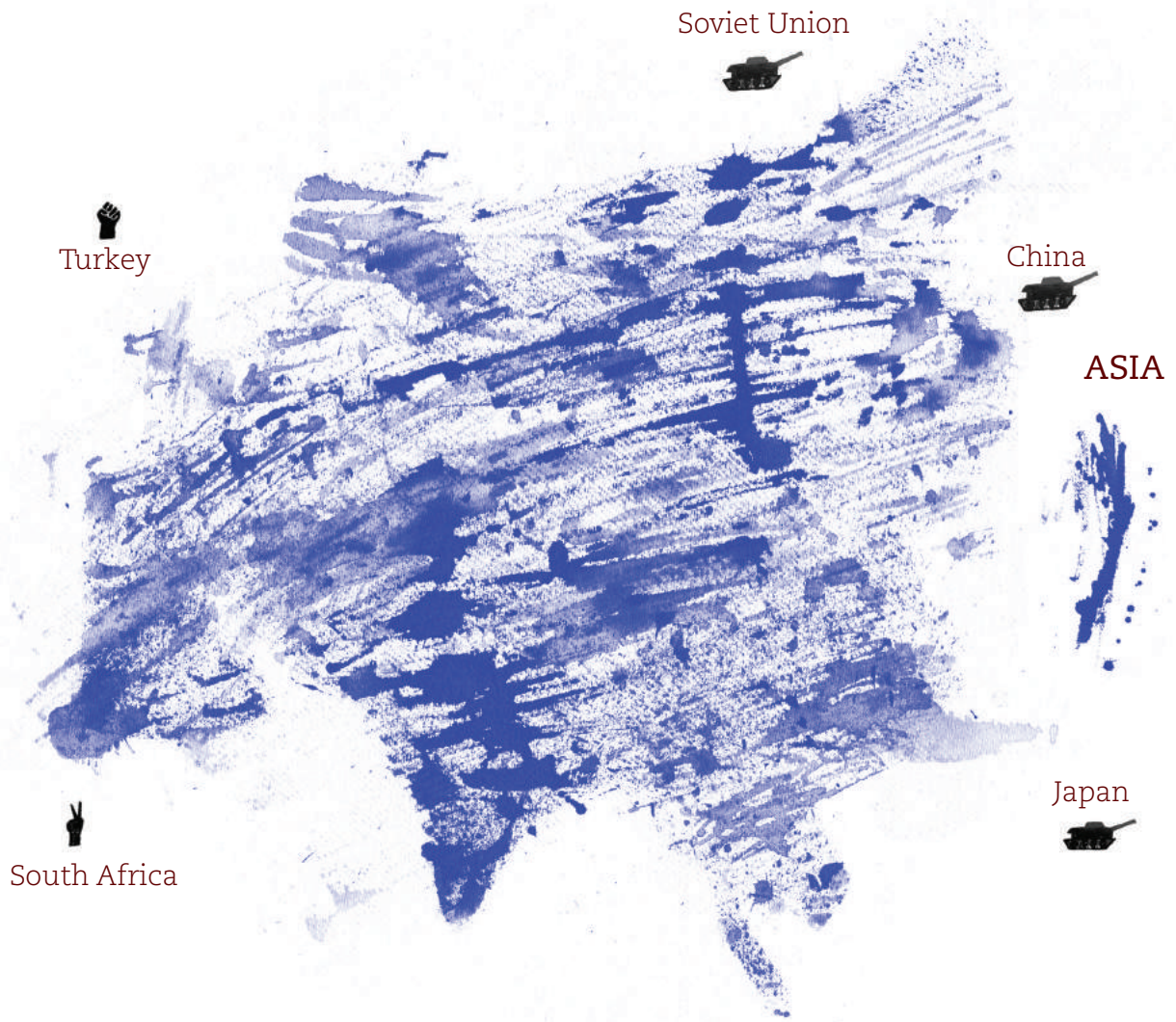
- August 20. The Warsaw Pact (except Rumania) and Soviet troops invade Prague, ending the process.
- Dubček is forced to sign the Moscow Protocol, which moderates the reforms.
- In a radio speech, Dubček recommends submitting to the invasion to avoid a bloodbath.

Spain

- Ideologically heterogeneous movement; different groups fight for political and organizational leadership amidst repression.

- The struggle against the Franco dictatorship overrides everything: its defeat is the only aim.

- Students create new unions, refuse to take exams, and demonstrate against arrests and expulsions.
- March 22. Police raid the universities without authorization from the university president to “impose order” and detain student leaders; dozens are wounded.
- Police murder Enrique Ruano of the Popular Liberation Front and impose a state of emergency, revealing the regime’s inability to quash society’s discontent.
- Increased police presence on university campuses demobilizes students; clandestine parties and unions take up the anti-Franco struggle.



ASIA AND AFRICA

China

- 1967. Consolidation of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution defending revolutionary ideals. Any attempt at rebellion is crushed, with Mao allying with a student group called the Red Guards.

Japan

- 1965-1967. Nationwide protests against the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the Vietnam War, and school tuition hikes.
- 155-day strike at Waseda University.
- October 1967. Clash between riot police and demonstrators at Tokyo's Haneda Airport; one student is killed and 600 more injured.
- Autumn 1968. Student unrest grows; Molotov cocktails are used at demonstrations; 6 000 protesting students are arrested and more injured.

- Nihon and Tokyo Universities. Intercampus Joint Struggle Committee created to mobilize non-affiliated students. More universities join the strike.
- Early 1969. The conflict heightens: 8 500 anti-riot police force students out of university buildings and arrest occupiers. Injuries and home-made bombs are common in clashes.

Soviet Union

- August 21-22. The Warsaw Pact invades Czechoslovakia to stop political liberalization reforms; about 250 000 troops from the USSR, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Bulgaria participate in what is dubbed Operation Danube.
- Approximately 500 Czech civilians are wounded and 108, killed.

Turkey

- June. University students organize anti-U.S. and anti-imperialist demonstrations. The Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey heads boycotts and school takeovers all over the country.

South Africa

- Almost 600 students and professors occupy the Cape Town University's Bremner Building for nine days to protest the withdrawal of the offer of a senior lectureship to Archie Mafeje due to pressure from the apartheid government. This marks the beginning of the civil disobedience that led to the end of institutionalized racial segregation in that country. **MM**