



## 1968: The Rise and Fall of the New American Revolution

**Robert C. Cottrell**

**Blaine T. Browne**

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Robert C. Cottrell and Blaine T. Browne's book is a reminder that the year 1968 saw the United States on the brink of a revolution, one that was virtually apocalyptic in scope. Race riots led to torched American cities, and outrage and rebellion against the Vietnam War prompted student revolts on campuses across the land. Conspiracy trials were held in an attempt to halt the radical challenge to authority. Major political figures and other leaders were gunned down, with the images broadcast to a horrified population.

It was a time of extremes. Cottrell and Browne show how the events that shattered the belief in "US invincibility" unfolded against the backdrop of a great generational divide and global unrest, contrasted with the pull to nonviolence and peace, free love, and the rise of communal and back-to-the-land living, all topped off with a good dose of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.

Remembered here, the sixties also saw the second wave of the feminist movement and its more radical members' claim that the real enemy was not war, the draft, the government, or racial issues, but men. Calls for women to rebel against patriarchy by remaining single or taking periodic sabbaticals from married life, living in all-female communes, learning karate, and practicing self-imposed celibacy resounded. And, while 1968 marked a turning point for American environmentalism with the passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers and National Trails System acts, it also saw the unveiling of some frighteningly draconian ideas on population control.

The year 1968 "added more to a sense of unease, disillusionment, and distrust of government institutions than any other year during the turbulent decade and a half that followed the start of the 1960s," Cottrell and Browne write. But it also brought a "small but bright glimmer of hope" that continues to light the path today.

KRISTINE MORRIS (July/August 2018)

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