

# ANATOMY OF VIOLENCE

film, speeches, discussion

for the Dangerous Times Festival, June 1, 2014

## THE DIALECTICS OF LIBERATION CONGRESS

THE ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON, JULY 1967

The Congress was the brainchild of Dr RD Laing, the radical psychiatrist, and three colleagues. It was summoned as a response to the horrors of the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement in the South together with race riots in the big US cities, and a rising tide of rebellion against the established powers all over the world. Its stated aim was 'to demystify human violence in all its forms, the social situations from which it emanates and to explore new forms of action' and it gathered intellectuals, activists, poets and artists from across the world to speak or perform to an audience made up of members of the counter-culture, the Black community, Flower Children and US draft dodgers, many of whom took up residence in the Roundhouse for the duration. The outpouring of energy and radical ideas in politics, education, psychiatry and the arts helped spawn a new generation of activists, and also inadvertently, in line with the majority of radical movements of the time, helped give birth to the women's liberation movement of the '70's through its exclusion of women's voices on the platform.

### PETER DAVIS FILMMAKER

Born in the UK and now living in Canada, Peter Davis has been directing, producing and distributing documentaries for over five decades, as well as working as cameraman, soundman, editor and writer on a wide range of other films. His own films have been widely shown internationally and won many awards.

From intimate pictures of his native East End including *Pub, Strip and Immigrants* he went on to film extensively in South Africa under apartheid, returning under cover when he was expelled; among many films from that period are *Remember Mandela!*, made while Mandela was in prison, *Under Apartheid: Generations of Resistance*, and *White Laager*, the history of Afrikaner nationalism. His book *In Darkest Hollywood* looks at Hollywood's role in supporting or challenging apartheid through film.

His other subjects, which range very widely, include the history of the US annexation of the Philippines (*This Bloody, Blundering Business*), *Rise and Fall of the Borscht Belt* (the resort industry in the Catskill Mountains as a microcosm of Jewish assimilation in the US) and *The Nature of Dr Suzuki*, on the famous Canadian environmentalist. His productions include *The Russell Tribunal*, about Bertrand Russell's Vietnam war crimes tribunal and featuring Tariq Ali and Jean Paul Sartre. He is currently working on a biography of Johnnie Cash and on the people, politics and passions that went into the making of the famous film on the Spanish Civil War, *Spanish Earth*.

Production company Villon Films: <http://www.villonfilms.ca>

Email: [peter@villonfilms.com](mailto:peter@villonfilms.com)

## **JACKY IVIMY**

### **DIRECTOR**

Jacky Ivimy has been working together with Peter Davis for some time now on the Dialectics of Liberation Congress of 1967, including filmed interviews with Congress participants. In 2012 she devised and directed *Dialektikon*, a political entertainment including Peter's film, the six principal Congress speeches, a poet, a folk singer and an audience discussion; the first performance was given to Occupy London at St Paul's. She is currently working on a script for theatre based on the Congress. Previous scripts include *The Ghosts of Dresden*, a mythical/historical panorama, and *Notting Hill '58*, on the race riots that led to the birth of the carnival.

Active in the Labour Party during the Thatcher years, she has also been a teacher and a trustee of *Agenda* poetry magazine. For twenty-five years she ran a small sheep farm in Herefordshire focusing on the restoration and recreation of wildflower meadows and continues to work on green issues, particularly climate change and the fight against fracking. Email: [jivimy@gmail.com](mailto:jivimy@gmail.com)

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#### **SPEAKERS:**

##### **STOKELY CARMICHAEL (1941-1998)**

Born in Trinidad, then a British colony, aged 11 Carmichael joined his parents who had emigrated to New York. He was an outstanding student at Howard University, Washington, where he joined the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC) and became active in the Civil Rights movement, taking part in the Freedom Rides and being arrested many times, including spending time in the notorious Parchman Farm jail. Heavily influenced by Franz Fanon and his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, as well as by Malcolm X, Carmichael started to preach Black Power and independence from white society. This led him to back the expulsion of the white members of SNCC, and in 1967 to leave SNCC and form the Black Panthers, a new militant group which didn't exclude the use of violence in response to generations of white brutality. In 1969 he and his South African wife the singer Miriam Makeba moved to Guinea where he became an aide to the Prime Minister, espousing a socialist, pan-African vision and changing his name to Kwame Ture.

##### **HERBERT MARCUSE (1898-1979)**

As a soldier, Marcuse was witness to the devastation of World War 1 and to the failed Spartacist uprising that aimed to renew German society through a socialist revolution. Later as a Marxist scholar of political philosophy he studied the terrifying rise of German fascism and the problems of authoritarian rule and obedience. When Hitler came to power in 1933 Marcuse joined the Frankfurt Institute and along with the other predominately Jewish members emigrated to the US where he taught at several US universities including Columbia and Harvard. During the rebellious '60's he became very popular with the student movement through his books such as *Eros and Civilisation* and *One-Dimensional Man* which describe the alienation brought about by capitalism, while his willingness to engage in discussion with his students earned him the title of 'father of the New Left'.

### **ALLEN GINSBERG (1926-1997)**

Along with Jack Kerouac one of the leading figures of the Beat generation, a poet who took his inspiration from Walt Whitman's long line and from an early vision of William Blake whose voice he heard reciting *Ah! Sunflower*. His poem *Howl* became instantly famous as the expression of the pain of a whole alienated generation; it became the subject of a famous obscenity trial, which Ginsberg won. He went on to lead many battles for peace, human rights, sexual openness and gay rights in calm defiance of the harshly repressive and warmongering climate of the US in the '50's and '60's. A practicing Buddhist and Krishna devotee, music and chanting were central to his wildly popular poetry readings. He was an immensely generous man, keeping open house for anyone who felt like dropping in, tirelessly promoting his friends' works, subsidising needy writers and giving away most of his own earnings.

### **ACTORS:**

#### **ADEBAYO BOLAJI (playing Stokely Carmichael)**

Adebayo Bolaji is an actor, writer and artistic director of the *Ex Nihilo* Theatre Group. He trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. His play *IN BED* (which he has written and directed) will feature at the London Theatre Workshop from 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September. He was last seen on stage in *THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS* at the Young Vic Theatre and is currently filming a two-part BBC2 drama, directed by John Alexander. For more info visit: [www.officialade.com](http://www.officialade.com)

#### **EDWARD HALSTED (playing Herbert Marcuse)**

Edward Halsted has been acting for forty years in all media and is currently appearing in the Punchdrunk/National Theatre production *The Drowned Man*. He is a director of Republic, which campaigns for a democratic alternative to the monarchy. (<http://republic.org.uk>)

#### **NIALL MCDEVITT (playing Allen Ginsberg)**

Niall McDevitt is an Irish poet living in London. He is the author of two collections of poems, *b/w* (Waterloo Press, 2010) and *Porterloo* (International Times, 2013). He is an urban explorer who specializes in the poetic history of London (<http://poetopography.wordpress.com/>). He has worked as an actor/musician in Neil Oram's *The Warp*, Ken Campbell's *Pidgin Macbeth* and John Constable's *The Southwark Mysteries*. He is also an activist.