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With the Weathermen: The Personal Journal of a Revolutionary Woman

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With the Weathermen

The Personal Journal
of a Revolutionary Woman

Susan Stern

Edited and with an Introduction by
Laura Browder

Rutgers University Press
New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London

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Introduction

Woman of the Weatherman, indicted member of the Seattle Seven, ex-felon, underground fugitive, brainless slut, porn film star, bride with a lavish social wedding, possessor of two master's degrees, daughter of wealth.

Thus began the *San Francisco Examiner's* profile of Susan Stern in the wake of her controversial 1974 memoir, *With the Weathermen*. Stern's life was one of contradictions, and the political memoir she published a year before her death described that contradictory life in a way that drove critics of all political persuasions crazy.

Drugs. Sex. Revolutionary violence. From its first pages, Susan Stern's memoir provides a close look inside Weatherman (also referred to as the Weathermen and the Weather Underground Organization, or WUO), one of the best-known and most controversial political groups of the late 1960s and 1970s. It challenges conventional notions of female autobiography in its treatment of the traditional markers of female experience. And it provides glimpses of the ways in which women in the 1960s and 1970s reconfigured their sense of what was important in their lives—not marriage and babies, but revolutionary action, sexual liberation, drug-taking, and collective living. It offers a definition of revolution that is not just about politics but also about lifestyle.

This is not to say that *With the Weathermen* should be read merely as a historical document or sociological curiosity. It is certainly one of the best accounts we have of a woman's evolving political consciousness

as she grapples with some of the major issues of her time, in the context of a group that was notorious and reviled both within and without the left. However, it is also an autobiography in a classic American tradition: an account of rebirth into a new identity. As a conversion narrative, it echoes the turn-of-the-century accounts of immigrants eager to proclaim their ethnic selves dead and to celebrate their rebirth into an American identity.¹ It sounds most of all like the memoirs of unbelievers who have found God, but in this case, Stern celebrates her birth, not into Americanness or faith, but into a life of heightened violence, sexuality, and drugs.

Moreover, Stern's memoir brings together two seemingly incompatible traditions: that of evangelical Christianity (the confession of a life of sin) and Maoist discipline. Weathermen, as Stern detailed in her memoir, routinely engaged in many-hours-long, brutalizing criticism/self-criticism sessions, modeled after those in Mao's China, in which collective members would be viciously attacked by their comrades for a variety of personal and political sins until they confessed their unworthiness. However, these sessions were designed for internal consumption only: Stern aired this dirty linen in public.

A book that received a great deal of attention when it was first published, *With the Weathermen* seemed to serve as a referendum on the place of rebellious youth in American society and on the meaning of political activism during that period. Responses by feminist critics offer us a window into the period's debates over what real feminism was all about—and whether there was a place in the women's liberation movement for a street-fighting, go-go dancing militant. Conservative critics voiced their disgust at having their worst impressions of radical students confirmed. And left-wing critics accused Stern of playing into the hands of conservatives by presenting the political activism of the time as being a little bit about ending the Vietnam War, and a lot about sex, drugs, and mindless violence. All in all, Stern managed to upset a lot of readers of her time—while offering later generations of readers a window into one kind of 1960s and 1970s radicalism. No matter how upsetting it may have been to readers anxious to defend Weatherman politics, readers looking to excoriate feckless youth, or readers searching for a femi-

nist role model, the book provides us with a gritty portrayal of life inside a movement.

WEATHERMAN IN CONTEXT

To understand the genesis of Weatherman, and the group's dedication to a revolutionary strategy that included, at various points, assaulting police, vandalizing stores, and bombing government buildings, it is necessary to trace an important shift among the leaders of the left. In the mid-1960s many activists made a conscious decision to abandon the nonviolent strategies of an older generation of social reformers in favor of more confrontational tactics.

Violence as a revolutionary strategy did not develop in the United States until the late 1960s, in large part because victimized innocence proved to be such a powerful spectacle. Martin Luther King Jr.'s strategy of nonviolence helped cast the civil rights movement as a moral drama, and the brutality of segregationist tactics against nonviolent marchers provided compelling political theater. During the Birmingham civil rights marches of 1963, public opinion turned in favor of the civil rights movement when television audiences saw the spectacle of police commissioner Bull Connor setting police dogs and fire hoses on the thousands of children who were marching through city streets. As one of King's lieutenants, Andrew Young, told the parents of the young protesters, however, "We must not boo the police when they bring up the dogs." Rather, "We must praise them. The police don't know how to handle the situation governed by love, and the power of God."² Although many civil rights workers armed themselves in self-defense against the attacks of white supremacists, they did not publicize this fact for fear that doing so would lessen public support for the movement.³

However, by the time of King's death, the civil rights movement and other progressive groups had become increasingly militant. The embrace of armed self-defense and the escalating violence of the American left began as a direct response to the violence, both governmental and extra-governmental, aimed first at civil rights activists and then at other leftists. At the beginning of the decade, white student activists had joined black civil rights organizers in

Mississippi to foster voter registration efforts during 1964's Freedom Summer. Members of the predominantly white Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) had joined with the predominantly black Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to follow Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s dictate that only through nonviolent protest could activists vanquish white supremacy and bring equal rights to African Americans. But as King noted, turning the other cheek is a very difficult burden to bear, and years of unceasing bombings, shootings, and beatings by hardcore segregationists inevitably took their toll. For many activists, King's assassination in April 1968 was the final straw, breaking their faith in nonviolence.

In the late 1960s, the most prominent group of African American activists was not linked to the church-based movement that had been epitomized by King, but the Black Panther Party (BPP), whose founding in Oakland, California, in 1967 was heralded by its members marching into the statehouse in Sacramento, fully armed. Explaining this action—which was undertaken to protest a proposed gun-control law—Party leader Huey Newton insisted that “the time has come for Black people to arm themselves against this terror before it is too late.”⁴ This was more than a defensive move. As *The Black Panther* newspaper put it: “Revolutionary strategy for Black people in America begins with the defensive movement of picking up the Gun, as the condition for ending the pigs' reign of terror by the Gun.”⁵ This was a far cry from Martin Luther King Jr.'s “I have a dream” speech.

The Black Panthers galvanized white students like Susan Stern, who saw their political skirmishes as being coterminous with leftist struggles the world over, including anti-colonial movements in Africa and Latin America. Also inspirational were the May 1968 Paris uprisings, in which 800,000 high school and college students, teachers, and workers took to the streets demanding an end to the De Gaulle regime and protesting police brutality—a movement that spread until ten million laborers, roughly two-thirds of the French workforce, went on strike, paralyzing the nation for two weeks.

Most of all, however, the student left looked to Vietnam. The war that would result in 58,000 American casualties and millions of Viet-

nameless dead would not be over until 1975, but as the 1960s neared their conclusion, few Americans believed that it was winnable, and many believed that it was deeply immoral. The Tet offensive of January 1968, in which 80,000 Viet Cong guerrillas launched assaults on every major city in South Vietnam—including Saigon, where they blew a hole in the wall of the American embassy—made it clear to many Americans that the United States was not, in fact, advancing triumphantly, despite constant government assertions to the contrary.

While Americans of all ages and many occupations engaged in war protests, colleges and universities were widely regarded as particular sites for the concentration of radical activism. White and black students alike had applauded President Lyndon B. Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and his championing of what he famously termed a "war on poverty." However, by 1968 another war had come to overshadow Johnson's focus on issues of domestic equality. American students, dismayed by the growing violence of the Vietnam War and appalled by the assassinations of Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Martin Luther King Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, and other progressive leaders, were nevertheless affected by the martial spirit, and in frustration abandoned the peaceful tactics of their predecessors. By the end of 1968, hundreds of major student protests had taken place at American universities—and there were more to come. The nonviolent activism of the early 1960s was, if not entirely over, now merely one approach to protest—and an approach that an increasing number of students and young radicals eschewed in favor of armed confrontation.

Weatherman—which later became the Weather Underground—had its genesis in a 1969 rift within Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a group that gained most of its strength and membership through the free speech movement at Berkeley in the early 1960s, and which found its greatest influence as the most powerful antiwar group on American campuses. Of the schism, Stern wrote, "Weatherman had been born, and SDS had died, taking with it a decade of valiant revolutionary struggle and burying the strongest white radical group since the Communist Party of the thirties. Now instead of a half-million members and supporters across the country, SDS

Weatherman represented a few thousand at the very most" (chapter 4). Activists and scholars during the time of Weatherman's formation and since then have debated whether the group was a cause or a symptom of the student left's fragmentation. What was very clear, however, was that the group, with its flamboyant tactics and outré beliefs, represented a direction very different from that of the student groups that had preceded it, which were tied philosophically to the peace movement and the civil rights movement. To many, Weatherman represented a new era of nihilism and despair. Though not all observers pinned the blame for the growth of radical violence on Weatherman, most were unified in their conclusion that as a strategy, violence did little to advance the progressive causes that occasioned their protest in the first place.

For those who were swept up in the torrent, however, Weatherman represented the fulfillment of years of frustrated striving. As Stern wrote, "With the advent of the Big Split [within SDS] there was only one reality in my life. Weatherman. I fell in love with a concept. My white knight materialized into a vision of world-wide liberation. I ceased to think of Susan Stern as a woman; I saw myself as a revolutionary tool. Impetuously and compulsively, I flung myself at the feet of the revolution and debauched in its whirlwind for the next few years . . . my family, my past all faded into dreary insignificance. For the first time in my life that I could remember, I was happy" (chapter 4). A new lifestyle (revolutionary debauchery, a heady mixture of sex, violence, and political theory), a new identity (goodbye friends and family), a new fantasy (the white knight of political activism, rescuing her from bourgeois anomie): in Weatherman Susan Stern was transformed.

Stern was a key player in the Seattle collective. Possessed of boundless energy, she seems to have been everywhere that major action was taking place: at the Days of Rage in Chicago, at the Ave riots in Seattle, at the Weatherman 1969 Flint War Council. She was a defendant in the well-publicized trial of the Seattle Seven, who were charged with trashing an ROTC building in a case that drew national attention. Her memoir provides a detailed account of life inside the group. Perhaps most gripping, beyond her detailed

descriptions of daily life inside the collective, are her analyses of the group's—and her own—attraction to violence.

Weatherman embraced theorist Regis Debray's idea of exemplary violence—the notion that the underclass could be inspired to foment revolution by the example of a small cadre of activists committed to spreading disorder through riots, bombings, and other acts of deprecation.⁶ They admired the work of anti-colonialist theoretician Frantz Fanon, who in his influential essay “On Violence” derided the revolutionary value of nonviolence and instead advocated that

the violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters.⁷

Violence, wrote Fanon, was not only tactically necessary in order to overthrow an oppressive regime, but was also personally transformative: “At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.”⁸ For Weatherman, the ideal of transformative violence became a central focus, to the extent that its leaders came to admire mass murderers and celebrate white infanticide—an approach far beyond what Debray and Fanon ever advocated.

Weatherman believed that only acts of armed protest could succeed in ending the war in Vietnam, and one of their earliest and most well-known actions, the Days of Rage, brought widespread publicity to the group. In preparation for this event Weatherman appealed to the white youth of America to come to Chicago during the weekend beginning October 8, 1969, to “bring the war home.” The city had been the site of mass protests during the Democratic National Convention the previous year. Weatherman called for youth to return to the scene “to turn pig city into the people's city.”⁹

As Susan Stern wrote, in detailing her preparation for the Days of Rage, "In one month's time we had handed out almost a million leaflets in at least two hundred different places swarming with potential revolutionary youth. We had learned how to use guns. Carrying pieces that we could shoot, in some fashion or another. I had carried a .22 caliber revolver tucked into the waistband of my jeans, plus a whammie slingshot stuck into my back pocket. We had all learned to make Molotov cocktails, but to my knowledge we had never used any. We could recite verbatim the ABC's of racism in America, the history of the Vietnam war, and sundry other political raps" (chapter 8). She and her comrades may have been unpracticed in the use of the guns, slingshots, and Molotov cocktails they carried, but they were important props for the confrontational form of political theater they practiced—and their "political raps" formed the script to the drama.

The Weathermen predicted a storm of tens of thousands, but the Days of Rage turned out to be a drizzle, drawing only a few hundred activists who smashed storefront and car windows and rioted in the streets, and got beaten by the cops in return. But the tremendous impact belied the modest numbers: Weatherman became instantly notorious as the most revolutionary faction of the New Left. With many Weathermen severely injured, though, the group subsequently deemphasized massive violent street actions. The leaders of Weatherman—Mark Rudd, Bill Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn, and Jeff Jones—still encouraged youth to rise up, loot, and otherwise disable small businesses, banks, and military recruitment centers. But they cautioned that these measures would be less effective than more explosive overtures.

As Mark Rudd and Terry Robbins wrote in an early statement, Weather should be "a movement that fights, not just talks about fighting. The aggressiveness, seriousness, and toughness . . . will attract vast numbers of working-class youth."¹⁰ Cathy Wilkerson, a founding member of Weatherman, recalled in an interview that the group "was trying to reach white youth on the basis of their most reactionary macho instinct, intellectuals playing at working-class toughs."¹¹ Weatherman leaders, many of them from privileged

backgrounds, shared a romanticized vision of white working-class youth: what Weathermen found when they encountered random groups of the young white workers whom they idealized was that these kids simply did not find the theory of exemplary violence compelling. While radical groups like the Black Panthers sought alliances with GIs fighting in Vietnam, Weatherman referred to U.S. soldiers as "pigs." In many instances like this, Weatherman seemed more interested in celebrating violence than in winning converts to the revolution. While their strategy was certainly theoretically grounded in their desire to engage in guerrilla struggle against an enormously powerful military-industrial complex, the theory that they embraced did not lead them to effective forms of activism.

Most alienating of all, though, was Weatherman's professed admiration for mass murderer Charles Manson and his "family" of devotees who, in 1969, in the hopes of igniting a race war, embarked on a killing orgy that ended in the grisly deaths of seven people in the L.A. area. Many observers, appalled by the Manson murders, saw in them a death knell for the idealism of the 1960s. But at Weatherman's War Council, held later that year in Flint, Michigan, delegates reveled at the news. As Stern reports, "Almost everybody in the Bureau ran around saluting people with the fork sign [to symbolize the fork the Mansons left in the belly of one of their victims] . . . There was a picture of Sharon Tate up on the wall, in tribute to Manson's murder of the star in her eighth month of pregnancy" (chapter 11). It was incomprehensible to most people why Weatherman would celebrate the spree killings of a white supremacist or advocate white infanticide (another stated position of the group during this time). However, Weather leadership saw the Manson cult as youths engaging in a guerrilla theater of violence against the wealthy and powerful.

Weatherman promoted an outlaw image with such stunts as helping LSD guru Timothy Leary escape from prison in 1970. And the group's commitment to violence remained strong even after three Weathermen accidentally blew themselves up while manufacturing bombs in one member's Greenwich Village townhouse—

bombs they had intended to plant at an army dance at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

The townhouse fiasco, the indictment of twelve Weather leaders on counts related to the Days of Rage, and the death of Black Panther leader Fred Hampton at the hands of the police hastened implementation of a decision made at the 1969 War Council: to go underground. From this point on the organization would be known as the Weather Underground Organization (WUO). After the townhouse incident, the organization decided to avoid human targets in favor of such institutional targets as the Capitol building, banks, military recruitment centers, and police barracks.

However, although its leaders made the decision to blow up buildings rather than people, Weatherman continued to support groups that others on the left shunned, such as the Symbionese Liberation Army and the Black Liberation Army, revolutionary organizations that robbed banks, organized kidnappings, and staged assassinations of government officials and cops, both black and white.

Despite these few alliances on the left, the group was despised by many radicals and liberals who shared Weatherman's opposition to the Vietnam War but found many of the group's other positions and tactics incomprehensible. As Susan Stern writes, "The majority in Seattle and across the country were violently opposed to Weatherman. Weatherman was the single biggest unifying factor in the Movement since the outbreak of the war. . . . I couldn't resist their appeal. Their flagrant arrogance, their contempt for everyone around them. I thought they were remarkable; I knew I belonged there" (chapter 6). Both the hostility Stern sensed from the group and her intense desire to be included suffuse her memoir. She herself seems conscious, throughout the text, that her feelings are those of a high school girl longing to belong to the coolest clique.

Central to Stern's attraction to the group, as well, was her own experience of the transformative quality of violence and of sex. Weather saw physical transgression as a means of not only political change but also social metamorphosis, particularly for women. The 1969 Weather essay "Honky Tonk Women" celebrated women's transfiguration through violence:

Completely transformed from passive wimps, afraid of blood or danger or guns, satisfied with the limitations set on us by hated slave relationships with one man, we became revolutionary women—whole people struggling in every way, at every level, to destroy the dying pig system that has tried to keep us and the rest of its leadership under its total control.

Giving up “hated slave relationships with one man” meant adhering to the Weather imperative to “smash monogamy,” even, or especially, if it meant breaking up longstanding personal relationships. Weatherman promoted “wargasms,” or group sex, and Weather leaders often demanded that group members sleep with others in their collective in rotation, in order to depersonalize sexual experience. In short, Weatherman insisted that women stop attaching meaning to the personal relationships that had traditionally defined their lives. For Weatherwomen, the focus of many feminists on such issues as better child care, reproductive freedom, and equal wages was misguided and downright selfish. As “Honky Tonk Women” concluded, “We demand—not ‘Bread and Roses’ to make our lives a little better and shield us from struggle a little more—but bombs and rifles to join the war being fought now all over the globe to destroy the motherfuckers responsible for this pig world.”¹²

This dismissal of “Bread and Roses” concerns, as well as Weatherwomen’s “more revolutionary than thou” stance, offended many feminists, who saw Weather’s focus on violence as a reproduction of the aggressive patriarchal structures that were responsible for society’s ills. In an influential essay, feminist Robin Morgan criticized Weatherwomen for rejecting “their own radical feminism for that last desperate grab at male approval that we all know so well, for claiming that the *machismo* style and the gratuitous violence is their own style by ‘free choice’ and for believing that this is the way for a woman to make her revolution.”¹³

THE EROTICS OF LIBERATION

Susan Stern, however, found personal and political liberation in the very aspects of Weatherman that so many feminists and leftists

deplored. For Stern, sexuality, feminism, and revolutionary violence were inextricably intertwined. Many feminists of Stern's day, such as Marge Piercy and Barbara Haber, scathingly critiqued the mistreatment of movement women under the guise of sexual liberation which, they argued, offered men more power rather than granting women true sexual freedom.¹⁴ As one veteran of the movement recalled, "Women, in many instances, lost the right to say 'no,' accused instead of being 'uptight.'"¹⁵ In contrast, Stern presented herself as a sexual aggressor. While she writes frankly about her disgust with the sexual expectations of SDS men—"They would drop into small-town U.S.A. with their grinning good looks and their political palaver and just like any other superstar attract a bunch of shining little groupies"—and her own disinclination to meet those expectations—"I couldn't stand the thought of being just another piece of ass to SDS men" (chapter 5), Stern is equally open about her own strong sexual desires and needs.

Most provocatively, Susan Stern insisted that the lifestyle others deplored as nihilistic was at the heart of her liberation. By defining herself as a feminist while detailing the ways she used her sexuality for pleasure, profit, and power, Stern defied conventional understandings of women's empowerment. Whereas many of her sisters decried the sexual exploitation of women, Stern supported herself much of the time through topless dancing and performing in pornographic films. Even her revolutionary comrades "were appalled that I would go-go dance . . . at a time when the Movement was in a crisis over Women's Liberation." Never one to smooth over difference when she could highlight it and provoke discussion or confrontation, "I chose to ignore what everyone was saying and took an aggressive 'who cares' attitude. Instead of hiding the fact that I worked at the Dunes [a local strip club] I flaunted it. Before work, I'd prance around the house in a miniscule G-string. Everyone in the house was too intimidated to stop my outrageous activity" (chapter 5). Stern used every means possible to provoke, intimidate, and throw her audience off balance, all in the interest of increasing her own personal power.

She had a deep understanding of political theatricality in many contexts. Reflecting on her trial as one of the Seattle Seven, for

example, she called the court “a movie set,” and noted that the jury regarded her and her fellow defendants as “part of the evidence . . . as they might a pornographic movie” (chapter 15). When she discovered, during the trial, that she was pregnant, her lawyers attempted to dissuade her from having an abortion by limning the image she would create: “It will look good to have you come in, glowing and pregnant, maybe with some knitting” (qtd. in chapter 14), one of them told her. Stern ultimately went ahead with the abortion: this was her life, and her show, and she would control it.

Just as sex for Stern was sometimes a means of aggression, so violence could be a means of female bonding. Her experience is common to many of the women she meets in her affinity group. Affinity groups, writes Stern, were “small groups of people, highly mobile, who could use guerrilla tactics on the streets” (chapter 2); hers was preparing for a violent demonstration in 1969 on University Avenue (“the Ave”) in Seattle: “We wanted to fight. The women had waited for a chance to assert leadership all summer; the Ave riots provided the opportunity” (chapter 5). Her collective saw the protests, which lasted for three days, as a great success: not only were they disruptive to the status quo, but they were also evidence of the strength of female leadership and of the women’s physical courage. More important, in Stern’s view, was their effect on the women of the group: “The major thing that came out of the Ave riots was a heavy corps of street-fighting women. The nights of rioting and fighting together had made bonds among the women that years of talking had not done . . . Nothing but action, running in the streets, actually fighting with the pigs could have released such a pent-up force. We were tasting the macho strength that characterizes men, but we felt it keenly as women. Eyes glowing, we looked at each other warmly. Like a sweet perfume in the air we breathed in our first scent of sister-love” (chapter 5).

The sister-love came about through their shared experience of violence: this was a far from gentle vision of sisterhood, though one embraced by a number of feminists on the left. A feminist journal of the time, *Dragon*, published instructions on making pipe bombs,¹⁶ and produced a special issue on “Women and Armed Struggle”; around the same time, the authors of *The Woman’s Gun Pamphlet* expressed

the hope that “G.C.R. (Gun Consciousness Raising) groups will spring up all over.” Armed women, they wrote, could empower women to “escape from ties with men and male institutions . . . men are afraid of women and a woman with a gun in her hand is indeed a wonderful fright.”¹⁷ The debates on whether feminists should engage in violence, or whether women were inherently nonviolent and thus superior to men, raged throughout the late 1960s and 1970s.

While Stern’s attitudes toward violence and sexuality are striking, her memoir offers much more than her revisionist take on feminism. As her editor noted when he was in the process of acquiring her manuscript, “No one who ‘ran with the Weathermen’ has ever written a book, and so Susan Stern’s will be the first inside look at what was surely the most amazing radical group in America in decades.” What attracted him to the work was the way “she gives a picture of life inside the Weatherman collective that makes you think of Orwell and of [Arthur Koestler’s] *Darkness at Noon*—the ‘stalinoid’ stress on thought-reform, the tyranny of double-think.”¹⁸ The practices that horrified him included the criticism/self-criticism sessions that lasted for hours and were designed to break down collective members’ defenses—their very personalities, in fact—and remake them in a revolutionary mold. As Stern wrote,

The key to the hours of criticism was struggle. Struggle was the only way to produce change; change was growth. To purge ourselves of the taint of some twenty-odd years of American indoctrination, we had to tear ourselves apart mentally.

With an enthusiasm born of total commitment, we began the impossible task of overhauling our brains. Out all the garbage our parents and schools taught us—in all the wisdom of Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Che Guevara—OVERHAUL! That’s what we attempted to do in a few short weeks. Turn ourselves inside out and start all over again. Fearless and unmindful of the dangers involved, we plunged into the process. (chapter 6)

This process of self-destruction and self-creation, and the relentless self-examination it demanded, made Stern’s autobiographical

voice more self-critical than most, and in ways that sometimes made reviewers uncomfortable. She was always willing, and even eager, to acknowledge the more personal, less political motives for her actions, in much the same way that members of the collective had.

RADICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Susan Stern's autobiography falls uncomfortably between genres. In it, Stern refuses to employ what Irene Gammel calls the "confessional form" of women's autobiography—the frames and practices that, as Gammel puts it, "systematically foreground and reproduce victims."¹⁹ Yet even as Stern refuses to be a victim (or a victimized former revolutionary), she also declines to present herself as a committed unambivalent revolutionary.

Stern's book was published during a period in which several high-profile women radicals were issuing autobiographies, including Angela Davis, who published her memoir shortly after her acquittal on charges of kidnapping, conspiracy, and murder in the attempted release of black activist George Jackson.

Like Stern, Davis belonged to an unpopular political group—in her case, the Communist Party U.S.A., an organization that had historical resonance for many readers of her autobiography but by the 1970s was completely irrelevant. In other contexts, Angela Davis did not shy away from incendiary remarks. In one interview from the 1970s, she explained that "for the black female, the solution is not to become less aggressive, not to lay down the gun, but to learn how to set the sights correctly, aim accurately, squeeze rather than jerk and not to be overcome by the damage. We have to learn how to rejoice when pigs' blood is spilled."²⁰ However, in her autobiography she presented herself as a disciplined, intellectual revolutionary, far from "rejoicing" at the sight of spilled blood. In fact, her autobiography was a book appealing enough (in both senses of the word) to mainstream audiences to be selected for the Book-of-the-Month Club. Davis kept the focus of her book on political events and largely eschewed a personal tone. Rather than end with a reflection on her life, she concluded her autobiography with a list of U.S. political prisoners and the exhortation that "across this country, there are

hundreds and thousands more like Reverend [Benjamin F.] Chavis, Donald Smith and Marie Hill. We—you and I—are their only hope for freedom.”²¹ She insisted that her experience as a political prisoner was only one among many: in her autobiography, she was not interested in herself as self, but rather as political example. Moreover, she steered clear of criticizing any of her political comrades.

Stern, on the other hand, aired a great deal of dirty laundry in her memoir, and was as unsparing of herself as she was of others. It is instructive to compare Stern’s treatment of her Weather experience with that of Weather leader Bill Ayers, who in 2001 published his memoir, *Fugitive Days*, about his time in Weatherman and the Weather Underground. While Stern never steered clear of chastising herself or Weatherman, Ayers presented an uncritical view of the group and glossed over acts of violence (many of the most dramatic of which took place only after Stern left the group). In Ayers’s book—perhaps because of the legal issues involved—he places a great deal of emphasis on the fragility of memory and is coy about specifics. After each of the Weatherman’s most controversial acts, he recalls a chance encounter with ordinary citizens who support what he is doing: in the case of the Days of Rage, he flees the police only to be rescued by a homeless man, Brother Red, who takes him to the hobo encampment and nurses him and a couple of Weather companions through the night. “At dawn, Brother Red told us we looked to him like angels now, glorified and risen up. You’ve been severely tested, he said, in a preacherly voice, and found worthy.”²² Similarly, Ayers reports that once his working-class landlord hears a radio report of a WUO plot to bomb the Pentagon he spontaneously compares the action to the Boston Tea Party.²³

Ayers’s autobiography, written decades after the events he describes, is suffused in nostalgia; Stern’s is immediate and unsentimental. Yet it clearly bears the mark of one of the most notable features of the Weatherman experience: those endless criticism/self-criticism sessions that took place in Weather collectives, and the notion that it was necessary for true revolutionaries to remake themselves in order to better serve the revolution. If this practice was, as Stern wrote, personally destructive, it perhaps helped her to produce

an autobiography in the classic American vein. Ironically enough, the tradition of the self-made man—exemplified first and most famously by Benjamin Franklin, whose autobiography detailed the steps he took to most perfectly perform the role of the successful individual, and echoed by hundreds of years of autobiographical tradition, on through Lee Iacocca—found full flower in Susan Stern.

In *With the Weathermen*, Stern presents herself in each new incarnation as having been a tabula rasa, reinscribed continuously and very deliberately with the marks of her new identity:

Now, for the first time in my life I had something to talk about, and people listened to me, especially women. I studied their reactions. I found that if I talked a certain way, and smiled a lot, and looked straight at them when I talked, that they listened better. I found it was best to talk very firmly and without hesitation, as if I was an authority on the subject . . . I talked incessantly. And as I talked, I grew. And as I grew, I thought more. And as I thought more, I read more widely. As I read more widely, I felt a new sense of pride which quickened my step, raised my head firmly in the air, and gave my voice a resonance and force that had never been there before. I bought a new pair of glasses, with thin gold rims, round and tinted pink, and I began using make-up again. Off came the sloppy jeans and on went the miniskirt and knee-high boots, and I developed my Style. Zip, zap, I was a new Susan Stern, and, honey, when I walked, I threw back my head and moved with determination. People moved out of my way as I strode through them. When I entered a room, I did so with a flourish, and people looked at me, and God damn it, when I talked, they listened, finally they listened. (chapter 1)

In this passage, Stern makes clear how studied her transformation was, how carefully she gauged not only her own performance but also the reactions of her audience to the way she presented herself. Stern's self-conscious fashioning of a new identity, her focus on everything from her posture and the way she carried herself to her clothing—her determination to shed what she saw as the uniform of

the women's movement—is only the first of many transformations she undergoes in the course of the book.

Yet her real “birth,” as she terms it, comes not in this extended performance of her new self, but in the first moment of rage that she fully expresses, in the aftermath of the SDS men's resistance to the women's focus on women's liberation. At a meeting on women's liberation, a topic the SDS men dismiss as trivial in comparison to racism or war, Stern, as chairwoman, “dressed to the teeth for the occasion and flying on speed,” begins to speak: “I put my hopeless marriage and its demise on a silver platter and danced around and around with it.” When her husband attempts to interrupt, she shouts him down: “backed by three years of bitterness and frustration I screamed ‘Fuck you—sit down and shut up, it's my turn now.’ He sat down stunned, and I felt a surge of power in my body that I had never felt before. And that was the very first moment of my life!” (chapter 1). For Stern, the ability to understand and represent her personal experience in the context of a larger political truth is deeply empowering—and her propulsive rage is the quality that makes her understanding, and the transformation it leads her to, possible.

Her next epiphany comes during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968. Against the backdrop of police and protester violence, surrounded by cops with clubs, rifles, and gas masks, and jeeps festooned with barbed wire to protect their drivers against attack, she lies on a blanket, recovering from a strained ligament she got while marching, and has a revelation:

I lay down shuddering on a piece of blanket, and looked at the clouds gauzy in the blue sky. I thought about bullets ripping through flesh, about napalmed babies. I thought about Malcolm X and lynching and American Indians. Lying there, sweating from doses of speed and terror, I thought about Auschwitz, and mountains of corpses piled high in the deep pits dug by German Nazis. I closed my eyes tightly, but tears oozed from under my lids and rolled off my face.

A new feeling was struggling to be born in me. It had no name, but it made me want to reach beyond myself to others who were

suffering. I felt real, as if suddenly I had found out something true about myself; that I was not helpless, that life meant enough to me to struggle for it, to take chances with it, to thrust out and wrestle with it. I thought about all the years I had been strangling my misery as I turned the other cheek. Now it would be different; now I would fight. (chapter 2)

Her anger and sorrow at the injustices of history propels her forward, in this case, into a more personal epiphany. In deciding to fight for the powerless, she is able to become more powerful herself. Yet even in this moment, she refuses to present her revelation as unadulterated analysis: these visions, she remarks, and the profound resolutions they inspired in her, were obtained while she was “sweating from doses of speed and terror.”

Her personal rage, her individual self-fashioning, will not be enough: she needs the connection to the past and the future to sustain her. Like fellow Weatherman David Gilbert, who first recalled being sensitized to injustice through learning about the Holocaust,²⁴ Stern also connects to her Jewish identity. In fact, her disconnection from her father, from whom she is estranged, is based in part on his inability to find a way out of racism through his Jewish identity: “Thinking Jewish made me think about my father and my childhood. I suddenly understood that I resented my father not only because he had tormented me for the first twenty years of my life, but because he was a capitalist, and he was very prejudiced. I don’t know what he really learned from the massacre of six million Jewish human beings in Germany. He hated any other color, but even if you passed the color test, he certainly hated all other religions” (chapter 8).

Her background is the reason movement leader Mark Rudd, “somewhat like a king talking to a peon,” dismisses her: “There was no way to escape the fact that I was white, female, from a wealthy family, Jewish, had been married, was well educated, had been a ghetto schoolteacher, etc.,” she wrote in a letter. “The obvious reaction to Rudd’s contempt for me never crossed my mind; he was from a similar background” (chapter 2). However, she herself soon feels that the background which once defined her choices is a distant

memory, having nothing to do with her current identity: “Careening from meeting to meeting, from demonstration to demonstration, from man to man, I wondered how I had lived a middle-class existence for so long. I knew that that part of my life was over. I would never again know how to be or want to be Susan Stern—student, housewife, potential mother” (chapter 3).

Stern thus experienced her personal journey as a form of loss. Distancing herself from her past, she loses the ability to inhabit her former self; she no longer knows how to be the Susan Stern she once was. Her revolutionary transformation leads to a kind of personal amnesia, and then finally to an obliteration of her physical past:

I sat out in front of Sundance and tore up my life. All the photos of my youth taken out of my album, one by one, tore up and into a big garbage can. Then my scrapbooks. Then all the poetry I’d written, notebooks filled with the odyssey of my adolescence, with the panic scribbles of those endless, sleepless nights of my youth. . . . Love trinkets, old letters, all traces of Susan Harris Stern shredded and into a foul garbage can.

Joe sat beside me the entire time, begging me to save some of it, telling me there would come a time when I would want it all. But he didn’t know that I was about to jump off, make a clean break, split. Soon there would be no more Susan Stern. She would be dead, and the person she had been would have another face, another color hair, another name, another past. She would invent it, build it, engineer it to be exactly what she wanted it to be, what she had never been. A past of fiction, a life of science fiction. Susan Stern Sham would end finally, finally she would end. (chapter 13)

This, then, is a form of revolutionary suicide, a willful self-immolation. Even though she speaks of inventing a new self, of rising from the ashes of her former life like a resplendent phoenix, what the reader is finally left with is not a triumphant rebirth, but a deliberate erasure of self. Unlike the old self (“Susan Stern Sham”) this newly engineered self would supposedly be authentic.

Yet in the end she could not fully eradicate herself, could not subordinate personal relationships in the way that Weatherman insisted was necessary in order to be an effective revolutionary. Her libido, she felt, was one of the factors that distracted her from her political goals. As she told one interviewer about her decision to go underground and why it failed, 'I went off with a shotgun, two handguns and a coffee pot in one valise, but I was the only one without a man. I didn't want to share. After three weeks I surfaced, sex-starved. That's why I am such a poor revolutionary and such a poor Weatherman.'²⁵ Although she frames her failure in terms of sexual starvation, it's clear that she could have had all the sex she wanted, if only she had been willing to have that sex in the way the organization deemed appropriate, by "smashing monogamy." The fact that she didn't, that the props of coffee pot and weaponry were not enough to enable her to play the role she had accepted, suggests that she was unsuccessful in her attempt at self-erasure. And, of course, the very act of writing and publishing an autobiography is an assertion that contradicts the self-negation for which she strove: every autobiography is a survivor's story.

With all the changes in identity that Stern underwent and detailed in her memoir, she sometimes seemed difficult to pin down. Perhaps the clearest self-portrait she produced was her memoir, but it is possible that another image she created of herself was just as memorable, just as controversial, and, in a certain way, just as true.

In 1970, shortly before Stern made her preparations to go underground, she and a female friend painted a mural on the wall of their collective house, while tripping on acid:

I noticed some oil paints and paintbrushes scattered on a table, and decided that what that living room needed was a symbol of liberated womanhood. Together, the other woman and I painted an eight-foot-tall nude woman with flowing green-blond hair, and a burning American flag coming out of her cunt! One graceful arm was raised in a fist; the other held a shotgun. Her breast was crisscrossed with a bandoleer. A caption beneath her said LONG LICKS OF LUST!

It was the first thing you saw when you entered the Sundance house. It dumfounded the Ithaca men, and infuriated all the radical women. No one could understand exactly what I had tried to represent. Perhaps in my acid frenzy I had painted what I wanted to be somewhere deep in my mind; tall and blond, nude and armed, consuming—or discharging—a burning America. (chapter 13)

Was this blonde woman posed as Miss America, with a bandoleer replacing her sash, a rifle her bouquet, and a raised fist her wave to the adoring crowd? Or was this the statue of liberty, carrying a gun as torch? Her height suggested overwhelming power, and her hair was green as well as blonde: this vision was both dream and nightmare. This aggressively sexual, violent woman who threatened to consume a country in flames was simultaneously a vision of a woman giving birth to a new nation. This vision of both nationhood and destruction, of maternity and erotic horror (the vagina dentata), psychedelically inspired and painted as home décor, offered Stern's housemates her vision of the revolutionary American woman, circa 1973.

COMPOSITION AND CRITIQUE

However spontaneous and outrageous *With the Weathermen* might seem, it was a carefully crafted, thoroughly researched literary document. Susan Stern began writing her memoirs while in jail serving time for contempt of court in the Seattle Seven trial. She described her writing process to her mother in a letter: "first I write in the morning, then I read (I am reading the classics, with female protagonists to help me with one of the chapters in my book; Tolstoy, thackery [*sic*], hardy, nabokov, lewis) . . . sleep until one-thirty when we are unlocked again; then I type until four on my book." Stern, who originally envisioned the memoir as covering not just her time in Seattle, but also her marriage to Robby Stern, a year spent in New York, and her work at Columbia SDS, had high hopes for the book: "if it is actually published, it will be the first chronical [*sic*] in America of a white American woman and her political experiences—for that reason, I expect to have little difficulty publishing it."²⁶

Stern's papers reveal that she did a great deal of revision as she wrote the work, first in response to the queries of her agent, David Obst (whose long list of editorial suggestions included such things as "Expand on your head trip at the time") and then in response to the urgings of her Doubleday editor, Tom Congdon, who wrote in an internal memo to a senior editor that her manuscript was "damned good—but so raw a mess of badly-typed single-spaced raw material that I could not bring myself to ask you to read it." As Congdon wrote, he was having her revise the work so that "the book itself will be lively but less ideological, with all the emphasis on story-telling. I think I can get the stories out of her without the aid of a ghost-writer. She's willing and works hard, and catches on quickly."²⁷

It is clear that Stern did a great deal of work to confirm and supplement her recollections. As she described the process to an interviewer,

The majority of the book was set down from memory . . . but then because I realized there had to be some kind of reality to it, I did six months of research in New York, San Francisco and here in Seattle.

I went to ex-Weathermen who had kept things like leaflets and newspapers. They were very helpful then, but none of them like the book now. I actually did interviews. I interviewed ex-Weathermen, people who had been friendly with Weathermen, people in RYM II [Radical Youth Movement II, a rival group resulting from the split in SDS that launched Weatherman], altogether I did 30 or 40 interviews. I also read all the literature I could get my hands on about that time. I read the two books out on Weatherman and biographies, like that dreadful biography of Diana Oughton.²⁸ I even read *The Strawberry Statement*, you know, "We ain't marchin' anymore." All that helped a great deal.²⁹

However, Stern's attempts at total honesty ran into legal problems. "Dear Susan," began one letter from Stern's editor at Doubleday, "I'm attaching herewith the eleven page libel report from the Doubleday lawyers." As one of the lawyers for the press wrote in a letter to the contracts manager there, "The book itself, to put matters in

context, is one big libel problem. Its narrative focuses on ‘revolutionary’ activities—destruction of property, physical assault of police—that are at worst criminal and at best obnoxious to current standards of society. The woof to this warp is the continuous description of a lifestyle shared by all the major characters that includes drug taking, extramarital sex, bomb making, thievery, arrests and terms in jail. Each statement that related an identifiable living person to one of these activities is libelous.”³⁰ Indeed, three of the principal characters depicted in Stern’s book threatened legal action.

Contributing to the controversy engendered by Stern’s book and her tendency to make provocative comments was the promotional campaign launched by her press to accompany the book’s release—one that situated Stern as a generational spokeswoman. Doubleday’s publicity release was headed by three photos of Stern, which were also used to illustrate the book: her formal wedding portrait, a shot of her being led away in handcuffs, and a picture of a smiling, long-haired Stern in a moment of repose. “THESE ARE THE FACES OF SUSAN STERN,” read the caption. “Ten years have elapsed since Bradford Bachrach took this glowing photo of Stern on her wedding day. During those ten years not only the face of Susan Stern but the faces of thousands of America’s young people have undergone many changes. And so have their hearts and minds.”

The transformation of young women from debutantes and brides to wild-eyed, promiscuous revolutionaries was very much in the public consciousness in July 1975, just two months before the capture of heiress-turned-kidnap victim-turned bank-robbing revolutionary Patty Hearst. Appealing to those outside of revolutionary movements and those baffled by them (“Susan Stern tells it like it was for her and for many of the other kids who joined the movement in search of a better world and who were cruelly hurt by the experience, hurt and disillusioned”) the release also stressed the feminist aspects of Stern’s journey: “It will shock many to learn that male chauvenism [*sic*] was as prevalent in the movement as it was in the world outside. Women were cast in traditional roles, brewing coffee, sharpening pencils, making love (or just ‘making out’) with the movement men who were also the leaders and policy makers.

Only when it came to standing on the barricades and going to jail . . . were women considered equals.”³¹ By casting Stern’s journey as a feminist and revolutionary odyssey, the press opened the door to a barrage of reviews attacking Stern for the quality of her feminism and the nature of her revolutionary activities—and the connection between these two causes.

Although Doubleday may have highlighted the provocative aspects of Stern’s book in its publicity campaign, Stern herself added to the controversy. She told Doubleday that she “would welcome all appearances and interviews,”³² and made outrageous comments whenever she had an opportunity. When she appeared on the *Seattle Today* show, viewer comment ranged from disgust (“Susan Stern is a horrible person! It’s good you had her on because she is an advocate of all that we real American’s [*sic*] are against”; “I never heard so much crap on this show before! That woman should be locked up”) to guarded interest (“How do I get in touch with Susan Stern?”; “What’s the name of Susan Stern’s book?”)³³

Reviews of *With the Weathermen* were decidedly mixed. Some reviewers praised Stern’s “unblinking clarity,” lauded the autobiography as “an honest, painful portrait and not a work of sensationalism,”³⁴ and admired *With the Weathermen* as “a most absorbing and interesting book about radical youth by one of the most dedicated of them.”³⁵ *People* magazine declared it one of six books readers should take on summer vacation. However, Stern herself pointed out in an interview that the attention her book was getting was comparable to another famous female outlaw of the time: “It’s like all the publicity surrounding Patty Hearst . . . *Time* and *Newsweek* probably kept breaking sales records as long as they kept Patty Hearst’s picture on the cover. People are bored, and they’re fascinated by sensation and romance.”³⁶

Yet how reviewers felt about the work seemed, in large part, to depend on how they felt about radical youth in general, and about Weather in particular—and these were subjects on which few reviewers were neutral. Daily newspaper reviews tended to be written by those who had nothing but disdain for leftist youth movements. The *Columbus (Ohio) Evening Dispatch* summarized Stern’s

life contemptuously: “born Harris in 1943 of prosperous Brooklyn parents later divorced, attended Syracuse University, had one abortion before marriage in 1965, divorced in 1970 with a second abortion, became an activist revolutionary after SDS membership and thereafter eagerly joined any demonstration anywhere for any cause whatever.” This description, with its focus on her prosperous upbringing, premarital sex, abortion, and divorce, paints Stern’s politics as symptomatic of her personal pathology and the cultural breakdown it seems to embody. In this description, Stern’s politics are beneath contempt, merely another outgrowth of her criminal tendencies: “She cheerfully admits gross shoplifting, extensive supermarket thievery, check and credit card forgery, persistent and recurrent addiction to drugs: a cavalcade of sickness, foolishness, amorality and utter irresponsibility.”³⁷

By describing her revolutionary activities as a personal existential quest, rather than a sober process of political awakening, and by foregrounding the “thrills” that she experienced, Stern offered ammunition to critics on both the right and the left. However, she also offered a personal truth that was shared by many during that period. The enormous popularity of Arthur Penn’s 1967 biopic *Bonnie and Clyde*, which presented the couple as romantic desperadoes, popularized the image of the sexy, existential outlaw. What surprised many older leftists of the period, including those who remembered the 1930s gangster couple as violent psychopaths, was the way in which this image would be linked, most famously by the Weathermen, to revolutionary politics, so that engaging in mindless violence, wearing cool clothes, and embracing a hedonistic lifestyle could be defined as political activities. Susan Stern’s revolution seemed above all to be about her existential experience: as she confessed, even if she had been aware of her shortcomings as a political thinker and activist, she wouldn’t have let this knowledge dissuade her from her life as a revolutionary.

Unlike other former revolutionaries (such as the ex-Communists whose self-abasing memoirs flooded the publishing market in the 1950s), she tries to hold fast to her ideals, and faults herself and her fellow revolutionaries for failing to live up to them satisfactorily. When

she took herself to task for being insufficiently knowledgeable about the causes she championed, or interrogated her own need for fame and attention, and when she reflected honestly about her work as a go-go dancer and her consumption of massive amounts of drugs, she gave ammunition to critics who were only too eager to trash her as a spoiled brat on a criminal rampage. In a sense, her autobiography was a neo-conservative's dream: she seemed like a poster child for what was wrong with youth. As Peter Prescott sniffed in *Newsweek*, "Dragging a man to her mattress every night became as imperative as ending the war in Vietnam, as offing honky pigs."³⁸

Stern's book appeared at a time when there were several high-profile radicals who came from privileged Jewish backgrounds. Thus, reviews in the popular press were often tinged with anti-Semitism. Several reviews took the tone of the *California Canyon Crier*, which explained that "Once a Jewish princess, Stern became a terrorist."³⁹ Jewish publications, on the other hand, tended to place Stern's narrative in the context of questions about Jewish political identity, wondering, for example, whether her behavior was motivated by her reaction to ethnic slurs: What did Stern's activism express, asked the *Women's American ORT Reporter*? "Was it perhaps a desire to dispel the 'Pampered Princess' myth?"⁴⁰

Yet even as conservative book reviewers dismissed Stern for her class privilege and her criminality, feminist critics and critics on the left attacked her as an example of the macho politics they detested. Within the community of Weather Underground members and sympathizers, the reaction to Stern's book was one of dismay. On the eve of Stern's cross-country publicity tour to promote her book, the Mother Jones Brigade of Seattle released a two-page manifesto and asked sympathetic media to reprint it in its entirety. In it, the group complained that "we have enough garbage to deal with from the pigs without having to answer this bullshit from our supposed sister."⁴¹ A review in the magazine *Win* written by some of Stern's former associates identified Stern's account as a naïve and treasonous work:

The effect this [portrayal] has on anyone who has had no contact with the left is to make us seem insane, pop star adventurers, self

indulgent children of the middle class. To place revolution far from the lives of the majority of people is one of the betrayals of this book. It is no accident that *The New York Times Book Review*, *Newsweek*, and *People* magazine have given the book a lot of coverage—because it fits right into their strategy of counter insurgency: to attack us from within, to trivialize the sources of struggle, to undermine the integrity of our lives.⁴²

These critics were doubtless responding to Stern's characterization of her comrades as "Stalinoids," "Mansonites," and "automatons, unthinking tools parroting the Weatherman line."

Indeed, on her publicity tour for the book Stern often made statements that were bound to infuriate left-wing critics. In one San Francisco newspaper profile she called herself a "tireder, older and wiser revolutionary," and was, as the journalist pointed out, "quick to acknowledge that drugs and sex first attracted her to the movement" and that "lack of a bed partner nipped her underground life."⁴³

Despite—or because of—the contradictory identity Susan Stern expressed in her mural and her memoir, *With the Weathermen* is a book that still demands to be read, as gripping narrative, as (debat-ably) feminist odyssey, and as political bildungsroman. Stern's painful honesty may make a reader wince, at times, as it did reviewers when it first appeared, but it is an invaluable addition to the canon of political memoir, of 1970s cultural documents, and of American autobiography.

Despite the stir it caused when it first appeared, *With the Weathermen* was never reprinted—this volume presents in its entirety the text of the Doubleday edition. Susan Stern died at thirty-three, on July 31, 1976, of cardiac arrest. Her death certificate noted that the heart attack occurred after she "took [a] sauna after drug & alcohol ingestion."⁴⁴ Although she did not die immediately, she suffered irreversible brain damage and her family discontinued the use of her respirator after a week. Although Universal Pictures optioned the book for a movie, and Berkeley purchased the paperback rights, neither of these plans came to fruition. It is quite possible that without

Stern's nearly inexhaustible energy—and without her dramatic presence—to keep these projects afloat both the studio and the publishing house lost momentum. In any event, Stern's controversial and incendiary memoir sank into obscurity.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Mary Antin's classic autobiography, *The Promised Land* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1912).
2. Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954–63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 763.
3. Lance Hill, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 2.
4. David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993), 122.
5. *The Black Panther*, April 25, 1970. Reprinted in *The Black Panther Speaks*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1970), 19.
6. Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?: Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review, 1967).
7. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; New York: Grove, 1968), 40.
8. *Ibid.*, 95.
9. Kathy Boudin, Bernardine Dohrn, and Terry Robbins, "Bringing the War Back Home: Less Talk, More National Action," in *Weatherman*, ed. Harold Jacobs (Berkeley: Ramparts, 1970), 177.
10. Mark Rudd and Terry Robbins, "Bring the War Home," *New Left Notes*, July 23, 1969, quoted in Jacobs, *The Way the Wind Blew*, 32.
11. Quoted in *ibid.*, 43.
12. "Honky Tonk Women" reprinted in Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman*, 319.
13. Robin Morgan, *Goodbye to All That* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Know, Inc., 1971), 2.
14. See Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000), 144–148.
15. Sara M. Evans, "The Rebirth of Feminism," in *Long Time Gone: Sixties America Then and Now*, ed. Alexander Bloom (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 198.
16. *Dragon 1* (August 1975), Bay Area Research Collective, 22.
17. Women's Press Collective, *The Woman's Gun Pamphlet*, 1, 2, 4.
18. Memo from Tom Congdon to (recipient whited out), February 7, 1973, Stern archives.
19. Irene Gammel, ed., *Confessional Politics: Women's Sexual Self-Representation*

in *Life Writing and Popular Media* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 8.

20. Reprinted in M. F. Beal and Friends, *Safe House: A Casebook Study of Revolutionary Feminism in the 1970's* (Eugene, Ore.: Northwest Matrix, 1976), 130.

21. Angela Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1974), 399.

22. Bill Ayers, *Fugitive Days: A Memoir* (Boston: Beacon, 2001), 175.

23. *Ibid.*, 262.

24. Varon, *Bringing the War Back Home*, 29.

25. Mildred Hamilton, "An Old Rebel Finds a New Way," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 14, 1975, 2, "Scene" section.

26. Susan Stern to Bunny Raymond, letter dated April 15, 1972, Stern archives.

27. Memo from Tom Congdon to (recipient whited out), February 7, 1973, Stern archives.

28. Harold Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman* (Berkeley: Ramparts, 1970). This was a compilation of documents issued by and about the organization. Among the other publications available on Weatherman at the time of Stern's interview were Worker-Student Alliance (U.S.); New England Free Press; Weatherman (Organization), *Documents on SDS and the Split* (Boston: New England Free Press, 1969); Bruce Franklin, *The Lumpenproletariat and the Revolutionary Youth Movement* (Boston: New England Free Press, 1970). Stern would undoubtedly have been outraged by a book that came out shortly after her own: Larry Grathwohl and Frank Reagan, *Bringing Down America: An FBI Informer with the Weathermen* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1976). It is unsurprising that Stern hated Thomas Powers's, *Diana: The Making of a Terrorist* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971). As the title suggests, Powers did not admire Weatherman's revolutionary commitment. Moreover, Stern would hardly have agreed with Powers's assessment that "most women in the movement were touchy to the point of hysteria about their dignity" (79).

29. Walt Shepperd, "Weatherman to Waitress," *Berkeley Barb*, August 8–14, 1975, 12. *The Strawberry Statement: Notes of a College Revolutionary*, by James Kunen (New York: Random House, 1969), was a tremendously popular account by one of the leaders of the Columbia University student protests.

30. Letter from Satterlee & Stephens, lawyers, to Kenneth William Lang, August 7, 1974, Stern archives.

31. "News from Doubleday," Publicity Department/Doubleday & Company, undated press release, Stern archives.

32. Doubleday author's questionnaire, March 24, 1973, Stern archives.

33. "Audience Reaction Recap for Tuesday, June 24, 1975," King AM FM TV, related by switchboard operator, Stern archives.

34. *The Booklist*, 5, no. 72 (September 1, 1975): 8.
35. Aaron Michelson, *Best Sellers* 35 (August 1975): 129.
36. Shepperd, "Weatherman to Waitress."
37. Charles M. Cummings. "Lame Apologetics for Radical Youth," *Columbus (Ohio) Evening Dispatch*, July 13, 1975, 11.
38. Peter S. Prescott, "Stormy Weather," *Newsweek* 85 (June 30, 1975): 64.
39. "Among the Publishers with Stephen Ongstreet," *Canyon Crier* (Calif.), undated clipping, Stern archives.
40. Roslyn Lacks, "Again, the 'Jewish Princess,'" *Women's American ORT Reporter* (May–June 1976): 4, 16.
41. Mother Jones Brigade, "Stern's Book Opportunistic," Stern archives.
42. Review of *With the Weathermen*, *Win* 11, no. 34 (October 16, 1975): 21–22.
43. Hamilton, "An Old Rebel Finds a New Way."
44. Death certificate for Susan Stern, State of Washington Department of Health.