

The French strikes of May-June 1968

What happens when a massive work stoppage takes place and capitalism ceases to function? It was for the purpose of answering this question that I undertook a detailed study of the strikes of May-June 1968. I thought that I would encounter a vast revolutionary efflorescence, but a distinction rapidly emerged. Behind the romanticism of the students and apprentice politicians who talked about revolution, there was a massive strike, but one that was above all a passive strike, and very few of those heroic historical deeds that the students invoked in order to situate themselves in the role of October-style leaders actually took place...

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