

Module 05: 1968 — A Generation in Revolt?

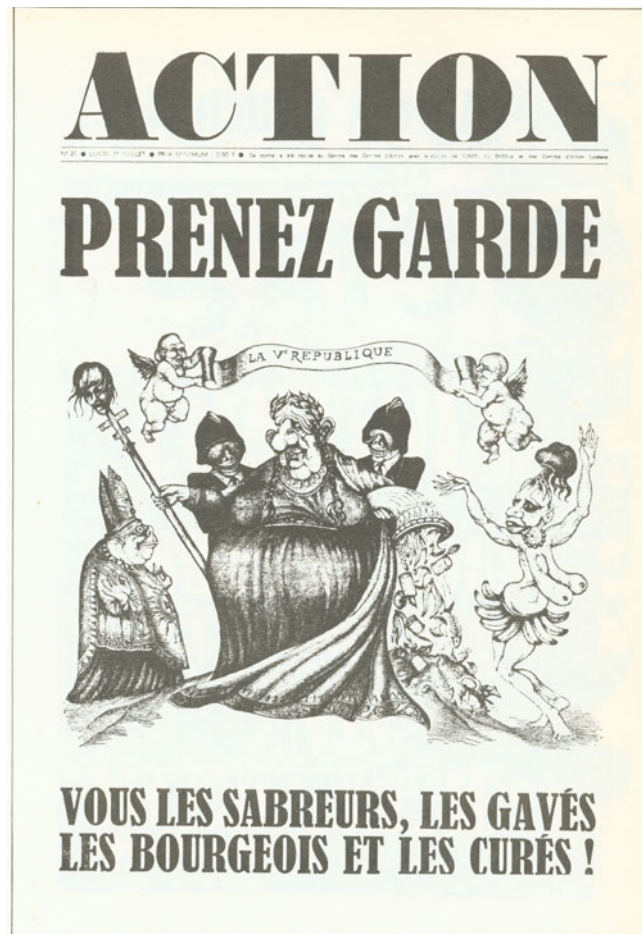
Evidence 12: "On Guard!" Cover of the July 1 Edition of *Action* Magazine



Introduction

Below is the cover to the radical magazine *Action* from July 1, 1968. The political cartoon may be difficult to "read" today, but to French readers in 1968, the symbolism would have been readily apparent. In the illustration, Charles De Gaulle, President of the Fifth Republic, stands in the center, surrounded by the forces of reaction. De Gaulle wears the trappings of an emperor, and the French reader would have immediately made connections between De Gaulle and Napoleon. The critique implied that De Gaulle had usurped the Fifth Republic, or had abandoned democracy in favor of despotism. In his left arm, De Gaulle carries a cornucopia, the traditional symbol of plenty, yet the tipped horn pours out trash. In his right hand, the obese emperor holds a scepter topped by a cross impaling the head of a student. The emperor is surrounded by sycophants who support his waste and murder. To his left, a corpulent priest with the face of a toad blesses De Gaulle; behind stand two police officers with skulls for heads, while on the right, a caricature of Josephine Baker, the famous African American dancer of the 1920s, represents the corruption of the bourgeoisie. Above the scene, two demonic-looking figures hold a banner announcing that the scene below is what the Fifth Republic has become.

Document



Translation:

On Guard! You the Swordsmen, the Pigs, the Bourgeoisie and the Priests!

Source:

Action (1 July 1968).