Radical Play

REVOLUTIONIZING CHILDREN'S TOYS IN 1960s AND 1970s AMERICA

ROB GOLDBERG

RADICAL PLAY

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Cover photograph by the author.

In loving memory of my father,
Edwin Goldberg

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Introduction

Victoria Reiss's home in 1960s New York City was a tolerant one when it came to her sons' play, with one exception: no war toys. To Reiss, a white Barnard College graduate and mother of three boys who was active in New York's peace movement (among other progressive causes), toy machine guns were symbols of war's horrors and little else; if her sons wanted to play war with sticks, that was different. But house rules end at one's doorstep. Reiss could expect the local toy store to stock war toys, but when her family pediatrician did too—a small arsenal in his waiting room, amid the puzzles and dolls—she had had enough. As the escalating US war in Vietnam began to occupy Reiss's attention, she made her private struggle against war toys public. As the cofounder and leader of Parents for Responsibility in the Toy Industry and, later, cofounder of the Public Action Coalition on Toys, Reiss staged pickets against toy guns outside the annual Toy Fair and gave awards to shops that agreed not to stock them. From the doctor's office to the toy industry headquarters, Reiss used toys to raise uncomfortable questions about war's everyday acceptance, not in isolation from the peace movement but as her own contribution to the cause.[1]

Lou Smith, meanwhile, came to toys by way of other movements transforming America in these years: civil rights and Black Power. From the Harlem office of the Congress of Racial Equality, to the Freedom Summer Project in Mississippi, to Los Angeles after the 1965 Watts Rebellion, Smith, who was Black, worked to improve the lives of his fellow Black Americans and overhaul the system that denied them equality. In the late 1960s, Smith was leading Operation Bootstrap, a unique self-help organization in South LA that set up small businesses as training sites for local men and women,

when he went searching for a large corporation to participate in the program. It was the nearby toy manufacturer Mattel, the largest toy company in the world, that answered his call. With Mattel's support, Smith and his colleagues founded Shindana Toys, with Smith as president. Employing the local Black community and putting politics into every phase of the toymaking process, Shindana revolutionized the practices of dollmaking. Thanks to Smith and his colleagues, all activists-turned-toymakers, the popular Black liberation slogan "Black Is Beautiful" would for the first time be translated into the world of children's toys.[2]

As it turns out, second-wave feminism had its toymakers too. In the early 1970s, Barbara Sprung, a white schoolteacher and graduate student at Bank Street College, began a part-time job for the Women's Action Alliance that changed her life and the lives of countless others. The women's movement had begun to challenge the traditional gender and sex norms in the toy business—and Sprung joined them. Bridging the teachings of child development with her existing feminist commitments, Sprung helped found the new field of nonsexist early childhood education and assigned toys a key role in the curriculum. When she couldn't find representational toys that met her socially progressive specifications—women and men in all roles, racial diversity, a variety of family structures—she followed in the footsteps of earlier progressive educators and, with the help of the Milton Bradley Company, made them herself. To Sprung, the prototypes she developed were not just for new toys but prototypes for a new society.[3]

What can these stories tell us about the meanings Americans attached to toys in the 1960s and 1970s? What led Reiss, Smith, Sprung, and other activists across the era's movements against war, racism, and sexism to see toys as useful tools for social change? And, finally, how did the industry make sense of, manage, and participate in this unique moment of consumer dissent and activist toymaking? In answering these questions, *Radical Play* locates a definitive moment in the production of American children's culture when the toy industry was tested, challenged, and ultimately transformed by the progressive social visions of the age. In the years between the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 and the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976, the antiwar, civil rights, and feminist movements brought their political concerns to Toyland, turning toys into vehicles for protest and reform. As the United States escalated the conflict in Vietnam, members of the two leading women's peace groups launched an unprecedented war on war toys. In the years following the April 1968 assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Black Power community organizers and white racial liberals revitalized the Black freedom

tradition of using dolls for racial uplift and anti-racist education. And in the 1970s, white women leaders from the most influential organizations of liberal feminism attacked the toy industry for its rampant stereotyping and exclusions related to gender, race, and family structure. As the examples of Smith and Sprung attest, some of these activists went beyond protesting into the arena of production itself. By the end of the 1970s, the combined efforts of these different advocates for change had both altered what was on retailers' shelves and reshaped the interpretation of toys in American culture.

But they did not accomplish this alone. In fact, no one did more to facilitate these efforts to transform American toys and childhood than the corporate toy industry itself. In the 1960s and 1970s, that industry's leaders were almost entirely white and disproportionately Jewish, as had been the case for decades; indeed, most of the major companies I write about in the following pages were founded or cofounded by Jews and, at least during this era, led by Jewish executives (often one of the founders), including Lionel, Ideal, Fisher-Price, Hasbro, Mattel, Creative Playthings, Kenner, and Remco.[4] In addition, while female executives ran three of the era's leading toy firms—Ruth Handler of Mattel, Lynn Pressman of Pressman Toy Corporation, and Min Horowitz of Gabriel Industries—the toy business as a whole was still largely male; the gendered term *toy man*, long used by and for professionals at all levels of the trade, was still part of industry speak. As I show, these toymakers engaged their era's social movements in diverse ways, using the tools of their trade. Some companies expressed their solidarity with activists' concerns through the creation of new products, like a liberated fashion doll, or by incorporating the language of antiwar or civil rights protest into their advertising. Others held press conferences to share their burgeoning social consciousness and apologize for past practices. One company president even left the industry's powerful trade association in protest of the association's failure to adopt a unified stance against war toys. And in a few remarkable instances, companies initiated and financed partnerships with the activists themselves. Such actions not only transformed their critics into allies, in some cases preemptively, but also empowered them to become toy entrepreneurs themselves. In the process, these toymakers created a new type of dialogue with the society around them and a theoretical win-win situation: an opportunity for producers and protesters alike to each achieve a kind of victory in the toy department. Starting in the 1960s, new groups outside the industry sought the right and the opportunity to participate in the business of children's toys. Through the public contestation and surprising collaborations that ensued, the cultural changes of the 1960s and 1970s took shape in the form of toys.

Toymakers may not have understood or articulated what they were doing as "politics," yet it was. By incorporating messages of peace or racial equality into their latest toys and marketing campaigns, they helped advance the movements' goals of translating the sixties imagination into children's culture.[5] Of course, the opposite was also true: when toymakers ignored the calls to integrate the doll shelves or pushed back against demands to eliminate sexist stereotypes, they were using their power not merely to foreclose that imagination but to preserve the white supremacist, heterosexist vision of society that had long reigned in the toy industry. When a toy salesman reacted to a 1964 public demonstration against war toys with the quip "I wonder what these dames let their boys play with? Dolls?" he was not just making a joke; he was showing his commitment to a traditional conception of white masculine identity development that the substitution of a (boy's) toy gun with a (girl's) doll threatened to disrupt.[6]

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The politicization of play in the 1960s and 1970s rested on a series of new historical developments that redefined the status of children's toys in American life in the decades after World War II. By the time the first major mobilizations around toys erupted in the mid-1960s, American parents faced a fundamentally different and all-encompassing consumer culture of children's toys from what they knew in their own youth. Starting in the 1950s and continuing into the next decade, large-scale structural changes radically changed how the industry did business. Thanks to new mass-production techniques and new and cheaper plastics, as well as the rise of discount stores and the more efficient model of direct distribution they enabled, the toy business could offer a larger volume and variety of toys at historically low prices. Discount stores bought wholesale, cut out the traditional middleman role of the wholesaler (or jobber) in selecting toys, and removed the sales clerks. As prices dropped, these practices also reshaped the landscape of toy shopping. Toy departments of upscale department stores, independently owned toy shops, and variety retailers remained important venues for toy buying, but they also were increasingly displaced by new toy discount mart chains such as Toys "R" Us, founded in 1957.[7]

If these trends built a new suburban consumer landscape of shopping centers and malls, the 1950s toy industry was also now able to reach potential shoppers at home. While radio had been around since the 1930s, the birth of televised advertising took that ability to a whole new level: TV not only allowed manufacturers to reach consumers in the comfort of their living rooms

but also provided an opportunity for them to visually demonstrate a product rather than just telling the family about it. By the early 1960s, when nine out of ten Americans had at least one TV in their home, televised marketing had been adopted by every major manufacturer with dreams of national sales. Moreover, with the advent of children's programming hours on the networks, advertisers could now target children directly, bypassing the mothers who had historically mediated the industry's relationship to the child consumer. This new age of child marketing, combined with the consolidation of an industry establishment made up of highly diversified national corporations hustling brand-name goods, helped create a more uniform consumer culture of play across the country.[8] This uniformity would play a key role in the campaigns against war toys and other controversial items. For one, recognizable brands meant that toy reformers across the country could effectively target particular companies in their protests. Meanwhile, the new level of standardization in what children played with made it possible to imagine a transformation of children's socialization on a national scale.

The child-centered culture of the postwar United States also helped underwrite the politicization of playthings. On one level, this was not entirely new so much as another phase in what historians have shown was a long-standing trend in American family life: the adoption of the normative child-rearing ideals of the educated white middle class. Yet it would be hard to overstate the extent to which the new social conditions of postwar life intensified the child-centeredness of American society, including the extraordinary upturn in the birth rate from roughly 1946 to 1964. Coming less than a decade after the nation had gone from the depths of the century's worst economic slump into a physically and emotionally draining foreign war, the baby boom, writes media scholar Lynn Spigel, "created a nation of children who became a new symbol of hope."[9] "More than ever," historian Howard Chudacoff explains, "parents put children at the center of their culture."[10] Such an approach, of course, was facilitated by the economic prosperity of the 1950s, which was more widely (if not equitably) shared than any other time in the nation's history. If typical Americans exercised their new purchasing power with unprecedented spending on discretionary goods, in the context of child-centered family life, at least, few types of goods were understood to be more worthy of these dollars than toys.

That these developments supplied special fuel for the new toy-industrial complex was not lost on social observers. "Child-centeredness is necessary . . . to our toy economy," wrote anthropologist Jules Henry in his popular 1963 book, *Culture against Man*. "Take away child-centeredness from the toy

business and it would be back in the nineteenth century."[11] With it, the toy economy swelled: between 1951 and 1961, retail toy sales in the United States increased by 120 percent, reaching $1.7 billion.[12] But it was not merely that toys were something fun to buy for the kids, or even something with which to bribe or spoil them. It was also the case that toys moved to the center of the new normative ideal of intensive consumerist child-rearing at a moment when the expanding fields of social and developmental psychology were reshaping how experts and their parent readers thought about what made for a healthy childhood, including what kinds of toys would best support it.

A large part of this was a midcentury shift in the professionals' definition of childhood well-being, as older concerns about physical health in a prevaccine age gave way to a new postscarcity preoccupation with psychological health, cognitive growth, and personality formation. Historian Leila J. Rupp has described the situation well, writing that "the 1950s brought a new emphasis on the quality of child-rearing, including . . . a popularized Freudian notion of the crucial importance of a child's first years, and the emergence of a new corps of child-rearing experts . . . who warned of the dire consequences of anything less than full-time attention from a mother for her children's well-being."[13] Whereas previously only the Freudians looked at early childhood, now virtually all of the human and behavioral sciences turned their attention to the child as a subject of study in the 1950s, especially when it promised to help solve thorny social problems like racial prejudice or the potential for homegrown fascism, as prominent intellectuals like anthropologist Margaret Mead and sociologist David Riesman believed it did.[14] By the early 1960s, the so-called cognitive revolution in psychology would be underway, with sweeping new pronouncements on the importance of the preschool years for all future learning. The new psychology not only popularized developmental theory as never before; it also directly inspired a wave of new federally funded programs as diverse as Head Start (1964) and the pioneering public television show *Sesame Street* (1969).[15]

As for attitudes about play, the emphasis on the first few years of life only added to the heightened anxiety over toy selection that came with so much focus on the child along with the potentially confusing abundance of choices in the aisles.[16] This focus helps explain why Dr. Benjamin Spock, the most famous child-care adviser of the period, devoted three of his magazine columns exclusively to toys in the period 1961–64 alone—this after not a single piece on toys in the previous decade and a relatively short section on the topic in his best-selling *The Commonsense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1946).[17] The noted psychologists Ruth M. Hartley and Robert M. Goldenson likewise left

no question as to the high stakes of toys in their own guidebook, *The Complete Book of Children's Play* (1957): "When we buy toys, we are investing as surely as when we buy stocks, and the commodity we are investing in may be more important than shares in a concern."[18] Such heightened awareness about toys' importance in the lives of children was not lost on the industry. According to a 1964 editorial in the venerable trade magazine *Playthings*, nothing was more crucial to future sales than "awareness of the tremendous increase in the number of college-educated mothers, young women who approach the task of selecting toys for their youngsters in a much more thoughtful and sophisticated manner than was the case with most mothers a generation ago. . . . Many . . . have taken wide-ranging liberal arts, child-psychology, and home economics courses as important parts of their curricula. . . . They're more aware of the function of toys in the development of their children along physical, psychological, and social lines."[19] But perhaps the toymaker A. C. Gilbert Jr., reflecting on the same cultural trend in *Playthings* just a couple of years earlier, said it best: "Who is not toy-conscious today?"[20]

Such toy-consciousness would continue to fuel the industry's remarkable growth, but it also would be responsible for the most embattled decade in the history of the trade. During the 1960s and 1970s, Americans involved in diverse social justice movements, from peace to Black Power to women's liberation, would tap into these new discourses on toys and play as well as older ones. As people engaged in trying to change the world, however, it was in the spirit of their age to ask a very different set of questions from those of mainstream experts: What are these toys teaching the young about the world around them? What are toys teaching them in terms of values to live by? Some looked with fresh eyes at their own kids' playthings. Some studied consumer catalogs and investigated the local toy aisles. Others revisited their own toy memories, recalling how few dolls or promotions featured anyone who looked like them; how it felt to be excluded from the industry's polished image of white American childhood; and how much the toy landscape hadn't changed since. The closer they looked, the more they felt that the only values that the toy industry was communicating were those of the status quo.

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Three goals drive this book. One is to expand our understanding of 1960s and 1970s progressive and radical politics by returning the reform of children's media culture, seen here as a contested process involving a wide range of social, political, cultural, and industry actors, to a more prominent place in the narrative.[21] I see toys as central to a new politicized parenting discourse

of "progressive parenting," an ideology first developed by psychologically oriented activist parents and left-leaning child experts in the 1930s and 1940s that combined the teachings of Sigmund Freud and progressive education with the social justice politics of the Popular Front.[22] Largely relegated to families on the left during the heyday of Popular Front culture, progressive parenting reemerged in the 1960s and 1970s with a new emphasis on bringing the commercialized world of children's popular culture in line with left-liberal values. These projects took a variety of forms, from the advent of watchdog groups such as the Council on Interracial Books for Children and Feminists on Children's Media to the development of innovative multimedia products like the award-winning 1972 record album *Free to Be . . . You and Me*, which was financed by the Ms. Foundation for Women. Together, they revised the fields of children's material and visual culture to be more racially and ethnically diverse; less bounded by conventional gender, sex, and family stereotypes; and consciously committed to fostering understanding and empathy around issues of identity, equality, and justice.[23] As I show, the efforts across different activist communities to transform the world of toys, starting in the early 1960s and reaching its height a decade later, would be a key aspect of this child-centered cultural movement and, arguably, one of the chief factors in propelling the new politics of parenting into the liberal mainstream.

A second goal of the book is to place business and the culture industry at the center of our understanding of the era's familiar cultural upheaval and spirit of dissent.[24] Consumer pressure, public protest, and critical shifts in American attitudes about war, race, and gender during the 1960s and 1970s provoked major changes in the toy industry's relationship to the world outside its institutional walls. One of them was that toymakers were forced to publicly reckon with, perhaps for the first time, their status as entrepreneurs of ideology—as producers of values and not just products. But perhaps the most surprising new development was that the proponents of a more socially conscious toy trade came not only from the ranks of political groups and child advocates but also from within the industry. Manufacturers, advertisers, and industry boosters alike consciously blurred the line between organizing markets and fostering movements. In doing so, they became the willing accomplices to their critics.

Finally, this book makes the claim that toys produced for children not only illustrate cultural change but also help shape it. Accordingly, I treat cultural objects that are often relegated to collectors' guides as historical subjects in their own right. A doll named Barbie has a role in this story, but it is a minor one compared to dolls with less familiar names such as Baby Nancy and Derry

Daring. For decades now, historians of consumer culture have drawn on the work of symbolic anthropologists to study the histories of a variety of cultural things, including toys and other childhood objects, and the different ways people have used them to construct identities and social relations.[25] Taking as a guiding premise Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood's definition of consumption as "the very arena in which culture is fought over and licked into shape," this book aims to underscore the importance of both the fights over meanings and the objects of struggle themselves—the actual shapes into which culture is licked.[26] By analyzing the material culture of toy design alongside other artifacts of promotion and merchandising such as toy packages, I show how the various debates, exchanges, and interactions between pressure groups, manufacturers, marketers, and experts in the 1960s and 1970s remade the forms as well as the meanings of American children's culture.

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"In the postwar years—the nearly two decades between the end of World War II and the assassination of John F. Kennedy—a cluster of powerful conservative norms set the parameters of American culture," writes historian Andrew Hartman.[27] Those norms, which together make up what Hartman has called "normative America," encompassed some of the most enduring ideologies of patriarchy, white supremacy, and heteronormativity: everything from the belief that women should be married and out of the workforce, to a patriotic faith in American exceptionalism, to an idealized projection of the national character that left out its singular racial and ethnic diversity.[28] With Barbie dolls and Burp Guns at the top of its best-seller list on the eve of the sixties, the American mass-market toy industry was essentially in the business of reproducing it all, in miniature. Could the world of toys be not just remade but repurposed for the goals of the 1960s and 1970s left, such as countering pro-military values, dismantling anti-Black racism, promoting a more egalitarian, unisex vision of human potential? At different times and in different ways, activists from across the era's radical cultural and political mobilizations said yes and set to work to transform the business of toys. To their surprise, the toy industry joined them.

Notes

Introduction

1. Victoria Reiss, phone interview by author, October 29, 2008; Richard Reiss, phone interview by author, February 9, 2022.

2. "Interview with Lou Smith."

3. Barbara Sprung, interviews by author, November 24, 2009, November 18, 2010, and March 25, 2022, all in New York, NY.

4. The story of American Jews in the making of the modern toy business, while beyond the scope of this study, deserves a book in itself. In fact, scholars have written about the role of Jews in virtually every major US culture industry except toys, with the notable exception of Gould, "Toys Make a Nation." On the role of Jews in other businesses of American popular culture, see, for example, Karp, "The Roots of Jewish Concentration"; Buhle, *From the Lower East Side to Hollywood*; Hoberman and Shandler, *Entertaining America*; and Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*.

5. My thinking about the toy industry's relationship to social movements owes much to Sasha Torres's analysis of network television and the civil rights struggle in the 1960s. See Torres, *Black, White, and in Color*, 5–6.

6. Salesman quoted in Alben Krebs, "Military Toys Come under Fire," *St. Petersburg Times*, March 11, 1964, 4D.

7. On new toy production methods and materials, see Cross, *Kids' Stuff*, 153. On the impact of the discount stores, see Leonard Sloane, "Discount Stores Broaden Inroads," *NYT*, July 19, 1964, F4; and Tom Mum, "Are the Department Stores Losing Faith?," *PT*, July 1975, 31.

8. On how TV changed the trade, see Henry Orenstein, "How to Sell More TV Toys," *TN*, October 15, 1967, 29; and Stern and Schoenbaum, *Toyland*, 23. On how discount stores and TV affected distribution, see Schneider, *Children's Television*, 45–46. The fact that contemporary observers understood this combination of developments to have dramatically altered the business of toys in a very compressed time span can be seen in "All's Swell at Mattel," *Time*, October 26, 1962, 90.

9. Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 111.

10. Chudacoff, *Children at Play*, 162. On the centrality of children to the postwar middle-class family ideal, see Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, chap. 14; Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, chap. 2; and Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, chap. 9. On the Cold War's influence on American childhood, see Grieve, *Little Cold Warriors*. For an innovative study of children's experiences during the 1960s, see Rhodes, *Growing Up in a Land Called Honalee*.

11. Henry, *Culture against Man*, 75. The toy business was not the only culture industry to reap the benefits of the new obsession with children's emotional health and happiness. The links between postwar childhood and the commercial marketplace are discussed in Mintz, "The Changing Face of Children's Culture."

12. Herbert Brock, "The Beginning of a New Toy Era—Year-Around Sales," *PT*, August 1961, 118.

13. Rupp, "The Survival of American Feminism," 37.

14. On the growing preoccupation among postwar social scientists with the relationship of child-rearing to culture change, see Sammond, *Babes in Tomorrowland*, chap. 4.

15. See Cahan, "Toward a Socially Relevant Science," 28–30; and Beatty, *Preschool Education in America*, 192–94. On the importance of developmental psychology to the Children's Television Workshop, which created *Sesame Street*, see Morrow, *Sesame Street and the Reform of Children's Television*, chap. 2.

16. One might say the cognitive revolution fed and spread the existing middle-class preoccupation with toys that were said to enrich the child's mind. See Ogata, "Creative Playthings"; and Almqvist, "Educational Toys, Creative Toys."

17. Benjamin Spock, "Creative Use of Toys," *Ladies' Home Journal*, December 1961, 36–37; Benjamin Spock, "What Toys Mean to Children," *Redbook*, December 1963, 46–47, 121–22, 124; Benjamin Spock, "Playing with Toy Guns," *Redbook*, November 1964, 24–32.

18. Hartley and Goldenson, *The Complete Book of Children's Play*, 5. On the emergence of a popular preoccupation with developmentally appropriate, educative play in the midcentury decades, see Seiter, *Sold Separately*, 66–74; Ogata, "Creative Playthings"; and Almqvist, "Educational Toys, Creative Toys."

19. "Toys and the Education 'Explosion,'" *PT*, June 1964, 48. In fact, this was the second editorial to focus on the new psychologically savvy, well-educated consumer in the past year. See "What the Public Thinks of Us," *PT*, November 1963, 40.

20. A. C. Gilbert Jr., "Toys as Part of the Booming Leisure-Time Industry," *PT*, December 1962, 120.

21. In thinking about children's media, what it is and what it does, I found Heather Hendershot's exploration of children's television to be essential reading. See Hendershot, *Saturday Morning Censors*.

22. See Mickenberg, "The Pedagogy of the Popular Front."

23. On the Council on Interracial Books for Children, see Mickenberg, *Learning from the Left*, epilogue. On *Free to Be . . . You and Me*, see Paris, "Happily Ever After," 524–26; and Lovett and Rotskoff, *When We Were Free to Be.* Another key contribution to this era's liberal children's media programming was *Sesame Street*, first broadcast on

public television in 1969. See Kamp, *Sunny Days*; Ostrofsky, "Taking *Sesame* to the Streets"; and Morrow, *Sesame Street and the Reform of Children's Television*.

24. For other studies that explore the role of business in the social and cultural revolts of the 1960s and 1970s, see Frank, *The Conquest of Cool*; Weems, *Desegregating the Dollar*; J. Davis, *From Head Shops to Whole Foods*; and Hogan, *The Feminist Bookstore Movement*. On the revitalized progressive movements of the 1960s and 1970s, see Rossinow, *Visions of Progress*; Schulman, *The Seventies*; Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*; Hečlo, "The Sixties' False Dawn"; and Farber, *The Sixties*.

25. Studies in cultural anthropology that have influenced my thinking include Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*; Douglas and Isherwood, *The World of Goods*; and Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. For starting points into the cultural history of toys, see Halliday, *Buy Black*; Brandow-Faller, *Childhood by Design*; Lange, *The Design of Childhood*; Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child*; Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*; Chudacoff, *Children at Play*; Thomas, "Sara Lee"; Jacobson, *Raising Consumers*; Cross, *Cute and the Cool*; Cross, *Kids' Stuff*; Forman-Brunell, *Made to Play House*; Best, "Too Much Fun"; Attfield, "Barbie and Action Man"; Rand, *Barbie's Queer Accessories*; Kline, *Out of the Garden*; Mergen, "Made, Bought, and Stolen"; Mergen, *Play and Playthings*; and McClintock and McClintock, *Toys in America*. Other studies of toys and play that influenced my thinking include Henricks, "The Nature of Play"; Pugh, "Selling Compromise"; Nelson-Rowe, "Ritual, Magic, and Educational Toys"; Seiter, "Toys Are Us"; Sutton-Smith, *Toys as Culture*; Barthes, *Mythologies*, 53–55; and Benjamin, "The Cultural History of Toys." For illuminating studies of other types of children's material culture in the twentieth-century United States, see, for example, Capshaw, *Civil Rights Childhood*; Mickenberg, *Learning from the Left*; and Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood*.

26. Douglas and Isherwood, *The World of Goods*, 57.

27. Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America*, 5.

28. Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America*, 5.

Chapter One. Parenting for Peace

1. *Exhibitors 1946*, 1, directory booklet published by the Toy Center, author's collection.

2. *Exhibitors 1946*, 3. Gary Cross writes that more than three-quarters of the nation's toy companies were leasing a space by the 1960s. See Cross, *Kids' Stuff*, 152.

3. Michael Specter, "Not All Fun and Games at 5th Ave. Toy Center," *NYT*, April 26, 1981, S8, 8.

4. Leonard Sloane, "Visions of Christmas Sales Captivate Toy Buyers," *NYT*, March 10, 1964, 51; "Toy Fair to Open Here Tomorrow," *NYT*, March 8, 1964, F22.

5. "Mothers Picket against Violent Toys," *THW*, April 6, 1964, 1, 3.

6. "Mothers Picket against Violent Toys," 1.

7. Sloane, "Visions of Christmas Sales."

8. My information on WSP's role in the event is from Margaret Kannenstine, phone interview by author, August 25, 2021. Curiously, none of the newspapers and magazines