



IS THIS THE AMERICAN WAY?

The New Americans
#VINCENTVALDEZ??



1968



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2026

The American Way?

Vincent Valdez

In 1968, printmaking students at the Rhode Island School of Design created a series of eight protest posters that were distributed and displayed around college campuses during protests against the Vietnam War.

One poster features a faceless silhouette — a black helmet, gas mask, and sunglasses — and a critical question displayed below: “Is this the American way?”

For many years, I have kept an original copy of this poster in my studio. It always struck me as a critical examination of the violence and brutality unleashed by police on Americans for standing up and speaking out.

I decided to create a visual call-and-response to the question being asked in 1968, “Is this the American way?” Fifty-eight years later, the answer should be clearer than ever. This is the American way.

— V.V.

Suggested reading: Radley Balko, “Rise of the Warrior Cop”

