

The Withering Away of the Revolution

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Chapter 10 of *The Storming of the Mind*

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As promised, no attempt has been made to examine *all* of the causes of the restructuring of consciousness which is taking place. Neither has any attempt been made to examine *all* the ways in which it manifests itself. Such an effort would have to range far beyond the rock phenomenon, the use of psychedelics, the effects of urbanization and mass media and those other few manifestations which have been touched upon here. The effort has been rather to approach a few of these phenomena and reach for the keys to their essential nature; to show, basically, how the doors of perception are being unlocked. We have not yet faced the central question: How can the new consciousness begin its real work of taking power out of the hands of those who are in the process of wrecking our world? There is a very specific deadline involved: the point, likely sometime in the next ten or twenty years, where the statistical probability of extinction will have become a certainty.

To speak of a self-structuring hierarchical jump is to speak of a revolution, a fundamental change in the way our affairs are conducted. Without such a change, the overwhelming likelihood is that we will kill ourselves off. No one suggests that men be put in charge of nuclear reactors who are only capable of "muddling through." Yet exactly such a suggestion is made when it comes to putting people in charge of the dynamic institutions which deter

mine the course of society. The question is not whether a revolution is needed. The question is: How can it succeed? Where are the lines of least resistance? What are the weapons at the disposal of the new consciousness? Are these weapons being picked up? Is some sort of an apocalyptic bloodbath—the "shit storm" foreseen by Norman Mailer—inevitable?

In the past, in virtually every case, it was. Is there any good reason for believing that conditions have changed in some mysterious way? That a true revolution can now be effected without the streets being littered with bodies?

First, in order to get some sort of a perspective, let us consider the odds *against* a successful revolution. So long as we stick to the traditional definition of a revolution, the odds seem formidable, more formidable perhaps than they have ever been in the past. An impression of the sheer power of the existing power structure, particularly in America, might best be conveyed through the lens of personal experience:

PEACE, *NOW!*

PEACE, *NOW!*

PEACE, *NOW!*

It was as though the great buildings around us were hi-fi speakers in the land of the giants with the volume on full. The vibrations beat against the 162-ton Picasso sculpture, reverberating along the Cor-ten weatherproofed steel walls of the 31-storey Chicago Civic Plaza, a sound that had several dimensions: anger, frenzy, fun, frustration, fear, surprise. It was therapeutic, as raw as the first roar of a timid man who has discovered the heroic within his grasp. It was defiant and exultant because the sound was composed of ten thousand voices and each voice suggested the liberation of a ninety-pound weakling who has completed his Charles Atlas course and is now moving with a growl down onto the bully-inhabited beach. And then it was also pure rooting-for-the-home-team stuff, complete with cheerleaders:

What do we want?

PEACE!

When do we want it?

NOW!

And, finally, it was frightening. "PEACE, *NOW!* PEACE, *NOW!*" The sound was blurred, like the noises of waves, and it was easy to close your eyes, let go of the mood for a moment, and hear them chanting, "SIEG *HEIL!* SIEG *HEIL!*" There was that hypnotic rhythm to it, a pace close to that of goose-stepping hordes. This was October 15, 1969, the First Moratorium Day. The word was already out that the United States this day had lurched like an elephant slammed by a hand grenade under the impact of the biggest anti-war demonstration in history. And it was only a month since the Woodstock music festival had gone off like a land mine.

Now the speeches were done with, the Chicago six—looking pale and if not self-conscious, at least a bit uncertain—have been duly honored, every angle has been played except the last: time for a moment's silence for the dead in Vietnam. Heads were bowed. Even the traffic was stilled, the crowd having become so large the streets around the Civic Plaza were sealed off. The swelling silence engulfed the murmuring, and soon we were as quiet as ants, a colony of ants amid a warehouse display of fridge-like buildings and stacks of rusting canned goods; there was even an altar before us—the First Methodist Church, the world's tallest place of worship. The silence soon matched the height of the building. After a few seconds, hands started fluttering up, making the V-sign of peace, a gesture by now as religious as the Catholic sign of the cross. Soon almost all the hands were raised in the V-sign, except for those hands which were black, and all those black hands, thousands, were making the clenched-fist Black Power salute. I saw no black fingers making the peace sign. Something had happened....

The demonstration was over. But the crowd was not quite prepared to dissolve. And now came the cry: OINK! OINK! It was the warning and battle-cry. It meant the riot cops were moving. Over the heads around me, bobbing like bubbles in a stirred-up bathtub, I could see a blue tide coming—a line of robin's egg riot helmets. The warning, almost a wave-action, had passed through me a second before, an impulse transmitted from nerve to nerve, body to body, thus flashing from one end of the plaza to the other, communicating to nearly ten thousand of us in seconds what would have taken several minutes to pass on by word of mouth—a flicker of

tension, excitement and fear. Briefly, my sense of isolation, of self, of individuality, *cracked*. I was a small unit in a larger creature, one spark in the total field laid down by a brain composed of ten thousand such sparks. And the brain is stupid, composed of too few parts—it has not much more going for it than an insect. (No metaphor is intended here—a crowd is a gestalt, and its currents work like magnetism on the ciphers of our "identities," creating whirlpools and floodstreams where none existed before.)

OINK! OINK! screamed thousands of voices.

The effect of the cry was to cauterize some of the automatic fear which had been in the message of a few seconds before. Shout cops and the impulse, maybe nothing more than the Pavlovian reaction of children caught stealing apples, is nevertheless to run. Shout OINK! OINK! and the impulse is to press forward to the edge of the trough. Good mob psychology to change the object of terror into an object of contempt.

The movement of the crowd was like water toward a cliff. The robin's egg helmets might as well have been magnets attracting chips—but of course the police knew this, knew by now after years of riots and demonstrations all about the psychology of mobs. It is a psychology not so different from that of rats or very retarded children. Knowing it, the police had purpose in their movement. They were good cowboys. The round-up began. They were pulling us into a new position, the better to control us.

The round-up was underway. I tried to hang back close to the Picasso sculpture, rising like a giant steel bat over the plaza. Tried to hang back. It didn't work. The surge of the crowd was too strong, and too much of its deep herd impulse had gotten into my head—like a primordial gorilla hand groping for the controls. I did not fight as hard as I might to avoid being carried forward and, first thing I knew, I was right up against the police line.

Easy to imagine that these cops gave off no odor. They were, in fact, as odorless as astronauts or the hostesses at Disneyland and the Playboy Club. The cop in front of me, looking by chance into my eyes no more curiously than you would look into the eyes of a passing dog, seemed like a steel robot, a big one, wearing a rubber mask over a transistorized brain. His truncheon was at least two and a half feet long. When the walkie-talkie order hit that transistor of his, he would bash my face in as automatically as an electronic door opening to let customers into a supermarket.

Now I could see the purpose to the movement of the police. They had taken up positions at one end of the glass-walled civic plaza, and the reaction of the crowd was not, after all, so unanimous. Only a fragment—the most hopped-up elements—had been drawn out, or, more precisely, *extracted*. So this was a dental operation. The police knew now where the trouble would come from. By their carefully-drilled movements, they had isolated the militants from their buffer of tax-paying citizens. These Chicago police were a good modern army. Beyond doubt their choreographer was sitting up in one of the skyscrapers, directing the performance like a man cutting a cake with sure strokes of his blue-edged knife.

And the crowd—the crowd was still a dull-witted gestalt. Part puppy-dog, part wolf. But in the end, manageable, more manageable than a baby. The police, having drawn the most dangerous

part of it into position, (having snagged the fangs) now kept it on the line like a fisherman jerking his line to make sure the hook is in place. This was done simply by moving the police line a few dozen yards to the right, a few dozen to the left. The crowd followed. Meanwhile, as anticipated in somebody's calculations, the majority of the original ten thousand demonstrators had dissolved back into the rush-hour traffic, and soon there were fewer than one thousand left chanting and singing in front of the police line. After a while, they decided to head over to the federal building, where a few hundred others, many of them young blacks, and Black Panthers, had gathered to make speeches and throw insults (nothing more) up at the courtroom where the charade of the trial of the Chicago six was in progress. The police line followed the demonstrators. From the federal building, the movement was back toward of the plaza, then over to Lincoln Park. All along the way, police marched silently, shoulder-to-shoulder with the demonstrators. At last we arrived at the park. It was late afternoon, and the potent force of ten thousand had been whittled by the blue knife down to less than a hundred. The skill in that whittling was at least equal to the talent employed in the carving of totem poles. The police had a very effective machine going for them.

Yet there, in Chicago, I was watching the functioning of a police machine which was still only a primitive tool compared to the computerized techno-structured operations now coming into existence. The difference between this Chicago police machine and those modern ones beginning to take shape everywhere is a matter of centuries compressed into decades. Compare a knife to a laser beam. You can at least see the knife coming. Against the laser beam you have no chance at all.

Police machines, even the machines of Hitler and Stalin, were clumsy, forced to resort to terrorism and brute force. It has been shown that slave labor is poorly adapted to industrialization and adapted to post-industrialization not at all. The new machineries of police control are as far removed, in their most highly-developed forms, from Nazi Germany as helicopters from Icarus. The efficiency of the Chicago police on the occasion of the First Vietnam Moratorium revealed more about their state of development than did the police riot during the 1968 Democratic Convention. There, while the whole world was watching, the police broke their ranks and the machine sputtered to a halt. Under those circumstances, had the Chicago police been faced by well-armed, well-drilled opponents, they would have been cut to ribbons. As it was, they were chasing children, attacking journalists and bystanders, and so they seemed to have tremendous brute power. It was an illusion. In fact, at that particular moment, the Chicago police were at their weakest. If the Democratic Convention riots of 1968 had been the real measure of the effectiveness of the Chicago police, then the Black Panthers could be certain of victory. When the police become a mob, they are as helpless against precision attack as that crowd on Moratorium Day was against precision control. And yet the point here is that those chillingly-efficient Moratorium Day police tactics were relatively unsophisticated. The blue knife that worked so well was still not a laser beam. In the very near future, control of mobs of ten thousand will be child's play.

The mass media have communicated a false message to the younger generation: Look at the

Democratic Convention! Look at Watts! Look at the cities that burned as funeral pyres in the wake of Martin Luther King's assassination! Remember the night when a tiny gadget near Niagara Falls broke down and all of New York was plunged into darkness? See how easy it is to throw a monkey wrench into the functionings of a modern industrial state? A bit of LSD in the water supply, a few snipers moving along the rooftops, a demonstration here, a reversal of a court decision concerning marijuana there...so easy, so easy.

Yet one has only to walk through Watts, or along West Madison, or through Harlem, to realize that probably fewer than a hundred miles of streets out of all the millions of miles of paved roadway in the United States actually were touched by flame the night after King died. And nothing has changed in New York because of the black-out, except that the hydro system is slightly more efficient now. LSD breaks down in water. As for snipers—they are killed, and have about as much chance of beating the existing system as a fly has of wresting power from the man with the fly-swatter. An overturned pot law can be planted back even more firmly on its feet a few weeks later. Guerrilla warfare? One might try reading *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-tung*, especially his ten principles of operation. In the context of modern America, it might well have been written by George Wallace. Point One: Attack dispersed, isolated enemy forces first; attack concentrated, strong enemy forces (*universities?*) later. Point Two: Take small and medium cities and extensive rural areas first; take big cities later. Etc. It should be obvious to everyone that guerrillas can only operate if the population supports them, and there is no advanced industrial nation today where that basic condition exists. A mass base is completely lacking for a *putsch* or revolution in the old style of the French and Russian revolutions. And even if it weren't, in order to beat the technological and organizational opposition, the revolutionaries would have to forge a faster, more powerful machine. To fight a revolution in an advanced industrial nation today (on its own ground, in short) one would have to become even better at the game than those who currently wield the blue knife and the laser beam.

The argument against revolution in an advanced industrial nation, in the old sense of a violent overthrow of the existing power structure through the mechanism of an armed insurrection, proceeds along three lines:

A. It's hopeless.

B. It accomplishes nothing, except a changing of the guard.

C. It diverts us from the real struggle, which is to attain a higher level of consciousness, and to explore our potential (which is still unknown).

Let us deal with these in turn:

A. It's hopeless.

The working class of late has not shown itself to be particularly responsive to the rhetoric of

the New Left. The evidence would suggest that any insurrection at this stage in the affairs of the American state is more likely to come from the right. Movements such as Yippie!, the Black Panther Party, SDS, and so on have proven to be shorter-lived and far less tolerated than the Minutemen or the Ku Klux Klan. This is not simply because of the raw power of the police machine.

John Galbraith has pointed out that when capital was the key to economic success, social conflict was between the rich and the poor. But in recent times, education became the difference that divides. "Politics," he writes, "reflect the new division. In the United States suspicion or resentment is no longer directed to the capitalists or the merely rich. It is the intellectuals who are eyed with misgiving and alarm. This should surprise no one. Nor should it be a matter for surprise when semi-literate millionaires turn up leading or financing the ignorant in struggle against the intellectually privileged and content. This reflects the relevant class distinction of our time." It is a distinction few intellectuals are willing to accept. Humanists and socialists alike would prefer to steer away from any position which might open them up to charges of elitism, yet everything points to a sharp (and widening) cleavage not only between the generations but between the new basic classes. Students can no longer appeal to the workers with much hope of being listened to (or, for that matter, of getting out of a union hall meeting without having their heads beaten in).

Add to that the fact that the very "masses" upon whom all organized revolutionaries pin their long range hopes are the people (in the highly industrialized states) who are the least likely to rise up against anybody except the revolutionaries themselves. Come the revolution, we will all be listening to Bob Hope. The problem in part is that only a minority of the population in any advanced industrialized nation is responsive to the new and accelerated pace of change. A few, among them many of the young and many of the intellectually privileged and content, are in tune with the new culture; that is, change is not something that frightens them. Mobility offers possibilities, not dread of being uprooted. The "broad masses," on the other hand, are still peeking out at the world from around the corner of their memories of the Depression and the Second World War.

Few will dispute that the guns and the tanks and the bombs and the advertising agencies and the mass media are in the hands of the established order. The target of any revolution cannot just be the White House, the Pentagon, and Fort Knox. It must be, let's say, "the hearts and minds of the people," whether Vietnamese or American. And these, at the moment, are largely under the control of the establishment press, the advertisers, and the politicians. So, already, the revolution must move against an enemy that commands the heights and is dug in everywhere, who, furthermore, has overwhelming firepower, with air and ground and naval support. And the odds are not yet through being added up. The establishment also has at its disposal a humming army of computers, an array of prototypal technostructures whose function is not only to anticipate trouble, pin-point likely danger spots, but, as a regular day-to-day operation, keep a closer eye on every individual citizen than could be done in any previous society. There is no one in America- or any advanced industrial state, for that matter-whose identity is not magnetically recorded on a

tape somewhere. So, in addition to the overwhelming firepower of the enemy, the revolutionary faces the dangers of bugging, wiretapping, computerized surveillance, and so on.

So far, however, we have been ticking off the obvious. We have not really got the *real* strength of the enemy, which is that, unlike a banana republic, the modern industrial state is not run by a strongman flanked by bullyboys, a division of armored jeeps, and financed by a clutch of businessmen with vested interests in keeping wages down. It may indeed stem from just such a basic structure, but in the process of its evolution it has become too complex, too bottomless, to be tackled as though it *remained* nothing more than that. The power of the industrial state is greater by several factors, and not just in terms of physical might.

Where we see progressiveness and openly liberal attitudes, we see the technological reality refining its methods of manipulation, organization, and, ultimately, control. It gets *better* at it all the time, absorbing more, spreading out in ever-widening circles, and turning every attack to its own advantage, simply by accepting the attacker, swallowing him, and thus very nearly literally feeding on opposition.

Historically, it has been hard enough to get broad masses of people to bite the hand that *wouldn't* feed them; to hope, under conditions of affluence, to get those same broad masses to bite a hand that does feed them-and feeds them very well-is a thin hope indeed. Add this stark reality to the problems already mentioned, and one begins to see that it would have to be one hell of a super-revolution, the one which could smash the technological society.

Even if the odds weren't so bad, consider the state the troops are in. What happened to the crowd in the Chicago Civic Plaza on Moratorium Day demonstrated clearly where the real organizational muscle was. But there is more to it. Shortly before Moratorium Day, I was in Berkeley, at the University of California campus. Listen to one of the most radical students I talked to: "It's ready to blow, man. There's a revolution coming. It's overcrowded here. Construction everywhere. Bad food. Lousy accommodation. It's mean. Bad vibrations. Everybody's really uptight, only it's low-level uptightness. People are bugged, I mean, really bugged... the food prices, the shortage of rooms, the noise... it's gonna *go*, man. Wow." So there is a revolution about to erupt. But follow the conversation further. It drifts. Soon, the student is talking about the intensity of the mescaline experience as compared to the hashish experience. A lot of quibbling gets going with other students present about the virtues of hash. And from there the conversation proceeds directly to the issue of the best places to go skiing. One place is generally conceded to be much better than the others, because "dampness from the ground soaks right up through your head and goes raining off in reverse right into the sky from your head, all those pores in your scalp, like they were sprinklers, man." This is, if you have been smoking hash. Somehow, no contradiction is seen between the desire to have a revolution and the desire to smoke hash and go skiing. The revolutionary fever was heavily seasoned with hedonism, which weakens it badly. And most conversations I got into on the campus seemed spiced in much the same way. A friend reports meeting two radicals at Berkeley, whose position is simple: Everything will have to be smashed from stem to stern; America has become that diseased. The conversation ends when they ask my friend if he would like to blow a joint. Okay. They go down

the street and climb into a brand-new Thunderbird, property of the most talkative radical and proceed to get stoned.

The story may be apocryphal, but not very.

Yet, through a process of nothing much more than elimination, we have arrived at a position where the vanguard of a revolution *must* be the "alienated" young. The working class has become reactionary (labor and management may quibble over the spoils, but none seeks to blow up the trough), the bourgeoisie middle class are more dominant than ever, the poor are already contained in ghettos which are concentration camps lacking only barbed wire. Let us look, therefore, at the picture these alienated young presented as the 1960s drew to a close. Here is Barry Farrell's description of the last two nights of the Woodstock festival:

As night fell the scene became more dramatic still, disclosing a loud electric image of the future. From the fringes of the crowd, the stage looked like a pearl at the bottom of a pond, a circle of light fired down from towers as big as missile gantries. Just beyond it, helicopters fluttered in and out of an LZ ringed with Christmas lights, bringing in the rock groups, evacuating casualties and stars. Much music was lost under the beat of their blades—an annoyance until it was perceived as a higher music than rock alone—as rock-helicopter music, space music to accompany the sound-and-light vision of the American '70s.

The speaker's expert voice purred across the breadth of the farm, reading off lists of the injured and ill, urging respect for the fences. In the newspeak of our age, he praised the crowd for being groovy, cautioning them not to blow the cool thing they had going by breaking any of the rules. Then he would give way to another group, and the musicians would appear, tiny forms bathed in lurid light.

On the festival's last night, when the field had turned to slime and abandoned sleeping bags lay sprawled underfoot like corpses, my feelings for the event began to darken. Everyone around me was shivering under soaked coats and blankets. Their bonfires, fed with newspapers and milk cartons, cast up a stench that hung above the meadow in a yellow haze. On the dark roads, unseen faces whispered the names of drugs to passing strangers. Mescaline? Hash? At the central crossroads, anxious voices shouted the names of lost friends. Gloria! Donald!

The great stoned rock show had worked a counter-miracle, trading on the freedom to get stoned, transforming it into a force that tamed the crowd and extracted its compliance. Not that anyone minded, of course—the freedom to get stoned was all the freedom they wanted. And, being stoned, everyone was content to sit in the mud and feed on a merchandised version of the culture they created. In the cold acid light, the spoiled field took on the aspect of an Orwellian concentration camp stocked with drugs and music and staffed with charming police. The speaker's coaxing voice only enriched the nightmare, which became complete when I asked a trembling blue-faced boy if he was feeling all right. "Groovy," he said, adding a

frozen smile.

The Woodstock festival has already been recorded as a victory for music and peace, and that is as it should be. But it should also be remembered as a display of the authority of drugs over a whole generation—an authority already being merchandised, exploited, promoted. It was groovy, as the speaker kept saying, but I fear it will grow groovier in memory, when the market in madness leads on to shows we'd rather not see.

As for *Hair*, one had only to glance at the faces in the lobby at intermission to see that these were not people about to take to the barricades. Flushed, excited faces, titillated. After all, hadn't they just had their jollies by becoming involved enough to cheer all the heavy anti-draft lines, the pro-pot lines, the ecstatic lyrics about beauty and truth? They got it out of them, all right. Now they will go home feeling liberated, some of them so liberated they will not even worry about how tired they're going to feel in the morning when it comes time to go back to work for The Machine.

Hair was only incidentally a piece of show biz. Its real significance lies in the fact that its arrival (along with the effective total collapse of censorship, the popularity of pot, the sudden militancy of every minority group, and the rediscovery of holism) signaled the beginning of a new stage in the affairs of the technological society. *Hair* was the death-knell of revolution, ringing joyously and ecstatically through the industrialized world. Then along came Woodstock, and as Barry Farrell wrote in *Life*, "no one there doubted that we were crossing a cultural Rubicon." The question is: How many realized that they had entered the gates of the comfortable concentration camp? The trap had begun to close. The barricades, like the guillotine, were suddenly relics of the past. As that small slice of humanity which represents the cutting edge of our evolution rushed forward to meet the dawn of the Age of Aquarius, they left their machine-guns and ideologies and programs behind. Straitjackets were shedded like old skins. We had begun to give up. What every pessimistic modern philosopher from Huxley to Jacques Ellul had warned us against was finally happening. We were losing control of our destiny, losing our minds, throwing down our weapons and surrendering in droves. We had stopped fighting. Hegel's historical man, whose spirit was in "a mighty conflict with itself," who could advance to higher forms only by overcoming himself, was suddenly as obsolete and pathetic as the Priest King of Nemi, who could succeed to office only by slaying the incumbent, and having slain him, retained power only until he himself was slain, with the result that "year in year out, in summer and winter, in fair weather and in foul, he had to keep his lonely watch, (sword in hand, pacing around the tree that was his throne) and whenever he snatched a troubled slumber it was at the peril of his life."

Revolution, whose death-convulsions had taken the form of student revolts in the fallopian tubes of the technological society, is finally finished as the vehicle of human advance. And since revolution really means cyclic recurrence, (a vicious circle) we do not have to bemoan, as Marcuse does, the "passing of historical forces" which seemed, at earlier stages, to represent the

possibility of change. There is no political institution left on the face of the earth whose ideology is not basically technological, so all a revolution hitched to realpolitik can offer now is more of the same. Revolution is giving way to liberation and short-circuiting the vicious circle entirely. If *Hair* and Woodstock signal the triumph of the technological society, they also signal the end to futile and self-perpetuating conflict.

The *Hair* and Woodstock phenomena are complex, like the flight of Apollo 11; the question has to be asked: What is the effect? Do these phenomena liberate or do they add a deeper dimension, a new twist, to the elaborate and subtle mechanisms of aggregate control? The immediate problem with *Hair* is that its emergence—or the emergence of some immensely popular show employing exactly the same devices of protest, outrage, anger, obscenity and revolutionary rhetoric—was anticipated as far back as the 1950s by French philosopher Jacques Ellul, who argued that the more restrictive the social mechanism, the more exaggerated are the associated ecstatic phenomena. (Neither *Hair* nor Woodstock could be described as other than ecstatic.) "Technique," wrote Ellul, "encourages and enables the individual to express his ecstatic reactions in a way never before possible. He can express criticism of his culture, and even loathing. He is permitted to propose the maddest solutions. The great law here is that all things are necessary to make a society and even revolt is necessary to make a technical society." *Hair*, which expresses plenty of loathing and not a few mad solutions, is tolerated (along with pornography, obscenity, and even, to an increasing degree, pot and homosexuality) not because there is more freedom than before, but because the expression of criticism allows people to let off steam. And having let off steam they are less likely to get serious about changing the social order.

Marcuse has a word for it: "repressive de-sublimation," which is the "release of sexuality in modes and forms which reduce and weaken erotic energy." (Erotic energy being the source of real rebellion as opposed to burlesques.) In tolerating a show like *Hair* or a happening like Woodstock, the technocratic order would be doing nothing less than moving into the realm of "pleasant forms of social control and cohesion." The thrust of the argument is that pleasant forms of control work more effectively than repression. Thus, there is the appearance of rebellion, but no substance. As Ellul puts it: "Technique defuses the revolt of the few and thus appeases the need of the millions for revolt."

B. It accomplishes nothing, except a changing of the guard.

Leonard Cohen remarked in 1968, when asked if there was a revolution going on: "Of course it's a revolution. But I want to see the *real* revolution. I don't want it siphoned off by the mobilization people. It's got to take place in every room. Revolutionaries, in their heart of hearts, are excited by the tyranny they wield. The lines are being drawn and people on both sides are beginning to terrorize each other. Somehow we have to break out of this process, which can only lead to both sides becoming *like* each other. I'm afraid that when the Pentagon is finally stormed

and taken, it will be by guys wearing uniforms very much like those worn by the guys defending it."

Many of us advance into our lives by little more than cause and effect. That is, we take a step for a variety of reasons and, having taken this small initial step, discover the consequences. We are then forced to deal with those consequences, and we do that by rationalizing the original act. Having rationalized it, one has then set up the crude framework of a behavioral pattern which can now be fleshed out by further actions—*proceeding in the same direction*. Each new action, so long as it continues to proceed in the same direction, becomes slightly easier than the one before. It's like learning to drive, acquiring reflexes. Once one is familiar with the gears it becomes largely automatic. Strong men, or men of action (such as revolutionaries must be), are therefore those whose behavior has been most effectively rationalized. They set themselves in motion automatically. Revolutionary heroes are therefore bound to a large degree to be behavioral automatons. Further, all revolutionaries are forced to accept a discipline which forbids them to freely explore interpretations other than those which serve as the basis for the revolution. Revolutionary zeal is one of the worst forms of tyranny, locking the individual into a position every bit as static as that of his opposite number, the reactionary. At the extremes, in terms of individual personality, the revolutionary and the reactionary merge. For both, the doors leading to personal growth and development of their own unrealized potential are closed.

The man of action requires an uncluttered setting with simple ground rules in order to function. Ideally: A setting as stark as a boxing ring. Only then can the Aristotelian proposition of either/or be put to work. The object of the revolutionary (or reactionary) game is to reduce complex on-going processes to a fixed game board involving nothing more than two players; black vs. white, good vs. bad, freedom vs. slavery. If he is successful in reducing multi-ordinal reality to a simple game, the revolutionary has then "set the stage" for an uprising. Needless to say, in a complex highly-integrated modern industrial state, the initial task of the revolutionary is that much more difficult.

The point here is simply that the revolutionary stance is an *idée fixe*, monomania. Further, it is, on a grand scale, a kind of decadence—a rejection of the complex (and real) in favor of the simple (and less real). What the revolutionary offers us, finally, is one other idea about how things should be done. His goal is to ram that idea down our throats, and in order to be able to do that, he must first seize power.

Which brings us to the heart of the matter. Chairman Mao advises us that "the seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution." It is a power struggle first and foremost. Exactly the sort of thing for which the Priest Kings of Nemi stand as the central metaphor. The revolutionary does not want change, he wants *one* change, the change which will bring him into power. And then...? Why then his task is to fight off the next wave of revolutionaries who want another change. "Everybody wants to save the world," Henry Miller once noted, "but nobody wants to help his neighbor."

"The urge to manipulate others," writes George B. Leonard, "whether to 'solve' a 'problem' or build an empire, begins in the nursery...The drive for surplus power...is born of lack and

nourished by deprivation. 'Power'—the word itself—appears only when there are unfulfilled needs. We would never have heard the term 'Black Power' if blacks had been treated fairly. 'Woman Power' is a statement of denial, a cry for justice. Ultimately, little will be gained if blacks, women, and others of the oppressed merely gain dominance, thus triggering yet another cycle of deprivation and desperation....'Power' is derived from an Old French word meaning, 'to be able.' When we return to this definition, the real question becomes, 'What do you want to be able to do or be, to feel or enjoy?' The past has taught us well: Playing power games and losing is a waste of time. Playing power games and getting exactly what you want is the ultimate despair."

All political parties, whether revolutionary or established (along with their ideologies and systems) are built on a narrow base of power. Some specialize in humanism, others on exploitation, yet others on inevitable conflict. In all cases, the issue of power remains the locus of activity. All existing political organizations (again whether revolutionary or not) remain essentially anthropomorphic. The struggle is between people and groups of people, each locked into a monomaniacal opposing stance. Any disinclination to accept the whole ideological package is a sign of betrayal—one becomes a "revisionist" or a "Commie-lover" or something to that effect, depending on where and what you are. Revolutions are seen as mechanisms whereby our sickness might be cured: racism, greed, insanity, hate, fear, distrust, alienation, poverty, dictatorship. Revolution, at best, is seen as a kind of heart transplant; at worst, lobotomy. Always, of course, for the good of the patient, and always on the assumption that the operation will cure all ills. "Social change" is the vehicle, the means toward the higher end of more moral behavior, of greater brotherly love, of physical well-being, an end to hunger and deprivation

And to affect these tremendous social changes, it remains absolutely necessary to seize power. Underdog must overthrow topdog. Underdog is then the new topdog and the old topdog now has a taste of being underdog. The guard has been changed. There is a new man in the saddle. Beyond that stage, what happens?

The operational mode of thinking remains the trigger of all practical change. Today, Marxism is the mirror image of capitalism, but basically no different. Because Communists and Socialists and Capitalists have all hitched their social wagons to the engine of technology, there can be no basic change. Exploitation of nature remains the key to wealth, whether equally distributed or not. And through the domination of nature, the men continue to dominate each other and be dominated.

Theodore Roszak puts it well:

To immerse oneself in the old ideologies—with the notable exception of the anarchist tradition which flows from such figures as Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Thoreau—is to find oneself stifling in the stone and steel environment of unquestionable technological necessity. It is a literature of seriousness and grim resolve, tightly bounded by practicality, class discipline, the statistics of injustice, and the lust for retribution. To speak of the ecstasies of life in such a somber environment is to risk folly. Here where all men trudge, none may dance. Dancing is . . . for later. If the demise of the

old ideologies begins anywhere, it begins with this delaying gesture. For to postpone until 'later' consideration of the humanly essential in the name of 'being realistic' is to practise the kind of deadly practicality which now stands our civilization in peril of annihilation. It is to deliver us into the hands of the dehumanized commissars, managers, and operational analysts—all of whom are professional experts at postponing the essential. These are the practitioners of what C. Wright Mills called 'crackpot realism.'

Revolution is based in part on the proposition that institutions must be shuffled, and *then* the hearts of men and women can be affected. Control—through the institutional agencies—is the prerequisite for real change. It does not cross the revolutionary mind that institutions are the last extensions of man—that to begin attempting to cure human ills through the agencies of institutions is to start at the ass end. Institutions, laws, legislation and flags can be easily changed—what, we must ask, has that got to do with individuals? Such thinking misses completely the basic psychological insight that we cannot deliberately bring about changes in ourselves or in others. Any intention toward change will have the opposite effect. A "successful" revolution means simply that we are saddled with a new set of controllers. Meanwhile, in our hearts nothing has changed. The power games go on. Exploitation of nature continues. Man is still assumed to be, "realistically," the center of the universe. A kind of flat-earth psychology continues to dominate our collective behavior.

Meanwhile, the earth continues to die.

C. It diverts us from the real struggle, which is to attain a higher level of consciousness, and to explore our potential (which is still unknown.)

Leon Trotsky once prophesied that the final revolution in the world would consist of a series of small and violent upheavals going on everywhere, lasting perhaps for generations. This sounds dead on, yet not even Trotsky could have envisioned how "small" and how "violent." The final revolution will be taking place in an arena no larger than my head and your head, and it will involve a psychic and emotional violence whose measure has not yet been taken. So long as we are concentrating our energies on power struggles, on toppling institutions only to replace them with others, we are channeling our energies outward; it is an exercise as futile as the trip to the moon, all part of an outward voyage whose aim is exploitation, whose method is manipulation, whose end is power and control. History is a stuck record, with human struggle caught in a single groove, the vicious circle of cyclic recurrence. Down goes one king, and up goes another. The day after a palace is stormed, the new bosses set up shop across the street. We have not yet escaped from collective childhood, in the sense that we still need leaders, and still do not trust our own senses. (Liberals, with their tremendous fear of being "judgmental," are among the worst

offenders. It is the liberals who have come closest to building systems on a fusion of man and his works, yet they have not learned that their weakness—equivocality—is also their greatest potential source of strength.) Revolution is seen always as the means to an end which is human liberation, freedom not only from want, but from the tyranny of the emotions, racism, hatred, murder, crime, and exploitation. "Social change" will lead to a change in consciousness. Yet this is in reality a Rube Goldberg course. The possibility of moving directly from A to B, without having to climb to the top of the pyramid in order to get down to the bottom of it, has not even historically been considered; except, of course, by theologians and artists. The only way for the greater human being to come into existence is directly, giving birth to himself. No ideology is prepared to accept the idea that the cure might precede the revolutionary operation, that perhaps the operation might only make the patient sicker. Change—real change, as opposed to a change of political underwear—will only come after the fact of individual liberation. And since this is something that cannot be organized or led, that does not lend itself to political or ideological frames of reference, it is dismissed (by the operationalists) as being nothing at all. Yet we might with good cause demand: Revolutionary, heal thyself! The real revolution works in exactly the opposite fashion to what has always been assumed to be the case—changing the social institutions does no good, because the last link in the chain, the individual, is the farthest removed from the locus of power. When however, the individual is the *first* link to be affected, it turns out that the seats of power are themselves the last to be changed. Institutions and thrones are about as far removed from the ordinary citizen as anything in the social landscape. The aim of revolutionary types has been to organize the people to move against the thrones, to tear down the institutions. In the process, people submit to discipline and the need for violence, and thus become violent disciplinarians themselves. The fact that they may be crushing an entrenched set of violent disciplinarians at this point makes no real difference. How far have they progressed in the direction of realization of themselves? Nowhere. They may have succeeded in brutalizing themselves, in reverting to the logic of domination and can be certain of emerging from the bloodbath convinced that the operational point of view is the only point of view. Other than that, there is no progress in the critical direction—which is to explore unknown territory, to move upward, not downward, in terms of personal and collective evolution, to acquire a keener vision, a deepening of the senses, an enlargement of vision, to the point where we might perceive subtler harmonies, regularities which were not noticed before, and, finally, to bring our shattered selves back into a working whole. The task is to complete the human being, not turn him back into a barbarian.

The question arises: It's all very well to say that we must all "save ourselves," no one can do it for us, but what about the obvious inequalities of the present system? What about corruption? Police brutality? Militarism? Murder? What good does it do if you liberate yourself and achieve a state of "higher morality" or whatever, if, in the meantime, Vietnamese peasants continue to be bombed, Blacks are starving in ghettos, Indians are processed and reprocessed through prisons, millions are dying of starvation, madmen have their fingers poised on the nuclear trigger, and the planet is being destroyed by parasitic corporations and governments? Isn't "self-liberation" at this

stage a luxury we can ill afford to indulge ourselves in? There is real work to be done, and done in a hurry if we are to survive.

The short answer lies in what Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls describes as the most important phenomenon in all pathology: "self-regulation versus external regulation. The anarchy which is usually feared by the controllers is not an anarchy which is without meaning. On the contrary, it means the organism is left alone to take care of itself, without being meddled with from outside. And I believe this is the great thing to understand: *that awareness per se—by and of itself—can be curative*. Because with full awareness you become aware of this organismic self-regulation, you can let the organism take over without interfering, without interrupting; we can rely on the wisdom of the organism." In the sociological context, the message is clear enough: *awareness* is the starting point for action which is not pre-determined by ideological bias; without awareness, without having gotten to the "center" of our beings, as the Gestaltists call it, without having transcended the operational mode of thinking which reduces our actions to little more than acted-out equations, without having "cured" ourselves of our refusal to let the situation dictate our actions (rather than vice-versa), there is nothing we can do with certainty which will not simply amount to a subtler kind of power-game, a reversal of roles, or—and this is the unavoidable trap—which will not amount in the long run to a projection of our own disequilibrium. This is not to suggest a "moratorium" on political activity, which in itself can be therapeutic, but it is to say that the blind have no right to be leading the blind. Only when our own eyes are open can we presume to lead. Otherwise we may rest assured that whatever illusions we may have about "progress" are in reality nothing more than circular gropings in the dark, with pitfalls everywhere. The answers, once one's eyes are open, can be clearly perceived.

Before proceeding to look beyond the barricades (a garbage heap of antique social furniture) there is a point which needs to be cleared up, since much of what has been said so far about the futility of revolution can easily be misconstrued as a put-down of very real and just revolutions taking place not only in America, but in Canada and Vietnam and elsewhere. My argument is simply that revolution must take the shape of its container; it defines itself in relation to the system it seeks to defy or overthrow. But I am speaking of revolution in the context of the technological society, or one-dimensional society, or the affluent society, or whatever label one chooses to describe what is mainly a white man's modern world. Not everyone in North America lives in that world. The ghettos—whether black ghettos in Los Angeles or Chicago or Eskimo or Indian ghettos in Canada and in the Arctic—are truly another country. And the struggles that go on within these territories are against colonialism, imperialism, and brutal oppression. They have much in common with the struggle of the Vietnamese. The "container" in these cases is quite different from the kind of container in which those of us who are predominantly white and living in suburbs and high-rise apartments find ourselves.

The Hudson Institute has calculated that within thirty years the first four post-industrial societies will have surfaced on the face of the planet. They will be, in this order, the United States, Canada, Japan, and Sweden. They will be characterized by the fact that *per capita* income will range from \$4,000 to \$20,000; most economic activity will have shifted from industrial

production to the service industries, research institutes and non-profit organizations; private enterprise will no longer be a major source of scientific and technical development. Large-scale integration will be all but complete. We will be far down the path of convergence with the Communist world. At this point, the technological society will have clamped its iron arms around the world, bioelectronics will have succeeded in literally plugging us into world-wide hookups and a *de facto* police state will have emerged. It is in these areas (the post-industrialized regions) that the obsolescence of revolution will be most apparent.

This is not to say that, *outside* the affluent sphere, revolution will be obsolete. The "wretched of the earth" will still be with us, old-style police states based on brutality and oppression will still exist, colonialism in a variety of forms will likely still prevail. In these "outside regions," there is no reason to assume that armed insurrection, revolution, and violent overthrow of corrupt and brutal administrations is in any way unjustified or unnecessary.

To draw our models for revolutionary behavior from these other regions, however, is to refuse to recognize the qualitative differences between these societies. Within a single generation, there will be a difference between the most advanced societies and the ones trailing behind them which will not only be a matter of degree but of kind. Those of us in the most advanced regions will be living in a different world. A fundamental change is involved. For us to continue to assume that revolutionary programs applicable in China, India, most of South America and Africa (areas which have not even approached the industrialized stage) can somehow have any relevance in our own advanced industrial context, is, at best, an unsophisticated notion; at worst, plain stupidity. Within the comfortable concentration camp, inside a system which can absorb and contain and feed on all forms of protest and rebellion, a whole new set of tactics must be evolved, and *are* being evolved. Moreover, we have no choice in the matter, since old-style revolutionary activity simply will not work. We will be effectively blocked from indulging in the kind of uprising and overthrow which amounts to cyclic recurrence. We will have no Bastilles left to storm except those within our skulls, no oppressors left whom we can get our hands on except our egos. The struggles which were always directed outward—against tyrants and dictators—will have been effectively thwarted, and will be turned back on themselves. Inward will go the revolution, turning every man's head into a battlefield.

The "social bottle" of those regions on planet earth which are furthest into the future is different, unique; by the standards of other ages and other cultures, it is downright freaky. It has been molded into a new form—by the computer, by television, by changes in social character, by technoplanning, cybernetics, chemistry, psychology, technique. We all agree it is made from new materials: plastic, nuclear power, vinyl, electronic circuitry, datapoints and programming. Yet how many of us are prepared to see that revolution, the counterpoint to all that is totalitarian and repressive (even when rationally totalitarian and repressive) must also change; it must, in fact, become as strange, as novel, as freaky as its container. And it is becoming all of that—so much so that most of us fail to recognize it as revolution. In drama we see, as Martin Esslin put it, "By all *traditional* standards of critical appreciation of the drama, these [modern absurd] dramas are not only abominably bad, they do not even deserve the name of drama." Mark Gerzon goes on to

say: "Many people have realized that nothing can be judged by traditional standards, for we do not live any longer in a traditional society. How many parents have said about modern music and painting that they do not even deserve the name? The arts have broken with tradition because they found the limitations on style and structure unnecessary and artificial..." Similarly, "revolution" is in the process of breaking from traditional style and structure.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to clearly distinguish between this ultimate struggle and the penultimate struggles being waged by oppressed people living outside the perimeter of The Machine. Basically, these next-to-last struggles are efforts to break into the area already inhabited by those of us who are affluent. Although our own struggle is of a different nature, we cannot ignore those other struggles and neither can we afford to refuse to help. But first we must have some understanding of the *difference*. To this end, let me focus on the Black Panther Party, which is a real revolutionary force (in the old pre-technological style).