

Ninety miles from the Fourth Reich

— reprinted from THE CHEVRON

Jerry Reuben is considered the national leader of the U.S. yippee movement, a group partially seeking the goals of the hippie but through action instead of by dropping out. In this letter addressed to the movement he takes a look at where things are at and where they are going.

DEAR FRIENDS,

From the Bay Area to New York, we are suffering the greatest depression in our history. People are taking bitterness in their coffee instead of sugar.

It's a common problem, not an individual one, and people don't talk to one another too much any more.

It is 1969 already, and 1965 seems almost like a childhood memory. Then we were the conquerors of the world. No one could stop us. We were going to end the war. We were going to wipe out racism. We were going to mobilize the poor. We were going to take over the universities.

Go back and read some of the early anti-war literature. Check out the original hippie-digger poetry and manifestoes; euphoria, overflowing optimism, and expectation of immediate success. Wow, I can still get high on it.

America proved deaf, and our dreams proved innocent. Scores of our brothers have become inactive and cynical.

Still, our victories since 1965 have been enormous. We kicked LBJ's ass. We defeated the Democratic Party. Our history has been marked by a series of great battles: Berkeley, the Pentagon, Columbia, Chicago. We are the most exciting energy force in the nation.

It is just because we are striking so deep that, in every phase of the movement, arrests and trials and court appearances and jail have bottled up resources, sapped energy, and demoralized the spirit.

- **Huey Newton is in prison
Eldridge Cleaver is in exile**

America's courts are colonial courts, where White America punishes her black subjects. America's jails are black concentration camps. Every black man in jail is a political prisoner. In America we have Race and Class Justice, pure and simple.

- **Oakland Seven are accused of conspiracy**

Which means: organize a demonstration which effectively challenges authority and the courts arrest you for conspiracy a d tie you up with lawyers for years. Is that why so few people are into planning demonstrations any more in Berkeley?

After spending three months there in the fall, I was depressed to see the old Berkeley audaciousness gone. Three years ago we were going to overthrow Washington from Telegraph Avenue. Result: broken dreams for hundreds and hundreds of people. "Politico" has virtually become a term of insult in Berkeley today.

- **Tim Leary is up for 30 years and how many of our brothers are in court and jail for getting high?**

Smoking pot is a political act, and every smoker is an outlaw. The drug culture is a revolutionary threat to plasticwasp9-5america.

If you smoke quietly, you won't get bothered. If you smoke in public, or if you live in a commune, or get active politically, or show up somewhere in J. Edgar Freaiko's computer, you're likely to get busted for getting high.

Through the power of arrest, the cops have virtually silenced the drug evangelists and have destroyed communities like the Haight-Ashbury.

- **Spock faces two years in the pen**

When America arrested the Baby Doctor for advising young men to follow their consciences, I was ecstatic: the next day I actually expected thousands of intellectuals and religious folk to stand on soapboxes and repeat Spock's words. No one hardly said a word.

"The streets of our country are in turmoil. The universities are filled with students rebelling and rioting. Communists are seeking to destroy our country. Russia is threatening us with her might, and the republic is in danger. Yes, danger from within and without. We need law and order! Yes, without law and order our nation can not survive."

Adolf Hitler, Hamburg, 1932

The intellectual community was paralyzed by fear. Is it any wonder now how German intellectuals were so easily silenced?

Sorry for the bitterness, but I saw the arrest of Spock as test case for the government. If they could arrest and convict Spock without much of a backlash, certainly they could exile Cleaver and jail Leary, and eventually get to me.

The government won the test. Now they are willing to try anything.

- **Campus activists are expelled and arrested**

Participants in campus outbreaks are expelled or suspended from school, and arrested on assorted misdemeanors, if not on felony charges for conspiracy.

Students quickly forget the court cases left behind, and the euphoria of an outbreak turns sour in the hearts of those who go to court and jail alone.

When cops first come on campus, the liberals scream—but gradually the liberals get tired and go to sleep.

Cops and courts never sleep.

- **War resisters are behind bars**

The anti-draft organizations are in shambles. Individuals are left alone to face 3-to-6 year sentences for refusing the draft. Thousands of men have been driven into exile in Canada and Sweden. The bravest men in the army are choosing to go to the stockade rather than eat military shit.

Stockades, federal prisons and courts are full of men who have defied the military, and who now must face the music. Unfortunately, there is no orchestra playing behind them.

- **Add it up:**

Cops and courts have tried to put the national black leadership on ice, knocked the Berkeley white activist movement on its heels, over-run the campuses, wiped out many longhair communities, muted the intellectuals, and given, with impunity, fantastic punishment to draft and GI resisters.

This pattern goes a long way to explaining the malaise so many of us feel. America got where she is by jailing and killing blacks and other colored peoples. If America's own children—the brats of her white middle class—insist on acting like blacks, well, they will jail and kill us too.

Who the hell wants to "make it" in America any more? The hippie-yippie-SDS movement is a "white nigger" movement. The American economy no longer needs young whites and blacks. We are waste material. We fulfill our destiny in life by rejecting a system which rejects us.

I used to know all this in my head. Now I know it in my gut. In the past six months I've personally found out what it's like to live in a police state.

In 1964 and 1965 I was active in campus demonstrations at Berkeley, travel to Cuba, and anti-war actions like stopping troop trains. In those days America thought it could solve its problems with white demonstrators by quickly winning the Vietnam war.

But we had other ideas, and so did the Vietnamese. The anti-war movement became part of a massive youth movement, student demonstrations spread across the country, and in the summer of 1967 America's ghettos burned. The solution to rebellion at home became for LBJ a military one, and his administration turned the problem over to the FBI-CIA, the Red Squads, the cops and the courts.

- **Virtually everyone under 30 in Manhattan smokes pot**

The cops use marijuana busts as a handy club against blacks, longhairs, and political activists. If you are a longhair and a political activist, you got trouble. If you are a longhair, a political activist, and black, you got real trouble. (Hello, Eldridge, wherever you are.)

The marijuana charge against me is a felony punishable by 2-15 years in the state pen.

When I arrived in Chicago for the yippie festival, I found three shifts of plainclothes cops hounding me night and day. It was typical Chicago police harassment. Round the clock they tailed the half dozen people they thought were "leaders". They were there when we went to bed at night and they were there when we got up in the morning.

For me they cooked up a special treat. Daley sent an undercover cop, Robert Pierson, alias Bob Lavon, to infiltrate the yippies, act as agent provocateur, spy on me, and frame me on a serious felony rap.

At 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 28, while looking for a restaurant, I was kidnapped off a nearly empty downtown street by four Chicago plainclothes pigs. I was threatened with beating and death, slugged, bullied, and told:

"You guys ruined our city. You, Rubin are responsible. Do you like our city? We hope you do because we are going to put you in jail here for a long time."

By chance, Jack Mabley, a columnist for the conservative Chicago American, happened to be in the streets when I was picked up. This is how he described what happened:

"No blood flowed in one of the most ominous happenings. Jerry Rubin... was walking west on Washington... A girl was with him..."

"An unmarked car with four policemen skidded to a stop beside Rubin. Three men jumped out. 'Come on Jerry, we want you,' one girl screamed, 'we haven't done anything! We were just walking.'

"I have heard Rubin speak, and he was obscene and revolting. In America a man may be arrested for obscenity or revolution. But Rubin was grabbed off the street and rushed to jail because of what he thinks.

"This is the way it is done in Prague. This is what happens to candidates who finish second in Vietnam. This is not the beginning of the police state, it IS the police state."

I was then accused of a wild assortment of charges and bail was set at \$25,000, more than the usual bail for accused murderers.

Whenever I come to Chicago for court appearances the press treats me like a yippie Richard Speck. The Judge has officially restricted my travel to Illinois. The court system, of course, is under Daley's thumb. It all adds up to a one-way ticket for me to five years in the Illinois state pen and revenge for Richard J. Daley.

An official government document which the Department of Justice admitted in December to a Virginia appeals court admitted that it maintains "electronic surveillance" of me.

It says: "the government is tendering herewith to this court a sealed exhibit containing transcripts of conversations in which appellant Rubin was a participant or at which he was present which were overheard by means of electronic surveillance."

Electronic surveillance!

The government admits that it maintains either a phone tap or a house bug, or both, on my life. In other words, there is nothing that I can do in the privacy of my own home that does not go into some secret Big Brother tape recorder!

The New York cops, using an illegal search warrant on June 13 and phony drug charges; the Chicago cops, using an agent provocateur and spy; the Department of Justice, using bugging; and the Chicago courts, using frame-up felony charges, \$25,000 bail, and travel restrictions, have joined together in a criminal conspiracy to deprive me of my civil rights.

These are days when one asks himself the most basic questions about the movement: Is it real or transparent? Does it just concern issues, or is it a whole new life style? Could the government break it apart with concessions?

- **Are we creating a new man, or are we a reflection ourselves of the system we hate so much? Are we a new brotherhood, or are we just a tangle of organizations and competing egos? What will happen when we reach age 30 and 40?**

I am not sure myself, and what I think often depends on how I feel when I wake up in the morning. And this is one of the differences between the black and white movements. For blacks the liberation movement is a struggle against physical and mental oppression. For whites, the movement is an existential choice.

One way to feel whether or not we have something real is to see how people relate to one another in trouble. In the past the movement has left the casualties of the last battle to their own individual fates as it moved on to the next dramatic action.

Many activists have even been forced to turn to their parents for help, rather than to the movement which is trying to overthrow their parents' institutions. How can we ask young kids to take risks in a movement which doesn't defend its own? My brother is 20 years old and his eyes often ask me that question.

The movement is more concerned with ideological debate, organizational games, and in fighting than with creating a family. But our movement is only as strong as the friendships within it. Our only real strength is in our identification with one another.

That collective identification then becomes the greatest challenge to the cops and courts:

- **Mess with him and you've got me to deal with too.**

If 1968 was "The Year of the Heroic Guerrilla," then 1969 will be "The Year of the Courts." We must attack the myths surrounding the courts as ferociously as we have attacked the American myths of war, apple pie, your friendly neighborhood cop, and "free elections."

Lenny Bruce put it right: "In the Halls of Justice, the only justice is in the halls." Courts come on as sacred as churches. Judges act like they just got off the last plane from heaven...

To challenge the courts is to attack American society at its roots. In campus rebellions, the most revolutionary demand, the demand that can never be granted by the administration is the demand for amnesty. Attacking the society's mechanism for punishing her citizens is attacking the society's very basis for control and repression.

Americans like to believe that this is a country of "fair play." We ought to organize tours for the American people of their courts and jails.

Remember the legend of Spartacus. The Romans slaughtered all the slaves, but the moral example lives on.

When the Roman Army came to kill Spartacus, they faced a mass of thousands of slaves. They demanded that Spartacus step forward.

"I am Spartacus!" shouted one slave.

"No, I am Spartacus!" shouted another.

"No, I am Spartacus!"

"No, I am Spartacus!"

"No, I am Spartacus!"

WITH LOVE,
JERRY RUBIN

(WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS, NANCY KURSHAN, MARTIN KENNER, ARTHUR NAIMAN, STEW ALBERT, GUMBO, JIM PETRAS, DAVID STEIN, SHARON KREBS, KEN PITCHFORD, ROBIN PALMER.)