

2-19-74

REVOLUTION? -- OR EDUCATION THROUGH THE MEDIA

Yes, the left in general is freaked out by the Symbionese Liberation Army. They are freaked out because there is no real leadership, no direction in the new left movement itself.

The only thing the leaders within the new left know about the S.L.A. is that they don't like it. And the primary reason for this attitude is a feeling that the actions of the S.L.A. will only increase police repression.

But these leaders fail to understand why groups like the S.L.A. come about; they focus primarily on the cart and ignore the horse. In other words just as the mass media, they are focusing on the symptoms and ignoring the problems -- the facts that hunger, poor housing, racism, sexism, and no jobs all exist. These conditions are very real, and they are all an integral part of this society, affecting primarily people of color and poor white working people.

These so-called "leaders" of the left understand that it is wrong to dictate to the people what they want and how to go about getting it without consulting them. However, they fail to understand that it is equally wrong to not be prepared to engage in struggle when the people are ready.

It is true that the police and the mass media are attempting to use the S.L.A. to discredit all struggles for radical change in this country, and this is bad. But I believe that it is possible to turn a bad thing into a good thing, and in order for for us to do this our priorities must be service and response to the needs and problems of the people, and any decisions to be made affecting the people must involve their participation and determination. Of course in order to do this successfully, we must have an organization with leadership representative of the people.

It is unfortunate that the needs and problems of the people, which are a reality, receive public attention only when critical situations like this arise.

I feel that the key question here is what lessons are the American people, including the new left, going to learn from the situations we are now confronted with.

Are we going to call for a harder crackdown on all people struggling for radical change in this country, are we going to call for new laws to give increased power to the police? Are we going to forget that it is, in fact, the oppression and the violence of the state which gives rise to groups such as the S.L.A.?

There is a historical lesson we can draw from "our government's" involvement in Vietnam. Namely, that oppression, exploitation, i. e. U. S. Imperialism breed Resistance. Whereever oppression exists, the people will fight back even if it means giving up their lives.

The Ghettos and jails in amerikkka which are nothing more than concentration camps for the poor are breeding grounds for resistance. Where else can the poor, the so-called "criminals" get together to draw up plans to "defend" themselves? In these Nazi-like concentration camps the poor are students and there, they learn namely that their only solution for survival is violence against a system using violence against them.

I will say to the Nixons, the Rockefellers and the Hearsts and to their puppets the state police that the solution to this resistance is not to kill and destroy the resisters, but to eliminate the social conditions which gave rise to the resistance.

And yes we would prefer that these social changes take place by Peaceful means. But, experience has shown that the ruling class never relinquishes power voluntarily; the government will never fall even in a period of crisis such as Watergate, the energy crisis, etc., unless it is pushed. Understanding this, it would be wrong to individually go out wolfing at the system with "BB guns" because the puppets of the ruling class with their military power will kill you and they do. In order to be successfull, we must push with the people, not against them. To push alone would only give the state police reason to take a better aim with their war machine against the people, especially the poor.

Young American men were forced to commit immoral, terrorist acts overseas. But they have now returned home very much skilled in how to fight the "enemy"; they have taught their sisters and brothers these skills and they are now fighting for a cause they themselves consider just. They have brought the war home.

However, the irony of the U.S. ruling class continues even with the kidnapping of Patricia Hearst. How much media attention would be given if the daughter of a poor black family was kidnapped? How many thousands of dollars would be sent to the family by the Nixons, the Reagans, and yes, the Hearsts? Even more important, would the people themselves care? Or has the ruling class controlled mass media convinced them that we should only be concerned when the sons and daughters of rich men are kidnapped?

It is true that the S.L.A. is using "revolution-through-the-media" tactics. The SLA's tactics and strategy for revolution are being published in full the same as a Nixon speech.

Never before has the mass media shown such a high interest in the left. They are even quoting Lenin and Mao, not to deal with the just demands put forward by the SLA, but rather to condemn their tactics. They are still asking what do those people want.

The demands put forward by the SLA should have been met yesterday by rich America, but even now at the risk of Patricia Hearst's life they still chose to focus primarily on who did it instead of why they did it.

In closing I will say to all people who claim they want to struggle is it necessary for us to follow the path of the ruling class and their mass media? Could we not better serve the people by dealing primarily with the objective realities of hunger, poor housing, lack of jobs, racism, sexism, etc. all which are social conditions directly affecting the poor?

I will strongly question the sincerity of those who chose to deal primarily with their subjective feelings about Patricia Hearst and the SLA....

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