

***Do it!* review**

Liberation News Service
Jomo Raskin

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a review of

Do It! by Jerry Rubin. \$2.45, Simon and Schuster, 256 pp.

"Do it!" A lot of people did it at Isla Vista. And there'll be a lot more doings. Do it! It's the title of Jerry Rubin's new book. The slogan "Do it!" is the yippie version of the Panther's "Seize the time." "Dig it, Do it, seize the time" in whatever way you know how.

Do it! isn't much to read. It's great to thumb through, cause the graphics are outa sight. Photos of naked men and women, kids smoking grass, people marching in the streets below VC flags, Gilbert Shelton's comix, concrete poetry, words flying all over the page.

Quentin Fiore, of Marshall McLuhan fame, designed it. More than any other book of our time it destroys the old linear bag. *Do it!* moves. But it doesn't leap; it's a recapitulation rather than a new breakthrough.

Chapter 24 is about the best chapter in the book. There are pictures of street kids throwing rocks at cops, naked Sharon Krebs at a clean-Gene McCarthy dinner carrying a pig's head, and a group of New York Panthers before the city court building

It's a good chapter because it's where Jerry is at. He's a performer and his stage is everywhere. He appears at HUAC in the costume of an American colonial soldier; he shows up at the conspiracy trial in Chicago in black robes.

A problem with the book is you aren't sure how to take it all. Much of it is intended to be funny, but just doesn't make it. A lot of what Rubin says sounds jive. Like when he says, after stopping a troop train in Berkeley for a few minutes, "We stopped the War Machine dead in its tracks." Because the War Machine is still going strong today.

Now it's in Laos as well as in Vietnam. Kids won't get turned on to Ho Chi Minh, they won't become revolutionary because Rubin says that "Ho Chi Minh is a yippie agent."

There's something out of date about Rubin's perspective. "Marijuana makes each person God," he writes. "Grass travels around the room like a continually moving kiss." Today, 1970, that's not where it's at. Much of what Rubin endorses died in the Haight and then again at Altamont.

Much of *Do it!* is about Did it. It's about the past. It's ahistorical: the Free Speech movement, the Peace and Freedom Party, things down a long corridor behind us. Jerry doesn't yet have the perspective which can make those events of the past relevant to the next stage of the revolution.

And most of the things are what Jerry himself has done. I, I, I, I, I. Too much ego tripping, not a complex sense of a whole movement, a whole society exploding.

After the murder of Fred Hampton, after the bombings in New York, Isla Vista, at a time when the government is attempting to send Bobby Seale to the electric chair, *Do it!* falls flat.

Times are changing fast. Like Dylan says "It's all over now Baby Blue." And as an old black woman in Chicago recently said, "Fascism doesn't stop at your front door, it comes into your bedroom and kills you while you're asleep."

Rubin says that the major conflict today is between the forces of revolution, and the forces of Fascism. Rubin says almost nothing about the conflict, between the black colony and the mother country, or the conflict between Capital and Labor.

One of the things that Eldridge Cleaver says in the Introduction to the book is that Rubin “bubbles through life.” Eldridge doesn’t mean to put Jerry down, but it’s an accurate description. There’s little sense of conflict or struggle in *Do it!* Rubin bubbles along without dealing with the major contradictions, without indicating that there have been decisive changes in the forces of revolution in the last decade, or that the Government has changed in its handling of those forces.

Eldridge calls Rubin “a child of Amerika.” That’s what he is. He’s a product of the imperial nation, shaped by it, turning against it. But Rubin hasn’t yet broken through to the other side.

What you find in Abbie Hoffman’s books is a sense of struggle, of conflict. In *Woodstock Nation* Abbie asks, where are white youth going? He knows that they are a part of Amerika, and also rebels against it; he saw several months ago that Woodstock could be a base for revolution, or a concentration camp. Abbie writes more about the contradictions of the movement, and less about himself, than Jerry.

Jerry talks about “creating liberated areas for dropouts.” That isn’t the road to revolution. We’ve seen that openly declared liberated areas for white youth are also clearly marked out targets for police raids and attacks.

He talks about creating a communal economy in the youth ghettos. He sees the possibility for pockets of communist societies existing within Amerika. Kind of like co-existence. Those oases of communism wouldn’t end or threaten Amerikan imperialism.

Rubin believes in myths. He is a Utopian. “The world,” he says, “will become one big Commune, with free food and housing, everything shared. There will be no more schools or churches because the entire world will become one church and one school.”

Everyone has a dream of the future, of world communism. It’s a compelling vision because it contrasts sharply with the nightmare of imperialism. In the context of *Do it!* that vision somehow makes imperialism less of the enemy. It diverts attention against the Amerikan empire so that one day we will all live in peace and brotherhood.

Do it! is a document of the 1960s, the product of a child of Amerika, not yet reborn a father of the revolution.

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