

Beatles 'Revolution'

More reaction

David Baker

1968

Editors' Note: The following article by brother Baker, Research Director of People Against Racism, is a rebuttal to the apology for the Beatles' song "Revolution" done by "critic" Ralph Gleason in the last issue of this paper [FE #62, Sept. 19-Oct. 2, 1968].

So the Beatles don't like revolution.

That's O.K. You wouldn't either if you had a billion jillion dollars. The old society, you see, has been very good to the Beatles, so what do they have to gain by identifying with those who would change it? Very little indeed. So don't be surprised.

It's perfectly natural for them to advise us not to mess with society's institutions but free our minds instead. The old society's institutions are no threat to the Beatles (or any other white folks with money for that matter). There was a time when they were worried about "The Taxman" because he wanted to cop a rather sizable portion of their huge income, but that passed quickly as soon as they discovered that there would still be plenty left for them.

The Beatles don't have to worry about slum landlords, the pigs, or the draft. So, of course, they don't realize that a free mind isn't much good if your children are being eaten by rats, your head is being clubbed by pigs. and your body can be possessed by the army at will.

It's perfectly natural for them to sing (along with the rest of the establishment) "so you say you've got a real solution. Well, you know, we'd all love to see the plan." Those who benefit or think they benefit from the old society can't conceive of even the possibility that anything could be fundamentally better.

Many of us, on the other hand, who are tired of being entertained by our sick old filth-encrusted plastic culture, sickened by the racist atrocities in Vietnam and the ghetto and outraged by the growing police state which threatens our survival, agree with the slave who said, "anything is better than this." The Beatles will probably be among the last to "see the plan."

And this is ironic because they contributed to the process that is making "the plan," the process in which old forms are—challenged and then replaced by newly created opposites. They showed us the beginning of the new music. Now it's going beyond them and we are making it part of the new culture.

And so it is with everything else that is or will be part of the new culture and the new society. The old structures, behavior patterns and attitudes outlive their usefulness and become oppressive.

People see this and begin to struggle against them. In the course of the struggle, new forms (e.g., the free store, the liberation schools, the underground newspaper, the commune and the community) are created which become clearer as the struggle sharpens.

Finally, after years of struggle, the new structures, behavior patterns, and attitudes come together in what the Beatles would call the "plan." Unfortunately for those who are attached to the old society and the old culture "the plan" is never complete enough to satisfy them. And it never will be.

So be it. If our friends the Beatles don't understand this yet there is little we can do about it. The question is, do we understand? Often it seems that we don't. Every time a former hero sells out we say that we've been "betrayed." This is because we have no sense of collective effort and no sense of history.

We feel "betrayed" by individuals because we depend on individuals. We have not yet learned to depend on ourselves and history.

fifth Estate

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