

Rock & Roll Dope

John Sinclair

1968

“The duty of the revolutionary is to make revolution.”

The duty of a musician is to make music. But there is an equation that can't be missed: MUSIC IS REVOLUTION. Rock and roll music is the most vital revolutionary force on earth—it blows people all the way back to their senses and makes them feel good. That's what the revolution is all about—we have to establish a situation on this planet where all people can feel good all the time. And we will not rest until that situation exists.

Rock and roll music is a weapon of cultural revolution. There are not enough musicians around today who are hip to this fact. Too many of your every-day pop stars feel that music is a means by which they can make a lot of money or gain a lot of popularity or whatever—and I don't mean just get laid, because anybody who's into that can't be all bad. I mean dollars and ego power, both of which are just a killer ruse.

Money is the biggest ruse of all, next to the so-called ego, which comes out of the same scene as money anyway. I mean the ego developed strictly as an economic function, when there got to be too many people on the planet for the planet's natural resources and there wasn't enough for everybody any more.

Then people had to start separating themselves out from the tribe and see themselves as individuals, because if there ain't enough for everybody then everybody's got to make sure there's gonna be enough for him.

Before that, when there was plenty for all and the only “enemy” was the magic force of nature, people were just “there.” Everyone was brother and sister and they were all in it together, totally. The Paleolithic age. And for centuries between then and now men struggled to secure enough for themselves and “their” families. The development of Western culture was strictly a function of economics. No one seems to realize this. It was all strictly necessary. But what is so interesting about being alive right now is that finally the means to plenty for all exists again, even with all the millions and billions of people on the planet, and it is only a small oligarchy really that's holding the new age back.

I said it last issue and I'll say it again, that the economy in this country is controlled by maybe 200 families which are inextricably connected through marriage and other traditional aristocratic tricks. Check out the boards of directors for banks, universities, industry, and other centers of corporate power and see how they interlock. These people are not bullshitting—they mean it!

There is no way we can get these people to give it up unless we can make them GIVE it to us. We can't buy it back. We can't stick 'em up for all that power—they'll just have us shot down in the streets. But we CAN get them stoned and make them share it with us.

In fact, once we get them turned on they'll do anything we want, because they'll start to see it our way and they'll have to dig it. OUR WAY IS THE BEST—don't ever forget that. We have the most fun. We feel good all the time, even in the most distressing situations—because we have to. We haven't got any choice. We know how bogus the old way is and we can't take it any more. It sucks so bad we can't stand it. That's why it's so funny to hear people talking about “selling out” and “co-optation” any more, because now anybody who's got it CAN'T give it up for that other shit any more. It's impossible.

Actually we co-opt their media, not vice versa. Just like we co-opt their kids. When the son of an industrialist big-shot starts smoking dope and dropping acid and digging hard-core rock and roll music and taking the money from his father's system and bringing it into our economy, we don't say he's co-opting the free thing—we have to say that we've copped another of their replacements.

It's the same way when PLAYBOY runs an interview with Eldridge Cleaver or an article on the future age by Alan Watts—we're using their media to get our message across to their people who are our people all the time but just aren't hip to it. We couldn't buy that space, we couldn't steal it, we couldn't make them give it up, but we did get it by making our thing attractive enough to them on their terms that they would use it for their ends too.

You have to get a copy of Abbie Hoffman's book, REVOLUTION FOR THE HELL OF IT, just published by Dial Press. REVOLUTION FOR THE HELL OF IT is a handbook on guerrilla warfare for the white middle-class American dropout. I would say that it ranks in importance with Che Guevara's GUERRILLA WARFARE as an essential handbook for revolutionaries in America, especially young white American revolutionaries.

Che says in his book that the most important dictum for a guerrilla is to "know your terrain," and Abbie knows America inside and out. He knows what to do with it too. So will you when you read his book. It's funny too. Along with sections of NAKED LUNCH and SOFT MACHINE and NOVA EXPRESS by William Burroughs, REVOLUTION FOR THE HELL OF IT will show you how to bring the system to its knees by using its very own techniques and technology against it.

Westerners have absolutely no respect for content—they're hooked on form-image. "Image is junk," Burroughs said, and once their form is infiltrated, you can get your own content in and they hardly notice it, as long as they can relate to the form. Americans are the farthest out in this respect. That's how we can disguise ourselves as simple economic forces, like rock and roll bands, newspapers, etc., and continue to carry out our work with the blessing of the power structure because they are so easily fooled by a graspable form. They even give us the money and the other means whereby we can carry out our work, which is making people feel good and giving them the information they need to free themselves from the death-pig culture once and for all and get busy freeing other people.

This is why I said before, that MUSIC IS REVOLUTION, because it is immediate, total, fast-changing and on-going. Rock and roll is the revolution. There is no separation. Rock and roll not only is a weapon of cultural revolution, it is cultural revolution, in all its applications. At its best the music works to free people on all levels, and a rock and roll band is a working model of post-revolutionary life. The members of a rock and roll family or tribe are totally interdependent and totally committed to the same end, which is universal freedom and universal happiness. And now it can happen.

The way to total freedom is through the cybernetic revolution, which means that the technology will be freed to do the work of the people and the people will be freed to have a goofy time doing whatever they might do. Work takes on its original definition—energy freed—because the work that people will do in the paleo-cybernetic age will be totally useful. There will be no waste, because there will be nobody who can profit from the waste, as there is in capitalist society.

Capitalism sucks—it is based on the two horrible notions of private property and competition, both of which have to go right now. There's no room for that old-time shit in the world today. People have got to get it together, not apart. People are now stuck in bullshit jobs, bullshit schools, bullshit houses, bullshit marriages, bullshit social and economic scenes, and there's no need for it anymore. Most of the jobs that presently exist are useless and anti-human, and they'll be done away with immediately.

Likewise most of the products of the present consumer economy—they're bullshit and will no longer exist. Eighty-seven different brands of fucking toothpaste, indeed! And that's only one of millions of dumb products—junk—that people have been hooked on by the junk pushers of capitalism. The whole thing sucks! Everything has to be free or else!

The only answer is for people to start dropping out of the death machine and start getting it together. Find your personal brothers and sisters and start living and working together. It's not only more fun and more productive, it's also cheaper and easier within the present system to live, work, eat, and do everything else as a unit. Plus, you get political and economic power that enables you to get along better and carry out your program with less bullshit from the creeps. If you have an effective organization, you can demand better conditions from the greed creeps, and you will get what you want. Try it.

You know this is true. The system depends on you and you alone for its existence. If you won't go along with it, it will fall apart. Believe it! If you—every one of you—won't go in the army then there wouldn't be any army! The same thing for General Motors. They need YOU to keep their thing going. And when you aren't there they miss you. They try to get you back. They want to lock you up so if you won't go along with them, at least you won't get to work against them. But they can't keep us locked up. Shit, they can't even keep ME locked up!

Think about it. If the kids in high schools who can't stand that shit would stop going—all of you—then where would the schools be? They have to have you there. If you aren't there they won't be able to eat—they won't have a job any more. Your parents will go crazy too. They'll all have to give you what you want in order to get you to go along with them. And if you don't stop demanding, they'll be on their toes every minute. The second you let up, they start to solidify their gains. You can't let up on them, people. You got to keep on them all the time. You have to live this life every second, or they'll shoot you right out of it before you know what happened.

Dig this: a group of militant brothers at Roosevelt High School in Wyandotte are being fucked with for wearing Levis to school! Like this is some kind of fucking church or something. But the Levi suspension is really a trick. The administration used it as a ruse so they could expel some of the most effective student organizers—almost 50 of them! But the brothers are bad and plan to make things hot for their rulers out there in Wyandotte. The suspensions went down on the last day of school before "Christmas vacation," so the brothers are planning their strategy and getting their shit together so they'll be ready when they get back. Power to the people! Student power to students! Up against the wall, Gregg and Brinklow!

If you're living at home, start planning for what you'll be doing when you split. Get together with your people who are waiting to split and plan a scene for when you can be together. Start practicing now, on your parents' money and time. Save up your money if you get any so you can buy your equipment and supplies when you split.

Don't waste your time pissing and moaning about how shitty everything is. Start getting it together so you can change it. Everybody knows what a drag it is. You're not telling anybody anything they can use. Exchange information. Get down. And when you split, have your thing together so you'll be able to have a better time than just sitting around smoking bogus dope, dropping bogus acid, shooting speed, and listening to low-energy pop-rock jams.

"Tripping out" is a dead end and a drag in the end. You always come down. If you engage yourself in a total revolutionary program, you will have a guaranteed good time forever and will help other people feel good too. More about this next time.

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