

Von Hoffman

After the Quake

Washington

THE AFTERSHOCKS from the quaking demonstrations of the last couple of weeks are still registering on the seismographs around here.

The Mitchell/Kleindienst faction is running around saying, "Nyaaa, nyaaa, we won. You said you were going to overthrow the government and



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ya didn't." If these politicians have any notion of what these demonstrations must look like to the country and the world, they're keeping it to themselves.

They appear to have lost all perspective and to have locked themselves into a vendetta with the weirdo leaders. So Mitchell, who didn't think Fred Hampton and Mark

Clark's civil rights were violated when they were rubbed out by the Chicago cops, is going to indict Rennie Davis for conspiring to deprive commuters of their civil rights by tying up traffic. How they think the manufacture of so many martyrs with all the trouble that causes is going to help this increasingly insecure and inept administration surpasses explanation.

While Mitchell angers more and more people to action, Nixon meets with his Washington police chief to prepare for next time. He's assuming that the next demonstrations will be like the last, but he does that with everything — deals with the future by replaying the past.

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IN TRUTH, with all the dough they spend on spies, snoops and taps, the government had no idea that so many people would be parading around here. Nixon's domestic intelligence is no better than what he gets in Southeast Asia. He'd help himself if he'd stop reading those silly apathy-on-the-campus articles. He won't, so he'll be as surprised and maladroit next time. But that is as it must be, for his part in history is to be everybody's foil.

The crew-cut, narrow-lapel doves are also in disarray. They're wringing their hands and asking themselves how much have we lost because of the behavior of the berserker freaks throwing the garbage in the streets and creating dangerously overcrowded and unhealthy conditions in Washington's jails.

It's hard for the respectable, working and shaving doves to understand that their real leaders are the freaks and the crazies. Yet it is so and has been throughout the development of this most unusual of American social movements. What the freaks say today the respectables will say in about a year. A year ago the creeps were telling people that the POW issue was just a crock, now the respectables are saying it too. It's been the same with everything from war crimes to Vietcong flags. The freaks break the ice with some new outrage which gets everyone apoplectic and then people think about it and often agree. So it is that Rennie Davis and the rest of his sordid lot have done more to shape and change American political opinion than the last three Presidents.

In 50 years this city of statues will have one of Rennie, but for the time being the liberal hero is John Kerry, the ex-naval officer who made the moving speech to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He's a good boy. He doesn't go too far; he goes instead to fancy Washington dances and plays houseguest at the home of multi-million dollar heiress ladies. Him Washington can relate to for he tickles the emotions without threatening anybody.

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THE FREAKS themselves have no idea what they're going to do next. They were bowled over, too, both by their numbers and their successes. There's a great desire to do it again, not only because the need to do something remains but also because they had such a helluva good time.

They had an action high from running around on the streets, but the best was the jail . . . girls and boys chanting, "today's pig is tomorrow's baloney sandwich," marvelous fun, all that singing and carrying on, but even the people who were not lucky enough to be in Mitchell's detention pens, but were stuffed 14 to a jail cell under beastly conditions, even these went through an inspiring experience, as though they'd swallowed the eucharist of fraternity. A Movement heavy from Detroit may have summed it up when he said, "Whatever it was we had at Woodstock and lost at Altamont, we found again in D.C.'s jails."

In the meantime, something may be happening at long last in the United States Senate. Senator Mike Gravel from Alaska says he's going to filibuster the draft bill, which must be passed by midnight of June 30, or Nixon's water is cut off.

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