

Los Angeles Free Press

October 23, 1970

'a clear and present danger'

The American Revolution 1970 -

not a shot away

NORMAN SPINRAD

It's been fashionable for the past year or two to say that the Revolution is already under way, which makes it a bit difficult for me to say that the events of the past few months clearly indicate that the Revolution has *really* started in earnest. The word "Revolution" has been rather freely used in the past couple of years as a label for everything from nonviolent protest to life-styles to the fantasies of the oppressed to a long list of lousy films.

But the "Revolution" that I'm talking about now is the kind that involves a civil war for control of the country, and not a war fought with rhetoric or posters or symbolic confrontations. In the second half of the twentieth century, Revolution has become nearly synonymous with guerrilla warfare, and that's precisely what's begun now in the United States: the opening stages of a guerrilla war.

A guerrilla war does not always or even often start with a declaration, a counterdeclaration, and then a series of pitched battles; it sort of sneaks up on you. One day you suddenly look around and realize that it's been going on for years, but you just can't put your finger on when it started. Like Vietnam, or Cuba, or China; you can fix the beginning of the war with a given minor event with the benefit of hindsight, but at the time no one dreamed that, for instance, the landing of a few men in Cuba was an event of great historical import.

That's where we're at right now in the United States. By perhaps 1972, there will be a guerrilla war being fought in this country that people will generally agree began sometime in 1970. It will be a very peculiar guerrilla war, and its beginnings will have really been weird, which perhaps is one of the reasons that in 1970 the war that has already begun is not that easy to see.

But not that hard to see, if you're looking for it.

For instance, there's the recent rash of bombings, bomb attempts, and bomb threats. Except that this isn't really an isolated outburst of terrorism—it's going to become a long-term part of our lives. The Weathermen have promised more bombings, as have any number of other guerrilla tribes, like the Red Sun Tribe, the Perfect Park Home Grown Garden Society, and the Black Death Motherfuckers. Assassinations of the families of public officials have been threatened by The Invisible Men, another guerrilla tribe, and it's only a matter of time—and not much of that!—before a few tribes decide to hang

some big-name political trophies on their walls. Terrorism in the form of bombings and assassinations is the natural opening stage of guerrilla warfare, at least in an urbanized society. Small groups or even lone individuals bent on assassinating public officials and blowing up buildings simply cannot be effectively stopped. It's anyone's guess how many dedicated violent revolutionary guerrillas there are in the United States today, but surely the figure must be well over a thousand. Even a thousand dedicated terrorists broken down into small independent groups can blow up a lot of buildings and assassinate a lot of politicians and then melt into the great man-made jungles of the cities. Terrorists will be caught, bombings and assassinations will fail, but there is simply no way that the government can crush a terrorist movement.

Moreover, this American brand of guerrilla terrorism will be harder to stop than even the classic form, because of the complete decentralization of the guerrilla tribes. As of now, there simply is no over-all command structure on any level; therefore there is no possibility of the government destroying the guerrilla movement by grabbing all the leaders in one fell swoop. Further, the guerrilla movement has a built-in self-recruiting mechanism. Every time a bombing is successful, new guerrilla tribes spring up, whose only connection to existing guerrilla tribes is a general dedication to the same cause. Thus the guerrilla movement gains new divisions without risking the exposure of a single man.

The army of the Revolution already exists, has already engaged in a form of combat, and has evolved a recruiting mechanism which will keep it growing, at least up to a point.

One need only look at what the national government is doing to see that they are convinced that some form of violent revolution is ahead. Nixon is expanding the size of the FBI, digging a big underground bunker for J. Edgar's boys in Washington, and moving to expand the jurisdiction of the FBI to cover all campus disorders, while piously assuring the faithful that he has no intention of turning the FBI into a National Police Force on the model of the Gestapo or the NKVD.

Remember when the FBI's "Ten

Most Wanted" list was stocked with bankrobbers and ax murderers? Well, look again. No sooner does the capture of Angela Davis remove her name from J. Edgar's shopping list than it is replaced by that of Bernadine Dohrn. More and more every day, the FBI is concentrating its attention on political criminals, so-called enemies of the state. And if you don't think that's the potential beginning of an American Gestapo, keep your eyes on those

wanted posters in the Post Office. The next face you see may be your own.

Or look at the recent Senate Internal Security Subcommittee hearings, in which law officers from various parts of the country displayed all the heavy artillery they had captured from revolutionaries (their word!) for the edification of the likes of Sens. Eastland and Thurmond.

While Strom toyed somewhat obscenely with a submachinegun, a California official told the committee a lurid tale of woe, revolution and anarchy, at the end of which was the following exchange between the California cop and Sen. James Eastland.

EASTLAND[eyes bugging]: "Why . . . why that's open revolution!"

CAL. COP: "Yes sir. We believe it constitutes a clear and present danger to the security of the United States."

The point of this is that people like Eastland, Nixon, Hoover, and police officials have zero desire to promote the Revolution. When people like this begin to acknowledge that some sort of revolution is under way, it's not because they want to but because they have to. They have to admit that a Revolution exists in order to pry the funds out of Congress and the state legislatures with which to combat it. Later on (perhaps not too much later on) we'll be hearing people like Nixon, Hoover, Mitchell and Reagan openly admitting that some sort of guerrilla war is going on for the purpose of securing legislation and/or court decisions that will allow the government to take quasi-wartime measures to "protect the internal security of the United States." "Preventive Detention" (English translation: internment camps for POWs) is only the opening wedge.

The guerrilla war has begun and the United States is slowly sliding into a domestic wartime footing. Public buildings are no longer open to the public. The police are being armed for anti-guerrilla warfare, though not nearly as rapidly as they would like.

OVER

Constitutional liberties are eroding away in the face of demands for greater government power to deal with the revolution. Democrats have found it necessary to form a united National Front with the Republicans on the "Law and Order" issue. It's not just a shot away anymore—it's *here*.

Where does it go from here? Expect a rapid rise in bombings and the beginning of a long series of political assassinations. The next step may be the establishment of guerrilla sanctuaries, small urban sections in the ghettos and in places like Berkeley where the police can only go in massive force. Along with this may come the beginning of really serious sabotage. Our technological society is peculiarly vulnerable to sabotage. A well-placed bomb in a power station can plunge a great metropolitan area into darkness; the destruction of key computers can throw an industrial complex or a governmental department into chaos.

If a few thousand terrorists want to bring America to an angry, ass-grinding halt, it's really not that difficult. A couple of hundred key assassinations, a thousand well-placed bombs, and a highly-sophisticated technological culture like our own would be left staggering and sputtering.

And then what?

Pitched battles between guerrillas and police? Mass arson and the burning of cities? Ambushes? Pogroms? Concentration Camps where length of hair need be the only entrance requirement? A coup by the US Army or a series of local coups by police? Foreign intervention? Chinese volunteers?

When you look past 1971, sober prognostication becomes indistinguishable from the most lurid science fiction. What this country will be like during the Presidential Election campaign of 1972 (assuming the election is held) beggars description.

The Revolution has begun; the guerrillas are in the streets and the bombs are exploding. Can the Revolution be won? Can it be crushed? Or will America endure what Vietnam has endured—a quarter century or more of continuous guerrilla warfare?

For the very decentralization and diffusion that makes the guerrilla tribes so impossible for the government to decisively crush will make it impossible for the revolutionaries to actually win a final victory. There is not even any firm agreement on what the practical goals of the revolution are.

But a lot of people are fed up enough with things as they stand to reach for their rifles and bombs; they don't agree on what they're for, but they bloody well know who and what they're against. And the American Establishment knows full well that these revolutionaries are its implacable enemies.

It sounds like the formula for one long mother of a civil war.