

## Jerry Rubin and the Youth International Party.

This handout is a tool in order to get a better sense of how the Yippies and especially one of the more prominent Yippie leaders Jerry Rubin thought.

The quotes and considerations are mostly Rubin's own. The quotes are included on this handout in order to provide a brief understanding of the state of mind of Jerry Rubin during his activist days, his justifications for doing what he did and an understanding of the way his rhetoric has been a tool in protesting and provoking the established system of government and society in general.

The two following quotes show how Rubin feels the established political left wing has passed its opportunity for successful action and why civil disobedience is a necessary tool for advocating one's case:

"For years I went to left-wing meetings trying to figure out what the hell was going on. Finally I started taking acid, and I realized what was going on: nothing. I vowed never to go to another left-wing meeting again. Fuck left-wing meetings!" (Clecak: 605/6)

'When a country's institutions stifle its thought and poison its moral health, civil disobedience is the only recourse ... We must say to Johnson, Inc.: If you want to go on killing Vietnamese you must jail Americans.' (De Groot: 103/4)

In January 1968, the Yippies released an initial call to come to Chicago, called "A STATEMENT FROM YIP":

"Join us in Chicago in August for an international festival of youth, music, and theater. Rise up and abandon the creeping meatball! Come all you rebels, youth spirits, rock minstrels, truth-seekers, peacock-freaks, poets, barricade-jumpers, dancers, lovers and artists!

"It is summer. It is the last week in August, and the NATIONAL DEATH PARTY meets to bless Lyndon Johnson. We are there! There are 50,000 of us dancing in the streets, throbbing with amplifiers and harmony. We are making love in the parks. We are reading, singing, laughing, printing newspapers, groping, and making a mock convention, and celebrating the birth of FREE AMERICA in our own time. "Everything will be free. Bring blankets, tents, draft-cards, body-paint, Mr. Leary's Cow, food to share, music, eager skin, and happiness. The threats of LBJ, Mayor Daley, and J. Edgar Freako will not stop us. We are coming! We are coming from all over the world! ... "We will be in Chicago. Begin preparations now! Chicago is yours! Do it!"

The following are all excerpts from Rubin's book DO IT! Scenarios of the Revolution:

'Yippies would use the Democratic Party and the Chicago theatre to build our stage and make the myth; we'd steal the media away from the Democrats and create the spectre of 'yippies' overthrowing Amerika.' (Rubin: 83)

'The myth of yippie will overthrow the government. The myth makes the revolution' (Rubin: 83)

'Marihuana is compulsory at all yippie meetings. Yippies take acid at breakfast to bring us closer to reality. Holden Caulfield is a yippie. The old Nixon was a yippie; the new Nixon is not.' (Rubin: 86)

'But there's one word which America hasn't ruined. One word which has maintained its emotional power and purity. America cannot destroy it because she dare not use it. It's illegal! It's the last word left in the English language! FUCK !! ... The Filthy Speech Movement had been born.' (Rubin: 109-10)

'The yippies are Marxists. We follow in the revolutionary tradition of Groucho, Chico, Harpo and Karl. What the yippies learnt from Karl Marx – history's most infamous, bearded, longhaired, hippie commie freek agitator – is that we must create a spectacular myth of revolution. Karl wrote and sang his own rock album called 'The Communist Manifesto'. 'The Communist Manifesto' is a song that has overthrown governments. (Rubin: 116)

#### Suggestions for further reading and bibliography

James P. O'Brien, 'The Development of the New Left', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol 395 (1971), pp. 15-25. (Available from JSTOR)

Phina Lahav, 'Theater in the Courtroom: The Chicago Conspiracy Trial', *Law and Literature*, Vol. 16 (2004), pp. 381-474. (Available from JSTOR)

David Deleon, 'The American as Anarchist: Social Criticism in the 1960s', *American Quarterly*, Vol 25, (1973), p. 516-537. (Available from JSTOR)

Stanley Aronowitz, 'When the New Left Was New', *Social Text*, No. 9/10, *The 60s without Apology*, (1984), pp. 11-43. (Available from JSTOR)

Peter Clecak, 'The Revolution Delayed: The Political and Cultural Revolutionaries in America', *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol 12, No. 3, (1971), pp. 590-619 (Available from JSTOR)

Gerard J. De Groot, 'The Limits of Moral Protest and Participatory Democracy: The Vietnam Day Committee', *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol 64, No.1 (1995), pp. 95-119. (Available from JSTOR)

Douglas O. Linder: 'The Chicago Seven Conspiracy Trial':  
<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/Chicago7/Account.html>

Jerry Rubin, 'DO IT! Scenarios of the Revolution', (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1970)