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Revolution, reform and change

This week LIFE begins a two-part series on Revolution, a subject we have long covered in its violent and nonviolent, political and social aspects. Through historical example, the current series will attempt to show how and why revolutions begin; how they have changed in nature, technique and goals; and, finally, how these lessons apply to the U.S. today.

By common consent, if not common approval, these are revolutionary times, but there are many different kinds and degrees of revolution. The LIFE series deals principally with the violent political overthrow of government, but revolutions also come in other forms: the process of peaceful but nevertheless profound change, the demand for reform of existing institutions and customs, the technological advance that suddenly makes old life styles obsolete.

Some of these milder forms of revolution are reflected in other stories in LIFE this week and in the world at large. The trial in Chicago (pp. 28D-31) assembles eight members of the radical left and attempts to convict them under the controversial conspiracy section of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. A look inside the Marine Corps prison at Camp Pendleton, Calif. (pp. 32-37) invites a thorough investigation and reform of the administration of military justice. (Just as the dismissal of the murder charges against the Green Berets invites other questions on the same subject.)

Another chapter in LIFE's series on Threatened America (pp. 126-134) reports on the battle between the nation's highways and its landscape, a battle that is drawing more and more citizens to both sides of the barricades. In Washington, D.C., President Nixon contends with a revolt against his Vietnam policy and simultaneously tries to convince Hanoi that there is no revolt (page 4). He also came out strongly in support of the revolutionary proposal to overthrow the Electoral College and permit Americans to elect a President by direct popular vote, a movement LIFE heartily supports. In Germany, a peaceful revolution took place at the polls, giving the Social Democrats an opportunity, for the first time since the days before Hitler, to try to form a government, and repudiating both the neo-Nazi far right and the pro-Communist left (page 38).

Fortunately, not all forms of revolution, reform and change need be taken so seriously. If you want to live in a barn (pp. 136-139) or a tree (page 144), there is nothing to stop you. And the change in high school fashions (pp. 40-45) is certainly radical, but it is peaceful, pleasant, and alarming mainly to saddle-shoe manufacturers.



RALPH GRAVES
Managing Editor

LIFE

A New Series REVOLUTION

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How does it start?
Can it happen here?

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