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Letter:

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The White Revolution

To the Editor:

Two events have moved me — as I arrived on the Berkeley campus this fall. I recount them with the belief that they are relevant to what is happening now at Brown.

The first occurred at the Oakland Induction Center on the second day of Stop The Draft Week. I was monitoring a group of 50 people sitting-in at the doorway, and the police began to clear the street, and a thousand demonstrators ran past in panic, and then club-carried by cops moved toward us and suddenly I realized that we were going to be arrested, but I didn't.

The second happened on the Sproul Hall steps. There 50 Negroes of the Afro-American Student Union physically blocked a scheduled rally by a campus conservative group. While black faces glowered at the white audience from the steps, AASU head Jim Nabors announced that any white who opposed this take-over had better do it in the privacy of his bathroom, behind locked doors, or "we are going to assert blackness all over you, baby!"

I went on to explain that he was there in order to urge support for one Huey P. Newton, a local Black Panther leader who recently shot and killed one cop and wounded another after having been stopped for a speeding violation. Huey Newton's only crime, Mr. Nabors informed us, was that he had been born with black skin.

The next heard from Jimmy Nabors, the leader of the Black Students Union at San Francisco State. That week 12 members of the Black Students Union had slashed themselves by breaking into the office of the campus newspaper and beating up two of the editors.

The "issue" that sent these two whites to the hospital was — if you can dig this — an allegedly rigged Homecoming Queen election, in which an Anglo-Saxon coed had defeated a Philippine girl. Mr. Garrett stated, in what he evidently regarded as a moral justification of this criminal assault, "what you have to realize is that the black revolution is on the upbeat."

Jimmy concluded his remarks by calling on non-racist Berkeley students to buy guns for the black revolutionaries: "Blacks can't buy guns in San Francisco. Whites can. If you want to help us, you know what you can do." A (white) voice from the crowd asked who he was planning to shoot with those guns. Non-plussed, Jimmy replied with only a hint of sarcasm in his voice. "I wouldn't shoot *you*. You're my friend." Next day Jim Nabors predicted that the Huey Newtons of America were going to "boil this nation dry and paint it black." He wasn't kidding, either.

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The emotion I felt on those two occasions was exactly the same. It wasn't fear, and it certainly wasn't hatred — though I also felt fear and had to stifle hatred. What I felt was a more numbing realization of the sickness — the violent sickness — of American society. I suggest that essentially that same emotion is shared by white radicals across the country. That emotion, with the perceptions it embodies, goes a long way toward explaining the new mood of anti-war protest in America.

That there is a new mood goes without saying. The sit-in that took place at Brown could not have occurred a year or even a month ago. The march on Washington has aptly been described as an assault on the Pentagon. In Oakland last October, 10,000

students overturned cars and barricaded the streets to prevent buses of inductees from reaching their destination. Less than two weeks ago, at UCLA students threw rocks at police and smashed every window in the building where a Dow recruiter was attempting to carry on interviews. These examples could be multiplied.

On November 10, at a public forum Berkeley Professor Franz Schurmann, a self-proclaimed "left-liberal-professional," asserted that professional friends of his — respected teachers, lawyers, and preachers — were talking seriously about terrorism, i.e. such acts as blowing up bridges and war supply depots.

I don't know Professor Schurmann's friends, but I can state categorically that some of my white friends are also talking terrorism, and they mean what they say.

Yesterday a fire-bomb was thrown into the Berkeley draft board office early in the morning. I didn't commit that act, nor do I have any idea who did; but I understand the desperate horror that could lead a man to such an act. Last year as HERALD editors we pontificated about the dead-end of liberal protest. This year as Americans we are witnessing the dead-end of radical protest — including sit-ins and other non-violent civil disobedience. Only now are we *living* through the radical dead-end, and the radical frustration is our own.

Paradoxically enough, the new mood of militant protest is associated with the emotion spoken of earlier: horror of the violence in American society.

What is happening is that white radicals are beginning to come to terms with the implications of black militancy. The anti-war movement has ever taken

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its cue from the right movement, and this is as true today, when Rap Brown is speaking for Negroes, as yesterday when Martin Luther King seemed to speak for them.

(If anybody doubts that the mood of the ghettos is indeed revolutionary or at least rebellious, don't just chew a pencil in reflection. Go down to the Providence ghetto, observe, and ask questions. Better yet, ask your token Negro friend what he thinks. You may be surprised.)

My own interpretation of white anti-war militance is that it is not so much a reaction to the failure of past protest, as is customarily claimed, but rather that it is a subconscious attempt to preempt the violent rhetoric of the blacks.

Whites today are beginning to recognize that in *The Fire Next Time* James Baldwin was making a sound prediction, not merely indulging in idle talk. And next time is now. Perhaps in the context of the 1960's the true conservatives are the white revolutionaries who want to tear down the racist institutions of society before the black racists tear down society itself or, what is far more likely, bring holocaust to the Negro community in the attempt.

What does Stokely Carmichael have to do with the war against Vietnam? Anybody who has been listening with half an ear knows that the Snick militants have answered that question for themselves. According to Mr. Carmichael, the name of the game is imperialism, and imperialism is what oppresses the Negroes in America and the Vietnamese in Vietnam alike.

To put the matter crudely — which is the way the black revolutionaries think — the colored peoples of the world are rising against the color-less nations. Since the colored peoples of Asia and Africa are the have-nots, and the color-less peoples of Europe and America are the haves, the struggle is against capitalism as well as colonialism. In Vietnam and Watts and Bolivia and Newark and South Africa and Detroit the story is somehow the same: white imperialism versus colored liberation.

Of course this is a myth, but like all myths it contains a measure of truth, and it is a proven fact that this particular myth makes white radicals

fantasy was dramatized at the Chicago New Politics Conference, where the white majority swallowed a list of strident black-power resolutions to prevent a black walk-out. I suggest the coming white anti-war resistance can best be understood as an attempt to stave off a national black walk-out and the resultant black apocalypse.

I believe that violent resistance to the suppression of the Vietnamese people is in part an attempt to say that there exist white Americans who understand the plight of the Negro and are willing to act to end that suppression.

More personally: as matters now stand I cannot communicate with Jim Nabors or Jimmy Garrett — far less with the Huey P. Newtons of America. If violence is the only language they understand, then so be it. I will learn that language. Moreover, though I speak contemptuously of the "fantasy" white imperialism, I know in my heart that there is more truth in that fantasy than I would care to admit.

I say all this because Americans will be in a muddle if they fail to recognize the coming resistance for what it is: a *revolutionary* resistance based on the conviction that Vietnam and the Dominican Republic are not simply horrible mistakes in American diplomacy, but that the contradictions in American society are being projected in a cruel, absurd international dialectic. Cruel because innocent Vietnamese and Americans are being killed, absurd because the killing serves no purpose.

What is needed is, in the quaintly dated jargon of SDS, "basic structural change." As I see it the main difference between that euphemism and H. Rap Brown's more candid "burn America down" is that the white revolutionaries visualize a society free of racial hatreds, not a race-proud black nation founded on a racist demonology.

Like thoughtful black theoreticians, white radicals are under no illusions as to what the consequences of resistance will be. The resistance will be crushed. I know that if I resist the war and the draft *effectively*, I will be kicked out of school into jail: that is a fact I have to learn to live with.

It is important to realize from the outset that there is

the war machine. If the war is to be resisted effectively property must be damaged and people (mostly resistors) will be hurt and maybe killed. To pretend otherwise, to claim that resistance is a constitutionally-guaranteed right along with free speech and assembly, is only to buttress the argument of those right-wingers who want to brand *all* dissent as treason and suppress legitimate free speech and assembly.

What is successful resistance? The hope is that the pragmatic political leaders of our country can be made to realize that the cost of military adventure abroad is militant disruption at home. The hope is that the cost — in terms of dissension and disruption within American society — will become higher than the American people are willing to pay. (The parallel is to the militant resistance among the French people to the occupation of Algeria.) And the further hope is that once the troops are brought home and American interventionism moderated, the race problem in America will not be found to be insoluble.

Whether these limited hopes are utopian remains to be seen. I myself am pessimistic, as are most thoughtful Americans of all political persuasions. Resistance is born of the knowledge that the situation is bad and getting worse, and that there exists no viable alternative mode of social change.

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I have deliberately been blunt in my comments, in an effort to offset the soothing implications of Mr. Kaplan's analysis, expressed in this newspaper in a recent letter-to-the-editor. As usual I am in agreement with much of what he says, but I vehemently reject his suggestion that the purpose of confrontation-style demonstrations is to achieve a serious dialogue — with the Dow and CIA recruiters, with Dr. Heffner and Dean Brennan, or with General Hershey and President Johnson.

In my experience just the opposite is true: the anti-war protesters are largely tired of dialogue, and rightly suspicious of those who insist that teach-ins and sit-ins are the alpha and omega of moral protest. To claim that the goal of militant resistance is mutual understanding between war-makers and war-

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protest is to miss the point of it all.

Pascal, don't overlook the possibility that when we say resistance we mean just what we say: we want to close down the induction centers, stop the troop trains, kick the recruiters off-campus, and generally shut the war machine down. Period.

Resistance implies a new concept of patriotism, such that to be a good citizen of America it is first necessary to be a good citizen of the world. When the CIA terrorizes Indonesia, when American planes bomb Hanoi, our responsibilities as citizens are no less than if the CIA were staging a coup in Providence or the bombs exploding in Berkeley. As a citizen I must do all I can to stop the war.

Resistance is essentially political — and thus collective — action. I believe the anti-war movement will become more and more anonymous. Who I am, what kind of person I am, is irrelevant when I am organizing or carrying out militant resistance. In an anti-draft riot there are no personalities, just soldiers or committed bodies. This is a frightening fact, but it must be recognized as a fact.

That is not to say that I subscribe to Pascal's portrayal of a person as two selves, one of which wants to lead a happy life and one of which wants to be martyred in the resistance. I am one person; I am not faced with the choice of deciding between two conflicting selves. Things are desperate, but they are not as desperate as all *that*: even Karl Marx had a wife and family. The resistance will be crushed, but resisters will survive to eat, breathe, work, make love, and perhaps to fight another day. The FBI notwithstanding, Stan Griffith is not going to vanish into thin air.

All that I have been trying to say can be summarized in a paraphrase of Jimmy Garrett: "The white revolution is on the upbeat." If you can understand that, you are in a position to understand what is going to happen in America during the coming months. It is as simple (and as complex) as black-and-white. Join us if you are so moved; reach for your shotgun if you are patriotically offended. But don't emasculate resistance by assimilating it to symbolic protest.

Gandhi asked, "What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy?" The anti-war movement now takes that question to be rhetorical. The answer is "no difference," and so resistance must be total.

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