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Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Times, 1967.

Reflections on the Revolutions of our Times
Daniel Jeremy Silver
January 22, 1967

Since last July most of the high schools and the colleges of China have been closed. The students in this seemingly endless recess have been conscripted to a Red Guard and they have been marching across China, forming a sort of parapetetic peace corps, stopping here and there to dig an irrigation tunnel, to clear a field of stones. It denounced elders who stand in the way of Mao Tse Tung's revolution and as they march they wave a little red notebook of Mao's maxims and they chant his poems, his proverbs and the songs of their revolution. The sun is rising in the east. China has brought forth a Mao Tse Tung. He plans blessings for the people - he is the people's great saviour. Mao Tse Tung has a great love for the people. He is the man who guides us along the pathway. With him we shall build a new China, he leads the people into the future. Mao Tse Tung is a son of the China earth. He will lead us to fight the enemy. There will come a time when we will be masters, all our enemies shall be beaten.

Now Western observers were quick to understand the political byplay which energized this surging Chinese mass. Since the days of the cave, men have beaten each other, bribed, libeled, guillotined, poisoned, murdered in order to gain the purple mantle. There is not a crime in all of the catalog of human mischief which men have not justified in the name of achieving office, becoming the senior lion who rules with pride. It is perhaps the greatest and least appreciated achievement of a democracy such as ours that we have found the way to engineer a relatively bloodless, effective and scrupled means by which men can reach for the belt, for authority, and through which they can be compelled to give back the mandate of authority when they no longer command it. To measure this achievement we should remind ourselves that nine in ten wars in history have been wars of succession, that nine in ten of the

revolutions of this generation, of this century, have been the attempt of this general or that hunta to overthrow this hunta or that general, and that the massive convulsion which is shaking China is no more or less than a war of succession. Mao Tse Tung, the great leader of the Chinese revolution, is 73 years of age. The Red son of China knows that however bright the day there must always be a sunset. He has nominated the Secretary of the People's Liberation Army, the great massive professional military, Lyn Peo, to be his successor, but there were others who watched and waited for the sunset. These have not been willing to give the seat of office, the badges of power, to Lyn Peo without a battle. General Yoo, the Chinese Chief of State, the head of the Chinese Communist Party, and others have been busy these last years building a coterie of admirers, establishing for themselves the base of power from which they could, as they are doing now, grab for the supreme authority over one-half of the peoples of the earth. This is the battle which is raging now in China. The Red Guard march because Mao Tse Tung and his nominee, Lyn Peo, know full well that they must have a show of force and the Red Guard, the surging mass, presumably unstoppable, immovable, these are their shock troops, these are their goats, these are their mandates. And the Red workers and the other groups which have come into the field opposing the Red Guard, these are the votes, these are the mandates of the dissidents, of those who have been passed over for the question in China today is the question, who shall rule.

But there are other issues, for us, perhaps, more important. These marching millions of youth, these children who chant the litanies of their church, these children who carry high the picture of their saviour, these children who have obviously a messianic feeling that the future rests on their shoulders, that they must purify the homeland of the dross, of the disease of counter revolution of the bourgeoisie, these children remind me of nothing so much as the children's revolution, the children's

crusade rather of some 700 years ago. In the year 1096 of this era Pope Urban II proposed an armed pilgrimage to recapture the Holy Sepulchre from the heathen, purify the holy land of the Saracens and Infidels. He preached the crusade and the promise of loot, the lure of adventure, medieval piety, the pledge that all debts of the crusaders would be remitted, the promise by the church of indulgences of sins that could be turned in at the gates of paradise to assure one of immediate admission, all of these emotional, economic and political factors were in the compound which led king and commoner and knight to shout, the Lord wills it, take the cross, cross the Mediterranean and try and capture the Holy Land for Christ's vicar on earth.

The first crusading armies won some great victories. Jerusalem was captured. A number of small crusader states were established in Asia Minor, but then the mass of the crusading army went home and the Arabs who had bent with the blow but who had not really been broken began to attack here and there, to slowly nibble away at the territory which the crusaders had conquered. A second crusade was preached. The second crusade pushed back the boundaries of the Christian Near East to those that had been there in 1098 and then the crusaders returned home and the Arabs returned to the process of reconquest. And finally, about 60 years after the first crusade, Jerusalem itself fell again into the hands of Saladin near Acre, the great Saracen leaders, and the pope preached a third crusade and the third crusade failed to recapture Jerusalem and the pope preached a fourth crusade and the fourth crusade failed to recapture Jerusalem. All of Europe became weary of this crusading war much as many in the United States have become weary of the war in Southeast Asia. The pope needed this victory to establish his sacred and his temporal power. He preached crusade, but no one answered the call. And then, surprisingly, in the year 1212 some cleric preached the crusade to a congregation of children. And in France 30,000 children, ten-year

olds, eleven-year olds, twelve-year olds, took up the cross. They were led by an illiterate shepherd lad named Stephen and they began to surge through the highways and the streets of Europe, down through France and Italy and the Balkans, to bring the light of the Pope's truth to the Holy Land. And they were joined by 20,000 children from Germany led by an illiterate tailor's apprentice, one Nicholas, who told the children that when they reached the Mediterranean the waters will part for them just as the waters of the Red Sea had parted for the children of Israel. Now, enthusiasm, excitement, among adolescents is contagious and always has been. We have only to look about some of the histrionics of our young girls at the Beatles or the Monkeys or these other professionals of culture to realize what this excitement can be. But one wonders why the wiser heads, the adults, the churchmen, who, after all, had a responsibility to these homes and to these children, why they didn't pour the cold water of logic upon this impossible enterprise. Why did they consign 50,000 children to sure death, if not in the cold of the Carpathian Mountain winter of steel, the cold steel, of the Saracen. And the answer, of course, is that heads of state have always been able to justify immorality in the name of public policy. And Pope wanted a new crusade, and he thought that the surging mass, the presence of these children marching to war would somehow shame the adults of Europe to take up the cross, to recapture Jerusalem for him.

The story of the Pied Piper of Hamlet, the folk tale of the little piper who led the children out of the village, up the mountain, to their death is the bitter folk tale which was told throughout Europe. The Pope is the Pied Piper and the children are the children of this children's crusade.

Now I put to you that the parallel is almost an exact one. We have the mass of children, the youngsters, the sense of messianic purpose, of holy purpose. There

is the enemy. The land will be clean, the Holy Land, with China will be cleaned of the counter-revolutionary, those who oppose, of the heretic. There is the sense the future rests with them, the children, that the elders have somehow given up, not proven worthy of their faith. There is the polity, the reading, the chanting in almost endless religious revival. There was the deed, there is the duty, and there is the devotion. Mao Tse Tung has a great love for the people. He is the man who guides us along the pathway. With him we shall build a new China, a yayo, he leads the people into the future. Now the Pope was the Pied Piper of the 13th century and Mao Tse Tung and his followers are the Pied Pipers of China in our century. And we can only hope and pray that these children, once the pied piper's purposes have been fulfilled, will not be abandoned as were the children of the crusade, abandoned to a life of wandering and quick death, abandoned to the not-so-tender mercies of the elders of those in power whom they have obviously dismayed. But why has Mao Tse Tung, why has he unleashed his Red Guard? There are purposes in his program far more than simply the assuring of the succession of Lyn Peo, and the parallel of the children's crusade, I think, makes clear what his purposes are. He is determined to rekindle the spark of revolution in China much as the Pope was determined to rekindle the spark of the crusade in Europe. He has not yet succeeded in bringing China across the great leap forward. She is still economically unproductive, agriculturally not self-sufficient, militarily far less powerful than her more powerful neighbors and his followers are tired. It was almost 30 years ago that he led them in the long trek to the caves of Yenon. They have fought and they have sacrificed and they have done without and now they want a little quiet, a little graceful living, a moment to catch their breath and he cannot afford to give them that moment. He needs a new revolution, what he calls the permanent revolution. He needs greater sacrifice of his people. Mao Tse Tung is fighting the universal enemy

of change, human lethargy. The angry young man of college quickly becomes the rather paunchy, conservative, middle-aged suburban. Animals cooled by time, passion is drained over the years, man lacks, really, a steadfastness, a stick-to-itiveness. We have great ideals, but then we become enmeshed and involved in our personal problems and personal responsibilities and we turn away from citizenship and we turn away from our crusades and we turn away from our causes and when we turn back we're tired, run down and weary of aging. Mao Tse Tung is fighting the lethargy of his people, the desire to settle home and settle down. In every great vision, for good or for ill, every great vision has ultimately had to fight against this common ordinary human sin.

Moses took a slave people, not a very great people, they showed no extraordinary human capacities and he managed by his force of personality, by his charisma, by his iron will to over the people of God and what happened? Within a generation they showed all of the signs of tribal disorientation, disintegration, all the ordinary human vices, all the ordinary hum-drum human greeds. Their religion was one of compromise and accommodation. Francis of Assisi summoned men in his day to join his army of fools, give up all those prudent securities ordinary men concern themselves with for the one privilege of serving the poor. He called on men to do the foolish thing, to take the beggars' bowl in hand, and ask only the privilege of serving mankind and within his short life span the Franciscan Order had become one of the wealthiest in Europe. Its monasteries were luxuriously appertenanced and the beggar's bowl had been replaced by the sumptuous repast.

In America we fought a war to free the slaves and once the urgency of the war was over the ordinary citizen and the abolitionist alike forgot the ex-slave and consigned them inevitably to economic disadvantage and to second-class citizenship. Indifference, lethargy, these are the common enemies of all human progress and it is with these ultimately that great leaders, good or , strong men, must wrestle. Mao Tse

Tung has proclaimed in China a permanent revolution and he has set out his shock troops, these youngsters, in order to enforce this revolution, to bring it into being. Years ago when he was a runaway revolutionary in one of his many books Mao wrote: In reasoning you must first shock, you must shout to the patient yomel, you must frighten him into a sweat, and only when he's in a sweat can you tell him gently the treatment that you prescribe. China is the patient, the Red Guard is the shock, their shouts are the shouts that must bring a man through his trauma to an awareness of the urgency of the hour and one can only hope that Mao will prescribe more tenderly than he has in the past for the ills of China.

But I would suggest to you this morning that far from simply shaking our heads at the convulsions of China, at the arrogance and the ruthlessness of its leaders, we ought to realize that Mao's challenge is Cleveland. Mao's chance is Cleveland. We, too, suffer from a hardening of the civic arteries. We, too, have grown old with our revolution or reformation. There was a time in Cleveland when Cleveland was a proud city. Not only were our factories producing an abundance of goods, providing an abundance of jobs, we had quality of education for our children, we were pioneering in all manner of voluntary social welfare. We had progressive city government. We had a model city government. We were proud of this city and the city was proud of its citizens. We had aggressive, able, vigorous leaders in this city and then we began to go to sleep on the oars, and then we began to want the graceful life, no longer to sacrifice the hours for civic responsibility. We want to be in our yards, to be at home to be with our children. We were concerned with our business, with earning the legacy we would leave to someone else and Cleveland grew fat and the civic heart of Cleveland rusted and this summer we saw our own red guard chanting, marching in the city of Cleveland, pillaging, looting, damaging and I had hoped that they would shake us awake, make us perspire and sweat, convince us that we are , but seven months

later it is as if they had not been in the streets. We've returned to our private business. We have returned to our private pleasures. There are as many rats in the city of Cleveland as there were seven months ago. Our slums are as blighted. Our welfare is inadequate. Our civic leadership as laxadaisical and inept; our citizens as lethargic as they ever were. Our revolution, my dear friends, was violent, far more destructive than constructive. Revolution is essentially an animal's response, not an human response. Men revert when they are driven like the caged beast into a corner and they have no alternative but in one desperate leap to claw and to seek for freedom. Revolution is not the woe of human reason, but I would suspect that had we lived in France in 1788, or had we lived in Russia in 1916 or in China in 1945 we would have been revolutionaries. I would have been. I would have manned the barricades. When evil is contemptuous, when the society's machinery is so rusted that no reform is possible, when wickedness and privilege is unyielding and when conditions are beyond belief, beyond description, then what can the mass, the huddled, the abused do - revolt. I am also convinced that if I had been a revolutionary in 1788 I would have been guillotined in 1791; that if I had been a revolutionary in 1916 I would have been shot by the Czech on Ljubanka Prison in 1919; that if I had been a revolutionary in 1945 I would have been shot by Mao's troops in 1947 or 1948; for I am one of those kind-hearted people, those tender-hearted people which the revolutionaries have no patience with, who insist that means are as important as ends; who insist that human life is sacred and that no man has the right to deprive another man of his life or of his liberty without due cause, but I would have been a revolutionary. It is in human nature to strike out against that privilege, that contempt which abuses you and holds you down. And is it my faith to be a revolutionary when the evil is unyielding, what does the Bible tell us, to burn out the evil that is within thy midst. Jews were rebellious people. Over the centuries we rebelled again and

again and only when we became weary in the last century or two did we lose in part the capacity to stand up against all odds for our dignity and for what we felt was due us.

I don't want a revolution in Cleveland and I don't want a Red Guard or a Black Guard or bands of children wandering the streets, threatening lives, destroying property, attacking their elders - this is simple destruction. And I would be blind if I did not say that the youth will be in our streets and that it will not be their fault, but ours. For forty years this city has taken a vacation. For forty years this city has dozed and slumbered and napped. For forty years we have allowed all that was achieved to peter out, to rust. The machinery of our city no longer is operative and it cannot be made operative by another dinner meeting to honor another civic figure. It cannot be made operative again by another luncheon meeting to plan another report on the ills of our city. We've got stacks of reports this high detailing every single one of the misfortunes which beset this community. What is needed now is action, to stand up and to be counted, to be vigorous; and if we don't want those who manipulate men, those who have contempt for human life, the demagogue, the revolutionary, the disciple of violence, to assume authority, to be the maker of history, then I say to you very simply that we will have to be vigorous ourselves, to win power ourselves, to move this city off of its dead center. If we do not there will be violence in our streets and there will be violence in the seats of power. It is inevitable, it is the law of history. There is always a race in history between man's self-awareness, his sense of responsibility, his sense of discipline and need to change and his lethargy, his indolence, his sloth. Good men are guillotined not because they are good men but because they were far too gentle; because they were far too inept; because they took so long to achieve anything that time passed them by, that the masses of men had no longer any patience waiting for the report, waiting for the accommodation with the proposed compromise.

Paradoxically, then, Mao Tse Tung's problem is our own. As he is wrestling with the inertia of China we must wrestle with the inertia of this city. And if we do not want Cleveland to be ruled by such men, and God, surely we do not, and if we abhor violence, and surely we do, then we ourselves must take the initiative, become again citizens, leave off the carping and the complaining, leave off protesting time-consuming ways which achieve nothing, and see to it that our housing is built, adequate welfare is provided, quality education is the birthright of all, see to it that industry and labor and citizen and educator and religion and all the elements which make up our city unite to achieve here the kind of urban decency which an American community requires in this century. If we do not the Red Guard will be on our streets.



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China has brought forth a Mao Tse-tung.
He plans blessings for the people.
Aiyayo, he is the people's great saviour.

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He is the man who guides us along the pathway.
With him we shall build a new China.
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He will lead us to fight the enemy.
There will come a time when we will be masters.
Aiyayo, all our enemies shall be beaten.



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other ~~revelations~~ ^{an} enlightenment, why did not ~~these~~ ^{these} ~~men~~ ^{men} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~others~~ ^{others}
 show the particular quality of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~enlightenment~~ ^{enlightenment} they ~~can~~ ^{can} ~~have~~ ^{have} -
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shall ~~lead~~ ^{lead} ~~them~~ ^{them}" ~~leader~~ ^{leader} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~house~~ ^{house} ~~enlightened~~ ^{enlightened} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~others~~ ^{others}
~~to~~ ^{to} ~~enlighten~~ ^{enlighten} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~people~~ ^{people} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~others~~ ^{and} ^{others} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~world~~ ^{world}
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 with the ~~enlightened~~ ^{enlightened} ~~center~~ ^{center} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~1000's~~ ^{1000's} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~men~~ ^{men} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~others~~ ^{and} ^{others}
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the kind of Chen from the calendar revised. He has revised or revised
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we ought to be fighting in the way of control

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the way of control

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higher level. Then we must have the way of control.

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Mad's struggle is a personal and not an one -
of the must to avoid the contingency to take a different

Kaddish

Friday

Jan 20 1967

Sunday

Jan 22 1967

Those who passed away this week

DR. SANDORD KOUNIN
HARRY SAKS

Vahrzeits

JOSEPH H. KITAY
EVA DAVIS WAYNE
ARCHIE A. WEISS
SARANE MEISEL COHN
PAULINE NEUMARK
EDWIN N. HORTON
ROSA HIRSCHMEIER
CELIA FRIEDMAN
CELIA ABRAMS
LEOPOLD A. STONE
ROSE WOLLASTON
LEO H. SCHLANG
ARTHUR L. MANDELZWEIG
EDITH LOIS WEGLEIN
LOUIS E. LEVY

RAY C. LEVY
SARA BEECHLER
MATHILDE STONE FISHEL
ABRAHAM GOLDBERG
CARL A. SPERBER
MOSES H. MOSS
ABRAHAM G. TALLISMAN
FANNY ALEXANDER
BEN FAULB

READ ON SUN JAN 22 ONLY
GARRY SANDS