



A working class hero is something to be

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I Wanna Hold Your Head: John Lennon After the Fall

What Lennon found out is the necessity for demystification, the possibility for breaking through myths, the inevitability of honesty. But he ends just at the point where we all have to begin: “And so, dear friends, you just have to carry on.” What that means must have to do with finding a way to shatter all the gods without us and within, to transfer power from our heroes to our imagination, to free ourselves from the isolation of private existence in a mass audience.

THE MYTH OF THE BEATLES was a seed-dream of the '60s. From it grew the rock religion to which massed millions now adhere. In most respects it is a complete cult, with a pantheon of gods, demi-gods, angels, priests and sacrificial virgins installed to cater to the range of human passions and needs. It is also big business, of course, as every true religion must become. In time, the roster of divinities grew long, but the Beatles retained the central throne. They claimed that they had superseded the old superstar, Jesus Christ, and for their adherents they were right. Then, as gods will, they fell to jealous fighting among themselves and went their ways, their divinity still more or less intact.

In the last few months, John Lennon has taken it upon himself to do what few gods can ever do: divest himself

of his divinity. “I don’t believe in Beatles” is not only a facile line (in the song, “God,” on his new record album); it’s as if Christ on the cross could say, “I don’t believe in Me.” Jehovah would have had a hard time telling the Hebrews in the Wilderness:

*And so dear friends
You just have to carry on
The dream is over.*

No more immodest metaphors or extravagant claims need be made for Lennon, his record or his lengthy interviews in *Rolling Stone*. When gods fall, the earth shakes. Lennon’s attempt to demystify himself, the Beatles and rock cultism has a force and urgency which breaks through the layers of dream-webs which have solidified around the new culture, freak consciousness and political revolution.

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Chilean Revolution: The Bullet or the Ballot

For the past several decades, Chile has been the only country in Latin America (Cuba excepted) in which the organized working class has been both politically and socially significant and also led by Marxian socialists.

WHEN ASKED BY A REPORTER what he thought the recent election of Marxist Salvador Allende meant, a Chilean peasant replied: "Now it's our turn."

That puts the issue nicely. Does the fact that Chile now has a freely elected President who won "without softpedalling the Marxist revolutionary program he hopes to carry out" (New York Times) really mean that at last it's the "turn" of the peasants and workers? The answer is not so simple as one might first expect.

Allende ran as the coalition candidate of the mass-based Communist and left-Socialist parties, the old Radical Party (whose only ideology is opportunism) and the independent Catholic revolutionaries (MAPU). He pledged to put Chile "on the road to socialism" by taking over the major domestic and U.S. corporations, the banks and insurance companies and large agrarian estates, and by instituting democratic planning in the interests of the nation as a whole. Thus, the question: Can the Chileans put through a socialist revolution via the historically unprecedented route of constitutional amendment, presidential leadership and parliamentary legislation, while the parties, the mass media and the unified organizations of the propertied classes still vie freely in the political arena, and the old Army (46,000 strong)

and crack police force, the *carabineros* (24,000), remain intact and untouched?

On the face of it the question seems extraordinarily silly, if not absurd, especially in a period in which the U.S. government has repeatedly intervened in the internal affairs of other countries to resist movements for national independence and social reform. Whether radical or reform governments were elected democratically or not has never mattered in the past, either to the local ruling class or the U.S. government. Time after time—in the Dominican Republic, in Brazil, in British Guyana and elsewhere—Washington and its ruling-class allies have opposed, undermined and subverted popularly based constitutional governments. In 1954 the CIA overthrew the constitutional reform government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala and sponsored a dictatorship that returned expropriated properties to the United Fruit Company, repealed social reforms, gave oil concessions to American companies, smashed trade unions and killed hundreds—perhaps thousands—of workers and peasants.

In 1967 the reform government of the freely elected Greek Premier Andreas Papandreou, an anti-communist and Social Democrat, was overthrown by a combination of Greek and foreign investors in league with the Army. They destroyed parliamentary democracy as soon as it looked like

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