

REVOLUTIONARY SUICIDE

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Writers and Readers 

Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., New York

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Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc.

P.O. Box 461, Village Station
New York, NY 10014

Writers and Readers Ltd.
2a Britannia Row
London N1 8QH

Cover Design: Terrie Dunkelberger

Copyright © 1973 - 1995 by Fredrika S. Newton and David Hilliard

Published by Harcourt Brace Javonovich, Inc., 1973

This edition published by Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1995

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paper ISBN: 0-86316-326-2

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EPILOGUE

I Am We

There is an old African saying, "I am we." If you met an African in ancient times and asked him who he was, he would reply, "I am we." This is revolutionary suicide: I, we, all of us are the one and the multitude.

So many of my comrades are gone now. Some tight partners, crime partners, and brothers off the block are begging on the street. Others are in asylum, penitentiary, or grave. They are all suicides of one kind or another who had the sensitivity and tragic imagination to see the oppression. Some overcame; they are the revolutionary suicides. Others were reactionary suicides who either overestimated or underestimated the enemy, but in any case were powerless to change their conception of the oppressor.

The difference lies in hope and desire. By hoping and desiring, the revolutionary suicide chooses life; he is, in the words of Nietzsche, "an arrow of longing for another shore." Both suicides despise tyranny, but the revolutionary is both a great despiser and a great adorer who longs for another shore. The reactionary suicide must learn, as his brother the revolutionary has learned, that the desert is not a circle. It is a spiral. When we have passed through the desert, nothing will be the same.

You cannot bare your throat to the murderer. As George Jackson said, you must defend yourself and take the dragon position as in karate and make the front kick and the back kick when you are surrounded. You do not beg because your enemy comes with the butcher

knife in one hand and the hatchet in the other. "He will not become a Buddhist overnight."

The Preacher said that the wise man and the fool have the same end; they go to the grave as a dog. Who sends us to the grave? The unknowable, the force that dictates to all classes, all territories, all ideologies; he is death, the Big Boss. An ambitious man seeks to dethrone the Big Boss, to free himself, to control when and how he will go to the grave.

There is another illuminating story of the wise man and the fool, found in Mao's *Little Red Book*: A foolish old man went to North Mountain and began to dig; a wise old man passed by and said, "Why do you dig, foolish old man? Do you not know that you cannot move the mountain with a little shovel?" But the foolish old man answered resolutely, "While the mountain cannot get any higher, it will get lower with each shovelful. When I pass on, my sons and his sons and his son's sons will go on making the mountain lower. Why can't we move the mountain?" And the foolish old man kept digging, and the generations that followed after him, and the wise old man looked on in disgust. But the resoluteness and the spirit of the generations that followed the foolish old man touched God's heart, and God sent two angels who put the mountain on their backs and moved the mountain.

This is the story Mao told. When he spoke of God he meant the six hundred million who had helped him to move imperialism and bourgeois thinking, the two great mountains.

The reactionary suicide is "wise," and the revolutionary suicide is a "fool," a fool for the revolution in the way that Paul meant when he spoke of being "a fool for Christ." That foolishness can move the mountain of oppression; it is our great leap and our commitment to the dead and the unborn.

We will touch God's heart; we will touch the people's heart, and together we will move the mountain.