

= Revolution (Beatles song) =

" Revolution " is a song by the Beatles , written by John Lennon and credited to Lennon & McCartney . Two versions of the song were recorded in 1968 : a hard rock version , released as the B-side of the " Hey Jude " single , and a slower , bluesier arrangement (titled " Revolution 1 ") for the Beatles ' self-titled double album , commonly known as " the White Album " . Although the single version was issued first , it was recorded several weeks after " Revolution 1 " , as a re-make specifically intended for release as a single . A third connected piece , written by Lennon , is the experimental track " Revolution 9 " , based on the latter parts of the same performance that produced " Revolution 1 " , and which also appears on the White Album .

Inspired by political protests in early 1968 , Lennon 's lyrics expressed doubt in regard to some of the tactics . When the single version was released in August , the political left viewed it as betraying their cause . The release of the album version in November indicated Lennon 's uncertainty about destructive change , with the phrase " count me out " recorded differently as " count me out , in " . In 1987 , the song became the first Beatles recording to be licensed for a television commercial , which prompted a lawsuit from the surviving members of the group .

In the same year Nina Simone recorded her single " Revolution " with some structural similarities (some lyrics are also the same) to the Beatles ' song , but credited to her and Weldon Irvine .

= = Background and composition = =

In early 1968 , media coverage in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive spurred increased protests in opposition to the Vietnam War , especially among university students . The protests were most prevalent in the US , but on 17 March , several thousand demonstrators marched to the American embassy in London 's Grosvenor Square and violently clashed with police . Major protests concerning other political issues made international news , such as the March 1968 protests in Poland against their communist government , and the campus uprisings of May 1968 in France .

By and large , the Beatles had avoided publicly expressing their political views , with " Taxman " being their only overtly political track thus far . During his time in Rishikesh , Lennon decided to write a song about the recent wave of social upheaval . He recalled , " I thought it was about time we spoke about it [revolution] , the same as I thought it was about time we stopped not answering about the Vietnamese war . I had been thinking about it up in the hills in India . "

Despite Lennon 's antiwar feelings , he had yet to become anti-establishment , and expressed in " Revolution " that he wanted " to see the plan " from those advocating toppling the system . The repeated phrase " it 's gonna be alright " in " Revolution " came directly from Lennon 's Transcendental Meditation experiences in India , conveying the idea that God would take care of the human race no matter what happened politically . Another influence on Lennon was his burgeoning relationship with avant-garde artist Yoko Ono ; Ono attended the recording sessions , and participated in the unused portion of " Revolution 1 " which evolved into " Revolution 9 " .

Around the fourth week of May 1968 , the Beatles met at Kinfauns , George Harrison 's home in Esher , to demonstrate their compositions to each other in preparation for recording their next studio album . A bootleg recording from that informal session shows that " Revolution " had two of its three verses intact . The line referencing Mao Zedong was added to the lyrics in the studio . During filming of a promotional clip later that year , Lennon told the director that it was the most important lyric of the song . Lennon had changed his mind by 1972 , saying " I should have never put that in about Chairman Mao " .

= = Recording = =

= = = Revolution 1 = = =

The Beatles began their studio sessions for the new album on 30 May , starting with " Revolution 1

" (simply titled " Revolution " for the first few sessions) . The first day concentrated on recording the basic rhythm track . Take 18 lasted 10 : 17 , much longer than the earlier takes , and it was this take that was chosen for additional overdubs recorded over the next two sessions .

During overdubs which brought the recording to take 20 , Lennon took the unusual step of performing his lead vocal while lying on the floor . He also altered one line into the ambiguous " you can count me out , in " . He later explained that he included both because he was undecided in his sentiments . The appended " in " did not appear on the lyric sheet included with the original album .

" Revolution 1 " has a blues style , performed at a relaxed tempo . The electric guitar heard in the intro (similar to the blues song " Dust My Broom ") shows a blues influence , and the " shoo @-@ bee @-@ do @-@ wop " backing vocals are a reference to Doo Wop music . The basic time signature is 12 / 8 (or 4 / 4 in a " shuffle " style) , but the song has several extra half @-@ length bars during the verses . There are also two extra beats at the end of the last chorus , the result of an accidental bad edit during the mixing process that was left uncorrected at Lennon 's request .

= = = = Take 20 = = = =

Low @-@ quality monitor mixes of the full @-@ length version of " Revolution " appeared on various bootlegs , such as From Kinfauns to Chaos , throughout the 1990s . Then in 2009 , a high @-@ quality version labelled " Revolution Take 20 " appeared on the bootleg CD Revolution : Take ... Your Knickers Off ! The release triggered considerable interest among the media and fans of the group . This version , RM1 (Remix in Mono # 1) of Take 20 , runs to 10 minutes 46 seconds (at the correct speed) and was created at the end of the 4 June session , with a copy taken away by Lennon . It was an attempt by Lennon to augment the full @-@ length version of " Revolution " in a way that satisfied him before he chose to split the piece between the edited " Revolution 1 " and the musique concrète " Revolution 9 " .

The bootlegged recording starts with engineer Geoff Emerick announcing the remix as " RM1 of Take ... " and then momentarily forgetting the take number , which Lennon jokingly finishes with " Take your knickers off and let 's go " , hence the name of the bootleg CD . The first half of the recording is almost identical to the released track " Revolution 1 " . It lacks the electric guitar and horn overdubs of the final version , but features two tape loops in the key of A (same as the song) that are faded in and out at various points . After the final chorus , the song launches into an extended coda similar to that in " Hey Jude " . (The album version only features about 40 seconds of this coda .) Beyond the point where the album version fades out , the basic instrumental backing keeps repeating while the vocals and overdubs become increasingly chaotic : Harrison and Paul McCartney repeatedly sing " dada , mama " in a childlike register ; Lennon 's histrionic vocals are randomly distorted in speed (a little of this can be heard in the fade of " Revolution 1 ") ; and radio tuning noises à la " I Am the Walrus " appear . Several elements of this coda appear in the officially released " Revolution 9 " . Throughout the body of that song , Lennon 's histrionic vocal track periodically appears (albeit minus the speed distortion) , as do the tape loops .

After the band track ends , the song moves into avant @-@ garde territory , with Yoko Ono reciting some prose over an unknown , vaguely operatic recording (possibly captured live from the radio) . Ono 's piece begins with the words " Maybe , it 's not that ? " , with her voice trailing off at the end ; Lennon or Harrison jokingly replies , " It is ' that ' ! " As the piece continues , Lennon quietly mumbles " Gonna be alright " a few times . Then follows a brief piano riff , some comments from Lennon and Ono on how well the track has preceded , and final appearances of the tape loops . Most of this coda was lifted for the end of " Revolution 9 " , with a little more piano at the beginning (which monitor mixes reveal was present in earlier mixes of " Revolution ") and minus Lennon 's (or Harrison 's) joking reply .

= = = = Splitting of Revolution 1 and Revolution 9 = = = =

Lennon soon decided to divide the existing ten @-@ minute recording into two parts : a more conventional Beatles track and an avant @-@ garde sound collage . Within days after take 20 ,

work began on " Revolution 9 " using the last six minutes of the take as a starting point . Numerous sound effects , tape loops , and overdubs were recorded and compiled over several sessions almost exclusively by Lennon and Ono , although Harrison provided assistance for additional spoken overdubs . With more than 40 sources used for " Revolution 9 " , only small portions of the take 20 coda are heard in the final mix ; most prominent from take 20 are Lennon 's multiple screams of " right " and " alright " , and around a minute near the end featuring Ono 's lines up to " you become naked " .

On 21 June , the first part of take 20 received several overdubs and became officially titled " Revolution 1 " . The overdubs included a lead guitar line by Harrison and a brass section of two trumpets and four trombones . Final stereo mixing was completed on 25 June . The final mix included the hurried announcement of " take two " by Geoff Emerick at the beginning of the song .

= = = Revolution (single version) = = =

Lennon wanted " Revolution 1 " to be the next Beatles single , but McCartney was reluctant to invite controversy , and argued along with Harrison that the track was too slow for a single . Lennon persisted , and rehearsals for a faster and louder re @-@ make began on 9 July ; recording started the following day . This proved an immense success .

The song begins with " a startling machine @-@ gun fuzz guitar riff " , with Lennon and Harrison 's guitars prominent throughout the track . The distorted guitar sound was achieved by direct injection of the guitar signal into the mixing console . Emerick later explained that he routed the signal through two microphone preamplifiers in series while keeping the amount of overload just below the point of overheating the console . Lennon overdubbed the opening scream , and double @-@ tracked some of the words " so roughly that its careless spontaneity becomes a point in itself " , according to author Ian MacDonald .

" Revolution " was performed in a higher key , B major , compared to the A major of " Revolution 1 " , although the distortion changes the key slightly , leaving the song halfway between B ? and B. The " shoo @-@ bee @-@ do @-@ wop " backing vocals were omitted in the re @-@ make , and an instrumental break was added . " Revolution " was given a climactic end , as opposed to the fade out of " Revolution 1 " . For this version , Lennon unequivocally sang " count me out " . An electric piano overdub by Nicky Hopkins was added on 11 July , with final overdubs on 13 July and mono mixing on 15 July .

= = Release and reception = =

" Revolution " was released as the B @-@ side of the " Hey Jude " single in late August 1968 . In the US , the song peaked at number 12 on the Billboard Hot 100 . The single was listed as a double @-@ sided number 1 in Australia , while " Revolution " topped New Zealand 's singles chart for one week , following " Hey Jude " ' s five @-@ week run at number 1 there . " Revolution 1 " was released on The Beatles in late November 1968 . It was the opening track on side four of the LP , four spots ahead of the companion piece " Revolution 9 " .

" Revolution " later appeared on the 1970 US compilation album Hey Jude , the first time the song was issued in stereo . Lennon disliked the stereo mix , saying in a 1974 interview that the mono mix of " Revolution " was a " heavy record " but " then they made it into a piece of ice cream ! " The song was released on other compilations , including 1967 ? 1970 and Past Masters . It was remixed for the 2006 soundtrack album Love , appearing in full length on the DVD @-@ Audio version and as a shortened edit on other versions .

Music journalist Greil Marcus noted that the political critics had overlooked the music ; he wrote that while " there is sterility and repression in the lyrics " , the " freedom and movement in the music ... dodges the message and comes out in front . " Among later music critics , Dave Marsh included " Revolution " in his 1989 book covering the 1001 greatest singles , describing it as a " gem " with a " ferocious fuzztone rock and roll attack " and a " snarling " Lennon vocal . Writing for AllMusic , Richie Unterberger called " Revolution " one of the Beatles ' " greatest , most furious rockers " with "

challenging , fiery lyrics " where the listener 's " heart immediately starts pounding before Lennon goes into the first verse " .

= = = Political reception = = =

Politically , the release of " Revolution " prompted immediate responses from the New Left and counterculture press . Ramparts branded it a " betrayal " , and the New Left Review said the song was " a lamentable petty bourgeois cry of fear " . The far left contrasted " Revolution " with a song by the Rolling Stones that was inspired by similar events and released around the same time : " Street Fighting Man " was perceived to be more supportive of their cause . Others on the left praised the Beatles for rejecting radicalism and advocating " pacifist idealism " . The song 's apparent scepticism about revolution caused Lennon to become the target of a few minority Trotskyist , Leninist and in particular Maoist groups .

The far right remained suspicious of the Beatles , saying they were moderate subversives who were " warning the Maoists not to ' blow ' the revolution by pushing too hard " . As further evidence of group 's supposed " pro @-@ Soviet " sentiments , the John Birch Society magazine cited another song on the White Album , " Back in the U.S.S.R. " Anti @-@ communist and far @-@ right groups also picked on the track " Piggies " , which was about social class and corporate greed .

= = Promotional clips = =

Filming for promotional clips of " Hey Jude " and " Revolution " took place on 4 September 1968 under the direction of Michael Lindsay @-@ Hogg . Two finished clips of " Revolution " were produced , with only lighting differences and other minor variations . The Beatles sang the vocals live over the pre @-@ recorded instrumental track from the single version . Their vocals included elements from " Revolution 1 " : McCartney and Harrison sang the " shoo @-@ bee @-@ doo @-@ wap " backing vocals , and Lennon sang " count me out , in " . Lennon also substituted " we 'd all love " for " we all want " in the opening verse . Later it was correctly pointed out that a track of Lennon 's voice is in fact playing in the background during the performance and can be heard quite noticeably at the end of the song when he fails to shout out his last and most explosive " All right " . Instead , the shout is heard from the soundtrack after he has already stopped singing and backed away from the microphone .

While the " Hey Jude " clip debuted on David Frost 's ITV television programme , the " Revolution " clip was first broadcast on the BBC1 programme Top of the Pops on 19 September 1968 . The first US screening of " Revolution " was on the 13 October 1968 broadcast of The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour . The promo clip is included in the three @-@ disc versions , titled 1 + , of the Beatles ' 2015 video compilation 1 .

= = Personnel = =

Revolution

John Lennon ? vocal , lead guitar , handclaps , scream

Paul McCartney ? bass guitar , Hammond organ , handclaps

George Harrison ? lead guitar , handclaps

Ringo Starr ? drums , handclaps

Nicky Hopkins ? electric piano

Revolution 1

John Lennon ? lead vocal , acoustic guitar , lead guitar

Paul McCartney ? bass guitar , piano , organ , backing vocals

George Harrison ? lead guitar , backing vocals

Ringo Starr ? drums

Francie Schwartz - backing vocals

Derek Watkins and Freddy Clayton ? trumpets

Don Lang , Rex Morris , J. Power , and Bill Povey ? trombones
Personnel per Ian MacDonald

= = Use in Nike advertisement = =

In 1987 , " Revolution " became the first Beatles recording to be licensed for use in a television commercial . Nike paid \$ 500 @, @ 000 for the right to use the song for one year , split between recording owner Capitol @-@ EMI and song publisher ATV Music Publishing (owned by Michael Jackson) . Commercials using the song started airing in March 1987 .

The three surviving Beatles , through their record company Apple , filed a lawsuit in July 1987 objecting to Nike 's use of the song . The suit was aimed at Nike , its advertising agency Wieden + Kennedy , and Capitol @-@ EMI Records . Capitol @-@ EMI said the lawsuit was groundless because they had licensed the use of " Revolution " with the " active support and encouragement of Yoko Ono Lennon , a shareholder and director of Apple " . Ono had expressed approval when the commercial was released , saying the commercial " is making John 's music accessible to a new generation " .

The " Revolution " lawsuit and others involving the Beatles and EMI were settled out of court in November 1989 , with the terms kept secret . The financial website TheStreet.com included the Nike " Revolution " advertisement campaign in its list of the 100 key business events of the 20th century , as it helped " commodify dissent " .

= = Cover versions = =

= = = Thompson Twins version = = =

Thompson Twins covered " Revolution " on their 1985 album Here 's to Future Days , from which it was released as the fourth and final single . The song peaked at number 56 in the UK , spending five weeks on the chart . The band made a promotional video for the single version of the song . The B @-@ side , " The Fourth Sunday " , was exclusive to this single .

Thompson Twins also performed the song with Madonna and Nile Rodgers at Live Aid in July 1985 .

= = = = Formats = = = =

7 " UK vinyl single (1985) Arista TWINS 10

Side A

" Revolution " ? 3 : 23

Side B

" The Fourth Sunday " ? 4 : 18

12 " UK vinyl single (1985) Arista TWINS 1210

Side One

" Revolution " (Extended Mix) ? 6 : 25

Side Two

" The Fourth Sunday " ? 4 : 18

12 " UK vinyl single (1985) Arista TWINS 2210

Side One

" Revolution " (Remix) ? 6 : 00

Side Two

" The Fourth Sunday " ? 4 : 18

= = = = Chart performance = = = =

===== Official versions =====

===== Personnel =====

Tom Bailey ? vocals , piano , Fairlight , synthesizers , guitar , contrabass , Fairlight and drum programming

Alannah Currie ? lyrics , marimba , backing vocals , acoustic drums , percussion , tuned percussion

Joe Leeway ? backing vocals , congas , percussion

Steve Stevens ? additional guitar

Produced by Nile Rodgers and Tom Bailey

Mixed by James Farber

Mixed at Skyline Studio , NYC

Photography ? Rebecca Blake

Artwork / Design ? Andie Airfix , Satori

Art Direction ? Alannah

===== Stone Temple Pilots version =====

In October 2001 , Stone Temple Pilots performed " Revolution " live during Come Together : A Night for John Lennon 's Words and Music , a television special in tribute to Lennon that raised funds for victims of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center . After their performance received significant radio airplay , the group recorded a studio version of the song , which was released as a single in November 2001 . The song reached number 30 on the US Mainstream Rock Tracks chart .