

Our Polarized Youth



Radical Left Movement Started In '60s

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Written for NEA

NEW YORK — (NEA) — Students have not always borne the image of free-loving, dope-smoking revolutionaries. Ten years ago, the Andy Hardy image prevailed — a young man in a sleeveless sweater clutching the pennant of old Alma Mater U. in his loyal hand. Why the change?

In the earlier decade, the anxieties of the depression still hung in the air. So middle-class youth marched in gray flannel suits into the many profitable slots which the corporate economy made available to them.

This conformistic mood foundered on two developments. First came the realization that not all Americans lived affluent, middle-class lives. The black movement, sparked by the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision and the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott exploded in 1960. That year black youth initiated the restaurant sit-ins in North Carolina, then Nashville, and soon all across the South. The reaction against these young people struck a responsive chord among college students

in the North. The migration to the South ensued; college youth set out to bring the American dream to black Southerners (who were already on their way to demanding it).

Simultaneously with these events, a different process took root — one which questioned the American dream itself. The youth of the '60s, many of them from affluent homes, tried the credit card society and found it wanting. For them, the American dream resembled a well-fed nightmare. The prophets of this movement can be found in the "beatniks" of the '50s. In 1955, Allen Ginsberg proclaimed, "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness. . . ." the madness of an empty America. One may find the lineal descendants of these trail-blazers in the college rebels and the hippy dropouts — many of whom hang around the campuses and play important roles in campus revolts (e.g. People's Park in Berkeley).

For these young people, the pinnacle of the American dream appeared to be a manipulated, neurotic human who attempted to prove himself worthy through

the accumulation of objects ranging from wildly overpowered cars to electric carving knives to the deodorized and repressed woman he married.

Thus arose the angry youth of the '60s. At first, we possessed the reformer's — even the missionary's — zeal. Off we went to the South to help the black man; later we entered the ghettos, black and white, to organize the poor generally into a populist reform movement.

Up until this time, the activist youth called themselves radicals. With the Americanization of the war in Vietnam, they became revolutionaries. The war taught radical youth — especially white ones — several lessons. Each young man faced being forced into military service and sent off to fight and die in the jungles of Southeast Asia in a conflict that was, to us, senseless.

The war also forced radicals to make a thorough analysis of the social system which could produce such consequences for GIs and Vietnamese alike. University reform battles — begun with the Berkeley Free Speech Movement of 1964 — related

to the war as students noted that these institutions provided support for the Vietnamese through weapons research, counterinsurgency work and ROTC programs.

In addition to its war related functions, the university produces trained personnel for an increasingly technological economic system. Youth has often employed the persuasive metaphor of the machine, comparing universities to factories which crank our replacement parts for the economic engine. Far from being simply irrelevant to a genuine educational process, this parts-producing function makes real education nearly impossible.

The universities are themselves bureaucratic, authoritarian institutions which demand that their students adopt a servile attitude in order to endure four years.

The last few years especially have witnessed rebellion after rebellion within the ivied walls. The seizure of buildings at Columbia over a year ago set the new militant tone for campus actions and these tactics have found many imitators.

The outlook is bright for fur-

ther student protest and direct action around these issues. There is a reservoir of experienced activists to lead the way.

This prospect could be altered by major government breakthroughs in either civil rights or the end of the Vietnam war.

From the long-range outlook, it seems unlikely to us that student unrest will vanish unless the government adopts an overtly dictatorial stance (in which case resistance would go underground) or fundamental changes are made in American society.

In the face of hollow American social existence, many youths will continue to fight the political, economic and cultural system. Many others will drop out and refuse to participate in them. No one knows whether other age groups will begin to feel the same revulsion for American society as many young people do. And no one knows how long officialdom will tolerate dissident and nonparticipating young people without cracking down on them even more than it already has. In the meantime, the rebellion will continue.

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A New Movement To Right By Youth

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When the radicals took over Whitehall at Columbia two years ago, one of the faculty, French historian Orest Ranum, tried to get them to leave. The professor struggled over a barricade, climbed through a window and, according to author James Kunen, who was there, told the students he was sympathetic, but suggested that they give up the building because their actions could only precipitate a "right-wing reaction."

They laughed at him. Then they thanked him and told him to get out.

Ranum's conciliatory approach is common fare in the academic community. When the McClellan Committee held hearings this summer on student unrest, the senators were amazed at college administrators who were more concerned about the "possibility" of congressional "repression" than about the reality of violence on the campus.

Chancellor Heyns of the University of California at Berkeley said he disapproved of the lawlessness and then devoted

his testimony to a discussion of "youthful unrest" on the part of "action-minded young people" whom American society had all but betrayed. His comments on violence were only parenthetical he was relatively unconcerned that many Berkeley students had and would resort to it. Nor was there in his testimony a moment's introspection brought on by the failure of higher education in this country to convey to the young an elementary and sustaining precept of Western culture: Without order there is no freedom.

The explanation for Heyns' unconcern, like that for Ranum's naivete, is rooted in their ideological world view. "Disruption of the educational process" is paramount in the mind of the modern liberal and his call for federal troops (or whatever) unhesitating — but only, it seems, when it is a Southern governor who is doing the disrupting.

The scholars at Yale will not have George Wallace on their campus — he "preaches hatred." But their spiritual brethren at Berkeley will invite Eldridge Cleaver to give a course on their campus and defend the

proposal in the name of free speech and academic freedom.

So the pattern emerges. The enemy is to the right, always to the right. The American Historical Association passed a resolution last year boycotting Mayor Daley's Chicago as a convention site, but when scheduled to attend a conference in Moscow just after the Russian troops had brutalized the people of Prague, the professors eased their tortured consciences and voted to go just the same. The ideological blinders are on.

Liberals cannot control our campuses for the same reason they have not been able to effect a foreign policy. Viet Cong or SDS — the liberal cannot see them for what they are.

Cornel and Columbia radicals

High Schools To Participate In Contest

Local elimination competition in the American Legion's 33rd annual national high school oratory contest is scheduled Monday at 8 p.m. in the Veterans

were committed revolutionaries who grasped fully the implications of what they had done. That is what Ranum forgot in his speech to the Whitehall radicals and why, ultimately, they thought him funny. (Those same radicals later burned 10 years of his research.)

If the New Left, as the polls and college referendums would seem to indicate, is discredited in the eyes of many college students, where and to whom does the American student turn for political orientation?

The answer lies in the one revolution in the 1960s that the networks and news magazines let go unreported. It is the growth on the campus of what Dartmouth Prof. Jeffery Hart refers to as the "new American dissent" or what, colloquial-

San Jose State Gets Science Aid For Summer Class

High school students with an aptitude for science may benefit from a grant of \$16,410 to San Jose State College for a pre-college student science training

ly, has become known as the "new conservatism."

Young Americans for Freedom, the conservative youth organization founded in 1960, has today over 50,000 members. University of Wisconsin law student David Keene, the articulate chairman of YAF, says of his organization's growth, "Actually, it is the New Left that has interested many students in YAF. We seemed to be the only campus group effectively combating the leftists. Many students as a consequence heard out the case for the new conservatism and realized that being a conservative doesn't mean being a racist or a reactionary. The result has been a substantial growth in out membership and our influence in the academic community."

On par with the growth of YAF has been the dramatic increase in the number of journals of political opinion published by conservative students. Harvard, Indiana University, Yale, Stanford and the University of Wisconsin are some of the colleges where such journals are currently flourishing.

There is more evidence of a conservative resurgence among the young: The growth