

SDS Sees Elements Of Revolt Brewing

(Editor's Note: The following is the final article in a three-part series on the goals of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) who were interviewed at UCSC.)

By Peter R. Walls
Sentinel Staff Writer

"This society breeds an individual at war with society and himself."

Student radical,
UC, Santa Cruz, 1969

This is what disgusts the left-wing radical most. It disgusts him even more than a liberal does. But at the same time, a malcontented individual, magnified by millions, makes revolution not merely necessary, but inevitable, say members of Students for a Democratic Society.

A society lacking a relatively high degree of social, economic and political integration faces stress which it may or may not ease peacefully.

In any event, the stress, by its definition, forces change, be it subtle or obvious, whether token or wide-ranging.

The SDS chapter at UC Santa Cruz, like Robin Hood's band, small and gritty, are convinced that revolution is coming and that inevitably it will involve violence because the "power structure" simply won't relinquish its hold on the economy and permit the non-capital-holding segment of the population—the workers—from getting their just share of profits that accrue from their toil.

Their economic views are Marxist, their social revolutionary views are Maoist, their politics are anarchist. All of which means that the means and profits of production must be communally owned and shared, that to obtain this end, the workers must revolt and maintain control of the revolution and not allow the middle class to use it for their ends, that the state

established "by the people" after the fall of the present power structure will be non-authoritarian and non-bureaucratic. Such an anarchistic state will be possible, say the radicals, because most laws now are designed to protect some from the avarice of others, or to allow some to take advantage of most.

Radicals agree that a revolutionary situation does not now exist in America, but that one is brewing as the basic contradictions in the social structure become ever more evident. And the key to launching a revolution lies in the mind of the worker who has heretofore been co-opted by "the system" into silence by an illusion of comfort.

As per Marx, workers—and most of them are middle class—must identify themselves as people being exploited by the elite.

"The middle class will realize it's oppressed," said one girl.

"People are unhappy."

But even with oppression and unhappiness on his side, the revolutionary must bide some time. "You have to sit and wait for the state to do the job of creating a revolutionary situation for you," she added.

The 10 per cent surtax, the festering cities, the ever-increasing property taxes, income-chewing inflation—all aid the radical in winning to his side the majority of Americans, most of whom remain unaware that it is not communism, but capitalism that has contributed to his affluent malaise and economic pinch.

In this regard, the end of American imperialism abroad is the essential first step.

Perhaps somewhat too facetiously, one of the radicals suggested that "when the U.S. is kicked out of foreign countries, its markets will shrink and the workers will become revolutionary."

In other words, the establish-

ment of American living standards was first based on exploitation of black slaves and white factory workers, then upon the inclusion of the worker—most of them white—in the system that said "rah-rah-let's pull-together," then upon the need to push outside the country to secure markets for the glut of goods produced by these co-opted workers.

Thus, socialistic, anti-capitalist revolutions in countries around the world are ardently sought from the SDS point of view. Such economic retrenchment would increase the pressure on an essentially bankrupt system.

Radicals do not, however, base their movement upon a charismatic figure leading the people on. The movement must come from the people. As one radical suggested: "The leader doesn't create the movement; the movement creates the leader."

Such is the meaning of "power to the people." The movement, in fact, precedes the philosophy of it, so that SDS radicals can deny they rely wholly upon Chairman Mao, or Castro or Herbert Marcuse for that matter. The new American revolution, by dint of American levels of development and experience, would differ from revolutions elsewhere.

The revolution presupposes that polarization of society has taken place to the point where differences cannot be reconciled—and violent outbreaks become inevitable.

One radical described polarization as an historical movement created by the contradictions in the social structure. The crucial difference is that the youth of America—exposed to education—realize the painful hypocrisy of suppression and exploitation.

The inevitable result is the pitting of the young and black against those forces with economic and military power behind them. But the chances of co-opting the young and black like the workers are virtually nil. "It's as if the people are getting a taste of freedom," said one, "and getting it fast."

Some groups—the hippies, though they may be a poor example—are showing their contempt for the consumer-oriented economic system in which the creation of false needs is more important than

the meeting of real needs.

Madison Avenue, says the fed-up radical, is almost an integral part of American government. Like the advertising of products that may or may not be good for you, "the leaders in this country create their own following and aren't responsive to the people," said one SDS member.

The cry from these young radicals is for the replacement of competition by cooperation—in revolution the people will find unity. "We're not in a revolutionary situation now," said one, "but when we are in one, we'll be as one."

Individual search for identity will be replaced by a sense of belonging to the drive for the re-arranging of society's values and priorities. In other words, when time comes for revolt, virtually everyone except the reactionary "haves" will join in the fight. "You would want to belong and feel a part of the revolution," said one radical.

And yet, said another, society must recognize cultural diversity, and allow everyone to do his thing—short of infringing upon the rights of others. Sameness in revolution will be succeeded by diversity in reconstruction of society along cooperative lines.

This may all seem academic, impractical, visionary—if you want to be kind; or it may be downright dangerous—if you see a threat to your values in it.

But what is to stop this minority unrest? Police truncheons? Military bayonets? Does SDS have a moral quarrel with the established aims of America in the post-industrial and post-affluent age?

Are the majority of Americans really disgusted only with SDS and black tactics, or do they fear the ends the black and white radicals have in mind? Is not "white backlash" merely an excuse to officially despise whom the majority always have feared, felt guilt over and maybe even envied: the blacks, the browns, the students, the non-conformists?

Said one girl: "We may be living in an apocalyptic age. Why aren't we allowed to enjoy life free of war and racism?" The young are asking an age-old question. Do their elders have an answer?

(End of series)

A Sociologist Views Younger Generation

By Sam Benowitz
UCSC Correspondent

To treat the rebelliousness of the younger generation as a phase which will be outgrown is to be misled and deluded.

So says UCSC Sociology Professor Mark Messer, who believes rather that the life-style of the older American generation is a phase which will soon be outgrown.

Messer believes that a substantial segment of America's youth is participating in a cultural movement so vast that it may turn the American value system inside out.

"The futuristic ethic—success, control over the environment, progress, ambition; the things so characteristic of Protestant culture—has become meaningless to many," Messer said. "Goallessness, futurelessness, a sense of being rather than doing is being substituted."

"The young have less ambition than their parents. We have bigger and better cars and highways and lots of smog. And we have produced the atom bomb. They are all products of ambition."

"There is no generation gap," Messer maintains. "There is a cultural gap. The younger generation will never be like their parents."

With the invention of the atom bomb, material success has outdone itself and youths see this as a time to turn inward to find a new way.

"For those born after the bomb," Messer said, "the future is no longer predictable." He claims, however, that the "new culture" is not rejecting the machine. "It is a matter of living off the machines, rather than living like the machines."

"Youth is questioning its parents' reality. The older generation calls this idealism, but what is real about saying, 'Let's prepare for war to have peace.' Why don't we plan for peace, if we want peace?"

As evidence to support his theory, Messer compared several similar studies of college students—one done in 1948 and another done during the past year.

"In 1948 Berkeley students were asked a series of questions about what was important to them. Most of them answered, concern for their future, rationality and manliness. Studies in the past year at Berkeley and

UCSC indicate that this has been reversed; the concerns of turning inward, knowing one's self and meditation are central. This indicates a basic shift in values," Messer said.

Citing a study done 12 years ago, Messer said students were asked what they would be 10 years in the future. "They answered in terms of status—what job they would be holding, how much money they would be making."

"When the same study was given last year to UCSC students, they were much more likely to answer such things as, 'I am alive,' or 'I am still growing.' The two groups seemed to be perceiving the world in different ways."

The sociologist sees a great difference in the philosophies of the radical political activists and the hippies. "Some people can't tell them apart," he said, "because they both often have long hair. The activists are seeing obstacles and pitting themselves against those obstacles."

"The activists are trying to manipulate the environment and redistribute the wealth. They

are trying to beat the government at the old game—politics."

But the hippies, Messer said, are playing a new game, ignoring the establishment instead of attacking it. "The established ethic is prepared to be defied, but it is not prepared to be ignored. When the whole ethic is not taken seriously, this is a serious matter."

If congressional investigators were really doing their job, Messer said, "they would be investigating rock groups such as the Grateful Dead, rather than the protesters at the Democratic National Convention. These are the real threats, because—like poets of the past—they are spreading the new word, the new culture."

"Kids are different now from what they were 20 years ago and parents will have to accept and live with their kids. If they can't, kids will concentrate in one area and become even more distasteful to their parents."

Messer noted that the younger generation will outnumber their elders before they outlive them—and they undoubtedly

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Once again the Defense Land artistic work will be displayed Barn, and will feature Balkan

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