

The Alternative Society

Youth
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EDITOR'S NOTE: There is developing in America a second society—an Alternative Society. It's young and full of dreams. But it also has its own wobbly institutions and structures, and it is attracting large numbers of disaffected young people. This dispatch, the first of a series from the AP Special Assignment Team, examines the broader aspects of this new and significant development in American life.

By KEN HARTNETT

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Margaret Mary, 22, tall, lithe and educated daughter of the middle class, hopes someday to make her parents understand why she dropped out. But not yet; the weekend would be awkward enough.

Her parents were driving in from Kansas Saturday and she had already promised to spend the day with her friends making a pornographic film.

The \$75 will help Margaret Mary get through another month. Each month brings her closer to the day she can flee the city for the rural commune that lights up her dreams.

Even if that dream falls through, there are others. The Alternative Society has no shortage of dreams and Margaret Mary is a member in good standing. She turned her back on the society that produced her.

She is not alone.

Throughout the nation, untold numbers of young white, well educated Americans have made the same decision to live apart from the larger society that spawned them.

Many may prove temporary dropouts, staying off to the side with one foot at least tentatively planted in straight America. They are finding "a way station."

"But there is evidence," wrote sociologists Peter L. and Brigitte Berger in the New Republic, "that for an as yet unknown number, the way station is becoming a place of permanent settlement. For an apparently growing number, there is a movement from youth culture to counter culture. These are the ones who drop out permanently."

There's no way to estimate the size of the Alternative Society's population, but it is clear that thousands of young people have turned their backs on the America of processed food and

ly, in building an Alternative Society with its own values, its own institutions, even its own religions.

So far, they have hardly created a brave new world, but they may have made a beginning.

Journeying through the outposts of this other America—places like Berkeley, Calif.; Madison, Wis.; and Cambridge, Mass., one finds free universities which offer whatever courses people want to teach or learn, free medical clinics, even free buses and taxi cabs.

Berkeley, Madison and Cambridge have long been regarded as radical bastions. But one finds the same kind of institutions in places without as rooted a history of confrontation politics.

Albuquerque, N.M., has its free store and a people's garage where profit is not a motive. Atlanta, Ga., has communes, a people's craft center, an underground newspaper. Seattle, Wash., will soon have a movement free clinic staffed by long-haired doctors.

Communes, not only for foot-loose hippies, but for doctors and lawyers, are springing up in the major cities. Farm communards are struggling with the hard dry earth of New Mexico and the flinty hills of Vermont.

Food cooperatives—on the West Coast they are called "Conspiracies"—are giving hip communities an alternative to supermarkets. Seattle hips, many of them stocked with federal food stamps, have their own "supermarket," with the markup percentages posted on the wall.

There are alternative radio stations, such as KTAO in Los Gatos, Calif., where the taped voices of Angela Davis or Jean Paul Sartre lend a radical touch to station identification.

Alternative newspapers are part of the scene in virtually every large city or major university town, providing street hawkers with a small but certain income. Boston even has a radical publishing house.

"Never before has a society dealt to its children two alternative ways of life," says Allen, a 30-year-old Berkeley trained doctor helping organize the Country Doctor, a free clinic in Seattle.

Sociologist Bennett Berger, author of "Looking for America," says there is ample reason for the spread of alternative in-

ies at the edge of the ghetto or scatter in smaller groups into the countryside.

They are united by the live and let live atmosphere of the drug culture—although by no reasons are they all drug users—and a common contempt for the values of what they call "Plastik Amerika."

Some are emotional wrecks, incapable of making it either in the old society or the new. Some are highly gifted—young people who in another age might have risen to eminence in politics or art or the church.

Psychiatrist Seymour Halleck of the University of Wisconsin believes it is important to see if the alternatives they are devising can work. "What I don't like," he said, "is that it takes some people with a potential for changing the system out of the system."

"That just makes it easier for those who want to keep it the way it is to keep it that way."

Others, notably Yale's Kenneth Keniston, see aspects of the Alternative Society as a source of inspiration for those who share its values but plunge into the larger society anyway. Keniston calls these people infiltrators.

"You are beginning to see a lot of people with new culture values but old culture skills, people who really agree with the most radical criticism of the society but at the same time are learning an awful lot about urban management or are going into medicine and becoming public health professionals."

"My own view," Keniston says, "is that (social change) is more likely to come about through infiltration than through a commune in Colorado, although the commune may be important because it provides inspiration for the infiltrators."

Everywhere, the new society is dwarfed by and dependent on the larger society.

"How autonomous can they be?" asks Keniston. "They almost have to be parasitic. They take for granted a much larger system that they are at least nominally opposed to but at the same time can't do without."

"It's really kind of ridiculous," sneered a New Mexico social worker, "these small groups of middle class children with their straightened teeth get so much sympathy while you can't get money for people

wrote revolutionary Tom Hayden in his book, "Trial." "We are a new people rising from the ruins of the American empire."

Hayden's "New People"—and only a minority are conscious revolutionaries—are together in what is often self-imposed poverty near the heart of virtually every major U.S. city.

They are linked by a life style that puts down profit and exploitation and extracts personal fulfillment.

Listen to Margaret Mary:

"I want someday to raise goats and wild plants and live off the land and be together with my friends ... It's very important to me to be a mother. I want to be the mother of children without last names. I won't force them to, but I believe my children will be hip because I hope my life will satisfy them."

Listen to Linda, a delicate, child-like girl of 22 living in an Albuquerque commune: "Why should I work 30 or 40 hours a week for someone or something that doesn't give a s— about me so I can get money to buy things I don't give a s— about owning."

Listen to Paul, a radical in Cambridge:

"I think the thing they got stinks. I don't think they are happy. I'm trying to be happy and I hope to come to a human alternative at the same time."

Listen to Berkeley's Frenchy, 19, whose mother left him a month after he was born: "I hope I can find a commune. I think a lot of cool people must be living there. Everything is togetherness. There ain't no trouble there. You can do what you want. You can live like you want without anyone saying it's right to do that and it's wrong do that. I can't find me one yet."

Margaret Mary, Linda, Paul and Frenchy all are in flight from the society they were raised to be a part of. The society they are running toward isn't yet ready to receive them all. It may never be.

But it is new. The hip movement as a catalyst that acted on significant numbers of middle class children is scarcely more than five years old, if one dates its birth to the blooming of the flower children of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury in 1966.

The institutions it is competing with have been entrenched

make it yourself," wrote Paul Goodman in his novel, "Making Do."

That is precisely what these young Americans are attempting to do.

As they see it, there is no choice.

"How much can we afford to lose before we win?" asks a poem by Diane DiPrima on a Berkeley handbill. "Can we cut hair, or give up drugs, take jobs, join Minute Men, marry, wear their clothes, play bingo?"

"What can we stomach? How soon does it leave its mark? Can we, living straight in a straight part of town, still see our people? Can we live if we don't see our people? ... Which would you choose?"

Another Bo In Benefits

By BRUCE BIOSSAT

Washington Correspondent
(Second in a Series.)

WASHINGTON — (NEA) —

Either this year or perhaps early in 1972, Congress seems likely to pile more Social Security changes onto the major benefit increases it approved this spring.

These coming changes could well include still another boost in benefits, in the range of maybe five to 10 per cent.

Since World War II there have been eight benefit increases. The last two, taking effect in 1970 and 1971, have totaled 25 per cent — including the 10 per cent hike just voted.

Government administrators and the Congress obviously are struggling to keep Social Security benefits moving upward to match the constantly rising cost of living.

Beyond the prospect of a ninth increase in benefits, these other Social Security changes may be coming along in the months ahead:

A widow's benefit may be boosted so that she will get 100 per cent of what her husband would have received in retirement benefits if properly qualified at age 65. Under pre-

bia. They are trying to build something better of their own.

They are engaged, some quite consciously, some spontaneous-

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There's nothing else to do, he said. "There's a large, an enormous population in the relevant age group whom the society has no room for. They are caught in schools which become warehouses, in an army they want to stay out of, and in businesses which they have trained incapacities for. So they gather together. . ."

They cluster in rickety apartment houses at the edge of university districts or in major cit-

and after they come here and get their case of hepatitis or whatever, off they go, back to Chevy Chase or Grosse Pointe."

Margaret Mary could return home to hide or to rest, but never to live.

"I'm afraid of the outside world," she said, sitting in her kitchen—a room void of such appliances as toasters or blenders. A puppy lay at her feet as if guarding a child. "There are parts of you that are still innocent and there's no way of knowing until you are hit."

Besides, she said, she wants to survive and straight America is doomed—a view widely held in the Alternative Society. "It will fall over from its own corruption, its own ridiculousness."

In another age, Margaret Mary might have been an oddity living up the gossip in a small Kansas town. Or, perhaps, she might have made her way to New York or Chicago and lived out her life among a minority of like-minded clustered there.

But Margaret Mary is no oddity in the other America. Even Kansas has hip communities where she would feel at home, find shelter, food and clothing and the company of friends.

It isn't easy going.

The trouble isn't just the recession that has left cupboards bare in communes from Seattle to Cambridge. It's also people: the bikers (motorcycle gangs) who harass the freak population of Atlanta; the smack (heroin) freaks who roam owl-eyed down Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue; the ripoff artists (petty thieves) who have all but killed the once happy hospitality of the crash pad.

As in the straight society, it helps if you have certain advantages—skills, education or some family money to fall back on.

Without those advantages, one needs a little bit of luck and some friends.

But, already, substantial numbers of young Americans are living on their own terms and surviving.

"We are not a lunatic fringe,"

reacting to the innovations spinning out of hip communities.

Clothing manufacturers mass produce hippie clothes, complete with embroidered patches that mock the very real poverty of the Alternative Society. Advertising copy is laced with Alternative Society phrases such as right on and groovy. Sexual mores are imitated; so is the rite of marijuana smoking, already as acceptable among some junior executives as a double martini before lunch.

All the while, the building process goes on.

"If we can show our generation that it's viable to live this way, that it isn't necessary to take a straight job, we may not be creating a counter society, but it will at least be a new direction," says a young lawyer in a Cambridge legal collective.

"If there is no community for you, young man, young man,

Clark Ordered FBI Surveillance, Magazine Say

NEW YORK (AP) — Former Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark ordered J. Edgar Hoover to use the full resources of the FBI to investigate such groups as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Time magazine says.

The newsmagazine published Sunday a memorandum that it claimed contained Clark's order to Hoover.

Clark was also quoted by Time as saying in an interview that he had authorized FBI investigations that possibly or sometimes included surveillance of black militants and political dissidents.

Clark, who served as attorney general under former President Johnson, was asked a week ago about reported government documents showing he had authorized such intelligence.

"I never saw any documents, and I don't know what's in them," he replied then.

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