

~~(Vissiting)~~ Leftist
The Hippie and the New Leftist
(SATYAPRIYA)

~~Student unrest~~ ~~and bears so much like~~
~~the days of "Student Unrest."~~ ~~Unrest~~ seems such an
~~un-practical word.~~ There is ~~more~~ ~~restlessness~~ ~~restlessness~~. And if ~~hell~~ ~~the~~ ~~truth~~, it is
not just students who show unrest. The
phenomenon extends to young people ~~across~~ ~~the~~ ~~more~~
developed ~~countries~~, as well as to ~~many~~ ~~not~~ ~~so~~ ~~young~~ ~~any~~.

The restlessness is directed
against the "system", the establishment, the
Status Quo. The main charge is hypocrisy
or lack of authenticity, at least in western
affluent societies. The major malaise may
be sheer meaninglessness - the painful
awareness that life has no point at all.

The drop-outs, the stay-ins, the
hawks, the doves, the coeds, the upstarts, in
the hippies, the New Left, the protesters,
the marchers - these are the phenomena of
societies where poverty has been all but to
banished, where distribution of wealth is
more equitable than ever before, where the
aged, the infirm and the unemployed are

1/ family well cared for.

What do they want? Someone asks. Their answer is "Do you want to give us what we want on a platter, so that you can be rid of us and continue comfortably in your snug, bourgeois, hypocrisy?" No, modern youth is not making demands which the older generation can easily meet.

In fact, they are our judges. They are our prosecutors. They point the accusing finger at us and say: "What you have done is not so good. The world is in bad shape. You have made the world what it is. And you are guilty."

Then we are even more puzzled. We ask our young people, "What kind of a world do you want us to make? Tell us, and we will try."

The young people reply: "No, thank you. We don't think you could understand it if we told you. Just hand over the power to us, and we will try our hand at creating a new world according to our own ideas."

"But you are too young. Running the world is serious business. It takes experience and maturity. You will wreck the world in no time" - so my generation replies.

"To hell with your experience and

majority. What you have done with it is enough evidence against its usefulness. Just let go, just get out, and ~~let us try~~ ^{allow us} to make our own mistakes, ^{on} our own way."

With that, conversation breaks down between the generations. What we then have is the "generation gap". A widening gap which makes us apprehensive. What is our youth coming to, we ask in consternation.

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In affluent societies contemporary youth is called "post-modern", since they have had "modern" parents. The "modern" style of their parents' way of life seems to them archaic. Affluence cannot be adequate as a goal for living.

In America, Sweden, Germany, U.K. and other western countries, youth protest takes two somewhat different but related forms. For want of better terms we shall call one of them "the hippie" ^{type} and the other the "New Left" ~~form~~ ^{type}.

Both protest against the status quo. The ~~hippie~~ New Left's angry young men and women want to change society radically, using violent revolution if necessary. But they at least regard human society as redeemable. Human existence can become

meaningful only through change of structures,
both in the nation and between nations.

change the politics, economies and culture
of mankind, in order to save man - that
seems to be the cry of the New Left.

The hippie is different. He
regards current society as irredeemable. So
he opts out or drops out. For him
salvation can come only from the expansion
of personal consciousness - through L.S.D. or
other drugs, through "transcendent meditation"
à la Maharshi Ramesh Yogi, or through
"flower culture" and similar patterns of
passivity.

This is of course not to say that
all students and youth who protest or are
restless belong to these two categories. No,
rather, these are the two distinct types
that can be clearly delineated as articulated
forms - one with a secularized social
gospel, and the other with an equally
secularized ^{gospel of} personal salvation.

But this secularized gospel,
whether it is a "social gospel" or a
"gospel of personal salvation", has very little
relation to the secular gospels peddled
by contemporary secular theologians. They

~~do not want to~~ youth refuses to accept the urban-technological society as the ideal form ^{for today} of the Kingdom of God. Neither Harvey Cox nor Leslie Dewant, neither Bishop Robinson ^{of Detroit to God fame} nor the Death of God theologians cut much ice with either the New Leftist or the Hippies.

Who then are the prophets of protest for youth today? For the hippie type, there are no real prophets. They tried the Maharshi, and despite an early romance, communications would at present appear to have broken down.

The New Left, on the other hand, has its articulate and outstanding prophets, martyrs and heroes. A list of names would appear shocking to many of our bourgeoisie.

The three that top the list are Mao Tse Tung, Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara. These three are heroes in the fight against Big Power Establishment, especially America's dominating power over the world's economy, culture and politics. Less known in political circles, but more astute as creators of ideas, are the Major Prophets — Herbert Marcuse, the 70-year old Marxist Philosopher who teaches at the University of California in San Diego (in hiding at

(the moment of writing in response to threats on his life) and Frantz Fanon, the Jamaican philosopher of revolution. America is the Cambridge

Strangely enough, the New Left, with its philosophy of revolution, finds itself making the greatest progress. At the University of Michigan, for example, the Students for a Democratic Society, recently organized a "Radical Education Project" which sought to acquaint students with the new thinking of Marcuse, Fanon, Guevara, Mao and others of a similar persuasion.

The writings of these men are selling like hot cakes in the U.S.A. and are spreading also in Western Europe. An anthology of some of this new thinking is to be published this year in a book entitled "Beyond Dissent" edited by Steve Weissman.

What does this protesting generation, this riotous generation want? This bears to the University and the concerns of higher education?

1) The Crusade against hypocrisy. According to a recent analysis by a Yale Professor, the generation now in power had their childhood before the second world war. Their parents were basically Victorians. They themselves, however, had been exposed to some new ideas of equality and freedom. But they grew up in this duality - forced to practice the Victorian morality of their parents (at least in public) while intellectually accepting contemporary ideas like racial equality, the equality of the sexes, the freedom of the young, sexual liberality and so on.

Their children, who were born after the war, do not know much about this Victorian morality. They have openly accepted the newer and "freer" morality. Their parents claim to understand them, but when they really practice what their parents intellectually accept, the parents are displeased. This they regard as hypocrisy. They indict the older generation of lacking in integrity. They want a clean break with the past, because it is dishonest and crooked. They want an honest open society.

2) Impatience with the impersonality of present structures of society.

They have no patience with all the sham and show in the religious and socio-cultural institutions of the established order. Youth is all for honest, open, intimate, warm, personal relations. The structures stand in the way by imposing form and propriety, rules and regulations, inaccessible and alienated, institutional authority structures, and the pretentious vanities of social custom.

(to my Victorian generation)
A shocking label button which demands to "make love, not war" ^{bears} ~~is~~ that kind of interpretation. Be warm, be intimate, not brutal, aggressive, cold, correct, forbidding. That is what youth wants.

3) Impatience with all Confining boundaries

Youth does not like denominationalism, nationalism, racialism or any other form of exclusionism. For them all young people belong to their set, irrespective of his or her religious persuasion, racial stock, country of citizenship. Especially in Western countries, young people ignore their own co-nationals in order to befriend Africans, Asians or Latin Americans.

Revolt against Authoritarian Structures.

Any form of arbitrary Authority invites a strong protest from our youth. They are the agents of the age, demanding the break down of authoritarian structures which are alienated and which fail to respond to human sentiments. The authority of the University administration and the authority of the Police are the two targets most frequently chosen by students to strike against. In effect it is a questioning of the whole establishment.

Youth demands participation in decision-making, and nowhere in the world of tomorrow ~~are~~ are students going to be contented to be at the receiving end of the educational pipe-line. They demand a voice in University and College administration. And the present writer does not think it can be held back from them for very long.

(5) Revolt against Academic non-Committal.

" - Text book knowledge & the attitude
" - " appear to these students

in the rough and tumble of life. Hence the antipathy towards examinations and all the paraphernalia of formal higher education which seem to them so unrelated to life. They are not anti-intellectual, but they search for the keenest analysis of the Vietnam situation or other human realities, while neglecting medieval history or philosophy or such ^{alienated} academics. They want more information - but relevant information.

Modern Youth is getting very disgusted with ^{much of} the content of education, which in their impatient eyes, seems to have no action value for the present.

6) Disgust with Affluence and the Technocratic Paradise.

Strangely enough there is a great disillusionment among contemporary youth about the much vaunted benefits of the affluent society. Not that they admire poverty, but they feel that the kind of affluence now available in western societies regiments life, destroys the joy of life and is based

the protesting generation takes on the
external of poverty as its banner —
the tattered dress, the crumpled fatigues,
the unkempt hair, the unshaven face,
and sometimes even unwashed bodies. Not
that they are poor — but they want to
deflate the claim of ~~behave~~ the western
economies to have discovered paradise
in the form of the urban-technological
civilization.

1) Enthusiasm for Freedom

Freedom and joy are the
key words of protesting youth. Sexual
freedom, which has been much publicized,
is not the most important aspect of this
freedom. One is surprised at the sexual
self-restraint practiced by many young
people in private, while outwardly they
flaunt all the ^{preferred} moral conventions of our
generation.

Overcoming inner inhibitions,
breaking down outer walls, taking off
all false supports, ^{overcoming authority} this is the negative side
of the campaign for freedom. On the
positive side they ask for freedom

the ability to enjoy life, the capacity to let go and let swing, ease and spontaneity of movement and relationships, and anything in short that seems to create freedom and joy.

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These are all, of course, positive evaluations of youth's protesting quest. It is possible to give another interpretation which ~~gives the parents~~ the riotous generation as irresponsible, disorderly, undisciplined, disloyal and all the rest. That would be merely to prove the point of youth's charge that we of the older generation are uncomprehending and insensitive.