

Hoffman vs. Rubin Yippie vs. Yuppie

By JOAN SULLIVAN

"YOU MAY REMEMBER ME. I used to be the cause of arguments around the dinner table. Fights started when my name was mentioned. Then, one day I shined off my beard and no one recognized me. That's why I carry this — an American Express card.

"That's a joke—sort of."

Jerry Rubin, author of *Do It*, co-founder of the Youth International Party (Yippies), a mentor behind guerilla theatre against the establishment, spoke to a standing-room only audience at Dalhousie's McInnes room wearing a suit and tie, drinking Perrier water. He's gone from a radical's radical to a political Brookeshields, and his message is—look after yourself, make money and stay away from drugs.

Rubin is debating Abbie Hoffman in "Yippie versus Yuppie". They glance at each other from their separate sides of the stage. Although they say many times during the debate that they respect each other, their glances seem to say—there but for the grace of God go I.

Hoffman wore corduroys, a sweater, and an open shirt, and drank plain water from a jug. The first thing he does is hold up some tags he tore from his hotel room furniture—the ones that say, Do Not Remove Under Penalty of Law.

Rubin opens with a definition of Yippies and Yuppies.

"If you hear the initials IRA and you think of the Irish Republican Army, then you're a Yippie. If you think of an Individual Retirement Account, then you're a Yuppie."

The baby boomers have settled into the establishment. They're self reliant, interested in social issues, and confident they can change the system from within, said Rubin.

"In the next presidential election, or the one after that, a Yuppie president will be elected." Yuppie-oriented politicians will be in power until the third decade of the 21st century.

"We haven't sold out, we're taking over." Rubin said.

He called the baby boomers "a generation of achievers" who had discovered that "It's OK to have nice things. It's OK to have money."

"Capitalism with a conscience" is the motto for the '80s, and this means an informational society supporting an entrepreneurial explosion.

This slow, sensible approach to change is the reason behind the Yuppie support of Reagan, Rubin said. Reagan would be known as "the President of peace" and Rubin predicted Reagan would spend his next term negotiating with the Soviets for a Nuclear Arms Control Treaty.

announces plans to be arrested twice in February.

He urged the audience to take a wider view of the world, because "Rubin's world is as narrow as his tie."

Change from within is not enough. "Agitation is necessary," Hoffman said, and he criticized universities today for being "hotbeds of social rest."

Rubin's plans for the political future were "exclusive" and smacked of "social darwinism." Yuppies voted for Reagan for financial reasons, and ignored issues such as US intervention in Central America, which "parallels Vietnam."

"Don't be overeager to sell your souls to capitalism." People must organize to confront governments and corporations, not infiltrate them in hopes of making small changes.

People must stand together, Hoffman said. While Rubin praised women for becoming

financially independent, Hoffman said he disagreed with the label "feminism" as he felt it separated people.

Hoffman took a humorous approach in getting his message across. When he expressed his distrust of Reagan, he said he had offered Reagan \$10,000 for his favorite charity, "even those son-of-a-bitch contras", if Reagan could name every member of his cabinet.

"I haven't heard back from him."

But Hoffman's message was not funny. People today face many dangers, and they should not focus on their own comfort. He mentioned the Union Carbide disaster in India, and said that such an accident would not happen in a white country.

He also called Canada "the nuclear whore of the world" and warned Canadians not to become the 51st state of America. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney

appeared willing to sell the whole country to the highest American bidder, he said.

Both Hoffman and Rubin have hope for the future, but their visions of changes and the method of securing them are very different.

"You can have it all," Rubin told the audience. Just look after yourself, don't turn to drugs, and trust those in power.

Hoffman's message was not new—power to the people. It is the era of "designer brains," he said, so just try and keep a sense of humour and build a broader version of the world.

"Democracy is a progress in motion. Go out and make tomorrow better than today," said Hoffman.

Joan Sullivan is the Atlantic bureau chief for Canadian University Press.

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