

You say you want a revolution?

by Stephen R. Mills

The revolutionary movement throughout the world is a group of people, mostly young, who wish to do away with the present political system, capitalist democracy, and replace it with something which will be of greater benefit to the peoples of the world.

There are ways of accomplishing this end which have become fashionable — peaceful demonstration, violent demonstration, intelligent discussion, etc. but contradictions are evident. It is also evident that there are a lot of people involved in the movement who have no clear idea of exactly what they wish to accomplish and how to accomplish it. A case in point was the "Stop Amchitka" rally held last Friday in front of the Hotel Nova Scotian.

The idea was to confront PM P. E. Trudeau, attending a fund-raising dinner at the hotel, with the issues and demand he do something positive about it — that is, do everything within his power to see that the Amchitka nuclear test by the U.S. was not allowed to take place.

The rally began at six-thirty with about 150 people present. Four or five organizations were represented, ranging from the Young Socialists to the Voice of Women. There were also many people affiliated with no organizations there merely to voice protest against the inhuman testing. The group congregated with banners, placards, and bull-horns near the front entrances of the hotel shouting such slogans as "Stop Amchitka, Stop the Bomb!", "2, 4, 6, 8, We are not a Yankee State!", "We want Trudeau!", etc. There were others from different groups; the Maoists throwing in an occasional "Down with US Imperialism!" and someone raising the lone cry "An-ar-chy!"

After an hour of this, it became evident that the group was not going to get Trudeau and that they were doing little to stop the bomb. Proposals were made by the more radical individuals — storm the hotel doors, block traffic, guard both exits (supposedly the PM was to emerge at ten), do anything but sit around and chant at a mocking crowd of straight by-standers.

The final outcome was that some thirty members of the group went to the hotel's back exit, which was guarded by six or seven city policemen. They stood around for several minutes, then moved about chanting until someone broke a window and the group instantly dispersed.

The group out front, meanwhile, continued to chant but finally grew weary and left. Organizer Walter Davis, of Y.S., told the press the demonstration had been a success because the Liberal Party was now aware of the people's views.

The rally was not a success, however, for the simple reason that there was no united action and no intelligent analysis of the situation.

The people who wished to remain passively out front of the Hotel Nova Scotian were wrong. They were noticed, certainly, but as one notices an insect on one's clothing — a minor irritation, not worthy of consideration. Also, even had their demand been met and Trudeau had appeared, he would have said nothing meaningful. The passivists were wrong.

The people who wished to storm the hotel were wrong. If you wish to pit the brute force of the local movement against the brute force of the established order, the movement can lose and, ultimately, be destroyed. Young people, no matter how dedicated, have not the training, resources, or numbers of the police, nor do they have the legal sanctions. Again, even had the radicals somehow overcome the police and entered the hotel — what of it? Will you chase the



Prime Minister through the hotel corridors until you catch him and threaten his life unless he "stops Amchitka, stops the bomb?" This is foolishness and should be frowned upon by intelligent revolutionaries, militant or otherwise.

If both these possibilities are wrong, what can be done? Society most certainly is not the way it should be and must be changed as soon as possible. This can only be done by individuals who, through united effort study the situation — and seek solutions. Solutions do not come from narrow hard time interpretations of political theories.

Use whatever means will work at the time, keeping in mind the long-range goal, the rights of others, the people's frailties. If militant tactics have a good chance of working — use them. If passivism works

better at another time — use it. If nothing works (as in the Amchitka rally), find out why and move to a better issue.

The required revolution calls for very intelligent, co-operative people. There are few of these around and this is one of the reasons that revolutions, in North America at least, have had such limited success. The revolution is a serious enterprise sometimes requiring superhuman effort on the part of the participants. Until it is looked upon in this light, it will remain, to a large degree, a frustrated and frustrating experience.

Since this article raises questions about revolution in general, the GAZETTE next week is beginning a column on revolution, political theories, and revolutionary movements.

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