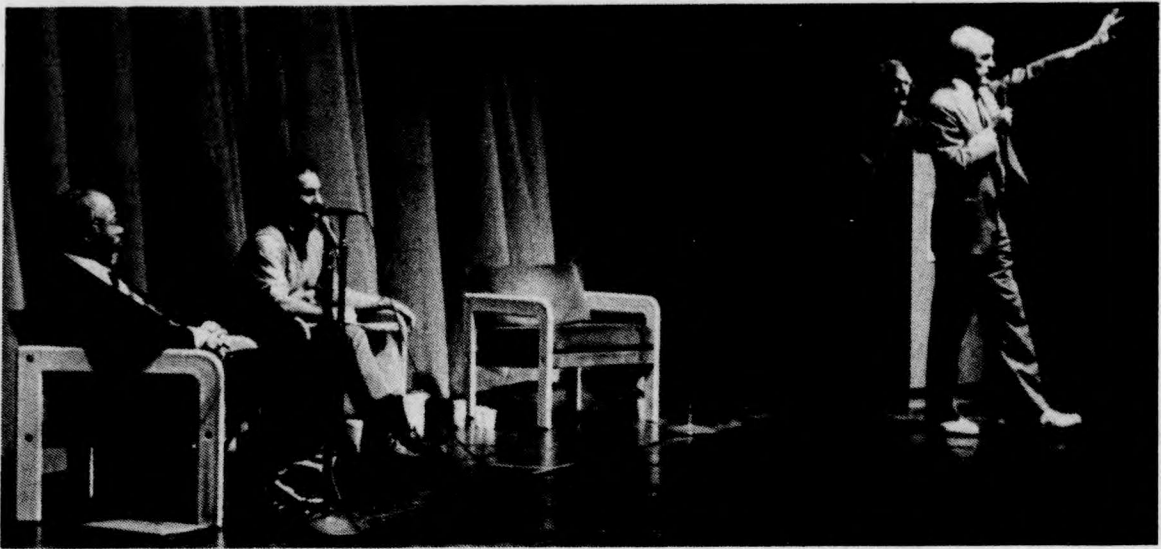


'60s radicals reunite at Ryerson



HAIL TO THE CHIEF: Eldridge Cleaver and Abbie Hoffman watch Timothy Leary doing an imitation of a Southern evangelist. At the podium is moderator Jack Layton.

By PAULETTE PEIROL

Change can be purely ideological, according to political activist Abbie Hoffman. "How do you separate the rhetoric from the ideology of the deed?" he asked over 1,300 people at the Ryerson Theatre on Sunday.

This critical distinction between rhetoric and deed became apparent during the heated two hour debate between Hoffman, LSD-guru-turned-computer-peddler Timothy Leary, and former Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver, now a self-proclaimed Christian Republican. All three were, at various times, exiled from the United States and denied entry into Canada.

The three American figureheads of 60s radicalism drew a capacity crowd at last weekend's forum, organized by David Lavin and sponsored by the *Toronto Star* and CFNY radio.

Yet if the audience was expecting an intelligible discussion of "Politics, Art, and The Media"—the umbrella title of the ongoing lecture series—then it was sorely disappointed. Hoffman, Leary and Cleaver offered a little more than a three ring oratory circus, which included name-calling and a half hour argument between Leary and Cleaver as to the circumstances behind Cleaver's possession of Leary's drugs and passport when the two were exiled in Algeria.

Ironically, the ringmaster of this circus was the crowd itself, as it applauded and prompted almost every sarcastic one-liner, however contradictory, that Hoffman and Cleaver uttered.

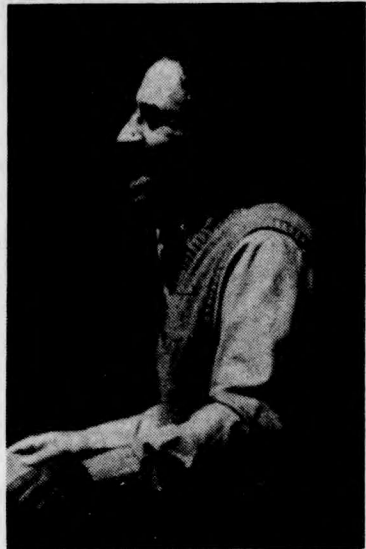
As for the 67 year old Leary, who coined the slogan "Turn on, tune in, drop out," and was called "the most dangerous man alive" by former president Richard Nixon, his speech on Sunday was vague at best, and was considered by many to be incomprehensible. After being interrupted by Leary several times, Cleaver told him to "shut up." Later, a heckler reminded Leary "we're not in the 60s anymore."

Leary now advocates mind-altering through the use of computers rather than drugs, and works with a futuristic software (or, "thoughtware") company in

California.

The middle-aged Hoffman, still a civil rights advocate and a political activist known for his guerilla theatre tactics, didn't mince words in condemning the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), institutions, and authority in general.

"Sometimes you'll find that authority is illegal, immoral, or just plain fucking stupid," he told the cheering audience. "The status quo



A chuckling Abbie Hoffman.

sits on society like fat sits on chicken soup," the clinical psychologist added.

Hoffman alternately called universities "hotbeds of social rest," and "psycho-social moratoriums." He feels, however, that today's youth is becoming more politically conscious and active, citing as an example, 7,000 American students protesting apartheid.

He charged that the CIA is infiltrating American campuses to recruit new members. Hoffman and Amy Carter (daughter of the former American president) were recently arrested in a demonstration against the CIA at a university in Massachusetts. They face a trial on April 6, at which time Hoffman says he will try to prove that the CIA is a criminal organization.

After the debate, Hoffman sold buttons, reading "What's so intelligent about the CIA?" to the audience.

Earlier, Hoffman described Leary and Cleaver (whom he hadn't seen in

over 19 years) as being alternately "spaced out" and "in outer space." Yet while the audience's reaction to Leary ranged from neutral to negative, many fully supported Cleaver's strong conservative stance.

In defense of Hoffman's charges, Cleaver contrasted the Black Panther Party, who "used real guns and real bullets," with Hoffman's Youth International Party (Yippies), who "had play guns and play bullets."

Almost two decades ago, when Cleaver held strong Marxist-Leninist views, he was quoted as saying, "The United States government is the number one enemy of mankind."

"I thought that if enough people followed the blueprint for a revolution, it would happen," the calm speaker told the Ryerson Theatre crowd. Yet after visiting numerous communist and Third World countries, such as China and Cuba, Cleaver's political stance took a radical twist to the right. "No one wants a dictatorship except the dictators," he said.

Cleaver claimed, however, that he does not support right-wing politics, and advocated instead "a balance between totalitarian governments and anarchy." While he generally agrees with the views of "the people in the middle," Cleaver noted, "I'll sit down with those tyrants, whether they're on the left or the right." As if to support this, he later admitted, after questioning, that he has spoken with members of the Klu Klux Klan.

Cleaver, who ran for Congress in 1984 and the Senate in 1986, charged that the Democratic party has established "a black machine" which is "equivalent to a Third World dictatorship... There is no split in the blacks," he said, "they're all Democrats."

One audience member, after noting the United States' anti-Communist emphasis and general xenophobia, asked Cleaver "what exactly is the United States in favour of?"

"I'm for the other people having a democratic republic where (they) have control of their own destiny," Cleaver answered.

According to Hoffman, the '60s will never return since "the sex will never be that free, the dope never that cheap, and the rock and roll never that good."

While Cleaver said he didn't want to "dwell on the past" and Hoffman in an earlier interview echoed Cleaver's sentiment, neither speaker offered concrete solutions to problems in the '80s, and both focused on American and Third World concerns.

"(President Ronald) Reagan says we're all one, including Canada," Hoffman noted in his introduction. The crowd self-consciously laughed and applauded.

Next in the *Toronto Star* Lectures will be contemporary art and culture critic Susan Sontag speaking at Ryerson Theatre on March 29. Graham Chapman a founding member of the Monty Python comedy troupe will conclude the series on April 12.



NOT THE BEAVER: Former Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver gets energetic in front of a sold-out crowd in one of the "Politics, Art and the Media" shows being presented at Ryerson.

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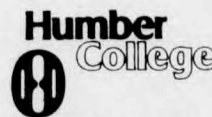
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