

**"PLAYING AT
REVOLUTION"**

TO THE EDITOR:

Many thanks to George Kennan for his perceptive analysis of student "Rebels Without a Program," Jan. 21. As might be expected, however, your letters column indicates it has given young radicals small pause for introspection. One should never have hoped, of course, that reason would convince them that their glorious revolutionary ideals might not be right, or that they just might not be consistent with the atmosphere of learning that a university presumably has. Nonetheless, it was refreshing to find that somewhere, someone still thinks that scholarship is the academic ideal.

S.D.S. ("Students for a Democratic Society," as they style themselves) is the symbol of campus radicalism, and no doubt its leaders feel smugly self-satisfied in this notoriety—they have worked hard enough to attain it. They have organized petitions, demonstrations, sit-ins, lock-ins and progressively more violent means to protest causes as diverse as the coming of an official of Dow Chemical Co. (proscribed because it makes napalm for the war) and a proposed increase in Boston subway fares (damnable because it would only further enrich fat capitalists). And if petitions or demonstrations—both of which are perfectly legitimate; I have no objection to these, as long as they do not disrupt the peace—do not make Lyndon Johnson change his war policy, nor Dow change its business, then, like little children not getting the attention they feel their actions deserve, they must use "more forceful" means in order to be heard. That is why they locked a Dow representative in a Harvard building for six hours, excusing their action on grounds of "freedom of speech."

Curiously enough, S.D.S. would ban Marine and C.I.A. on-campus recruiting. Its rea-

soning is perfectly sound. The U.S. Government (read Lyndon Johnson) is suppressing freedom around the world, and therefore has no right to enjoy the freedom it guarantees to S.D.S. Who has decided that the United States is suppressing freedom and therefore should not be accorded it? S.D.S., of course. All of which strikes me as very Maoist.

I do not mean to imply that S.D.S. members are evil or totalitarian or impossible to get along with; indeed, some of my best friends are S.D.S.'ers. I do think, though, that in playing at revolution, secure in their ivory tower, they have forgotten the purpose of university education. They are carried away by all the passions of youth, yet pretend to be reasonable. It is a peculiar trait of the S.D.S. member to be perfectly pleasant, even rational, until matters concerning public policy become the theme of conversation; then the eyes turn fiery and he becomes livid, shouting his Truth and his Righteousness.

I know S.D.S.'ers at both Princeton and Harvard. True, I cannot judge if they are "far more knowledgeable and sophisticated, far less imprisoned by myth and ideology, than the average undergraduate," as Professor Duberman claims; but nor am I imprisoned by their vague but "angry" ideology which damns the society that has pampered them. There are a lot of injustices in the present system, but it is the Eugene McCarthys, the John Lindsays and, perhaps most of all, the Lyndon Johnsons (anathema!) who will correct them—certainly not the students rioting at Whitehall, screaming tired Marxist slogans or dreaming up revolutions.

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