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Campus Unrest and Generation Gap

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KENT, Ohio — "The Kerner Commission said a very beautiful thing," a black student named Robert S. Pickett told the President's Commission on Campus Unrest last week, "which you guys could probably say, too."

He opened a paperback copy of the report by the Commission on Civil Disorders and changing two phrases began to read from the conclusion: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, student or intellectual, and hardhat..."

The finding of the Kerner Commission that the nation was moving toward a black and a white society and that "white racism" was at the root of much of the problems of American society has had little effect on the lives of Negroes. And it seems doubtful that whatever the campus commission says when it makes its report in late September or nearly October will calm the nation's troubled youth.

The commission and its staff have held public hearings here at Kent State University, where four students were killed in a volley of National Guard rifle fire last spring, and at Jackson State in Mississippi, where two black students died when the state police opened fire on a state dormitory.

Also Visited California

Commissioners and staff workers have also been to Isla Vista, Calif., where students burned down a branch of the Bank of America, and to Lawrence, Kan., where two students were shot to death by the police this summer.

They have been told that outrage over the incursion into Cambodia triggered window-breaking and the burning of the R.O.T.C. building here, but that what happened was also part of a disenchantment with America over a wide variety of issues.

Asked what the President could do to ease campus tensions, Robert Stamps, a student

Panel Finds a Wide Gulf Between Young and Old

believe that Cambodia and Kent galvanized previously undemonstrative students into action and note that there was fierce street fighting at such disparate campuses as the University of Wisconsin, Southern Illinois and the State University at Buffalo.

Further Radicalization

And they feel that police action has caused further radicalization: At the University of New Mexico, for instance, several students were bayoneted along with a television cameraman whose multiple wounds, the Guard asserted, were caused by a fall into a rose bush.

Throughout the country, particularly in cities where there are large universities, "youth colonies" are being formed in parks and other places where the young gather. Last winter, Tom Hayden, one of the most astute of the radical analysts, suggested that many of the events of the next few years would be centered on a struggle of the young to control and defend these "liberated zones."

Here in Kent, the gathering places are a series of bars along North Water Street, which on weekends attract not only Kent students, but also youths from the surrounding towns—several of which are dry—and from much of northeastern Ohio.

Much like the Southern sheriffs and mayors of a few years back, the officials here say that their troubles have been caused by "outside agitators." But there is a real fear and resentment of the students among the townspeople.

Flag Torn Down

Last spring, a youth tore down on one of the American flags that had been put up here, but a judge let him off with a small fine because there was no local ordinance against flag desecration. The City Council met in emergency session and passed a law that forbid, among other things "contemptuous" display of the

Mrs. Doris Aick, a middle-aged housewife who, by July 5, had collected 8,011 signatures on a petition supporting the action of the Guard.

"Seven years ago it was perfectly safe for me to take my daughters to the movies," she said. "Now, all the movies are about sex and violence, and we do not go downtown at night, any night. The students sit on the sidewalk with their feet in the street, and you have to step over them."

(The features at the Kent theaters last week were "Chisum," the John Wayne Western, Walt Disney's "The Boatniks" and a Tarzen movie.)

Some Canvassers Afraid

The only difficulty she had in getting signatures, Mrs. Aick said, arose because some canvassers were afraid to go to houses where students might live.

"There's one in my neighborhood where 10 students live, they were hippie types," she said. "They flew a black flag for about a month after the incident, so I put up my American flag every day."

"I'm not against long hair, it depends on how long it is," she said.

After the laughter of the students in the audience had died down, she explained that long hair was all right "as long as his collar shows," but if it was any longer, "Well, they frighten me."

Jerry M. Lewis, a sociology professor, suggested to the panel that part of the resentment was an attempt to "rationalize" the killings because the possibility that the deaths were unwarranted was too great a challenge to the fundamental beliefs of the townspeople.

And it seems that many of the young, who have grown up with the civil rights and anti-war movements as the base of their experience look at American society from an entirely different perspective.

Some of the commission members point out that many of the most severe disturbances this spring came at relatively unsophisticated state schools where there had been little ideological debate and where