

OVER



Found, One Generation

IT WAS A grey, still morning with the threat of rain. For a week or more, I had the uneasy feeling that something had come loose in America — some integral cotter pin that held the whole structure together.

Cambodia, Kent State, the Hardhats, strikes and riots, leaders who seemed as confused and as secretly apprehensive as I. For the first time, I doubted that we would, as we always have in the past, somehow muddle through.

So I drove over to Berkeley where, in a way, it all began.

There, in a small, neat apartment a few blocks off the campus, I sat for a few hours, sipping coffee and listening to a dozen students explain what it was all about.

They weren't student leaders or brick-throwing militants or apathetic pot-smokers. They were simply university students — bright, eager, rational, funny and warmly human.

But what struck you immediately about them was their happy enthusiasms for what they were doing these days. They glowed with it.

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EACH WAS eager to talk about the change that had come over him in these past two weeks.

"I was always against the war and I thought a lot of college was a waste of time and that our society was really rotten in many ways," said a girl with long blonde hair. "But I felt there was nothing I could do about it. The little percentage of militants turned me off with their rock-throwing and stuff."

"Who wanted to become a pawn of the militants?" said a young man with black, unruly hair.

"Yes," said the girl. "So we felt sort of — you know — helpless. But now . . . now everybody's in on this. It's really wonderful." She smiled a smile of pure delight. "It's as though we suddenly put it all together."

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As they talked on it became clear that they sought no radical change in our society. The specific goals they talked of were an end to the war, to poverty, racism and American intervention abroad. They talked of these things with serious frowns as students do.

"But what we really want, too," said a brown-haired girl, "is a new way of dealing with each other — with police and hardhats and just plain people. The way we have it here now. I guess you'd call it mutual respect."

They all lit up at this. "You mean, 'Bring us together,'" said a young man. And they all laughed.

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I LEFT FILLED with their enthusiasm and after a day of wandering around the campus I think all they told me is true. I think for the first time the majority of the students at Berkeley is, as they would say, turned on.

For the first time, they have hopes of doing something constructive about the ills of our society. For the first time, they believe that perhaps, as one young man put it, "we won't be the last generation."

And yet, right now, these hopes are fragile things. They need \$2000 a day to keep their movement going. The militants, whom they engulfed with their enthusiasm and numbers, are now seeking violent confrontations once again.

They need our money. They need our understanding of what they are saying. More than that, they need our belief in them — in their essential nobility of purpose.

These are the best of our youth. They have been lost for a long, long time. Now that they are found, we can't afford to lose them again.