

RCYB members back anarchy for future

By DAVID STEINMAN
Of the Emerald

Eugene is a quiet American city.

Most of its citizens believe in law and order and when laws are not to their liking, citizens work for change within existing government structures.

But some people are dissatisfied with political change that results from working within the system. And when politics in Eugene do get noisy, some of the louder moments are provided by the agitation of Renee or Jonathon Draper, or any of the other two or three members of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade.

The RCYB likes to agitate. They want the United States government overthrown, and if it takes a violent revolution, then so be it.

The RCYB's agitation might be with a bullhorn or loud, almost shouting, discussions with students and citizens interested enough to take issue with them. In the past, hostility between the brigade and less radical citizens has resulted in threats of violence and police action, but the brigade continues with its arguments and dialogues.

The brigade's purpose might be to defend Bob Avakian, chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, who was recently charged with federal offenses that could have put him in prison for more than 100 years, or to blast U.S. foreign policy in Iran, or to protest white minority rule in South Africa.

"Our forum is the street corner," says John Kaiser, one of the newest members of the RCYB and a 1979 graduate of the University with an undergraduate degree in sociology.

Kaiser, the son of a retired doctor in Sparks, Nevada, says he still holds political discussions with his "progressive" parents. But conflicts arise when they talk of the means for change in the nation. "The thing my parents can't see is the necessity for a violent revolution. The imperialists will not concede their rule without violence."

"Communism and revolution are very controversial," Renee Draper says. "When we held a recent press conference to discuss the Iran situation out on 13th and University some people said taking over the Embassy in Iran is bullshit. I think it's a good thing. People spitting on the flag, like what was done in Iran, is what's needed."

Although Renee Draper says some people have been won over to the brigade's position, others still dissent with the brigade and members recall



RCYB member Renee Draper sees the group's activities as a necessary function to awaken people.

such abusive phrases as "If you don't like it here, then leave," and "Go back to Russia."

Though the brigade members want this country to become communist, they do not look to the Soviet Union for inspiration. The Soviet Union and United States are both equally capitalistic and imperialistic, Renee Draper says.

Draper, from Chicago, is the daughter of a mother who taught school and a salesman father. "My parents aren't thrilled about my being in the brigade. My parents, like a lot of other middle class parents, want their children successful in ways they consider successful."

But how could someone — a good American baby — given all the advantages of a middle class upbringing, turn into a communist?

Renee was brought into the brigade by her husband Jonathon Draper, a native Oregonian, 1974 graduate of Columbia University and onetime graduate student of political science at the University.

Of her first impression of the brigade, Renee Draper says, "I saw these people out there raising hell. Anything going against the system, I had to check into."

For Jonathon Draper it was the hypocrisy of the moral principles he grew up with. His ideas on how social change could be achieved became radical as he saw, "the contradictions between what I was told and read in school texts and what actually happened in the world."

Key words for Draper are oppression and discrimination. "I saw the United States always playing the role of the aggressor

and I wondered why my country did these kinds of things."

"I see corporations go into Latin America, dominate the government and economy through corruption. I see poverty, malnutrition and dictators that shoot down their own people with the complicity of the U.S. government."

Draper's answer to the atrocities of the U.S. government is guerilla warfare in American cities.

Jonathon Draper has worked with the brigade for more than five years. He says that everyone in the brigade has thoughts about moving up to the Revolutionary Communist Party, but for now people in the brigade are learning to be fully committed communists.

A constant brigade activity is newspaper sales. Brigade members sell both the Revolutionary Communist Youth and the Revolutionary Worker newspapers.

The brigade members will often go to East Springfield to sell newspapers to working class people, such as those from the Weyerhaeuser plant. But one of the brigade's favorite territories is the University.

Much of the brigade's agitations at the University directly involve students. The brigade has struggled against tuition hikes and against cutbacks of minority students. Most recently, it's worked closely with the Iranian Students Association to promote discussion of the overseas situation.

Although communism is not the most popular of political philosophies to be espoused in Eugene, the brigade members "feel we have nothing to fear from the people," Jonathon Draper says. "Because we're out there among the strata we have a better understanding of the people. We think the University is friendly territory. People here aren't just pre-professionals."

Revolution for the brigade members means, first, destroying capitalism, but if the end result of the revolution was to be socialism that would be no better. "Whereas capitalism is the ruling class oppressing the working class, socialism is the oppression of the ruling class by the workers," Renee Draper says.

The brigade members see no way for anyone to avoid the political struggle they are so heatedly involved with. Whenever a national or international political situation serves as a focus for the brigade's philosophies, members use it as bridge with which to work with people, Draper says.

"I want people to see they're being forced to take mindless positions, to rally round a political stance without thinking. We're trying to get people to think of the situation. We try to bring an understanding of the situation."

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