



Steve Schapiro

COUNTER-CEREMONY: Yippies and other self-styled young "revolutionaries" marched in Washington last week in a "counter-inaugural parade" to dramatize their opposition to the American political system as symbolized by the inauguration of President Nixon. Despite some violence, the protest fizzled and left many questions about the future of The Movement.

They Didn't Advance Their Cause at the Inaugural

WASHINGTON — America's young militants have made more of a mark than most of their elders are aware of, or anyway are willing to admit. For different reasons, at least four Americans over 30—Lyndon B. Johnson, Hubert H. Humphrey, Senator Eugene J. McCarthy and Mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago—can testify to that.

Last week the young militants had their initial brush with Richard M. Nixon—and left the new President unscathed.

Behind the esoteric dialectic there are worthy, even noble, yearnings in the idealism and the disgust of the militant generation with much of American society, particularly the middle class suburban society from which much of the generation springs. At the counter-inaugural peace demonstration mounted here last week by the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam—"the Mobe" of Pentagon and Chicago fame—there were some evidences of

what is eating "those kids."

But without the presence of a single identifiable hero of dissent who retains credibility in "straight" society—a Dr. Benjamin Spock, for example, or the list of celebrities from the rock, folk, literary and black militant scenes whose names were on the mimeographed counter-inaugural program but who simply didn't appear—the underground's pearls were cast, literally, before the swine. The contemptuous "inhoguration" of a pig as youth's Counter-President became the main event and left a city-full of Republicans neither moved nor amused.

Feelings Dissipated

One of the chants in the youthful counter-inaugural parade was "work, study, get ahead—kill." If that is what young people—even just some young people—feel about the American dream and the world the adults made for them, the country should know it. Unfortunately,

the show of deep feelings of dissent were dissipated last week in more bizarre behavior against the Republicans as they assumed power.

At the inauguration of President Nixon—a target the Movement largely ignored during the 1968 campaign because, as one demonstrator put it here last week, "We don't relate to the Republicans"—"those kids" certainly did nothing to advance whatever potential they may have for influencing the Republicans during the next four years.

The Movement's hard core "crazies"—the scruffy, self-appointed commandos of the young left, armed with firecrackers, smoke bombs, sticks, stones, beer cans, bottles, and a catalogue of obscenities—chose to confront the new President and his Cabinet by pelting their limousines during Monday's official inaugural parade with missiles and four-letter epithets.

It was a tactical blunder that

even the Mobe's radical leadership disavowed. Not content with that, the Yippies careened around downtown Washington after the parade, smashing a church window and the plate glass of banks, the National Geographic Society and the National Association of Home Builders.

Police Kept Cool

But in Washington — unlike Mayor Daley's Chicago — the police kept their cool. And more than one observer of both skirmishes began to have second, kindlier thoughts about the police after witnessing the provocative tactics employed by the children here.

The spit of a sweet-faced girl ran down a policeman's jacket. Endless insults and burning American flags — tiny banners distributed by Boy Scouts at a counter-counter-inaugural demonstration—were thrown at the police along the parade route. A few of the police retaliated

with clubs and fists. But there was no general skull cracking, and only 85 demonstrators were arrested. Their average age was 20. The hometowns on the police blotters were middle class and suburban — Charlottesville, and Falls Church, Va.; Darien, Conn.; Bethesda and Chevy Chase, Md.; Madison, Wisc.; Bayshore, N.Y.

In the name of the Revolution, the "crazies," and the Mobe's unwillingness or inability to control them, had marred the dignity of Presidential transition by creating a situation for the first time in the 180 years of the American Presidency, in which the new Chief Executive required the protection of combat-equipped troops at his inauguration. Troops were deployed on the double along Pennsylvania Avenue just before Monday's parade. But the question that will pursue the militants is what else they achieved.

—BEN A. FRANKLIN