

SDS Guerrillas Strike

Scott Braley

Madison Avenue seems determined to co-opt and make a profit on everything, even revolution.

What the movement has to do is politicize every facet of Amerikan life and relate to people everywhere they are—in this case, at the movies.

For the last couple of weeks several people from the SDS summer program have been spending spare time at “CHE!” (“A man who created a nightmare of violence and terror”). We went to theatres all over Detroit passing out the June 12 “Che!” issue of the *Fifth Estate* [FE #81, June 12–25, 1969], and rapping about what Che and Cuba really are about.

The SDS guerrillas passed out leaflets, at the show, and at the end of each one, grabbed the stage for a short rap until the management got wise.

The speakers would describe how when the U.S. owned most of the productive facilities of Cuba thousands of people died every year from starvation and disease and the literacy rate was less than 5%. Now starvation is non-existent & medical care is available for everyone and literacy is over 95%.

All good examples that the revolutionaries in Cuba, as Che said, were “guided by thoughts of love,” rather than “obviously masochistic,” as Omar Sharif said of Che.

As a followup, SDS has scheduled a series of Monday night film showings of Cuban and revolutionary films at St. Joseph’s Church. People at the theatres were invited to attend and take part in further raps and work sessions.

Almost all the young people dug the rap. They saw through the bullshit of the movie and stayed and listened when we rapped from the stage—and applauded at the mention of a “violent revolution” in Amerika.

Reactions from the old folks, however, were weird. One woman, trying to keep her little girl from taking one of our leaflets, said “Don’t take that. You can take things from hippies, but not from them.”

Apparently there is now a lower form of life than a hippie—or else Madison Avenue has now been able to commercialize the hippie thing so that it’s no longer a threat.

This commercialization is so heavy that one of the theatre managers even asked if he could put up some of our leaflets condemning the movie on the ticket window. In fact, like that manager, most of the old folks really seemed to be into a McLuhan thing—the medium is the message—and saw us as part of the show.

I think, though, that Madison Avenue is going to have a hard time selling plastic revolution even to old people while the Vietnamese are taking care of business, black people are taking back what is theirs, and young white America is burning down their piggy institutions.

fifth Estate

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/83-july-10-23-1969/sds-guerrillas-strike>
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