Revolution as religion

By Steve Carhart

Most of the attention which has been focused on SDS has been toward the activities of various factions and sects and the ideological characteristics of both of these groups as political organizations. While they certainly are that, there is another aspect to the ideological purity of many of these groups which is generally not considered. That aspect is expressed as part of a search on the part of youth for values of the sort considered to be inherent in society.

One of the prime characteristics of most religions and ideologically orientated political movements is that they give the believer a unified explanation of the workings of those parts of reality which he will never experience himself. In making this determination, the religious person assumes that the everyday life which is consistent with what is good or inevitable epitome of Big (or the ultimate truth). He is not content to be left alone ... even the most religious people say about traditions of the traditional. It is an article of faith that those who profess the right beliefs will have their reward.

This can be understood in terms of what we call the believer's sincerity, it is interpreted in terms of how feeling of guilt often form part of the motivation.

Groups with strong political or religious orientations spend as much time arguing about doctrine among themselves as they do addressing substantive issues. After all, if one has not made a moral commitment to a system which admits to the validity of competing ultimate truths, he is free to believe in anything that seems to be true. Perhaps the best example of this is the various factions and sects from which a religious person can choose. When we believe in Christ, was Peter the first Pope? And of course, the universe.

The Second Pentagon

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Second-class postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts. The Tech is published every Tuesday and Friday by the students of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Tech, Room W10-483, MIT Student Center, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. Telephone: Area code 617, 877-5585. United States Post Office subscription rates: $4.50 for one year, $8.00 for two years. Printed by PTI Publishing.