The Battle of Harvard Square

By Bruce Schwartz

“Riot, it’s going to be pretty hard getting said to that desecrator second that I’m going to be and I know it. We marched to the Common under the N.P. flag; we applauded, Abbe, Doug Mitana and John Proaize. Now we march back over the Harvard Bridge, shouting ‘off the pig!’ “Free Bobby!” and “Ho, Ho, Ho...” Up past MIT, where a few rocks are thrown - the first nation, but that’s what I’m going hard getting used to that desecration so what? the whole familiar American syndrome — and a pervasive sense of the Battle in Harvard Square. Predictably, the wrong: Victory to the Viet Cong. Marxism influence: these factors have combined to drive the New Left down the road toward revolution. Many young people have concluded that the capitalist American system is at the root of these evils, and that before they can be eliminated, the system must be smashed.

When SDS split, the young revolutionaries formed three splinter groups: Weatherman, PL-WSA, and Revolutionary Youth Movement. PL advocated the associative style and all associated alliances with the working class to eventually result in classic Marxist revolution, with proletariat control of the system. Weatherman advocated immediate beginning of violent insurrection. Their actions last fall in Chicago, Washington and Boston have put many of them in jail. Weatherman today is demoralized and decimated.

Weatherman stood for revolution - later. This militancy extended to many unorganized radicals, including Yippie types. In Boston radicals of such a bent clattered around anti-war actions, anti-war research actions and anti-fascist actions. NAC came and went; when the Chicago 7 were sentenced we witnessed TDA. All these months more radicals have been moving to want a Weatherman faith that it’s time to start in on violent resolution.

I met him in Central Square about 9 o’clock, after the first wave of cops had cleared the square. I asked him how he’d gotten out, “Oh, groovy man.” I turned my dog on him. The dog knocked him down, and I picked up this big mother rock and smashed him in the face with it while he was on his back.”

“Did you kill him?”

“I dunno. I ran like hell. It was the stupid pig broke away from the others to chase me. I turned my dog on him. The dog knocked him down, and I picked

No straight newspaper except possibly the Globe made any sense of the Battle in Harvard Square. Predictably, the Traveler and Wretched American confused the action with the Common peace rally; all three papers pretty well neglected the political meaning of the Bobby Seale contingent.

Radical paper will tell you “Right on!” and let you do your own guessing.

In these pages, we will attempt analysis. However, objectivity isn’t found in italics. Be warned.

The Bobby Seale contingent left the Common about 6 pm Wednesday and marched to Harvard Square. Windows were smashed along the way; rioting erupted in the square. This was politically inspired rioting.

The Bobby Seale contingent was the brainchild of NAC/TIDA, the least radical of the three semiorganizations. The word “semiorganization” is critical to an understanding of the group’s activities. It has no membership lists, no dues, no initiation rites, few regular meetings, no hard doctrine. It has no programs, it isn’t a political party.

By now its hard core members consider it a revolutionary organization. Five years of Vietnam war, frustration over the war to continue and does not want the US Government to impress the chairman of the Black Panthers Party, Bobby Seal. (Bobby is on trial now in New Haven, allegedly for ordering the execution of a turncoat BPP member.) The Panthers are the emotionalists; moreover, they are armed and use their guns. Eldridge Cleaver has boasted of killing cops.

The Panthers came by their revolutionary doctrine the hard way: in the ghetto, where the cop really is the pig, where the white capitalist system preys on everyone. Where the courts dispense “justice” on an arbitrary, atomistic line basis. Where the landlord has rights, and the tenant has none, for property in

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Photo by Lee Gayer