

The Agency and the Young Employee

The Agency recruits many of its professional employees directly from the college campus where the life-styles, values, experience and priorities of the young are at odds with the values and attitudes of Agency supervisors. Motivating and gaining the maximum job effort and cooperation from the young employee is a challenge for many "old-line" supervisors. Supervising and directing of the young today is frustrating and can even be hopeless unless an effort is made to understand "where the young employee is at." If this effort is not made, the young employees will suffer in the short term, but the Agency will be the loser in the long run.

This paper presents the writer's view of the historical, social and political consciousness of American youth who are now moving into the job market and who will do so in increasing numbers throughout the Seventies. The paper explores the values and attitudes of the youthful job seeker, where these values have been derived, what the young employee is likely to expect from a position within the Agency, the type of work environment that "turns him on," and areas of divergence between the young worker and the older manager.

The youth counter-culture consists of several elements. There is a core of those who have become so disillusioned with

the dominant society that they have rejected the values and structures of our society and have dropped out or turned on. Among these elements would be users of hard drugs, those who have a prolonged history of soft drug use, and those whose life-style includes commune living or "rip-off" (living off society through stealing). They also include the extreme activists who actively work to destroy "the establishment" -- the campus radical or factions of the underground, i.e., the Weathermen.

Outside this core there are those who have experimented in the counter-culture, perhaps briefly, or who share some if not all counter-culture values, but do not carry through on these values to the point of extreme action. This latter group includes the social activists who follow Ralph Nader and the political activists who are still willing to work for change from within the system but who reject in varying degrees the assumptions and views of the dominant culture. It appears likely that the Agency will not be recruiting from the core of the youth counter-culture but is likely to come into contact with those outside this core.

American youth of today are loosely bound together in at least one regard -- a fairly homogeneous experience of childhood, adolescence and early maturity. To some degree this shared experience has shaped the perceptions and

perspectives of most of today's young -- from counter-culturist to straight.

The typical young employee was born between the years 1945 to 1950, and grew up during the decade of the Fifties. Through the eyes of the youth of today, this decade was shallow if not hypocritical. To them it was an age when liberalism was overshadowed by the McCarthy witch hunt. It was the time of another "silent majority" -- the mass consumer who sought creature comforts and was complacent toward the social problems which lay beneath the surface and were to erupt on the American scene during the Sixties -- poverty and inequality amidst the Affluent Democracy.

Still, the Fifties had a profound effect upon the development of the child. For within this environment the child grew up in resplendent affluence and technological wonder. The parents lavished their new abundance upon the child. Basic needs were over-met, material desires were encouraged and over-fed. The society around him was mobile and he became accustomed to rapid change through technological breakthroughs. The wonders of television enabled him to gorge himself on violence and easy solutions to a myriad of world problems. Unlike any earlier generation, he gleaned from television a sophistication and consciousness

of man's troubles before his time. Child psychologists encouraged and began the era of child permissiveness and continued progressive education. In his early years, at home and in school, he was encouraged to seek and find for himself the rules by which he should live and the life he should follow. His place in society was to be determined by his ability and interests. He was taught to question, not only his peers, but also those in authority.

By the time of President Kennedy, our typical youth was in or approaching high school. Kennedy caught the imagination and spirit of his older brothers and sisters through his dynamism and vigor in seeking the involvement and commitment of the young in solving America's problems. The early years of the Sixties also saw the struggle for human civil rights by the Black minority. Through television this struggle was poignantly brought into the living rooms of American homes where emotionally charged pictures of adult whites taunting black children and the policeman's dog snarling at the disenfranchized blacks left a marked imprint upon impressionable young minds. Moreover, the assassination of President Kennedy -- a blow to the country as a whole -- had a special impact upon the young.

During the presidential campaign of 1964, youth sought the election of President Johnson. The SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) endorsed him as their choice over

Goldwater primarily because Johnson promised a leveling off of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The idea that international differences can be solved by military force is absurd to the young. They watched as the military build-up in Vietnam escalated under President Johnson, and they were shocked but united against what they regarded as a betrayal. Despite the vocal dissent, peaceful protests and demonstrations, the system remained unresponsive. In 1968, another election year, first Eugene McCarthy and then Robert Kennedy -- both of whom youth felt were working against the war and for minorities, the poor and the young -- were able to siphon off a great deal of the volatile youthful tendencies and to put them to work for changing the system from within. The defeat of McCarthy in the face of an escalation of the Vietnam War by a Democratic administration and the assassination of Kennedy were bitter blows for young idealists. But the final disillusionment was still to come at the Democratic Convention. In the eyes of the young, this was "the Chicago police riot" where dissent could not be tolerated and therefore had to be crushed. The year 1968 saw the beginnings of the counter-culture movement in the form of hippies moving into the Haight-Asbury district of California. The movement gained ground rapidly and, during the early part of the next year, violence rocked the

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American campuses, reaching its apex with the shocking deaths of the students at Kent State and Jackson State in early 1970.

The impact of this social and political environment on individual American youths has been diffuse, but it is within the context of these perceived experiences that the future CIA employee worked his way through college and graduate school. On the one hand, this environment spawned the counter-culture in which the young, repelled by society and its institutions, disgusted by white indifference to the black's struggle for equality, and sickened by an immoral war, seek refuge.

The basis of the movement, the adherents claim, is rejection of the dominant culture. The symbols of the rejection are the long-hair, colorful clothing, drugs and bearded faces. They claim to have found the "new morality" when, in fact, the young seem to have reordered and restructured the priorities of the dominant society. They reject deferred gratification and instead seek what they desire now, whether it be sex, drugs or politics. One manifestation of this can be seen in their slogans and signs "Peace Now." The counter-culture movement is also a return to the basics of human life. Interpersonal relationships and feelings for other human beings are far more important than the material goods of our society. Nature

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is more beautiful and serene than all of man's technology combined. Counter-culturists are willing to live at the subsistence level and cooperate with the establishment only to the extent of fulfilling their basic wants. The youthful adherents reject authoritarian figures and institutions. They hold the government in particular contempt and are basically disinterested in its policies unless they impact on them directly as in the case of draft laws or laws against the use of drugs.

The young Agency employee or the potential employee shares common experiences with his counterparts in the sub-culture and, although he may not have been in most instances an active participant in this counter-culture, he has been in close touch with it and its views. These two influences seem to combine to give the young employee within our midst a different orientation and motivation. His world outlook is different from the typical older supervisor.

The typical young employee is not motivated by money. This does not mean that he rejects it nor the goods which money implies, but money is not his primary goal of life. He simply takes an adequate salary and a certain standard of living as given. Less money and he would not work for a particular company or institution; more money, so much the better, but not a significant factor in determining his motivation or loyalties. In a similar vein, he expects an

adequate working environment, but not a pretentious one. The wooden furniture of upper management leaves him unimpressed and does not elicit his respect. One value which has replaced the emphasis upon materialism is that of social commitment, a commitment which is not seen as divorced from the work environment. Every work organization, in his view, has a responsibility to respond to social problems. This Agency has already been challenged to think through its policies and to redouble its efforts to recruit, train and place professionals from minority groups. Moreover, the time may not be far away when questions will be raised inside the Agency about the value to American society of one or more of the major Agency functions.

The challenge of the young employee's position, the meaning and depth of his work are his primary motivators. He wants to be able to see that his work has purpose and meaning and is of value to others or to society. His work is important to him because he is involved with helping others. Menial work -- until "he learns the business" -- is anathema and is met with derision. He similarly views long periods of training, job orientation and job rotation as wasteful of his time. He wants to accept responsibility and he wants to do so "now." The young employee is not asking or demanding to be made Director or Executive Director, but he is asking for the freedom, on the one hand, to hang himself if his judgments and decisions are wrong,



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and, on the other hand, to savor his success when he proves right. It is not unlikely that you will find among the new employees some who have held far more important and responsible positions on the college campus than they will hold with the Agency for some years. He wants the quality of his previous experience to count for something rather than just quantity of time spent on the job.

The young employee is a mobile employee even in the present tight job market and economic difficulties. Change is common and familiar to him as well as expected. His employment with the Agency does not have the sancity of a marriage contract. If dissatisfied he will leave, even at a lower rate of pay if the new opening offers challenge and responsibility. He is not disloyal, but his loyalty to an institution is an emotionally complex issue. The "credibility gaps" of the Sixties make him distrustful, not only of government, but of most institutions. His respect and loyalty must be earned.

The young employee intensely craves feedback. His respect can be earned through honest and forthright leveling with him. In reverse, holding back or distorting the truth are eventually recognized, and he is confused or angered. Moreover, because his perspectives are related to the here and now, he wants frequent feedback. The yearly

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fitness report is not frequent enough. When his efforts succeed he wants to know that others know, and he wants to enjoy the satisfaction now. Similarly, if he fails in his supervisor's view, he expects equal treatment so he can take his own corrective actions.

People who command important squares in the organizational chart are not ipso facto brighter or deserving of instant respect. In fact, the young employee may be suspicious of authoritarian figures and holds his own views and prejudices toward those assigned over him. He will not cower from directly confronting higher management. Moreover, he may seek out members of top management for their view of Agency policies and attitudes, since who is better able than the office chiefs or the Deputy Directors to translate policy. He may even challenge them directly or in concert with his peers.

Throughout his childhood and adolescence he was encouraged to question the "conventional wisdom" and the sources of this wisdom. During early maturity he learned that America's institutions can and in some cases must be challenged to make them more responsive to human needs. Thus, a supervisor can anticipate that Agency decisions and policies will come under close scrutiny by the young employee. Questions will be asked of the oldest and most basic purposes of intelligence work. The questioning is

not a threat and can be a healthy and refreshing exercise. The worst response is to refuse the dialogue or to hide or obscure the answer since it closes off communication and forces the opening of unofficial lines and channels which are often confused and distorted. Moreover, to close the lines of communication, to be inflexible and authoritarian is to risk a more radical response from the young. This occurred in the domestic arena, and on college campus.

Finally, a word on the young employee's life-style, dress, appearance and speech. These mannerisms are meant to distinguish him as different; one whose outlook, in his own perception of himself, is different. They can cause anguish and aggravation but they should be recognized for what they are -- the outward appearance of a differently oriented individual.

CIA is just beginning to see the influx of the new generation. Agency managers and supervisors should welcome, understand and motivate our young employees, for many are representative of the best educated and most articulate of the generation. They can be a great asset to the present and future of CIA. In the words of several young employees already on the Agency campus: "This is a good Agency; let's make it a great one."