

I DON'T TRUST THEM

By a Member of the Beat Generation

In the Twenties America burst into what F. Scott Fitzgerald called the Jazz Age. It was a joyous rebellion peopled, according to Gertrude Stein, with a Lost Generation.

Today's phrasemakers think another rebellion is brewing. Reportedly our new rebels, unlike their Charlestoning predecessors, are not interested in violent dissipation. Called the Angry Young Men in Europe, the Unsilent or Beat Genera-

tion in the United States, they are as much recluses as rebels.

Here are the thoughts of one young man, an A-student at the University, who, if not a member of this Beat Generation, sympathizes with their disapproval of our society. He speaks frankly of himself, his future, and the people around him. We leave it to the reader to decide if this is a shocking, new rebellion or an age-old case of pre-diploma weltenschmerz.

OF COURSE I only know what I know, and since you know something else you may feel free to ignore what I say or discount it. I'm sure the squares will do just that and no non-square will admit having read this article.

I may be a member of the Beat Generation, but I am not a member of any beat clique. The world is full of square people thinking square thoughts, saying square things and giving square reasons for the nasty things they do. It is repulsive. So repulsive as to make the beats and I withdraw. The beats dislike the world and draw up into a circle of beats against the world. They withdraw into a world where they go through the motions of living and yet stay "cool." I, too, dislike the world, but my circle consists of only me.

My little world is a mental limbo where I think much and do nothing. I daydream, talk to myself mentally and aloud, sing, dance, and continually ask questions all alone. I do not put any of this mental energy to any practical use and don't feel bad about not doing so. I live from day to day doing things to make time pass and accomplish mostly nothing. I would like to do something extraordinary and be paid royally for it, but I'm afraid I'll do something unusual and be jailed for it. Everything is run by squares and I don't trust them.

A thought which guides me in my dealings with people is: "People are no damn good." People are liars, cheats, petty thieves and hypocrites. Why then do they hold up truth, honesty and sincerity as the guiding principles by which a man should live?

Because people are like they are, everything is like it is. And since people are no damn good, organized religion is no damn

good. Every Sunday the poor preacher, the scapegoat of the hypocrites, stands before the mob gather to gabble and gape at one another and pours forth his feeble philosophy. Most of his actions are wasted. He is the victim and the perfect example of the hypocrisy of our society. He must stand for what men profess to be good. He must lead the exemplary life and be convinced that men are not only worth saving but saveable; and he is rewarded with a low income, low prestige and continual frustration.

I have been taught to believe in God. I'm not sure I do. But a decision on the existence of God is not an exigency in my life.

For some reason, people want the best of everything except people, and they want only mediocre people. Mediocre people are not the best people, but the best people put up a front of mediocrity. I know it's that way at college.

I can't really say I don't like college. I have learned much in college but it was not taught in class and most of those who taught me did not realize just what they were teaching. I think I have learned enough to get ahead in life and I would probably quit if a college degree weren't so highly regarded by the squares who hire.

COLLEGE, like life, is a lie. It is a place where some people become educated, but not through the efforts of the faculty. Some profs try to shake up the marks, but most just ladle out the milk and honey of erudition. The goals which are held out to the students are good grades and a degree. Any intelligent student who opens his eyes soon learns he can beat the system and attain these goals with very little effort.

I have learned how to beat the system.

Pay attention in class, study the text a minimum and then only before a quiz, make a good initial impression and remain subsequently unobtrusive while aiming for the lowest A the professor will give. There is a system to advancement in the business world too, but I have been only briefly exposed to it.

I couldn't get along without our business system. It feeds me, clothes me, prints words for me to read and holds society together. But it's run by the squares so it must be rotten.

I have seen the most intelligent man in a research group promoted to assistant to the square who was group leader. That leader was a good talker, mixer and story teller. He was the best hypocrite. If a PhD means anything (which it may not) he was intelligent, but he hid it very well. Everywhere I turn I learn: "If you want to succeed, find out what they want and be that."

I hate to think of graduating and getting a job. I feel confident I can beat the system outside, but I feel equally confident I won't like the role I will have to play.

"All the world's a stage," and the only time you can take off your mask is when you are alone. So I prefer to be alone. I don't want to be a hero; heroes are trying to prove something and I have nothing to prove. I'm not a crusader. I think the curse that men are is just the curse that men deserve. And why should I change a world where I can get along without any real effort?

Still, if all the squares go in one big blast, I go too, or else I'm stuck with grubbing for shelter and sustenance. I prefer to let society provide these. So I need the squares.

You can't be a rebel by yourself, but you can be a rebel and not tell anybody.