

The Crazies

It takes astonishingly little to disrupt a campus today. College administrators are acutely sensitive, students harbor easily inflamed frustrations and a seemingly minor incident can profoundly shake the tenuous equilibrium. Most often that first, minute spark comes from the familiar roster of campus activists: the academic reformers who want greater control over the curriculum, the political revolutionaries like the Students for a Democratic Society, or even the yippies who are as interested in the theater of the absurd as remaking the university.

Occasionally, however, the forces for disruption are more shadowy. One such movement—if it can be so defined—is the

myself from doing what we wanted." After ten minutes of disruption, Inkeles called in the police, and the five Crazies—none of whom attended Harvard—were arrested.

Collins was active in the Columbia revolution last spring, helping form the Radical Action Cooperative during the occupation of Fayerweather Hall, one of the five "liberated" buildings. The cooperative was continued during the summer as a commune studying educational reform at Teachers College. Then, two weeks ago, Collins and his fellow Crazies arrived in Cambridge. Things started falling apart when the five—including two girls—took off their clothes to wash them in the basement laundry of Eliot House, one of Harvard's residential col-



Ron Janis—Harvard Crimson

More myth than movement? Radicals strip for action at Harvard.

Crazies. "The Crazy," says a more traditional University of Chicago radical, "is the guy no one knows or sees until the administration brings the cops on campus." The Crazies may number 50, 100 or more—nobody seems to know. But whether largely myth or a just surfacing reality, they now exist as part of the complex culture of student protest. Loosely defined as more radical than the radicals, they believe in direct action—whether it's disrupting classes, throwing stink bombs or kicking in doors.

Invade: Last week, one group of five Crazies showed the measure of their muscle at Harvard University. Led by King Collins, a 30-year-old Columbia Teachers College dropout, they invaded Harvard sociology Prof. Alex Inkeles' course on Personality and the Social System, trying to provoke a confrontation. As the large (250 students) lecture began, Collins rose and challenged Inkeles to explain the meaning of a university. When Inkeles tried to answer, Collins and his band hooted and interrupted. "It quickly came down to the fundamental question," said Inkeles, "whether they could prevent the students and

leges. After asking police to stand by, Harvard officials threw them out. "People seemed to think that having your clothes off is something unusual," said one female Crazy. "That's an indication of the repression of our society."

The five also started attending Inkeles' class, Social Relations 153. Initially, Collins largely confined himself to such routine matters as asking about the relation between the police and juvenile delinquency. But two days later, when Inkeles declared a discussion period, Collins tried to radicalize the class. "The lecture system is a manifestation of slavery," he announced. "You are all sheep led the same way sheep are led." The disruptive tactics of Collins soon turned off Inkeles' students. Even Harvard's SDS denounced the outsiders.

Fight: Some Crazies gain almost mythical stature for pulling the tactics of other radicals farther to the left. John Jacobs, a former Columbia student, is one of the handful of true Crazies, living in a romantic Che Guevara world where the revolutionary fights evil imperialists in sorties from secret bases. Three years ago, J.J. joined Columbia's Progressive

Labor Party, abide the party's tight discipline. Then he joined the university's 150-pound football team in an unsuccessful effort to radicalize the athletes.

Most Crazies stay away from organizations. But J.J. moved into Columbia's SDS chapter, and was in the first wave to seize Hamilton Hall and Low Library last April. About 5 feet, 8 inches tall with piercing eyes and a trim beard, J.J. has a peculiar charisma and an ability to stir up even the moderates. Inside Low, for example, he spent 25 minutes telling the other demonstrators that there were three ways to meet the police: they could cooperate and walk out, they could sit and offer passive resistance, or they could fight. As if he were expressing a preference for tea over coffee, J.J. declared: "I'm for actively resisting." He then led the seizure of Mathematics Building, the most revolutionary of Columbia's "occupied" structures.

Over the summer, J.J. shaved his beard and reportedly moved to the Catskills to organize guerrillas. Like most Crazies, he is underground now most of the time, but surfaces occasionally at Morningside Heights and in the national headquarters of SDS in Chicago.

Bomb: At first glance, Robert Salisin, 21, seems a fairly inconspicuous figure on the University of Chicago campus. He wears his hair rather short and has a quiet, measured manner. But some of Chicago's radical students put him in the same category as Columbia's J.J. He was expelled from the university four weeks ago for participating in the sixteen-day take-over of the school's administration building—and subsequent guerrilla disruptions. He and others stink-bombed campus buildings and marched around the faculty club, apparently trying to crumble it by sheer mind power. The walls of the club still stand.

"As soon as the students are convinced that the legitimacy of the university is gone," says the indefatigable Salisin, "then there are no boundaries. The administration then becomes the enemy and guerrilla actions become the quickest way to dramatize the students' protests." Salisin carefully tries to structure his tactics so they won't turn off moderate students. "When we go into a classroom," he says, "we don't try to shut it down. We ask the students if they want to discuss the university's problems, and we take a vote. If you break up a classroom without any purpose in mind, all you do is alienate the students, and the movement loses its sense of true democratic quality."

Some Chicago radicals are trying to regroup to close the university with a mass strike on March 31, the start of spring quarter. "Right now," says Salisin, "we are interested in reaching people, not burning buildings. I want to see the university shut down, but I also want us to open it up under our own terms. If we don't succeed, the guerrilla tactics will continue."