

The history foundation of the youth international party, or the "yippies"

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The Youth International Party, or the “ Yippies”, were founded in 1968 by Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. Some other significant people of this party were Nancy Kurshan, Paul Krassner and Abbie’s sister, Anita Hoffman. The party was established in opposition to the Vietnam war and other aspects of America that they believed were deteriorating. They were mainly stationed in New York City yet their influence reverberated throughout America and even concentrated in Chicago for some time. The founding members have now passed and their shoes failed to be filled but the party was never officially disbanded.

There was a “ second wave” of Yippies that emerged in the nineties who to the best of their ability continued their influence into the early two-thousandths. The Youth International Party was unlike the other political parties that emerged in the sixties and were considered more of a catalyst for change than an actual political group. Commenting on their theatrical style of protest, Jonah Raskin who at the time was a professor of communication at Sonoma State University emphasizes that “ the image was the message”.

The Yippies were most notably recognized because of their eccentric “ guerrilla theater” or outdoor dramatic events that targeted controversial issues. These actions included gestures such as burning money, or releasing thousands of dollar bills along the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and watching as the stockbrokers scrambled to gather them. Another one of their notorious antics was staged in order to take advantage of their circumstances and raise awareness to outrage about the war and their lesser other concerns regarding legalizing marijuana and advocating for love and
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pleasure. They had planned to host a concert in Lincoln Park in Chicago, Illinois but police refused to allow it spurring a riot.

Hoffman and Rubin were arrested along with members from the Students for a Democratic Society, the Black Panther Party, and the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. Even during the trial the Yippie's continued their outrageous behavior and ultimately Hoffman and Rubin were convicted but later the charges became overturned. The people involved in this trial and sequence of events earned the infamous title of The Chicago Seven. Following the trial, American troops were beginning to be withdrawn from Vietnam and the Yippies lost their political zeal. Eventually, in 1972 the Democratic Convention voted both Hoffman and Rubin out of the organization.

Although the Yippies are no longer a strong political force, their lasting effect on society confronted what they considered absurd head-on with even more absurd behavior resulting in a revelation of how being aware of conventional attitudes can affect behavior. They also created an extreme "leftism" mentality outwardly challenging the old conservative ideals with the opposite extremes. Their imprint on society can also be observed through what used to be the official Yippie museum in New York, 9 Bleecker.

The cafe/museum was considered the headquarters of the Youth International Party during its years of vital influence and in the following years became a haven for political activism, music, instructional courses and more. The museum lost a mortgage battle and became a boxing club but the "leftist" memorabilia and remnants of what was considered the most

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influential time period for the youth of Americans can still be found on the walls.