

The Injustice Between Generations

By SEAN P. RILEY

Last week on the University of New Brunswick Campus, a two-part seminar was held on the topics of 1) student activism in 1968 and 2) the Dr. Norman Shax Affair. For those in attendance, the occasion permitted retrospection on the student movements of the 1960's, a period when university students throughout the world were extremely active in voicing opposition to everything in this world they considered to be unjust. It was a time of unrest about everything from the Vietnam War and civil rights, to the very purpose of universities and the power of authoritarian university administrations.

Direct action, often leading to overt confrontation, was discovered to be a very effective tool in bringing attention to many faults of our society. Realizing this, the radical students of the day more than willingly became the shock troops that brought the messages of social unrest out into the open. In the praxis, students began questioning the fundamental beliefs and philosophies of western thought. In allowing themselves to be self-critical and reflective, they came to the realization that something was lacking in the material way of life around them. *Awakening from the Father Knows Best/Leave It To Beaver* slumber party that was the post-war period, they tuned their televisions only to see leaders get assassinated and witness the graphic carnage of the Vietnam War; quite a shock to a generation weaned and suckled on the idealic myths of Wally and the Beaver. Enough to shake any generation up.

Indeed, students were attuned that 'something is rotten in the State of Denmark'. Of course, they wanted to do something about it, but unfortunately for them, the levers of power were in the hands of a far more conservative generation - their parents. In retrospect, it is easy to imagine why these young people could not just get the message through to their suburban parents. What a generation gap. One can picture the look on Mrs. Cleaver's face upon visiting the Beaver at college, only to discover her little boy sporting long hair, a tie-dyed shirt and a picket to match. Golly gee, how would Wade Cleaver handle that episode? There is little wonder as to why the students of the 1960's could not get the message across to the older generation. They could not communicate. Attesting to some truth in media guru Marshall McLuhan's theories, 'the medium became the message'. So overpowering was the methodology of their dramatic protests that these actions became the focus of attention themselves, resulting in the real message they wanted to convey being lost in the din. *The voice of Reason was drowned out amid the chaos*, and, much to their chagrin, while trying to draw attention to their causes, the students instead succeeded in diverting all the attention to themselves in their guises as far-out hippies. Thus the 'freaked out hippie' became the focus of attention, not the messages which were so important. *The established order would not join a revolution whose leaders could be dismissed as court jesters* (by their standards). This new hippie generation was all too alien to them, however legitimate their grievances were (and they were legitimate).

As for the student movement on the UNB campus during the 1960's, the events which culminated in what has become known as the Strax Affair best documents how easily student radicals could be quashed when they transgressed authority using the direct action methodology to the degree that they did, only then to be beaten by the rules which were stacked against them. A few charges were laid. Life went on. Nothing much changed except the students themselves.

All this is not to negate the value of the sixties experience to those students who did protest. No doubt they gained immeasurably on the personal level in terms of strengthened characters and strong convictions probably still manifest twenty years later. No one can deny the courage of their actions either. They did the best they could. No fault of their own that they were not well-versed enough in the subtleties needed to tilt the levers of power. *They simply thought all they had to do was to speak the truth and then people would listen. They did not recognize some people had vested interests in quashing truth, while yet many more simply did not want to hear it for the responsibilities it brings.* People are funny like that sometimes.

(NEXT WEEK: If Students Have Rights, They Also Have Responsibilities)

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Beating Depression

BY ALICE PITRE

Wrong. Stress doesn't just occur around Christmas time, it can hit you any time. There are so very many factors which contribute to stress in our kaleidoscopic lives. I myself recently fought off a depression that threatened to darken the universe. I was stung by the merciless scourge of fatigue, wrenching emotionalism, sagging dispiritedly, brooding over the injustices of life. With no built-in, burn-out factor, it became disturbingly evident that I was about to hit the wall. I did.

It's pretty hard to wake up each morning with camper's high, attend classes and labs with unbridled enthusiasm, study your buns off to attain good grades so that you can get into the professional institution you so desperately want to, complete the never-ending list of assignments due, (come on, we can only do so much) while the profs watch with amused detachment. You can see the hardness behind those smiles. Yes sirree Bob, it's hard to get happy after all that! Remember that sit-com star who announced, "How's life treating you? Like a baby treats a diaper!" I hear you.

And that's just the tip of the ice cube. We've got all the personal turmoil to go with it. Maybe it's financial worries, a death in the family, a parent with Alzheimer's Disease, or any other serious illness or disability, social pressure, personal health concerns... you know what they are. These are serious stress factors.

Maybe some of you readers are feeling the squeeze right now. Let's try to ease things but before your health is subverted. Talk - talk to friends, classmates, a sympathetic prof (are there any?), parents, or a counsellor. The UNB Counselling Service is an



excellent consideration. Don't feel ashamed to approach these people. It feels so good to get things out and bounce your concerns off someone else. Don't harbour your feelings inside.

If your beef is a too-demanding course, get

together with your classmates and see how they feel. If everyone feels the same, maybe it's time to talk to the instructor, the Chairman or even the V.P. Academic. Maybe it's time for the prof to update those dusty old notes and revise his course content. Voice your concerns. And get things in writing! Maybe those course evaluations are a fruitless effort, but after a couple of attempts (again, in writing) to meet with the prof to no avail, maybe we should boycott the exam? Then Dr. Burridge might look into things. After all, administration is terrified of students who threaten poor publicity. In turn, the University Development Office might see increased donations to their Alumni Fund if faculty and students worked together. Wouldn't it be great to graduate from the University of New Brunswick with positive feelings!

So, if you feeling blue, notice any signs of stress, do something about it RIGHT NOW. You'll be glad you did.

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