

Relive a Student Revolution

By GREG F. HOARE

"Come gather around people
wherever you roam,
"And admit that the waters
around you have grown,
"and accept that soon you'll be
drenched to the bone,
"If your time to you is worth
saving, then you better start
swimming,
"Or you'll sink like a stone
"For the times, they are a
changing." - Bob Dylan.

On September 24, 1968, a three paragraph article appeared on the front page of the *Daily Gleaner*. The article stated that "The University of New Brunswick Library closed earlier than usual last evening after a number of students attempted to borrow books without identification cards."

In actuality, what had begun was something known as "Bookie Book," a seemingly insignificant event that would bring about irrevocable changes at UNB.

The transformation would be the result of Dr. Norman Strax.

Dr. Strax was born in Great Neck, New York, in 1938. He was educated at Princeton and obtained his PhD. in Nuclear Physics at Harvard University.

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U.N.B. Students Symbolically Burying the Board of Governors

He came to teach at UNB in September 1966.

It was in September of '66, that Professor Steven Paterson, then a junior professor at UNB, recalls meeting Dr. Strax. "He was a tall, thin character. He kept his head down, and his shoulders were always hunched forward. He spoke in a very small voice."

The summer of '67 proved to be a changing point in Dr. Strax's life. He began to attend anti-Vietnam rallies, taking a busload of UNB students to Washington. The *Atlantic Advocate* reported that this was an incident that would cause embarrassment to the Government of Canada. It was the first time such a large contingent of Canadian students had become politically active in criticizing America on her own soil. Dr. Strax and seven UNB students were arrested for their anti-Vietnam activities. After their release, Dr. Strax

returned to UNB and continued to protest America's involvement in Vietnam.

Upon returning from a demonstration at Columbia University in the summer of '68, Dr. Strax began to tell students that UNB had to change and he formed "Mobilization SDS," which stood for "Students for a Democratic society."

In 1968 UNB issued a new type of identity card to students and faculty. It had to be shown in order to borrow books from the library.

Dr. Strax felt that the new ID cards were just another form of student repression and only in a Police State environment would one have to show a picture ID card. So Dr. Strax and his SDS group, of which there were twelve members, went to the library and began what they termed "Bookie Book."

Each one of them would ap-

proach the librarian with an armload of books. The librarian would ask for their picture ID cards, which the members of the SDS group would refuse, stating that they would show any other form of identification but not the new ID card. The librarian would then refuse to let the books go out. The member then went back to the stacks and started the process all over again. Time and time again, books were brought to the librarian and refused exit. After several hundred books had piled up on the librarian's desk and around it, she closed the library.

The following day, September 25, 1968, Dr. Strax was suspended.

In protest, Dr. Strax and some SDS members locked themselves in his office; Bailey hall, Room 130, which SDS renamed "Liberated Area 130."

SDS members took shifts and at any one time there were at least seven UNB students (to a maximum of twenty-eight students) crammed into "Liberated Area 130." They travelled in and out of the building by way of the window.



Dr. Norman Strax, above, as he leaves the Saint John Courthouse.

Things began to escalate between Administration and Dr. Strax. He was served with a court injunction that ordered him to vacate UNB faculties. He ignored it.

Two days later, Dr. Strax appeared in court to face a charge of contempt of court. He was found guilty, and fined one dollar. He returned to "Liberated Area 130" and with his SDS followers, began to issue demands to Administration. They demanded a series of apologies to the members of the SDS group. In addition, they wanted the "Board of Governors to be representative of the people of the province; it should not be dominated by Irving and other businessmen. It should include professors, students, Maliseet and Micmac people, French-speaking Acadicians, at least one farmer, one mill worker, one pulp cutter, one unemployed man, etc."

By October 1968, the situation had begun to receive national attention. Members of the national press: CTV, CBC, Time Magazine, and Atlantic Advocate, began to show an interest in what was happening in New Brunswick. Political parties and professors in other Canadian universities began to voice their opinions.

What began as "Bookie Book" was threatening to tear UNB apart. Faculty, Administration and students aligned themselves on both sides of the issue.

One of the most vocal groups in opposition to Dr. Strax and SDS were the engineering students, and they began to mass in large numbers. After a brief meeting, the engineering students decided that for the good of UNB's reputation, Dr. Strax and his followers would have to be removed by force if necessary.

The outcome of the Strax Affair will be described next week.

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