

The final solution to the Strax problem

by Ip Sc Dixit

What is a saint? A saint is someone who has achieved a remote human possibility. It is impossible to say what that possibility is. I think it has something to do with the energy of love. Contact with this energy results in the exercise of a kind of balance in the chaos of existence. A saint does not dissolve the chaos; if he did the world would have changed long ago. I do not think that a saint dissolves the chaos even for himself, for there is something arrogant and warlike in the notion of a man setting the universe in order. It is a kind of balance that is his glory. He rides the drifts like an escaped ski. His course is a carress of the hill. His track is a drawing of the snow in a moment of its particular arrangement with wind and rock. Something in him so loves the world that he gives himself to the laws of gravity and chance. Far from flying with the angels, he traces with the fidelity of a seismograph needle the state of the solid bloody landscape. His house is dangerous and finite, but he is at home in the world. He can love the shapes of human beings, the fine and twisted shapes of the heart. It is good to have among us such men, such balancing monsters of love.

—Leonard Cohen, from *Beautiful Losers*.

Until September 1968 it was the stated policy of the President of the University to keep University conflicts "within the family". In the eyes of several student leaders this meant an abridgement of their sphere of influence, but they cooperated. Until September 1968, and even afterwards, it was the policy of the students and the faculty to keep the conflicts on the campus. But in September 1968 the President of the University, and top level members of his staff, lost their cool, and took the conflict outside the University.

The wise man's eyes are in his head, But the fool always walketh in darkness. —Ecclesiastes.

It was the second time in as many academic years that the President took his cause to the courts, for an action was taken by someone without his approval. The other incident involved an injunction against the City of Fredericton, who were building a road at the foot of the University. The University lost that case, and may even lose their case against Norman Strax, Ph.D. (Harvard).

The irony in this story, surely the biggest event at the University in years, is far-reaching. The President of the University, in a statement to the press more than a week after he was asked for reasons for the suspension of Dr. Strax, said "... he did not have the right to counsel others to break University regulations ...". Dr. Spock was tried because he counselled young Americans to avoid the draft. Even if one agrees with Spock's indictment, the comparison of the offenses of Spock and Strax shows that they are on a vastly different scale.

CRIMINALS UNITE: ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SECRETLY BROKEN A UNIVERSITY REGULATION IN THE PAST YEAR, TURN YOURSELVES IN. BE THOU NOT A HYPOCRITE!

Where are those order-loving students I saw throw firecrackers into the Bailey Hall on the night of September 28? Were they saying "Kill Strax" because they wanted to restore the University to a state of tranquility?

Victory for the 'Mobilization-SDS' would only come with a complete change in the Board of Governors. It would be an elected group, by and from the students and faculty, for the most part, with representation from all walks of New Brunswick life. This is intolerable for the University

President, whose record of achievement would be severely marred if this came about, even in part.

Was Dr. Strax fired because he counselled students to break University regulations "and himself to lead students in disrupting the work of the library?" Or was it because he disagreed with the President of the University? Do you remember the time when the University removed Neil MacGill from his Donship of Neill House? He was one of the most outspoken critics of the residence system. Did you know that one of the greatest sources of encouragement to student leaders on the "freeze the fees" issue, both in 1968 and in 1965 was the President of the University? And yet when it is his office that is the target of criticism, demonstrations are hardly encouraged. It depends who stands to profit by a demonstration. The word "profit" is used advisedly. For also in 1965 the President, with the words of the Premier still ringing in his ears, brought the axe down on a Conservative Club demonstration against the Prime Minister of Canada. One of the leaders of that demonstration, Hart North, will testify to this.

With small beginnings, for surely the mimeographed sheet about ID cards and the library incident could have been easily ignored, a movement is growing which is certain to become an important force in the University. One reason this is true is that the dissenters are so highly decentralized. Dr. Strax was just one focal point. As the news of his suspension became understood in the context of University affairs, several groups sprang up all over the campus. "Dialogue I" and the "Sheldrick Meeting" are two examples; these groups expressed strong disagreement with the policies of the University, and discussed in very unconservative terms means to change the University.

At the same time there has been a tendency for students to take care of their own affairs

and to depend less on the University's administrators. The growing residence cooperative is one example of this. The free expression of the *Brunswickan* is another sign of this. The Student Union Building is another attempt. The fact that the SRC is hiring a full-time, year-round professional staff to handle its mundane affairs to allow their leaders to discuss policy is another example. And the action of students in major cities and universities around the world is having its effect on UNB, even though UNB is buried in the gray obscurity of the Maritimes.

A revolutionary movement lives in the minds of men, and its realization comes when the opportunity presents itself. When the University reacted so strongly to the events of mid-September, it gave the revolutionary movement at the University ample evidence to make several legitimate criticisms of the University President, his staff, and of the University of New Brunswick Act (N.B., 1967). The revolutionary movement lifted itself to a higher plane, for now several professors of note at the University have committed themselves to changing the structure of the University. There are now perhaps five Norman Straxes!

Either by accident or as a result of astute judgement, the 'Mobilization-SDS' struck a nerve and the University jumped. The people of the revolution were confronting the established administration. Dozens of little debates raged on the campus. The result will probably be positive, in the sense that now that people are speaking out the University President can enact reforms to make the University an educational institution in a broader sense than the classroom sense. If he and the Board of Governors had encouraged the evolution of the University there may have been no Strax Problem.

Now it is too late to try to forget the whole thing. The academic profession has been affronted. A professor with better qualifications than many

of the University's Deans has been suspended for the weakest of reasons. We owe him an apology at least. We must also listen to him, for the advice of a person with his experience in the area of dialogue with the University administration can be valuable in our attempt to achieve a just, educational and, perhaps orderly University. Dr. Norman Strax, among UNB faculty and students, has certainly achieved a remote human possibility, and this must not go unnoticed.

EPILOGUE

It raised a louder outcry than the \$600,000 deficit incurred by the University in this academic year. It raised a louder outcry than the food riot of 1966. It raised a far louder outcry than fees going up, than the new UNB act, than panty raids, or open rooms. Why?

Was it because the mimeographed sheet used that nastiest of four-letter words in its headline? Was it because it accused the Province's super-industrialist of having too much power? Was it because it called people by their first names? Or was it because Norman Strax wears a ski jacket and talks with students? Was it because he made it possible, perhaps even respectable, for some students to speak out against what they felt was injustice? All the evidence points to the conclusion that the University acted as it did because of dislike for Dr. Strax the man, not for his action. For he expressed the desires of his so-called "followers" and he became the figurehead for their group; he did not plant the ideas in their minds, but he is taking all the blame for their collective action. Could he do alone what was done? Will the action stop if he is gone?

*If ten of thine ten times
refigur'd thee;
Then what could death do,
if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in
posterity?*

—Shakespeare.

Lectures and opening begin four-day convocation



Sir Max Aitken
Chancellor of UNB

The university's 1968 Beaverbrook lecturer arrived Sunday to bring UNB's four-day convocation. Richard Briginshaw delivered one seminar yesterday and is giving two more today and tomorrow.

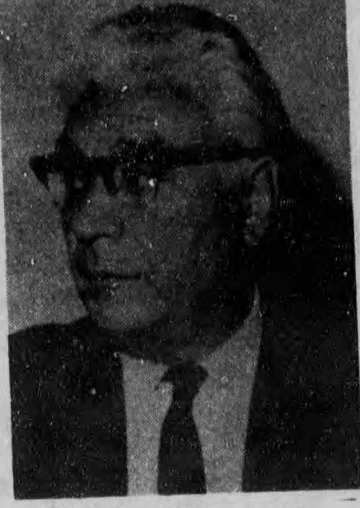
The Beaverbrook lectures are sponsored by the Beaverbrook Canadian foundation and are open to the public. Each year



The Hon. John N. Turner
Min. of Justice

a distinguished speaker delivers a series of addresses on his field of interest. The format of this year's lectures has been changed so that the speaker delivers a series of seminars to special interests groups rather than lectures. The seminars today and tomorrow will be held in Tilley Hall at 10:30.

Briginshaw is receiving an honorary degree at the Lady



Mr. Richard W. Briginshaw
Beaverbrook Lecturer

Beaverbrook rink tomorrow. Five others receiving honorary degrees are Canadian justice minister John Turner, convocation speaker Lord Shawcross, chief justice Bora Laskin who was a judge at the Nuremberg trials, Allan Frederick Smith, and Wallace Bird, lieutenant governor of New Brunswick.

University chancellor Max Aitken will perform opening



Lord Shaw Cross
Convocation Speaker

ceremonies today for the new law building, Ludlow Hall.

The building is a memorial to George Duncan Ludlow, the first chief justice of New Brunswick. Ludlow was a member of the New York state bar until the beginning of the American revolution. He left New York for England in 1783.

The province of New Brunswick was formed the next year and Ludlow was named chief



Hon. G.D. Ludlow
First chief Justice of N.B.

justice. He was also active in the founding of the provincial academy of arts and sciences and was a member of its first executive council.

The academy later became the University of New Brunswick.

Ludlow also served on the board of commissioners supervising the education of New Brunswick Indians.