



Political Perspectives by R. Hutchins

By BLAKE PATON
Guest Writer

Last week's feature established that the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) manifesto was too radical to be accepted into the mainstream of North American society. In Political Perspectives this week I would like to examine the reasons for this judgement, which I believe is accurate. The whole counter-culture of the 1960's is superficially misleading; the war in Vietnam, and sexism made society repugnant to its youth. Youth therefore became politically mobilized, but the focus of the counter-culture became a lifestyle dominated by self-gratification. In the wake of the 60's the political issues have faded, while the popular narcissism has prevailed. Left politics (which stress an identification with the collective) were in fundamental contradiction with the individualist orientation of the youth and its parent society.

We see, therefore, that the most important factor of the counter-culture is not (leftist) political activism, but the establishment of a popular narcissism. As this popular narcissism solidified with the aid of imaginative entrepreneurs, it was transformed into the culture of the 1970's: the "ME" decade. Beneath this era of est, gestalt, and getting it together, the fresh memories of Vietnam and the Nixon years (in the U.S.) and the F.L.Q. in Canada prevented the right from completely controlling the country, so middle politics were embraced (Carter and the persistent Trudeau). Which is to say that narcissistic human beings can be influenced by conscience.

It is my distinct pleasure to announce that the 1980's are much more logically consistent (i.e., between culture and politics) than either the 60's or the 70's. The present YUPPIE individualism (a direct descendant of the counter-culture) is best-suited to conservative politics, so Reagan maintained a high-percentage of youth votes. The tax issue became crucial because increased tax means a lower personal disposable income; one of Reagan's questions for America was "do you have better things to do with your money than give it to the government?". The answer is "yes."

What relevance does this thesis have for UNB? Well, it explains why the focus of our education is now unashamedly on career-oriented programs. In turn, society gets a return on the money it invests in higher education while students live consumer dreams. The absence of political issues which can cause great rifts between parents and children has turned the youth of the 80's into the ideological mirrors of their parents, which might explain the absence of political activism in the students of today.

Anyone interested in this topic should consult the following two sources:

The Culture of Narcissism by Christopher Lasch
The Hearts of Men by Barbara Ehrenreich

P.S.: This column might also be considered an act of narcissism.

A special thank you to Mr. Paton for his insightful comments on last week's feature: "Agenda For A Generation." As of press time I will have returned from Halifax, where I'll be covering the talk given by Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, two of the original "Chicago Seven" members. These men were leading activists of the 1960's and they will be discussing the present state of society in relation to the 1960's. It is my hope that this seminar will supply more insight into this important and vital issue for the students of the 1980's. As with Mr. Paton's contribution my column remains open to those interested in making a political statement. Get involved and aid in broadening the focus of opinion at UNB. All submissions can be handed in at the *Brunswickan* office care of the Features Editor.

GSA to separate?

By OLIVER KONCZ
Brunswickan Staff

The executive of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) would like to separate from the Student Union and form the Graduate Students Union (GSU). This would establish two student unions, with the GSU controlling the graduate students' fees. Presently, the GSA receives \$10 directly from the Student Union (per graduate student) and \$20 remains with the Student Union.

The GSA plans to conduct an opinion poll and later a referendum on the question. They want the administration to transfer the money to the GSA to allow graduate students to participate in student clubs and organizations.

Members of the Student Union have expressed concern that the establishment of two student unions will have a divisive effect on students and student matters, and that there will be a duplication of facilities. If two unions are created, then bickering over small matters will obscure the more pressing needs of all students, such as proper representation to the University bodies and efforts to gain control of student facilities (the Student Union Building), according to one source.

The President of the Graduate Students Association, Dave Zimmerman, believes that graduate students have concerns and interests which differ from those of undergraduate students. The Graduate Students' Union would be socially, not politically, oriented. Student Union entertainment does not appeal to graduate students, says Mr. Zimmerman, and most of the graduate fees should go to socials. The GSA already holds approximately 10 socials per year.

The Vice-President Academic, Mike Bennett, stated that there must be an umbrella organization to represent all students - the Student Union. Here, students can find information and help, from fighting academic appeals to attempts to enlarge the Student Union Building. Mr. Bennett feels the problem is one of no communication - the graduate students rarely voice their needs and concerns.

Graduate students presently have a representative on the Student Union Council (Jeff Fryer) and a representative on Senate (Evelyn Morin). Yet no motions have been brought forward dealing with graduate students' concerns. The Student Union has recently broadened representation on Council by adding the graduate student Senator as an ex-officio member.

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