

es have landed

inspirational development, its advertisers, marketing executives and all the other people who live to sell. After all, what could be more opportune than millions of young people with lots of money to spend who define themselves by what they own? A prime example would be this Michelob Beer commercial which states: "You're on you way, moving up. You were always the one...eager to try. You're on you way to the top." Like any elite, yuppies exert an influence far greater than their numbers alone would suggest. What enhances their image is that they are part of the richest, largest, best-educated generation ever born. Their enormous economic muscle will continue to get stronger. One need only look around the campus to see the impact yuppie-ism has had on fashion and all round appearance, the modern student has been given a role model to follow just as in the 1960's when Hoffman and Reuben set trends and styles. Yuppie-ism has arrived! Critics of Yuppie-ism call it a generation of sell-outs, lacking in a social conscience and insensitive to their fellow man. Reuben says these critics are wrong and that there has not been a sell-out. It is his contention that the values of the 60's are still present but that methodology has changed. To him anger was a

"I'm not interested in resurrecting politics built around drugs and freaky hair anymore than Jerry Reuben but I am interested in resurrecting politics built on activism, activism on social issues, injustice, poverty, enviornmental abuse, arms control.

ABBIE HOFFMAN

program in the 60's, people weren't healthy, activists eulogized foreign intellectuals and the whole movement was bent on tearing down institutions, at the same time never having any real political power. As he points out, the yuppies now are in a position to take power, they are not operating from the "outside" like their 60's counter-culture but from "inside", a political force, influential and respected. We are entering a "communication" revolution where the youth of the 60's are now the spokesmen of the 80's. Reuben frames Yuppie-ism as "Capitalism with a conscience," he goes on to say that protest (Abbie Hoffman style) only acts as a searchlight but it does not change situations and events only "power", political and economic can exert the necessary pressures for change. He defines the "yuppies" as the engineers of social change. They have earned the responsibility to lead, they preach self-reliance, less big government, tax free zones, they are pro-self, anti-authority, consumeristic, and most importantly "liberal" on social issues. Reuben hates the media image of "consumers" and prefers the "achievers" label. All these ism's are part of the "Yuppie" culture but one important fact remains to be

discussed. Some would argue that this drive for success, self improvement and a faith in the free-enterprise system are nothing more than a classic "Liberalism," not so much new as merely highlighted by such an elite group. I would disagree with such a philosophy. In times as precarious as now I believe that a generation such as the Yuppies should slow down their "self" improvement and "image" orientations long enough to realize that the values they fought for in the 1960's are still important. It is their responsibility as the new "movers and

shakers" of society to be agitators and activists on strong social issues. With the power and influence they hold they can renew the war on poverty, embrace the anti-nuclear movement, fight acid rain and demand equal rights for women. I do not believe Jerry Reuben's model for success must reject the principles of an Abbie Hoffman entirely, this Yuppie generation can have a strong social conscience as well as a desire for self-improvement, if it can only see beyond the limitations of financial success and into the realm of human compassion. I believe the notion of self-improvement is not wrong but a closing-off of social conscience can only lead to an ego-centric generation, aloof to the problems of society and further alienated than the present conservative elite these Yuppies fought against with such passion in the 60's.

"The nuclear freeze movement is the peace movement recycled, the women's movement and MS. Magazine are all products of the 60's activism. It is your generation, those under thirty that I fear the most, campus have become hotbeds of social REST!"

ABBIE HOFFMAN

The key to the whole debate over idealism and realism, Yippie-ism and Yuppie-ism and corporatism and entrepreneurialism is the notion of community. The Yuppies must realize that they make up a minority of North Americans, they may be the best educated and most affluent but they are only a cross section of a huge community. It is a foregone conclusion that they will have power soon but will they be able to effectively represent the interests of the rest of society? I think there is a medium between Hoffman's activism and Reuben's Yuppie-ism. Democracy cannot be accepted so much as it should be acted upon, agitation and activism are necessary right in a free democracy, they act to make the power holders accountable. It is my belief that Yuppie-ism and its drive to entrepreneurialism and self-improvement is a positive movement but not at the sacrifice of community. If you as a student, a future Yuppie,



Photo by Corinne Boone

cannot recall one instance where you voiced discontent, acted in protest for what you believed was right or stood up for the values of others less fortunate, then you are what I fear the most in the future. We can all be successful without sacrificing the values of equality and humanity but if we do the quest for true democracy will be stalled and the ideals of a majority lost to the small few who will inherit the "Ivory Tower."

"I like Canada, Prime Minister Mulrone goes to New York to inform 1500 of the most influential corporate interests that Canada is once again up for sale."

ABBIE HOFFMAN

So, as we move further into the 1980's we find ourselves faced with a role model to follow. It is our individual choice to embrace such a role or to mould it to our priorities, taking its best qualities as well of those in our activist tradition. As one final point Jerry Reuben points out:

"If you believe in activism such as espoused by Abbie Hoffman then stop being hypocritical, be like him, live like him and give your life to agitation."

To this point I agree, we are not a generation destined to be "pure" activists like Abbie Hoffman and we will not for the most part sacrifice our upward mobility to become full-time agitators but we can when necessary show our support and stand up for principles that are basic to our own integrity, this is our inherited tradition, one that is central to a working democracy.

This week's feature is a followup to the feature of two weeks ago entitled: The Agenda For A Generation. Last Thursday I went to Halifax to witness a debate between Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Reuben, I found their talk stimulating and emotional. It is from this debate that this feature "1985, The Yuppies Have Landed" gets its central thesis. The views expressed are those of the Features Editor and not necessarily those of the Brunswickan staff or University community.

R. Hutchins
Features Editor