

In the Arm or in the Glass... A Shot Will Surely Shoot You Down

By ALLISTER THOMSON
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The use and abuse of drugs and drinks by college students poses one of the thorniest problems on campus today.

Leading educators are deeply disturbed by the use of stimulants among college students, but so far no one has come up with a solution of conducted a study which might answer the problem.

The situation is not so acute in Canada as in the United States and Britain. In the U.S., pot (marijuana), has replaced liquor among college types and in Britain Indian hemp and purple heart pills are almost a national institution.

While Murray G. Ross, of York University in Toronto warns freshmen students not to look for relaxation in drugs or liquor, just across the border in New York state, a student says: "If they put a cop in front of the apartment of every college kid who smoked pot, there would not be anyone left to ticket cars."

Another student said: "If I want to relax or take a funny little trip in my head, I smoke pot." A member of the same group conducted a survey among his classmates and estimates that 20 to 25 per cent of his colleagues are on the weed.

What turns an otherwise law-abiding student to the use of drugs? To be sure, this revolution in the actions of these people, many of them still in their teens' did not occur overnight. The pressures to succeed, to be popular, to be one of the gang, may be part of the reason. Certainly these are powerful forces at work on our campuses today — forces of which our fathers and grandfathers had no conception. The days of cherry-eyed college kids

paired off in matching raccoon coats, banking ukeleles and doing the cake-walke are gone. This is particularly true in the United States where, besides the normal student anxieties, the young men are faced with the ever-present threat of draft re-classification and a muddy death in Viet Nam.

One of the most disturbing reasons for dope connections is that of personal profit. In an interview with MacLean's Magazine one student commented "Marijuana was as much a part of my university education as textbooks and lectures. I smoked pot, and I sold pot to anyone, and I had no feelings of guilt."

"Somewhere," he said, "I decided to make my own distinction between what is normally wrong and what is against the law — besides it seemed a good way to make money."

He went on to say that his buddies in certain drugstores gave him a supply of "jumpers" (Dexidrene pills) and that he used pot as casually as some people have a bottle of beer. He said he used his bursary money to buy pot wholesale and resell it retail. With the aid of a girl-friend he brought the stuff across the border from the U.S. Sometimes a truck driver would smuggle it across for them. Over the years, he claims, he made enough to cover his university expenses and liberally supplied himself with pocket money.

Joshua Macmillan, 20, grandson of the former British prime minister, died last year of drug poisoning. In an attempt to cure his addiction, doctors prescribed another drug in the withdrawal treatments. The drug when combined with alcohol is deadly. Mr. Macmillan was also a heavy drinker.

Newsweek inadvertently gave an insight into why students

use drugs. Commenting recently on campus standards, the magazine said. "It is hardly news now that this generation of students was raised in the most permissive and affluent society in history."

"Rarely having been told no, by their parents..." they have experienced just about everything by the time they reach university. Newsweek continues: "In their slang the supreme accolade is being cool and they cultivate coolness by being as aloof and dispassionate as possible. Yet at college, especially the cosmopolitan ones, the aloof generation has been suddenly thrust into an environment that is not only cool but sometimes coldly and cruelly competitive. They encounter a faculty that long ago said goodbye to the Mr. Chipses who could be as devoted to students as they could be to scholarship."

Uncertain of themselves but fearful of revealing their inner uncertainty to the outer world, many have sought other outlets for their strangled emotions—among them, drink and drugs. The existential loneliness that exists in many colleges is best described by a small sign in the wall of a Harvard residence: "It's the two of us against the world, and the world is winning."

An equally serious threat to our youth is the use of pep pills. Initially they weren't on the prescription list and could be purchased over the counter in any drug store. Students cramming for exams after one- or two, or several years hard work. Under the pressure of failing sometimes resort to "bennies." The results of a survey of Hamilton's McMaster University, released early in March 1965, showed that one out of every five male students used sedatives, pep pills or tranquilizers, usually at exam time. Last year a student who barely escaped death due to pep pills was found to have 38 different prescriptions from 11 doctors in Toronto.

In May 1964, Wayne B. Mackenzie, 23, was found dead in Victoria College residence. Pep pills were the suspected cause of the death of the student who had lost 30 pounds in three weeks of gruelling final exams. In the ensuing inquiry, Dr. George Wodehouse discovered that about 25 students at Victoria College were using a benzedrine type pill. In June of that year the coroner's jury decided that excessive use of drugs had caused Mackenzie's death.

The major reason for the use of pep pills seems to be the fear of failure. One pretty coed commented: "I always said I'd never take them, but this is the moment of truth. I've spent three years working for this degree and I can't fail now."

Amid the growing concern about drugs there is also an underlying suspicion among

college authorities that all is not right with the educational system. Most instructors feel that college should be a happy, pressure-free time of life, a time when the students can explore and reflect the world of learning. However, with increased enrolments and subsequent overcrowding, lack of proper facilities, inadequate government legislation, and insufficient financial aid, from time to time the conditions become more than the average student can cope with.

It is well known that on most campuses, Ryerson included, that a serious mental health problem exists. Perhaps the whole society is sick and the large numbers of young people at college merely concentrate what has been a diversified condition.

Among college kids, the most prevalent escape is the bottle. The availability and the abuse of liquor among college types gives frightening preview to the way narcotics might be used if they were legalized.

Most students give the same old reasons for drinking—to get away from it all, or because its sociable. The standard antidote for just about any college ailment from snakebite to smallpox, is considered to be a good drunk. It's not unusual to hear an undergraduate express his intention to go out and get "hammered," or "bashed," to get out from under the mid-term blues.

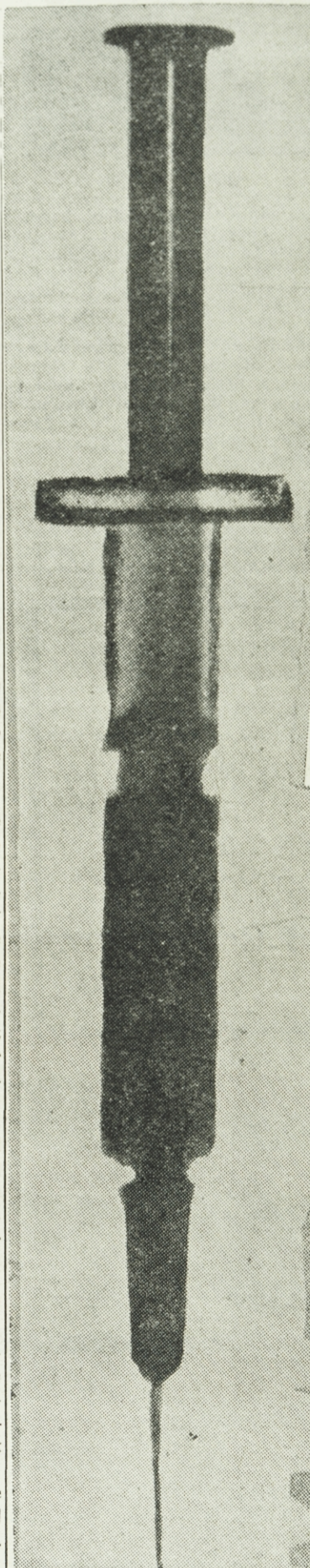
In the words of a 23-year-old student, who is a confessed alcoholic and a member of the Alcoholics Anonymous: "University is a potential breeding ground for alcoholics."

He said at 18 he entered university but had to leave 11 weeks later because of excessive drinking. He returned to try for a second time and lasted seven weeks before the bottle beat him again. Now, back at college for the third time and away from the liquor—he realizes that one drink would dash his hopes and his future.

Statistics prove that if a young person has had experience with alcohol in high school, but has not started to drink heavily, there is a good chance the bottle will get him in university.

On Jan 23, 1965, Thomas Dasovich, a 27-year-old Ryerson student, died in an auto accident after a beer guzzling competition organized by the salesmen of a large Toronto brewery. A fellow student estimated he drank 25 to 30 pints.

Tom lived in an off-campus apartment about ten miles from Ryerson. His story is similar to many tragedy-bound students. They live in apartments by themselves or with a room-mate, they usually know no one in the neighborhood, and the loneliness and sense of isolation drives them to desperation.



There is a veneer of impersonal, institutional, bureaucracy that starts in minor ways, and grows until the student may say: "To hell with the whole works—I'm going out to get drunk, or load up on some pot."

One of the most effective cures is a compulsory residence program as instituted at some colleges, where the students must stay for one year in residence.

This dispels the loneliness, alienation and depression that haunts many students. Residence integrates them into a healthy atmosphere which defeats much of the pressure of higher education.

Lack of finances and government planning inhibits the residence approach.

One thing is certain however, if the people who refuse the legislation and the finances, don't want a lot of wrecked lives on their hands, they had better do something—and do it fast.

Sigma Delta Sorority

The Sigma Delta Sorority represents the only exclusively female organization at St. Dunstan's; it serves to provide spiritual, cultural, social and athletic occupation for the Coeds. This year Sorority hopes to accomplish a number of worthwhile projects among which include a student art exhibit, fashion show, bake sale, senior banquet earlier, concession of girls sports activities. With the help of our faculty advisor Fr. Kelly and the support of all females at St. Dunstan's, we hope we can live up to these plans.

Members of the executive are: President, Carol Ann Power; Vice-President, Mary Cullen; Sec-Treas., Helen Dalton; Soph. Rep., Helen McKenzie; Culture, Lyris Roberts; Religious, Anita McIsaac; Athletic, Ann, Smith; Faculty advisor Father Kelly.

This year for the first time the Sigma Delta Sorority will have a representative on the students council.

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LOST...Margaret and Warren, sweetheart of the class of '68, to UBC which wants to change its image. Guaranteed satisfaction.

FOUND...A new regulation forbidding the wearing of mini-skirts to classes at St. Dunstan's. Sorry about that, boys.

FOR SALE...Italian Army Surplus rifles. Good condition: never fired, dropped once. Call WOP-0007 at twilight.

FOR SALE...One slightly used ball costume. Write Batman Productions Inc., 6920 Sunset Boul., Hollywood, Calif.

