YOU NEED THIS BOOK TO KNOW WHICH WAY THE WIND BLOWED

Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era
by Kenneth J. Heineman

DURING A recent visit to my elder sister in San Francisco, I discovered an old book (published way back in 1970) that had fascinated me when I was young. Comprised mainly of articles from 1960's student organizations and underground newspapers, the 750 pages of The Movement Toward a New America: The Beginning of a Long Revolution contain the complete agenda and qualified proof of an advancing revolution. (I read it in 1976, and it also contains some unfinished sixth grade math assignments — my contribution to the movement.) Hundreds of photographs and illustrations depict mainly serious-looking students with long hair, clenched fists and peace signs. I wondered, looking at the book again, what forces had brought it into existence and what had made those students so hopeful, yet so serious? Kenneth Heineman's book, Campus Wars, answers many of my questions.

As the subtitle indicates, Heineman examines the peace movement through activities at four state universities: Penn State, Kent State, SUNY-Buffalo and Michigan State. The book should be of special interest in the Western Pennsylvania region, and for scholars of its history, because two of the four were popular colleges for area students. Heineman's premise, contrary to popular understanding, is that these and other "second-tier" state schools did not follow the lead of elite universities such as Columbia, UC-Berkeley or Wisconsin. He attributes this erroneous assumption to the higher degree of journalistic coverage of Ivy League school activities and the many peace movement books and memoirs written by graduates of those universities. What is more, he actually finds state schools in the vanguard of protest activities, producing leaders of national student organizations. Kent State students demonstrated and won campus free speech in 1963 — a full year before the well-known activities at Berkeley. Michigan State had the first underground campus-based newspaper — The Paper. Carl Davidson, vice president of Students for a Democratic Society in 1966, attended Penn State, as did Andy Strapp, president of American Serviceman's Union in 1967. Forty-five SUNY-Buffalo faculty were arrested in 1970 for occupying the college president's office.

As a boy who grew up believing the legends and preconceptions of the peace movement, it is refreshing to see a historian scrutinize the "generation gap" theory and give credence to the majority of Americans (both students and adults) who supported the war or who were, at best, ambivalent. Heineman, an assistant professor of history at Ohio University-Lancaster who earned his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh, offers his family as an example. He confesses to being born in 1962 and thus too late, but his older brother both protested the war and served in Vietnam. His father, a World War II veteran, urged his son to go to Canada and avoid the draft. Ken Heineman notes common, yet under-recognized conflicting loyalties when he writes that his family "hated Nixon, the Vietnam War and the peace movement."

His contentions make the whole period more believable and real to me as a man. Rather than viewing the movement just through anti-war activity, the author broadens the scope of the book to include the diversity of opinion and organizations at work on the four university campuses. While concentrating on the ideology of the student doves, he does not forget the hawks.

Having stated his method and established his premise, Heineman attends to an impressive list of themes. He divides the book into three sections, the first mainly analytical, and the last two both narrative and chronological. Each chapter has an overview before detailing the action on the four campuses.

The book begins by showing the growth of college enrollment after World War II and state schools' increasing reliance on federal research funds during the Cold War. Heineman believes faculty and administration at elite schools were charged with crafting defense and foreign policy, while the second-tier state schools helped carry out the policy by developing weapons industry-related technology. In conjunction, he analyzes the political and cultural values of each school's president and chief administrators, and describes how they increasingly clashed with student and faculty values during the 1950s and early 1960s. But he does not fail to profile the values and actions of more conservative faculty and students, plus the interesting phenomenon of cooperation among "religious oriented" and "Marxist-based" anti-war campaigners.

While he makes sound correlations between the four schools, he just as readily shows each university's unique geographical differences and educational missions. Michigan State's minimal admission requirements created a huge student body in East Lansing. Kent State was a small conservative school in a small Ohio town, where students came from predominately working class homes of Cleveland. Penn State dominated the small isolated town of State College, while attracting students from both Philadelphia and rural Pennsylvania. Lastly, SUNY-Buffalo is situated in a city with a large white ethnic population where anti-Communist sentiment was traditional. Buffalo's economic decline also began during this period, which affected its natives' reaction to more liberal students from New York City. Lastly, Heineman examines national student organizations' attempts to organize in each community, and why they usually received a
hostile response and accomplished little. He reaffirms the old American adage: “All politics is local.”

Although this book has many charts and graphs, relies on numerous acronyms for the many organizations active during the period, and at times reads as dryly as a government document, a great narrative story is at its heart. Heineman wisely avoids ideological code words and cliches; instead, he describes the real people involved in the events, while discussing how specific students, administrators and city officials considered, then responded to each others’ actions. He moves through each growing stage of the peace movement, from its initial days in 1965-67, through its evolution into a mass movement in 1968 and 1969. He shows how the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King and Sen. Robert Kennedy, and the 1968 Democratic Party Convention splintered and polarized the movement. This led to the founding of the terrorist Weatherman Underground, partly by Kent State activists. Finally, he focuses on 1970 and the impact the Kent State shootings had on all four universities and the movement as a whole. The radicals believed it was the opening round of a wider revolution, when in fact it brought the country back to its senses and channeled the movement’s energy into less confrontational forms and less divisive issues.

Among questions answered by the book, for me, was an important one that has nagged me for years. I was led to believe that the 1960s were chaotic, but here I read that the students’ thoughts, plans and organizing were as “sophisticated” as the actions of university and city administrators. By beginning his story in the early 1950s, one is able to see the larger issues and causes of the movement, beyond the Vietnam War. Heineman pays great attention to the small events that fed popular perceptions. His research and sources are amazing. For instance, he found and analyzed dozens of underground newspapers and manifestos of the era — and here I had assumed they were left on the roadside by bearded or bra-less hitchhikers, or to compost when the communes broke up and the idealist came “down from the country.”

The book is not intended to be a definitive account, but rather a case study at the four universities. So not every question that could have been answered was: Were the activists really full-time students, who went to class, fulfilled requirements and graduated? Were they really all under 30 years old? Where did the money come from to organize and publicize the movement? How did the leaders of the organizations live? Were they paid for their time or did they receive donations? And what happened to all these people, both hawks and doves, students, faculty, administrators and city officials, after 1971?

Maybe expecting such answers is a product of my 1980s cynicism. When I went to college in 1982, I half hoped to encounter a few remaining true believers. Unfortunately, the energy and hopefulness was reduced to either a spirit that hovered over the campus or to just a twinkle in a few professors’ eyes. Occasionally the spirit lighted on students demanding school divestment from South Africa, the military out of Central America, or the like. Many art and drama majors possessed some of the 1960s spirit, but I felt they did so only to meet the requirements. Its most frequent manifestation was wanton hedonism. To my peers, the 1960s were more famous for plentiful sex, drugs and booze than serious idealism. Even though I joined the National Guard and R.O.T.C., neither the activist, the artist, nor the hedonist distrusted me. In fact, I was deeply involved in all three camps, and few of my comrades considered the possible contradictions or conflicts.

My sister’s book, with all of its strained language, disturbing images and serious yet hopeful students, is now nicely translated by Kenneth Heineman. His book contains insights for those of us too young to know what happened, and, I believe, those who lived it — insights that we both can understand.

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Gettysburg: A Meditation on War and Values
by Kent Gramm

AUTHOR GRAMM pursues not only the meaning of the three days of battle in July 1863, but what it means to us today, and for all people. He begins by examining subtle parts of the battle and battlefield — the sounds, the geography, even the visitors through the years. Then we're off on a chronological tour, traversing terrain that's become familiar, at least in name, to many — Little Round Top, the Peach Orchard, Devil’s Den, Seminary Ridge. Still, Gramm pauses to examine other elements: “Higher Laws” is one intermediate chapter, “Walking” another. Throughout, Gramm relates the battle events to today's world, and he's not shy in expressing his feelings about either. It's one of the few accounts that pauses to ask not just what happened... but why. — Brian Butko

Led by the River — The Story of My Father’s Towboating Days
by Marjorie Byrnside Burress

HERE'S AN intimate if overtly nostalgic account of river life based on the author's investigations and also on notes her father made about his piloting days in the region, during the mid-twentieth century, on the Monongahela, West Virginia's Great Kanawha, and the Ohio. The book's look is homemade, in the