

# (or, “Pavlov, Punk Rock, Politics, and Puke”)

ciety. Instant gratification (stimulus-response again) is not only a household phrase but a standard of living. The mere excruciating thought that a solution might take *time* has a revolting affective association for the glass-eyed masses.

But enough on television...

3) Education in the TV Age has taken on a new priority. The Baby Boomers were capable of finding work with a high school diploma; they went *back* to school to get a Bachelor's Degree.

This resulted in a rush of parental panic—admittedly well-intentioned, but then there's an age-old saying about the road to hell—and “Gen X” (yes, I hate being labeled a math variable, crossed-out mistake, and “brand X” second-rate product as much as the rest of *us*.)—why, “Gen X” needed an education!

Parents, aided by the relatively *new* implementation of students loans, decided to fling their youngsters into the dungeons of the Ivory Tower *en masse*. At least *we* would have the education *they* lacked...

Alas, they knew not a damn thing about supply and demand. Now the market is flooded with over-educated people whose Bachelor's Degree—once nearly priceless, accorded the same sort of respect a PhD is today—has become devalued, commonplace, and worthless. Now it is sim-

ply a prerequisite for employment rather than a guarantee.

What does “Gen X” have to show for it? A degree that is hardly worth the paper it's printed on and early start with \$20k of extra debt. No wonder the Baby Boom generation thinks we're slackers—we're better educated and less employed; few of us can even feasibly afford not to live at home. Yet at *our* age, the Baby Boomers were all married!

4) The supposedly benign influence of the media has systematically assassinated all of our cultural icons. Generation X has no heroes. Without heroes, who will be our roles models?

(There's a smiley face on the TV...)

Worse, the absence of positive influence has led us to suppose that our problems are in fact insolvable and that any trust or—Gen X kids will laugh—“faith” are hopelessly mistaken, deceptive, and downright absurd.

This generation with its generic-brand label has become easily the most dispirited one to exist. Nothing is seen as sacred, sane, or even safe. A kind word is always a cruel bluff, ready to be “exposed” by the ever-watchful, “benevolent” “journalists” of the media.

5) TV has the power, unpredictable by the

Founding Fathers, to discredit any candidate that they disfavor. If they were to abuse this power, who would expose *them*? Who, may I ask, can prevent these power-hungry leeches from becoming a hidden branch of government?

Remember that these are not merely “yellow journalists;” *the entire medium is yellow.*

I leave the unknown and unbelievable backroom politics of this multibillion dollar business to the speculation of those willing to risk the label of “conspiracy theorist,” although money corrupts, and absolute money corrupts absolutely.

I pray that I'm giving you nightmares.

6) Corporate influences, using the media as their battleground and their money as a vote by proxy, have openly lobbied Congress to create laws and purchased lawyers to set precedent for so long that the legislative branch is theirs to toy with freely. Add to this the discrediting of the Executive, and the carefully engineered (?!) burying of the Judicial Branch, and you may well agree with me that law of the land is the voice of dollars rather than people.

I urge you to correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that one half of all of our jail space is taken up by drug offenders, primarily marijuana users. (If memory serves, this figure is from *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice* by Charles Silberman.) Moreover, if I remember correctly, our jails are currently at double their capacity. Do the math yourself, do some research, and please tell me—is the

“War on Drugs” a smoke-screen engineered not only by lumber and paper companies, not only by pharmaceutical companies, not only by election-greedy politicians, but also by those who would neatly tie the hand of the Judicial Branch?

Ye gods! I hope I'm wrong. Yet the media as a whole would and could do just such a thing to achieve power over the United States.

7) Sadly, the Generation as a whole has such a dim view of matters that they *don't even vote*. As a result, “We the People” has turned into “We the Rich.”

*We* could easily get off *our* lead asses and harass *our* Congressmen to do what *we* think is right. For God's sake, they work for *us*. If we paid attention and if we decided we didn't like what they were doing—we could *fire them* and hire (elect) someone else who did what we wanted!

Alas, you'll probably read this with your 20-second attention span and decide to do something about it *tomorrow*—which will never come.

And yet *we* technically and in reality have all the power we need to fix this mess ourselves, if only someone could persuade us to care and to have faith in one another.

Let me point out in closing that these phenomena are all related and interconnected. The synergistic effect will be devastating if we remain apathetic...

**WE COULD BECOME AN X-GENERATION. •**

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