

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS

SCHOOLS SCOPE

A N I L

A proponent of the nearly implemented dress code revision speaks out...

PAWNS NOT PERPS
Let Us Teach Them First

For an opposing viewpoint, turn the page for a student's take on respectful dress...

By Rabbi Mayer Schiller

Poised upon the precipice of bringing "shirts-tucked-in" from the hazy realm of "encouraged-but-not-enforced" to that of "required" (a vague enough term in its own right in our environs, at times!), the fellows with Boss emblazoned upon their hats pulled back.

Thus, what we are left with are the reflective musings of rival theoreticians in place of the sorrowful moans and whinings of some of those "condemned" to the anticipated agonies of elementary dignity and respect.

Like Ishmael atop Queequeg's coffin, afloat in the sea, I am among the few left in a position to tell what really happened.

Truth be told, though, I am not of those who feels that the truth must always be told. Thus, the events and musings to follow are somewhat truncated by the demands of privacy and respect. Nonetheless, enough remains to fashion a story of some interest and, perchance, edification, although of the latter, alas, I am none too sure.

Heading home for *Sukkos* I was prepared, together with other administrators, to launch the Draconian demand that *talmidei hayeshiva* not attend davening, *shiur* and school looking as if they were cultural disciples of Oscar Madison. Yet, I was haunted by the images of some of my very own *talmidim*,

(all well intentioned lads in general, may they be blessed from Above always) of both last year and this, who seemed dumb-founded by the notion that prayer and sacred study should be pursued with demeanor and style a tad more respectful than that sported by shipwrecked, first mate, Gilligan. Surely their pouting was a spoof.



Rabbi Schiller

Was it really possible that the nectar of post sixties decadence had so seeped into their bloodstream as to render them a veritable new species of men, deaf to life's simple rituals of respect and reverence? Yet, it seemed, (L-rd have mercy on them) that their utter submissiveness before the dogmas of the post sixties, social mind controllers was real. They felt that their right to cavort freely, exuding an aura of *bizayon* to themselves, their *limudim*, *tefilos*, *rebbeim*, teachers and *yeshiva* was "sacrosanct."

I was aghast. But educators must, in the end, educate. The brow beaten victims of contemporary media stood before us pathetically,

yet, clearly, revealed to be a long term project. To coerce a naked aborigine to immediately cover his private parts, for example, would be jarring and given his cultural training, probably, inherently, worthless.

First, our mission must be to lift the weighty edifice of three decades of casual irreverence from the souls of modernity's victims among our *talmidim*. Then, and only then, might it be possible for the light of sanity to penetrate. There were yet miles to be traveled before that, which any five year old in public school understood a half century ago, would be grasped by my own dear and good hearted, *talmidim*. Verily we are cult deprogrammers. As such we must handle the victims entrusted to us with softness and care.

G-d willing that "the kids," who "are (verily) all right" in many things, will yet realize that life is a constant incarnation of the essential in the symbolic. For the meantime, though, we choose not to force the cripples to walk. (Amahl still awaits the three good kings capable of performing this feat.)

Or maybe they were spoofing and really do get that slovenliness and the gravity of the *bais Hashem* do not mesh?

Who knows?

We chose to err on the side of the pessimistic diagnosis. -S-