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**CHOPPING BLOCK**



by Jens Andersen

I left off last week advocating that emergency measures be taken in case of nuclear war, including public and private bomb shelters.

Well, let me amend that to private bombshelters and private measures. After all, a good many people, perhaps even the majority, believe that no measures will do any good. And, governments being what they are, the measures would be completed three years too late and would cost four times too much.

Let the thing be done like a toothpaste test: .3 per cent of the population build their own bomb shelters; a control group of 99.7 per cent don't. Which group will have the highest survival rate if a global nuclear war happens despite mankind's "best" efforts?

According to a possibly reliable source, the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa ("From the Soviet Press #125, Oct. 25, 1983), 200 million people out of the 1,290 in the northern hemisphere will survive a nuclear war without immediate bodily harm. The subsequent radiation effects, climatic changes, and whatnot could easily wipe out even these survivors. However, this conclusion is not entirely certain.

But wouldn't survival be so horrible that, in Krushchev's classic phrase, "the living would envy the dead"? Well, probably, but I am curious, skeptical and obstinate enough that I would want to see for myself. Hence, the idea of building a bomb shelter appeals to me.

With some skill and imagination the shelter could even be built as an integral part of an underground "earth home" at little or no extra cost. All a person has to do to finance such a project is to stop wasting money on Hollywood dreck, schlocky books, flashy clothes, cable TV, junk food, booze (above the bare minimum needed to cope with our insane world), and all the other crap shoved down one's throat in our relentless consumer society.

On a similar theme, there is a thick package sent to the Gateway by the Hon. Pauline Jewett, NDP MP, containing all this summer's Commons debates over cruise missile testing. Presumably it was sent to reiterate and bolster the

NDP's anti-cruise stand, but I can hardly see how it succeeds. Again and again in the debate their position is trounced: there is no corresponding move by the Russians to stop testing their cruise missiles, the cruise is only doubtfully a first strike weapon (I have heard serious arguments about whether the cruise is even a useful weapon), NATO requested weapons to counter Soviet SS-20 missiles, the Soviets - in their traditional manner - refused to negotiate removal of the SS-20's until they saw clearly that NATO had sufficient will to counter with cruise and Pershing missiles, and so on.

In addition I find it extremely offensive to read Ed Broadbent dragging his ten-year old daughter into the debate, as if the issue was merely that MP's had forgotten their duty to their children. Ditto for Pauline Jewett's "revelation" of the horrors of nuclear war, as if the issue was just that MP's didn't know it was horrible. Such red herrings insult the intelligence and sincerity of people whose only difference from the NDP "peace" position lies in methodology.

The most pertinent comments in *Hansard* I found to be those of Flora MacDonald, who pointed out that the 1979 NATO decision to deploy the Pershing and cruise missiles had an integral second part: using the deployment in disarmament negotiations. She lambastes Trudeau for not having used Canada's position as a relatively disinterested NATO member to push positions and proposals for such negotiations. And she blasts the NDP as well, for having detracted from these crucial negotiations by engaging in weak and irrelevant histrionics against the cruise missile.

To which I can only add, "Amen."

Damn! I've scarcely made a dent in the pile of paper I began cleaning up last week. Left untouched still is a hysterical communique, mailed to us by the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), sheafs of self-serving bilge from the federal government, more bilge from the USSR embassy ("the Soviet Union with the other fraternal socialist countries and all peace loving forces..."), still more bilge from 20th Century Fox extolling their latest narcotics, an interesting report on toxic waste from the May-June *International Wildlife*, the *U of A Senate Report on Mature Students*, clippings from the local papers on Grenada, and the decline of the liberal Christian denominations, and hundreds of other items...

Maybe next week...

P.S. If you haven't done your good deed for the day, you might consider buying raffle tickets in support of the Edmonton Women's Shelter for battered women. Once, when driving taxi, I had the experience of driving a woman to the Shelter. I can assure you it is serving a genuine need.

For more information contact the Women's Centre, 432-2882.



**THE TALLY STONE**

Fiction Serial  
by Gilbert Bouchard

**Part Four**

Alfred MacDonald homesteaded the quarter section of land due east of the shallow, putrid lake that would someday bear his name. He arrived on the spring of 1922 and spent a long, arduous summer clearing land with an ax and a lot of grim determination. He managed to build a rudimentary cabin and almost managed to chop enough firewood for the winter.

A totally miserable winter, cold, blustery, it snowed six feet and drifts trapped Alfred in his cabin two days in early November. Then, in December, he got lost one evening and nearly froze to death. Followed two weeks later by his cabin catching fire and partially burning down, forcing him to spend the latter half of the winter shivering in a tent.

But he survived. He survived the loneliness, the long sled trips to town (actually an RCMP outpost) for what few supplies he could afford, and the long days spent tracking down whatever wild life he could shoot.

Much later his daughters Hattie, Annabelle and Geraldine would read the cramped furious notes in his diary and all three would be awed by the man's fortitude, amazed by his strength.

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Things change. Annabelle, for example, had renounced her Presbyterian roots and had married a Frenchman by the name of Gerald Johnson and after her husband's coaxing, raised her daughter Tracy a strict Catholic, until she too abandoned organized worship and glided in a spiritual neutral like her mother and aunts.

And now, sixty years later this diary, these Protestant ramblings of her grandfather amazed Tracy more than anything but they bothered her too. For the old man, despite all his fanaticism, had a sharp eye and an equally sharp mind. Tracy was particularly interested in his references to the large stone, dead centre of MacDonald's Lake. She'd read the diaries as a girl and had even inherited the majority of them with her mother's death, and a nagging memory of something in them she'd read bothered her. The Tally Stone was what Alfred had called the rock in the middle of the lake. That first winter when the ice had grown strong enough to support his weight and he observed its strange markings and eerie hieroglyphics and had promptly

pronounced that rock a vile and undoubtedly pagan relic and perhaps even demonic - Lucifer's own Tally Stone, so to speak, a hellish guest list for an eternal fiery dinner party - and hence its name.

Alfred had even confronted the local Catholic Missionary and had vented his concern over this repugnant satanic object so near to Godfearing Christian settlers.

But like most of his brethren, the missionary had decided that the accursed stone must have been some Indian worship site and feared reprisals from the local natives if it were desecrated since white settlement was tenuous at best without having Indian problems.

And as for the natives that Alfred spoke to, they denied any connection with the stone, stressing the fact that the stone was truly ancient and predated by any settlement, Indian or white. But MacDonald knew better. He'd seen the shadows sulking across his property when the moon grew fat, he'd seen the myriad of jumbled moccasin tracks on the snow surrounding the snow the following mornings and he'd seen the circles of ashes, the greyed bones of the tiny bonfires on the ice and even the carcasses of animals wrapped in rawhide and decorated with pagan scribbles, feathers and beads.

Then, in early February, Alfred first noticed the lights, the blue, nebulous lights that hovered and danced above the stone. This last bit of witchery was too much, at the next full moon Alfred would act.

This most of all interested Tracy in the four days since she'd been here. She'd noticed the same blue lights in the general direction of the lake. She'd dismissed it as swamp gas, until the night before when the light had actually moved, crept across the lake, and crossed her fields and had slowly circled her house, perhaps three or four times. Mighty strange behaviour for swamp gasses.

Not to mention the fact that as of her second day on the farm the winds has shifted and had blown continuously off the lake, blowing with it an unbelievable stench. And to tip it off, Tracy's well water had turned a light greenish colour with a swampish odor and bitter taste.

Be it the swamp smell or the funny tasting water Tracy reacted badly, falling prey to cramps and nausea.

The sudden illness, the floating lights, and the scurrings in the loft and shrubbery surrounding her house were getting to her. She had to find out what had happened in the winter of '22 and how that connected to her situation.

Tracy's portion of the diary ended in early February, but it turned out that the nephew of the same missionary that had antagonized her grandfather, a man called John Blackburn, had somehow gotten hold of the latter writing.

She phoned Blackburn that morning and arranged to read the rest of the diaries the very next morning.

Whatever happened in March 1922, she'd soon know.

**To be continued**