

# the Gateway

## EDITORIAL

### The Wall

After twenty years, it's being ignored. It's there, possibly the only creation of the twentieth century that can be seen from another planet, but it doesn't effect us. We'll never have a wall like that.

Our guide warns us not to photograph the guards at the checkpoint. "By all means take lots of pictures once you're inside and make lots of copies of them and send to all your relatives. But don't point your cameras at the checkpoint. It makes them nervous. They will confiscate your film, maybe even your camera."

Checkpoint Charlie. It brings with it only unreal images of old spy-thrillers. It is hard to imagine this is where Russian and American tanks squared off in 1961, the focus of the Cold War. It is memorable.

In all, 71 people were killed by the Wall, 109 wounded, 3085 arrested. Only a few weeks after our visit a young man tried to escape its confines, but he was caught and dragged away. Such escape attempts are punishable by at least five years in prison.

Yet the Wall has ceased to be a political issue. The 1971 Quadripartite Agreement that redefined accessibility rights from East to West defused it. Now the East makes an estimated billion dollars a year selling visas to West Berliners, foreigners, and tourists.

"I can't go with you, I'm afraid," says our guide. "They say I haven't got the right ideological line. They will provide you with a guide with the right line. So, goodbye, and enjoy yourselves in the paradise of the proletariat."

The Mercedes bus door whooshes shut and we're off on a short jaunt to the checkpoint. Heavy noon traffic congests the wide West Berlin avenues which themselves are lined with more neon signs and unabashed commercialism than anywhere else in free Germany. In its decline, West Berlin is a metropolis, a city of Turks, squatters, and extreme-avant garde artists. It is run down, facing severe housing shortages, the buildings constructed expediently in the 50's in need of renovation or replacement.

On the other side, even in July it's colorless, but neat and clean. The orderliness is impressive — rows and rows of look-alike apartment blocks landscaped with trees and bushes spaced evenly down mile-long boulevards. Yet there is something unnatural in its symmetry.

At one War Memorial we visit I notice two policemen leaning on the fender of their Volkspolizei watching us. I draw my camera and take a picture of them sitting there watching us. Another tourist does the same, and then another. Very quickly the police jump in their Volkspolizei and drive away.

We stop for refreshments and souvenirs during the tour. Western marks only, please, says our new guide. The East Germans aren't stupid. Western currency at high exchange rates helps keep the economy alive, enabling the government to pay off, no doubt, the debt owed Mother Liberation in Moscow for her estimated 30,000 troops keeping the peace on Berlin's periphery.

Those of us steeped in freedom find all of this extraordinary. How, after three million people fled, could a nation get away with simply putting up a bloody wall to keep the other five-sixths of the population in?

"I didn't think of freedom much," says a former East German guard who escaped over the wall.

"Hitler was in power before my father was born and the Communists before I was born. It's difficult to imagine something you've never had."

He took his oppression for granted just as we take for granted our freedom, but he remained oppressed until on impulse — "in pursuit of cars, girls, money, holidays in the sun" — he left.

At the end of our afternoon sojourn we are herded once again out of the bus, our names checked off. We are all here. But a guard checks the bus undercarriage with a mirror to ensure here are no workers hanging on trying to avoid being part of the great communist experiment. It's a funny thing about Soviet paradises — no one seems to want to live in them.

But pay no attention to it. We're living quietly. We'll continue to live peacefully and quietly here.

Peter Michalyszyn



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Male views Women's Centre

Tuesday night I went to a Women's Center meeting expecting to find a bunch of Women's Libbers sitting around talking about how useless guys are.

I will break down my views of the meeting in order of good to bad.

A woman spoke about wife battering (her personal experience) and the problems she encountered with the doctors, the police, and the social services.

The Women's Center would help you get in touch with people who care and who can help if you or anyone you know are having problems of this nature.

Another woman was looking for complaints of sexual harassment — any complaints should be directed to the Women's Center.

The women made a point of making all of the women present feel welcome.

One speaker was against pornography in magazines and sex in advertising. She produced fairly good examples of both problems.

One of the speakers would like to rewrite the dictionary so that any (every?) word that has sexual connotations or that views women as the weaker sex would be changed or deleted.

A girl made a comment (while looking at me) that men would only attend a women's meeting to pick up women.

The woman who spoke against pornography is so obsess-

ed with her ideas that she won't talk to any guy unless she knows that he doesn't read pornography. If I remember correctly, she brought back two suitcases of the stuff over the border.

A few fanatical statements, made by one or two speakers, were approximately as follows: 1) We want men to fear us. 2) We want the power to destroy the system

(society standards). 3) I want to give orders to men.

That doesn't sound like equal rights to me.

The Womyn's March is Friday night. Concerned women and even apathetic women are welcome.

Men are needed to work at the Child Care Center.

Gordon Stamp  
Science II

### National Debt exposed at over 120 billion

Editor, The Gateway:

I would like to clear up a couple of points which were not made clear in your Thursday editorial on EPF.

1) The federal Liberal government is not struggling with a \$14 billion national debt. The \$14 x 10<sup>9</sup> loss is this year.

Including our varying deficits (how much more the government spends than it collects) over the last 11 years and the remaining debt for WWI and II (we've paid for almost all of the Boer War) the National Debt is over 90 billion.

Add to this our hidden debts owed by Crown corporations and owed by the government in buying corporations we are in debt to bankers and governments around the world to the tune of

120 to 130 billion dollars.

I have tried to find out what interest we pay on this but no one in the federal government in Edmonton can tell me and I can't afford to phone Ottawa as I was suggested to do.

2) The change from matching funds to the present system was largely an initiative of the provinces in the Holy (Conservative, including the Sacred and NDP wings) Name of financial sovereignty.

Yet another move in the history of our loveable premiers "one for you, some for me" drive for centralized money control.

Sceptically Yours,  
M.W. Ekelund  
Law I

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Staff this issue: Everyone used to think that Mike Walker was a normal guy. But at his dinner party he started out by talking more to his plants than to his guests. Garnet DuGray, Ben Yee, Dave Cox, and Grace Hickman all just shrugged their shoulders and hoped that things would become less embarrassing. Instead, Mike started a deep discussion with his Boston Fern on the Kennedy legacy. David Chan, Janis Lee, Peter West, Geoff Jackson, Jordan Peterson and David Benoit tried to shout some sense into him. But Mike just turned away and started to whimper to his African Violet. Mike Cheng, K. Bushing, and Eric Blare decided to phone Oliver. Mike overheard, and viciously flung his giant Venus Fly Trap into the middle of the room. It was a grisly sight, and the survivors vowed one day to return with barrels of defoliant.