

Maturity required

In her pro-abortion article *Reader Comment*, Suzanne Bizon should not have used a twenty year old in her "real life" situation. Being twenty myself I cannot imagine a woman my age whining about leaving home and supporting herself or whimpering about the dangers of pregnancy.

I believe she exaggerated a woman's need for a foolproof method of birth control so that she can govern her own life. If a woman tries hard enough she can find a way to control a situation. As David Marples said "A woman cannot abort herself" so they have to find someone else to do their dirty work. They had poor Dr. Morgentaler working overtime until some people tried to clue him in.

Sue, I cannot believe there are "young girls, children who don't know any better" who can wine him, dine him, and bed him down and still not know how babies are made. Also, I cannot understand why you see pregnancy as a punishment. It is only nine months of our life in exchange for the rest of our baby's life.

Yes, Sue, I would say "what it comes down to is to have sex or not to have sex." Sexual intercourse is an adult act and if a person is not mature enough to accept the responsibilities that accompany it then that person should not have sex. If your birth control fails and you become pregnant then it is time to grow up. If some of my closest friends could grow up at fifteen and sixteen then you can grow up at twenty.

Jo-Anne Corcoran
Science 1

Literacy not the point

I see that an SU Council censure motion "was carried with 4 in favour and 12 against" (*Gateway*, Nov. 29th). Tell me more.

But of greater importance, however, was the comment of one William Pidruchney, who advocated tuitionless liberal arts education in pursuit of the Grail of universal literacy. Now, tuitionless means without any teaching. Or was Mr. Pidruchney misquoted, and did he really mean a free liberal arts education?

Now I'm all in favour of free education, but a University was

More news

I am sure that the lack of coverage in the *Gateway*, of the recently held Blood Donor Clinic, was merely an oversight, and was in no way related to the amount of attention paid to the political situation in Chile, or the alleged war crimes in Cambodia some years back. And I'm sure that your recent criticism of the SU exec. for not taking an active interest in the convention centre issue did not impair your ability to deal with issues that primarily concern students.

I feel I must acknowledge the relative importance of these issues, however, until the *Journal* and *Sun* start dealing directly with campus issues, you must assume that as your primary concern. Although I feel that the overall quality of the *Gateway* has improved a great deal this year, your political overtones still exist as a major detraction from your efforts.

Still Bleeding
Frank Whipple
Science 4



Quixote

by David Marples

What is the reasoning behind the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and what are the likely consequences of Jimmy Carter's reaction to withhold grain shipments to the USSR?

The deployment of five Soviet divisions in neighboring Afghanistan marks the first major armed offensive undertaken by the Soviet Union in almost twelve years. A horrified world has witnessed the attack with such adjectives as "brutal", "savage" and "calculated", all of which appears to be indisputable, whilst hardly penetrating Soviet motives. In turn, the Soviet organs *Pravda* and *Izvestia* resolutely maintain that Soviet troops are in Afghanistan at the behest of the Afghan people and that Babrak Karmal is the acclaimed ruler of this strife-torn country.

The timing of the invasion may well have been calculated. In that cynical world of super-power politics, it represents a gamble at a time when the chief protagonist, the United States, is preoccupied with neighboring Iran. Brezhnev, no doubt at the will of the Politburo "hawks", seized the opportunity for an armed coup d'etat in the belief that the West would protest, but nevertheless do nothing to help a country which has long remained in the Soviet sphere of interest. One of the benefits would be the subsequent proximity to a seaport on the Indian Ocean, with which to accommodate the rapidly-expanding Soviet navy.

The tactics of the takeover are depressingly familiar. Over the last thirty years, both the United States and the Soviet Union have utilized civil war situations in countries to their own advantage, in order to promote "puppet regimes" directly dependent upon them. In the Soviet case, this policy was clearly elaborated by Brezhnev himself at the Twenty Fifth Party Congress in 1975. Yet Babrak Karmal is the third successive pro-Soviet ruler to be installed in

Afghanistan since the April revolution of 1978 and the usage of some 50,000 Soviet troops to prop up his regime is a poignant indicator of the failure of the previous two attempts.

Consequently, it is evident that the invasion also reveals the desperation of the Soviet leaders. Neither of the former two rulers, Daoud Taraki and Hafizullah Amin (both of whom were assassinated), were capable of quelling the Muslim rebels waging a guerilla war in the mountains of Afghanistan. On the other hand, Amin constantly refused to negotiate a peace settlement, despite Soviet instructions. Karmal, a veteran campaigner and an opportunist, is unlikely to pursue such an independent course, particularly after returning from exile in Czechoslovakia and East Germany. Karmal is hardly the People's candidate, the Soviets have satisfied his lust for power and now await their compensation.

Soviet concern over the Muslim rebellions is closely linked with fears regarding the huge Soviet Muslim population, which is expected to make up the majority of the Soviet population by the year 2000. The outburst of Muslim fundamentalism in Iran also cannot have escaped the attention of the Soviet Azerbaijanis north of the border. Thus Moscow has recognized the need to placate its Muslims. If one accepts the Soviet Union within its present boundaries as a legitimate state, and most governments do so, then Soviet anxiety over the Muslim rebellion on its borders is to be expected, whether or not one agrees with the means used to "resolve" the crisis.

The Soviet invasion, an unpardonable act of aggression by an imperialist state, is also a panic measure to bring under control a would-be satellite and to appease its own huge Muslim populace. Thus Carter's decision to cut down grain shipments to the USSR can lead only to an escalation of the conflict. For it presents the Politburo with only two foreseeable alternatives; either to drastically redirect government investment from military to consumer expenditure, thereby conceding that the U.S. is the superior military power, or to retaliate in kind, with the threat of nuclear conflict looming ever closer.

Brezhnev is more likely to choose the second alternative. His regime has staked its reputation and Soviet survival upon achieving military parity with the United States, an objective which presupposes lowering the living standards of the Soviet people. Carter's move and the expected reduction of grain exports to the USSR from American allies such as Canada and Australia will have little effect on what is expected to be a protracted and bloody war in Afghanistan. It will however have two consequences. First, it will starve thousands of innocent people. Secondly, it will force the hand of the Politburo in a way which no military intervention could have accomplished.

Religion does not close the mind

David Marples makes some interesting comments in his column on Dec. 4 on the "instant knowledge" which he sees being

offered by religions. However, he is less than convincing when he implies that one should not join any religion because to do so

narrows or closes one's mind.

Even on the level of science, to have an open mind does not mean that one may not reach any conclusions. Most open-minded geologists do not feel compelled to set aside a few days each year to review the arguments of the flat earth society. One settles on certain conclusions and goes on from there. One reviews such conclusions only if something dramatically new shakes one's confidence in them. Nor does being open-minded rule out joining and being committed to certain groups with whose principles one agrees. To join an organization to fight cystic fibrosis or to protect academic freedom is not necessarily proof of a closed mind. So even if one were to judge religions as one

were to judge scientific thinking, one should not rule out ahead of time or automatically the propriety of joining a religion.

Furthermore, any science or academic discipline which is in touch with the real world recognizes that its own method may not be the only method of discovering truth. This suggests caution in judging some other group or discipline by one's own methods. So, while sharing some of Mr. Marple's scepticism about "instant knowledge" I would not conclude that it is impossible for someone to get a sudden brilliant insight which may change his or her life. To rule out that possibility would be to show a closed mind.

John Gallagher CSB
St. Joseph's College

never intended to provide universal literacy. That is what the schools are supposed to provide. Obviously there are far too many students here lacking fundamental literacy skills, but this is scarcely the place to make up for lost time. Students should damn well be literate before they arrive. I make exceptions for the dyslexic, the blind, the deaf and such, but the rest of us have to be able to communicate adequately with others, and if you can't, go away

and learn how.

I guess I just cannot accept the all-too-frequent attitude that it is the duty of the University to provide a degree to anyone who has spent four years here. Degrees have to be earned and deserved, not automatic rewards. A mediocre student in a lack-lustre class gets a 9; where's the logic in it all? It depresses me.

Richard Miller
Grad Studies



THE STUDENTS' UNION requires a GATEWAY EDITOR

The Editor-in-Chief shall:

- be responsible for supervising all aspects of the editing and producing of the *Gateway*.
- use his or her discretion as to what material is published in the *Gateway*.
- submit the annual budget for the *Gateway* to the Administration Board in compliance with By-Law 700.
- ensure the smooth operation of the Students' Union newspaper.

Salary: under review

For further information, please contact:

Gordon Turtle, Editor-in-Chief, *Gateway*, at 432-5168, or in Room 282 Students' Union Building.

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