

# Opinion

Randal Smathers



## Randal a redneck?!

Left, right: fascist, communist; liberal, redneck: just some of the more popular political/social labels thrown around. The problem is that these labels are too easy to use. I know this from personal experience: you see, I've been called all these names because of what I've written for *The Gateway* in the last few years.

That fact might suggest that my politics have changed radically, but I don't believe they have. What it suggests to me is that people are too quick to label others, based on their own self-image. As proof that this is indeed the case, I submit the fact that I've been called both a liberal and a redneck for the same column. If you see yourself as a liberal and you don't like what I say, you call me a redneck, or a fascist. If you think of yourself as a conservative and you disagree with me, I'm a commie pinko fag.

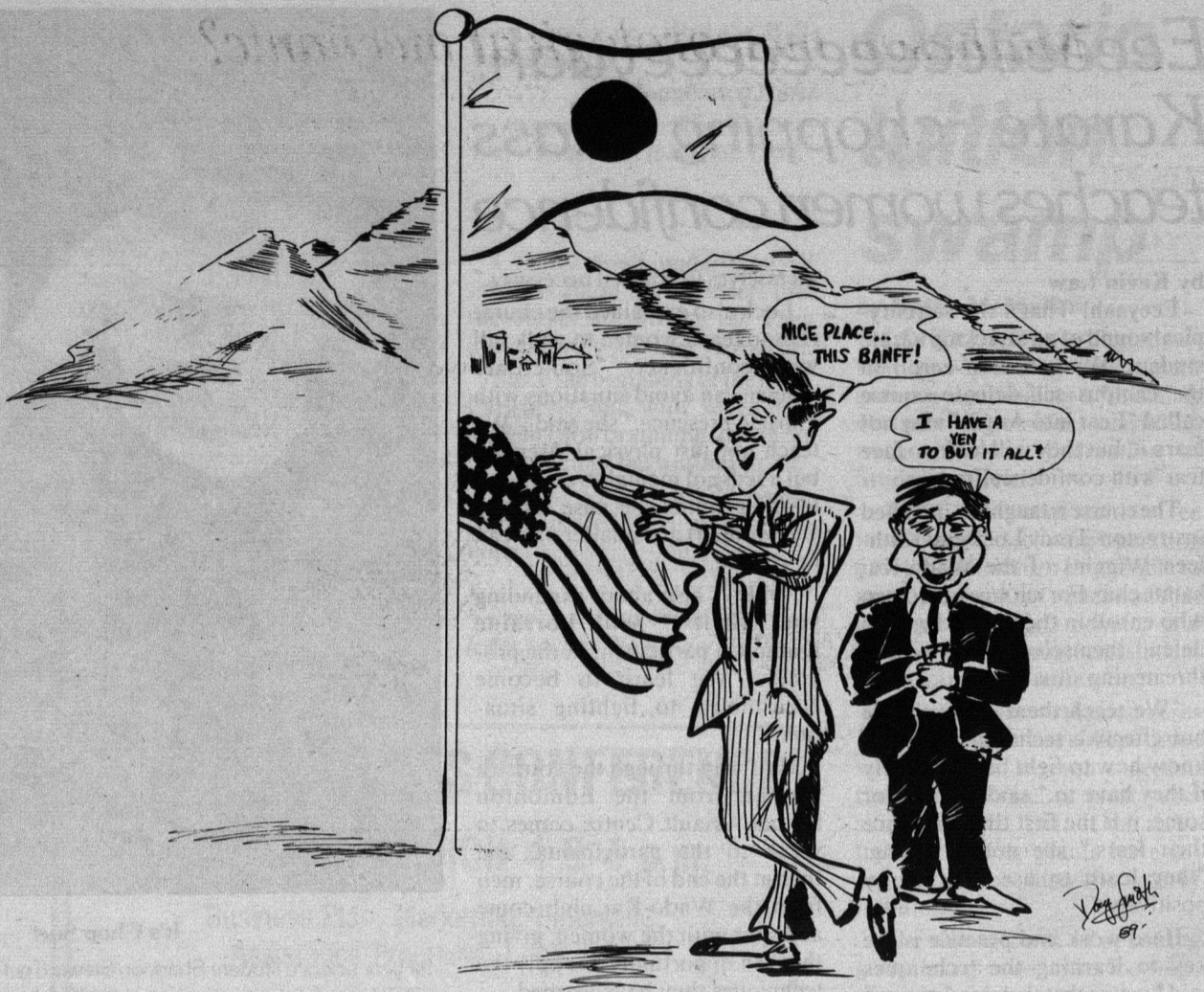
The truth is that I am neither a leftist nor a rightist, but both. On some issues, such as medicare, I ardently support socialized medicine, or the peace or environmental movements, both of which I believe in. Other times, I have decidedly conservative outlooks: capital punishment and government spending being just two examples.

In a recent editorial, I criticized what I feel is a bad trait of the American society: a tendency to shoot first and not bother to ask questions. It was suggested that I should criticize the USSR as well. The fact is that I wrote a column questioning the naive acceptance of glasnost earlier this semester, but obviously, because I blasted George Bush, all of a sudden I'm a commie.

"America — love it or leave it" stank in 1969, and it still stinks. On the other hand, sowing mines on the way out of Afghanistan is only the latest Soviet outrage from *their* Vietnam. The important thing is not who is committing an outrage, but that an outrage is being committed.

Perhaps it is naive of me, but I feel that if more people thought through every issue separately, most would also find they held a range of beliefs. Unfortunately, many people only expose themselves to one outlook on everything: they subscribe to *Alberta Report* but wouldn't dream of reading *Rolling Stone*, or they live and die by the *Mother Earth News* and won't touch *The Edmonton Sun*.

One last note: if you still want to call me names, at least come up with some new ones. Commie was old in 1920; fascist was tired by 1950; this is 1984 plus five.



## Letters

### Christians misunderstood

Re: Respect religions (Feb. 3)

I always appreciate reading letters such as yours. They are an accurate indication of how little understanding of Christianity people actually have.

Your first concern can be answered by the simple fact that Christians sponsored this activity. A Christian is one who believes in the plan of salvation as described by the Holy Bible (John 3:16) wholeheartedly, and so, loves and follows the Lord's

direction with all his heart, soul and mind. This is why a *Christian* from a Pentacostal Church is just as much a Christian brother of mine as is a Conservative, Evangelical Baptist...; therefore, Christians (not a denomination) supported Christian Awareness Week.

Secondly, every Christian as described by the bible is to take pride in his faith, and yet be as humble as Christ himself (he washed his disciples' feet); therefore, arrogance is not to be a Christian's quality.

Rodney Adams  
Engg. II

### First Year



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Sean Sunderland

## Money motivation for cruise testing



No, Canada neither should, nor is it required to, test the cruise missile. Why?

First of all, NATO was founded as a "defensive" military alliance to protect against aggression in Western Europe immediately following the Second World War. Relying on the concept of "collective sovereignty," its posture has always been "defensive" in nature and policy.

The cruise missile, however, is *not* a defensive weapon. Equipped with "Stealth" technology (as admitted by the US Defense Dept.), its purpose is to elude every radar and communications webs.

Cruise missiles, because they are aircraft launched, require several hours for them to reach their targets. ICBM's, however, require only 30 minutes. Therefore, cruise missiles are irrelevant in the event of an already existing nuclear war. However, they are a perfect "first-strike" weapon, which has nothing to do

with Canada's commitment to a "defense-minded" NATO.

Secondly, cruise missiles do not protect the balance of power. Rather, they disrupt it. The United States was the first to develop and incorporate "cruise missile" technology. This, of course, elicited an immediate and reflexive response from the Soviets as they scrambled to develop their own version. (Which is just coming on stream now, five years after the installation of US cruise missiles in Europe.) Thus, the cruise missile has acted as a destabilizing agent, and further escalated an already spirally arms-race.

Thirdly, Canada need not worry about being excluded from the American "nuclear umbrella." In the case of an attack against Canada, nuclear or not, the US will assuredly not sit idly by.

Fourthly, the rationale that nuclear weapons deter terrorist attacks is ludicrous beyond belief. I need not

remind people of the numerous terrorist attacks against France, Israel, the UK, and the US, and to a lesser extent the USSR — all nuclear-armed nations. Furthermore, empirical studies have shown that countries with a nuclear arsenal have found themselves more constrained in dealing with critical foreign policy issues because of the dangerous threat of escalation.

The real reason Canada is testing the cruise missile has nothing to do with our commitment to NATO. It has, however, everything to do with something that is very close to the hearts of most politicians — money. Canada has historically participated in the North American defense industry to great profit. In return for allowing the US to set-up the D.E.W. line, maintain military bases in Canada, test the cruise, and ensure that Canada keep them supplied with a constant and guaranteed access to vital new resources, the American defense industry always throws us a few crumbs come budget time. Hence, business for "Litton industries," "DeHavilland airplanes," "Spar Aerospace," and many other Canadian corporations. To refuse the cruise would mean refusing over \$5 billion in defense contracts with the US since 1960 (Source: US Division, Defense Purposes Branch, Dept. of Ind., Trade & Commerce).

But hey, what's the point in having a defense industry if not to make money. Right?