

the Gateway

EDITORIAL

L'optimism

Lately we have been assailed, even abused, by forecasts of impending nuclear blight and by 'mushroom cloud cookoo-land' predictions that if the world does not settle its differences, immediately, we all shall perish, immediately.

This is probably true. However, that is no reason for everyone to become highly emotional and depressed, to march in the streets and chant slogans and profanities at our public representatives, to print and distribute propaganda damning the inevitability of self-destructive capitalism or the horrors of death camps in the primitive darkness of the Soviet Union, and so on and so forth.

Beyond the clairvoyant radical fringe, which would be, is, lost but for vague concerns for the future of the world, there is room for optimism.

To begin: even in today's restless, faithless world, more people in poor, underdeveloped third world nations will die of starvation than would all of us, well fed but insecure, in a nuclear accident (which is more probable a way to go than nuclear war, I think).

More specifically, even as you read this, 500 million people are wasting from famine in one place or another; 100 million of these are children; 30 million will die by 1986.

Compare these numbers with Dr. Helen Caldicott's gloomy prediction, based on the effects of a major (class IX) nuclear accident in the U.S.:

"A plume of radioactive fall-out could contaminate a land mass the size of Pennsylvania and produce the following diseases, given the exposure of a population of ten million people (at this time 30 million Americans live within 30 miles of a nuclear reactor). Approximately 3,300 people would die within the first several days; others would feel normal for two to six weeks but death would ensue after vomiting, bloody diarrhea, hair loss and massive infections and terminal hemorrhage.

This disease is called acute radiation illness and could affect 10,000 to 100,000 people.

Forty-five thousand patients would develop severe shortness of breath; 240,000 others could develop acute hypothyroidism secondary to thyroid damage from radioactive iodine.

Approximately 350,000 males and 40,000 to 100,000 females would develop sterility. There would be approximately 3,000 spontaneous abortions, 1,500 cases of microcephaly, or babies born with tiny heads, permanently retarded.

Approximately 300,000 cases of cancer would develop five to 50 years after the accident and some 30,000 genetic abnormalities would become apparent over the next 150 years in future generations."

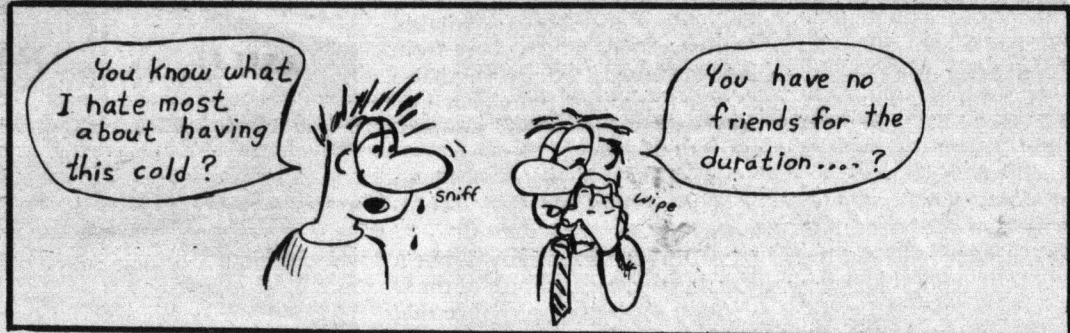
At the outside, that all comes to 1,172,800 people. But that's just Americans. The Soviet Union, China, Great Britain, France, India, Israel, South Africa, Pakistan, Canada, West Germany, Japan, Sweden, and Switzerland, among others, have and use nuclear power plants, all capable of wreaking death and destruction upon themselves.

(Suddenly, there is optimism in the famine angle; after all, those who don't starve to death won't likely die of radiation either, being as they are quite far removed from the centers of civilization.)

Another cause for anxiety has been the neutron bomb. But try looking at it from an optimistic, moral, Christian standpoint. In "The Christian Tradition of Warfare" Thomas Murray wrote in the early 1960's:

"...Not a few have expressed serious doubts as to whether there is such a thing as a tradition of civilized warfare.

But while upholding the legitimacy of the military function and the military profession in society, Christianity categorically rejected the barbaric idea that the use of military force is not subject to any moral restraints. A sharp distinction was drawn between the "just war," fought to vindicate juridical rights, and the "unjust war," launched for adventure, plunder, or gladiatorial glory. The foundation for this doctrine was laid by Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine ... In the days of the Truce of God and the Peace of God, the conduct of warfare was limited as to the times and places of fighting, as well as to the classes of persons who could neither be pressed into military service nor made targets of belligerent action. Indeed, one of the noblest features of Western military tradition was the protective wall which was erected around civilian populations and peaceful



activities — a wall which military men observed for several centuries with remarkable fidelity ..."

Thus, another individual, a gentleman and the father of the neutron bomb Mr. Samuel T. Cohen, was asked once by His Holiness Pope John Paul II if "... you ... are working for peace?"

"I (Cohen speaking) assured him I was, as best I could in my own way."

Back in his role as a weapons analyst, Cohen said the neutron bomb was the ultimate, moral deterrent to war. "Used in conjunction with barriers designed to prevent incursions into Western Europe and other areas threatened by invasion, these weapons can speak for the determination of free nations to remain free while sparing 'civilian populations and peaceful activities' from the carnage and destruction which have accompanied warfare even since advances in destructive weapons made it possible to batter down the walls." (from "Morality and the Neutron Bomb" *National Review* August 8, 1980).

If that won't do for you, there is another, Christian, alternative outlook on human survival and nuclear weapons. The esteemed pacifist (if there is such a thing) Dr. Carl-Friedrich von Weizsaecker, visiting the University of Alberta recently, acquainted us with the definitive contemporary old school Christian ethos: submit to the unholy forces of evil and darkness (i.e. the Soviet Union and other Marxist-inspired states) providing you can sustain the necessary moral firmament to endure and be saved, eventually, from untold suffering, brutal and unceasing persecution, and other unpleasantnesses the avoidance of which has been the usual rationale for deterrant nuclear weapons. No matter, says Dr. von Weizsaecker; these are his terms for unilateral disarmament.

To end on a pessimistic point: reflect on the phenomena of mutually assured arms controls agreements. For many years the Americans and the Russians have misled great numbers of the public by non-negotiating arms limitations pacts. As described by *Newweek's* Meg Greenfield:

"You begin (SALT I) with a reasonable effort to limit those things that can be limited, which is to say seen and counted — i.e. launchers [in this case; medium range nuclear missiles in another]. You then have a race to see how much (before the next historic accord) you can pile onto each launcher in the way of multiple warheads etc ... You end up with weapons so loaded for bear that you need to protect them at all costs from attack — ergo, MX, the monster, movable (fugitive?) missile that no one wants hidden in his basement."

If you think that's depressing: we have more immediate problems with the madman Colonel Kadaffi running about looking for attention. One of these days he'll make his point — with a bang, Greenfield notes. That's depressing.

Peter Michalyshyn

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

lousy 'n' little

In the movie *Annie Hall*, Woody Allen tells the story of two women at a resort. One was complaining to the other about how terrible the food was. The other replied: "Yes, and such small portions, too!" Woody Allen concludes by saying that is how he essentially felt life was like: full of horrible, terrible things and over much too quickly.

The Gateway has been demonstrating undeniably poor quality. And now, it comes only once a week.

Simone Gareau
Grad Studies

LETTERS

Letters to the Editor should be a maximum of 250 words on any subject, regardless of how much you normally run off at the mouth. The fact that you are hot under the collar doesn't impress us in the slightest. Also, spastic, disjointed and semi-intelligible writing is pure migraine to read, and should be saved for your professors, who deserve it. Thirdly, the statement "I think" is just a theory, and considering the evidence - 3,877 predictable letters on every subject - a rather dubious theory. Finally, we reserve the right to hack, chop or shred any windy, illiterate or defamatory correspondence. Furthermore, if you persist in sending us such diatribes *Gateway* special assistants Vito and Ernie will take whatever extralegal measures are necessary to ensure that you bother us no more.

新年快樂
HAPPY NEW YEAR, EH.

Staff
on
page
16

EDITOR - Peter Michalyshyn
MANAGING - Mary Ruth Olson
NEWS - Wes Oginski and Greg Harris
PRODUCTION - Robert Cook
ARTS - Jens Andersen
SPORTS - Andrew Watts
PHOTO - Ray Giguere
CUP - Richard Watts
ADVERTISING - Tom Wright
MEDIA PRODUCTIONS - Margriet Tilroe-West
CIRCULATION - Mike McKinney

The Gateway is the official newspaper of the students at the University of Alberta. With a readership of over 25,000 the Gateway is published Tuesdays and Thursdays during the winter session, excepting holidays. Contents are the responsibility of the editor; editorials are written by an editorial board or signed. All other opinions are signed by the party expressing them. Copy deadlines are 12 noon Mondays and Wednesdays. The Gateway, a member of the Canadian University Press and of CUP Media Services Ltd., is located in Room 282 Students' Union Building, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7. Newsroom 432-5168; Advertising 432-3423.

