

EDITORIAL

The difference between the sexes

Walking past the small town arcade, the one boarded up, the one with a "For Lease" sign, the three of us, two men and a woman, shrug in our coats against the roaring wind and roaring voices.

"Go home, you lousy fags - we don't want you here!"

We looked up to see a gang of long-haired youth with their thumbs in the loops of their scraggly jeans. The most brazen ones stood on the step outside the door, the rest peered from behind the "Gays Prohibited" sign in the window. They followed our brisk pace with their eyes and shouts, but not their bodies.

"If you fucking faggots come into this arcade, we'll pound the shit out of you — and tell your bum-buddies back at the hotel, too!"

We did make it back to the hotel and told the other Canadian University Press delegates about the incident. Most of the delegates were concerned enough to take direct action. Some actually went into the arcade. A few wrote homophobic articles in the nightly conference newsletters — but these few only heightened the anger of the largely gay-positive delegation.

But as that controversy raged, the three of us who originally passed the arcade saw the incident in a more personal light. The two men were still upset about it a day later. One talked about how scared he felt, how alienated and disgusted.

The other was frightened about being randomly attacked by a group of strangers — there was no recourse, no avenue of reconciliation for whatever differences may have originated the animosity.

The two men still reflect on the incident with a degree of personal pain.

But I don't. When I walked past the shouting gang outside the arcade, I did walk faster than usual — because I wanted to get out of the cold. I heard the shouts, but I have been conditioned to ignore verbal abuse from strangers. Not because of any therapy training, but because I am a woman and a visible minority and I have a funny haircut and I wear funny clothes. And in downtown and suburban Edmonton the same kind of verbal abuse is leveled at women, visible minorities and people who go out of their way to break the typical Edmonton dress code. Often with the same voracity.

When the two male delegates approached me the day after the incident to give their analysis of what happened, I barely knew what they were talking about. I had forgotten the incident altogether. Just another round of verbal abuse I have sustained in my life.

The male delegates, who up till then had no idea what it's like to be verbally harassed, could not imagine how I could deal with such abuse on a regular basis.

They wondered if it was worse to live through the trauma and its effects for a week or to be desensitized to such abuse over a lifetime.

But I couldn't formulate an answer. I felt too indifferent.

Suzette C. Chan

Market economics ?

Labor Minister Les Young's recent statement that rural teachers should consider lowering their salary expectations must be a joke. Invoking fair play, he has suggested that Albertans ask themselves what their entitlement is relative to their neighbour.

This is a clear violation of the provincial labor code, which guarantees equal pay for the same job, and ignores the government's own policy of paying professionals, especially medical graduates, supplements for working in the rural regions of the province. Rural teachers should accept lower remuneration for performing the same job as their civic counterparts, while new doctors receive thousands of dollars to practice in the rural clinics. Just how often do the members of the Tory cabinet talk to each other — or do they believe that only medical professionals 'suffer' when deprived of their local specialists and resources.

Teachers have problems in rural districts that their urban fellows do not share. In Northern Alberta, the cost of living is higher; there is no large resource centers for audio-visual or library materials; and the workload is heavier due to the lack of these resources for lesson preparation.

Young's policy suggestion has another interesting dimension: if the crops fail this year, but are bountiful in 1986, do the teachers receive wages that mirror these fluctuations in the local economy?

John Algard



LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

More nukes

I'd like to reply to Charles LeRongetel's letter to "Louise," as per the December 6 issue of *The Gateway*. I make this response, unfortunately, without having read the letter or article to which Mr. LeRongetel is referring.

I would like to remind Mr. LeRongetel that in a democratic society such as ours, citizens have the right to express their opinions and concerns, acting either individually or in groups. The freedom of assembly and speech are two of the foundations of the democratic system. If you disagree with what others are saying with regard to the nuclear weapons issue, Mr. LeRongetel, then it would be far more productive on your part to present logical, effective counter-arguments than it is to rail at and insult those who are acting upon their democratic rights. Referring to these people as 'morons' will not help to convince them that they need to re-evaluate their stand on the issue. In fact, such name-calling devices are illustrative of the sadly immature behaviour emanating from both Washington and Moscow. We hear from the Soviets that the Americans are 'capitalist imperialists' and Reagan dubs the USSR 'The Evil Empire'. I believe that the cause at the bargaining table could sincerely be helped if both sides controlled their rhetorical impulses more effectively (assuming, of course, that the super-powers do in fact decide to return to the bargaining table).

Regarding your comparison between the current state of affairs between the superpowers and the appeasement of Germany prior to World War II: I don't believe it is very informative. There are simply

too many variables existing between the two parts of the comparison to make it anything other than simplistic. The biggest variable is the existence of nuclear arms themselves. The 1930's were a different era; for, as Einstein said of the nuclear age (and I paraphrase), "it has changed everything, save for man's own understanding." Who can blame Louise for speaking out, for voicing her fears and concern, when the human race stands with one foot poised over the abyss? I applaud her for it, and add my voice to hers.

You must remember, Mr. LeRongetel, that the Soviet Union helped to defeat Hitler, at a cost of untold suffering and at least 20 million dead—they are a nation that know, firsthand, the horrors of war; that France, England and the United States each have the capacity to destroy the Soviet Union in a nuclear attack; that the Soviet Union shares an immense border with China, a long-feared enemy; that the Warsaw Pact satellites are anything but willing partners; and that the Soviet Union is engaged in an unpopular war of attrition in Afghanistan. I would also like to refer you to a series of three articles on the current state of affairs of the Soviet economy and morale within the Soviet Union (*The Manchester Guardian Weekly*, vol. 131, issues 15-17, October 7-21, 1984). Given these conditions, it hardly seems likely that the Soviet Union is currently waiting for some drift toward 'appeasement' on the part of the Americans so that it can send its hungry armies pouring into Western Europe.

Whether you agree with my argument or not, Mr. LeRongetel, I hope that in the future you will more carefully consider your words before committing yourself to print.

Ron Fazio
Education

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It's another silly day here at the newsroom: Anna Borowiecki dropped by to say hello. Bill Doskocch repaired his typewriter and stayed for layout. Kent Cochrane checked the news lists and wishes his fans the best of the New Year. Don Teplysk and Warren Opheim blitzed the desk looking for vinyl treats. Greg Owens told tales of Christmas Past and proofed copy. Tim Hellum escaped to a darkroom and framed a reply to our Sunshine Person, Ken Lenz, who shall remain nameless. Meanwhile, Suzette and Gilbert deny they know any Tims or Marges in Saskatchewan, but apologize by making them honorary *Gateway* staffers. Or is that "apologize for"?