

# TO BAN OR NOT TO BAN

## HOW LITTLE WE KNOW

"Ban the Bomb" groups have a formidable task ahead of them if the result of a recent Gateway poll is any indication. On the assumption that university students tend to be better informed, Gateway Features interviewed fifty students to determine their stand on nuclear arms and disarmament. A general apathetic tendency was uncovered, a resignation to fate, a feeling that the forces governing the use and spread of nuclear weapons is out of the hands of the people.

Most students do not like to think of nuclear war; its consequences seem too colossal to fully comprehend. Consequently, the impression gained was a tendency to anesthetize the mind to the fact that the world powers now possess means to utterly destroy each other and blight future generations. An incidental impression gained was the feel-

ing that we lack a national identity, that we are so inextricably bound to our allies that we cannot express ourselves as a sovereign nation.

Most of the students polled desired nuclear disarmament, most did not anticipate nuclear warfare, feeling that it could be averted through diplomacy yet, paradoxically, 28 out of the 50 students polled were in

### CONFUSED THINKING?

favor of Canada receiving nuclear arms from the United States. Again, half of the students were in favor of the construction of public fallout shelters.

Students desire nuclear disarmament, yet they are not too concerned that Canada herself may acquire nuclear weapons in the near future. They do not anticipate nuclear war-

fare yet half of them would advocate the construction of public fallout shelters. Such is typical of the confused thinking on the issue of nuclear disarmament. Many students who advocated that Canada acquire nuclear weapons were not even aware of the type of weapons proposed.

Many students hold the "pet theory" that peace will be achieved as a result of a stalemate in the arms race wherein each opposing side has the power to utterly destroy the other yet neither dares exercise that power knowing that it would be suicidal to do so. This Dr. D. B. Scott of the Physics Department and a member of the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, has called "a rational argument in an irrational context". It would at best be an unstable and highly uncertain peace.

What is known of the "Ban the Bomb" groups? Very little

it would appear. Only a few students could name the campus group and little was known of groups on the national level. While the majority of the students did not question the aims of the groups, there was a tendency to label them "crank" or "crackpot"; minority groups to be ranked with the unrealistic mentalities of anarchists, anti-divisionists and adulators of the CBC.

### IRRATIONAL CONTEXT

"I don't pay much attention to that trash" was the comment of one particularly vocal student. It would seem that if "Ban the Bomb" groups are to have any measure of success, they must first de-anesthetize the public mind.

## FIFTH COLUMN

Next Monday (and it's surprisingly not a Friday) the 13th, the government of Canada will deliver itself of a single colossal twitch. More of a Totentanz than St. Vitus', it will be the first ever, large-scale, so-called Civil Defence exercise. While the armed forces rush intelligently about in small circles and the radio stations cause another "War of the World's" panic, you and I will be asked to keep out of the way and amuse ourselves by checking our digging-out-of-ruins kits.

Thanks to the intellectual giants who keep us poor northerners supplied with news, there are plenty of recent Significant Events to consider with Monday's fun and games. Not the least is the air defence exercise Skyshield II, which was held last month. Perhaps you remember hearing on the radio that all civilian planes had been grounded for twelve hours, so that they should not disturb the generals at their "War Games." (The frequent use of this term by the military is perhaps a horrible warning in itself.)

Only we never heard anything more afterwards. Not a solitary mention of what went on has been made to the general public from that day to this. Of course, it's probably rather difficult for a USAF press officer to tell the world that twenty million or seventy million or a hundred and twenty million of us died a rather nasty theoretical death a couple of weeks ago. It spoils the father-image of "This is your friendly neighborhood rocketeer."

Whatever the results of Skyshield II, we can rest assured that at least ten per cent of the bombers reached their targets—but then what's fifty or so high-yield hydrogen bombs all over North America. It's only a game.

Even the way they play his military game is staggering. There were no simulated rocket attacks, only bombers (according to the press release); and the air was cleared of all non-military aircraft, so the poor radar operators would not be too confused. If You-Know-Who chose to attack North America and did so without rockets and at a time when no civil aircraft were flying—well, no doubt the generals would be so pleased. Add to this NORAD's

pathetic reliance on the DEW line when we now know the Soviets have the ability to send little gifts the long day round, over Mexico, and one begins to wonder about our defenders' sanity.

The war psychology of the American press has ebbed for a spell, but our own traditions serve to blind us just as well. Tomorrow is Remembrance Day, when the flags will be fetched out of moth-balls, old men will parade in the Legion ranks, clergymen will wear their medals and lead the agonizing "We will remember them." In brief, we hopeful creatures will stretch ourselves to our full height and recall the bravery and the beauty of war.

We will recall the bravery and the beauty? Yes, of course, for we are scatter-brained and optimistic to a preposterous extent. Of war? Of the gallant assaults, of Churchill's inspiring oratory, of men's laying down their lives for their friends? Not on you life—should you have one tomorrow. We bow down before our little Lutyens cenotaphs, poppies in our lapels, in an effort to stop our ears against fifty million accusing voices.

In six years alone, fifty million people died. Fifty million men, women, schoolchildren and babies, they all died. Some were healthy and some sick; some were happy and some sad; some were at peace and some guilt-stricken; but they all died.

None of their deaths were very pleasant. They were roasted alive far above the earth; they were crushed to jelly in the depths of the sea; they felt the knife, the bullet, the bomb tearing their bodies, piercing their brains, releasing their blood into the thirsty dust. Millions died by starvation alone; and it takes time to starve to death, time to watch your parents and wives and children and friends grow to skeletons and die, one by one, and ten by ten and thousand by thousand. They died by disease, by all the elements of earth, air, water and fire, they died of grief alone. The only common factor is that they all died. And few of them died well or gloriously.

Perhaps, therefore, we should remember a little more and a little more often and a little more profoundly. And, remembering, let us look about us.

