

# editorial

## Media misguided

In the past few months the news media has been saturated with items dealing with the fate of south-east Asian refugees. The reading and viewing public has been offered a plethora of phrases with which to describe these unfortunates; "boat-people," "camp-people," "foot-people" and so on.

Headlines have been filled with concern over the "Asian Holocaust." As a reporter writing in a British publication suggests, the analogy of the holocaust may be a proper one, not simply because of the alleged oppression by the Vietnamese communists, but rather in light of the reaction of western nations to the situation in south-east Asia.

As the initial sensationalism of the media recedes, we are being told of the economic ills of the Vietnamese, arising out of forty years of conflict with foes ranging from the French and Americans to economic embargos, crop failures and floods. Many of the media, both left and right, have divided the issues along pro or con-Vietnamese lines. Very often the message that thousands of people are being forced to their deaths, whether it be on the high seas, in Thai refugee camps, or in famine-ridden Vietnam, is blurred by a cloud of emotion, politics and sensationalism.

The superficial nature with which a large portion of the media has chosen to deal with this subject is reflected in their willingness to confine the issues to largely predefined paths of analysis and exposition, in some cases going so far as to parrot government policy.

It is interesting that the recommendations of bodies such as the U.N. High Commission on Refugees or the U.S. Senate Committee chaired by Senator Edward Kennedy, have gone largely unreported. Both of these bodies conducted extensive investigations into the problems of Vietnam and south-east Asian refugees. Their recommendations stand in opposition to the actions of the organizations which commissioned them; the member nations of the U.N. and the U.S. government.

Contrary to the Kennedy Committee recommendations that various forms of aid to Vietnam be undertaken, President Carter refuses to grant any aid whatsoever. Meanwhile his administration continues to snub Vietnamese attempts at normalizing diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Similarly the U.N.'s refugee quotas, set by the High Commission continue to be ignored by all of the western nations. Britain and Canada have chosen to devise their own quota system, and both have suspended aid to Vietnam.

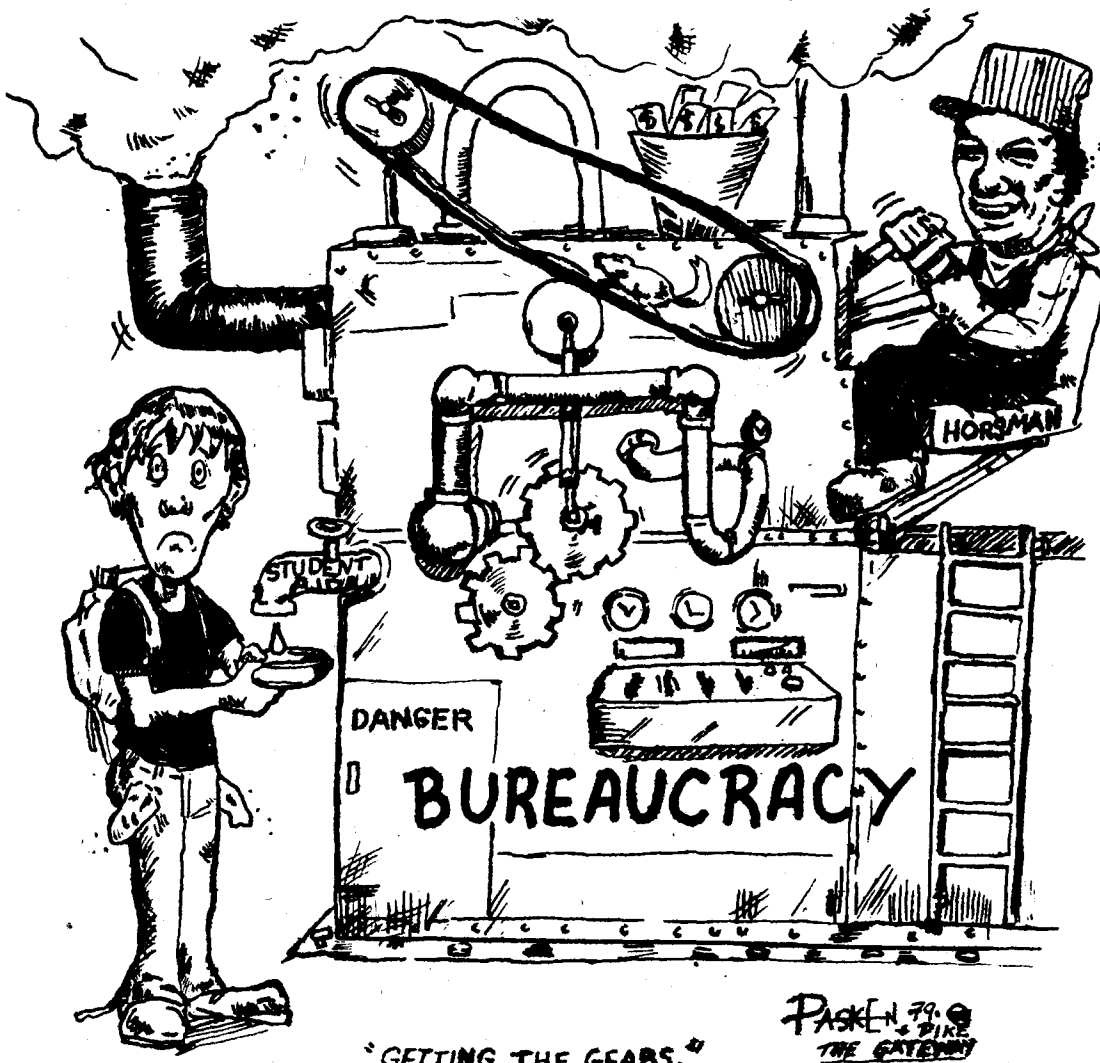
Mrs. Thatcher's humanitarian aspirations led her to plead the cause of the "boat-people" before the EEC, halting the shipment of much-needed food and medical supplies to Vietnam.

Excuses that are being offered by both the government and the media in defense of government inaction and the continuation of idiotic, even criminal policies are indeed reminiscent of the ones given in the thirties and forties regarding the plight of Jewish and East European refugees, if only in their shallowness.

It is tragic that the western nations, all of which profited directly or indirectly from the American war in Vietnam, a war which is central to an understanding of the flight of refugees as well as the plight of the Vietnamese, have chosen to forget this. One wonders whether it is rationality or vengeance which guides their policies.

The situation cannot improve until we arrive at a clear realization of our responsibilities; politically, for the support our government gave to the American war, and more importantly, morally, for indulging in inexcusable pathy, and ignoring the deaths of thousands, whether they be adrift on the South China Sea, or in Vinh province, Viet Nam.

Ken Daskewech



## Irish non-democracy

In response to Charles Forley's sermon on Northern Ireland: Charles, allow me to enlighten you on just a few points.

First of all, does the term "Gerrymandering" mean anything to you? (Webster's Dictionary defines Gerrymander as "to arrange or redistribute electoral districts to private advantage"). I presume you're ignorant of the word's meaning, because in your sectarian fervor to justify the presence of British troops in Ireland you neglected to mention that the (quote)

"democratically elected government" which you claim they are upholding, does not exist and in reality, never has.

Northern Ireland is under direct British rule and has been ever since the collapse of the infamous 'Stormont Government.' Read up on the history of the Stormont Government, and examine its record, Charles; it wrote the book on Gerrymandering in order to neutralize the native Catholic vote in Ulster for the past 50 years. Its legitimacy was sorely lacking, to say the least.

When you express your outrage at the killing of the "noted and respected" Lord Mountbatten, it makes me wonder if you regard his life as being worth more than that of the young Catholic working man (another innocent) who was murdered by Protestant vigilantes the next day. Was it? A life is a life, regardless.

In closing, Charles, I'll let you ponder your own words from a different angle; I quote: "The last thing Ireland needs is such people in foreign countries such as Canada coming up with instant solutions to its problems." From the viewpoint of the Irish, *England is a foreign country*, and one which has been trying to impose its solutions to the "Irish Question" for almost 900 years without success.

Cheerio, old boy

Bill Dolan  
Ed. 4

## Rust ain't the best

While I admire and respect Neil Macdonald's obsessive love for Neil Young, (see his *Rust Never Sleeps* review of September 18), I feel he has been unfair to Elvis Presley and to Neil Young himself.

Macdonald cites Presley as the perfect example of a once-great rocker turned "into a boring old fart." There is no denying that Presley faded away in the last ten years of his life, but if Macdonald wants boring old farts, look to Stephen Stills, Carly Simon and David Crosby. Elvis lived out his vision, Young and Macdonald live out their visions: let's leave it at that.

Macdonald also maintains that rock and roll is a young man's music. That is simply *Circus* magazine bullshit. If it's true, someone had better tell it to Pete Townshend, Ronnie Wood, Gregg Allman, Paul McCartney, Rick Danko, Paul Rodgers, Van Morrison, Bob Dylan and many others, all of whom are "old fogies" recording rock and roll of varying quality.

Macdonald's simplistic analysis of new wave is hardly accurate either. Macdonald

states that new wave is a menace for people "too old and dissipated to hack the pace." It's also a menace, Mr. Macdonald, to those who still have enough principles to refuse to spend money on a thousand pseudo-new wave groups who are really garage bands with appropriate haircuts and dress.

*Rust Never Sleeps* is a good album, but, as a friend of mine said, "it ain't *On the Beach*." Furthermore, "Pocohontas" ain't "Ohio," and I urge Mr. Macdonald to go back and listen to that material rather than further mis-interpreting *Rust Never Sleeps*.

Martin Lamble  
Agriculture 2

## Classic quotations

The quotation by Woody Allen which appeared in your "ears" Sept. 13 ("A classic is a book everyone wants to have read and no one wants to read") is a plagiarism of Mark Twain ("Classic: a book which people praise and don't read"). The original Twain is not only

written in clearer English, it also brings the hypocrisy of classics worship into sharp focus. How many Marxists have read *Das Kapital*? How many Jaycees have read *Wealth of Nations*?

Jens Andersen  
Science 2

## the Gateway

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If it happens on campus...it's news to us.

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