

## LETTERS

### Logan gets letter

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be a farce, this by no means implies that we are less keen. It was the Newman Society, after all, that has continued to oppose strippers in the SUB over the past three years, ever since the Engineering Society first tried to have this event. We do not feel that Student Council should be held bound by this referendum because it may not represent the true consensus of the student body and, in addition, because the opinions of those who do vote may not be based entirely on the facts of the matter (i.e. they may not be aware of the full implications). We hope this letter will clarify our position in this matter.

We would further appreciate it if you would continue to keep us apprised of developments in this regard. Our society continues to

be very concerned in the resolution of this issue.  
Sincerely,

David G.C. McCann  
Co-chairman

To the Editor:

Whatever I said, this is what I meant. Further, I am loathe to criticise Miss Roseveare's reporting as she probably quoted me correctly.

Thank you  
John Logan  
Dalhousie Student Union

### Swim reputation disillusioning

To the Editor,

As I perused through the Sports Section of the January 28th issue of the *Gazette*, I was pleased to see an account of the swim team's trip to Cuba. In reading through the article, though, I became quite surprised. One line in particular really shocked me. "As for Havana's nightlife, the swimmers' opinions were limited because their training kept them too tired to explore the evenings."

My reaction to this was to glance back and see if the article was on the Dal swim team. If this

were a true statement, the reputation built up over the years by the swim team would go down the drain.

On approaching members of the swim team, my assumptions proved right and the statement wrong. In speaking with Stuart McLennan, the training never seemed to slow him down. As a matter of fact, the only thing that kept him from seeing the show girls at the Tropicana was a lack of funds. As for Tom Scheibelhut, just ask him what it was like sleeping on the floor. The best

quote of the trip though, came from Shelley Platt, when asked whether it was worth it: "It sure was, I can finally drink rum straight."

So for you readers out there who felt bad that the swimmers spent all their hard-earned cash training and sleeping, do not worry. The swimmers drank their way into oblivion a number of times. Besides, even if all they did was train, it would have been to make up for their "training" in Barbados two years ago.

Sincerely yours,

Rusty James

P.S. The swimmers contend that they missed Brian Jessop getting "heaved" out of the pool this year.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

# The Geneva talks; the world waits expectantly

by David Matsch

When the Geneva dialogue on reducing nuclear arms in Europe began last November, it was marked by an element of forced diplomatic style. As the chief negotiator for the United States faced his Russian counterpart across the four-foot wide teak table he said, "I think perhaps they would like to see us shaking hands." Paul Nitze referred to the jostling, eager crowd of photographers who were select witnesses of history in the making. Yuli Kvitsinsky smiled and reached across the table to shake the American's hand. "Once more?" he then asked. "Yes, yes," came the enthusiastic reply.

So began the formidable task of two superpowers negotiating what, if any, nuclear weapons were to enter or leave the European theatre. The opposing delegations had agreed on few things: two handshakes, a location for their first close encounter and a complete press blackout.

What has been said and pursued before Geneva is not secret but obscure. It is a complicated matter of political mathematics and intrigue. And it

involves millions of Europeans, Americans, Russians and, strangely enough, Canadians. (A terrible fact of the matter: Canada lies between the two superpowers and believe it or not, Halifax is of strategic importance as a military base and harbour. In a nuclear war it would be a likely target.)

The U.S. contends that the Soviet Union has, since the mid-70's, gained a distinct nuclear advantage in Western Europe with the development of 250 or more new SS-20s missiles, sophisticated, mobile weapons which carry three warheads capable of hitting separate targets. As well, the Russians have 285 out-dated but powerful SS-4 and SS-5 missiles pointed at the West.

Heeding West German cries of foul, the U.S. and its NATO allies decided in 1979 to assemble 572 Pershing II and land-based Cruise missiles in West Germany, Italy, Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands starting in 1983. The American rationale behind their deployment was to regain strategic parity with the Soviets and to supplement the 'obsolete' nuclear force in Europe today. The new systems would be under

complete American control.

The Russians promptly accused NATO of being an international pact of irresponsible warmongers, intent upon nuclear havoc in Europe. The deployment of such weapons (especially the Cruise missile) "would disrupt the approximate balance of medium range nuclear systems" because it made possible "a surprise suppression of (our) strategic forces," the Soviet chief-of-staff said in June 1980.

Small and mobile, self-guided in flight and highly accurate, the Cruise missile is only 20 feet long and can be easily hidden in a commercial aircraft, an aircraft carrier, or even a truck. There would be no way of distinguishing, through satellite photographs, whether a missile was conventional or nuclear. And the flight speed of both the Pershing II and Cruise missiles is frightening. A Pershing II missile launched from West Germany could hit a selected target 1000 miles away in the Soviet Union within eight minutes. Russia had good reason to be alarmed: the new missiles are the best in the nuclear business.

The Russians argue that British and French nuclear arms must be considered in any negotiations, but the U.S. has thus far refused to listen, countering that it is the business of the French and English what weapons they choose to deploy. At Geneva, the talks are between Russians and Americans.

Too, the Russians regard the U.S. forward-base missiles (located in submarines off the European coast) as part and parcel to the nuclear game of numbers. The Americans do not, wishing to concentrate on the intermediate-range missiles based in Europe. According to the U.S., to begin talking about forward-base missiles would be to mire the two sides in a com-

plex discussion of the several types and qualities of weapons already deployed throughout the continent.

The propaganda intensified as both sides sought to win approval from the European community. In the beginning, Europeans appeared to sympathise with the Russians as they observed the growing ambivalence of the Reagan administration. For the new Americans, Europe was (almost) in the belly of the Communist beast.

Conflicting statements by the U.S. Defense Secretary, Casper Weinberger, the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, and the President himself did not help alleviate European anxieties about American intentions.

Weinberger announced that the U.S. would build a neutron warhead. The Secretary of State immediately noted that no decision had been made to deploy such a weapon. Haig announced that NATO had a contingency plan to fire a warning nuclear "shot across the bow", if needed, to deter a Soviet conventional attack in Europe. Weinberger denied any knowledge of such a policy. Finally, Reagan mused aloud to newspaper editors visiting him at the White House: "I could see where you could have the exchange of tactical weapons against troops in the field without bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the buttons."

Reagan had said in public what many Europeans had long suspected in private -- deployment of the U.S. missiles was an American manoeuvre to limit nuclear war to their continent. After the damage was done, the U.S. president attempted to placate his allies by saying, "a military threat to Western Europe equalled a threat to the U.S. itself...in a nuclear war, all mankind would lose."

As well, American stumbling in dark rhetoric only served to enhance the Russian perspective of the NATO decision: It was to regain a first-strike capability against the Soviet Union.

But at the end of October, Moscow in turn was embarrassed when one of its submarines ran aground in Swedish waters. The Swedes declared the incident "an unusually crude violation of Swedish neutrality" only to be further angered when tests they conducted registered a radioactive source coming from the sub. The credibility of Brezhnev's proposal of a "nuclear free zone" in Northern Europe was severely undermined.

Then on November 18, Reagan offered his 'zero option' plan to Brezhnev before a satellite audience of over 200 million people. The Americans would abandon plans to install their missiles if the Soviet Union would dismantle the SS-20s, SS-5s and SS-4s already situated in Europe.

In public, the Russians could only balk at the idea as ludicrous, but Reagan's initiative (after several large hints from Schmidt and others) had created a stalemate between the two powers that would remain intact until the Geneva talks began.

At Geneva, only lucid will and reason can bring about an arms reduction in Europe. If there is no arms reduction, the 80s and 90s will be remarkable for further polarizing American-Soviet relations and eroding the NATO pact. Social unrest in Western Europe will deepen and only be contained by more rigid, dogmatic government. World security and peace will become the absurd ideal. And millions of people throughout the world will bitterly remember the tactful handshakes in Geneva as symbols of a diplomatic game played without sincerity.

## The Impossible Dream?

Next Saturday (Feb. 13) the third workshop in the **Nuclear War and the Future** series, will take place. Entitled **Defence Against Nuclear Weapons: The Impossible Dream?**, it will consist of three sessions dealing with the proliferation of nuclear technology and incentives to acquire nuclear weapons, and non-proliferation efforts on both the political and technical levels. The sessions will be held from 9:30-10:45 a.m.; 11:00-12:15 p.m.; 1:30-3:00 p.m. They will be held in the MacMechan Auditorium in the Killam Library. Bibliographies and other aids are available on request.