



tom thompson

Why you should believe in the oil crisis

It is incredible that a majority of Americans believe that there is no energy crisis, that the whole thing is part of a conspiracy by the major oil firms and the American government. We are in the midst of a crisis. There are several reasons.

Increased oil consumption: Petroleum demand is higher than ever, averaging 21 million barrels a day, or 11 percent above 1973's level. Gasoline demand is up 4 percent over last year and nearly 12 percent over 1973. Demand for distillates (jet fuel, diesel) is up 5 percent over last year and 18 percent over 1973 (largely because of a colder-than-normal winter). Residuals (bunker oil for ships, asphalt, low-grade fuels) have increased just 0.3 percent over last year, but are up 16.8 percent from 1973.

We could escape from the trap of this crisis if we could only reduce our oil consumption — relatively easy in theory but difficult in practice. The United States, whose consumption sets the pattern for the world's oil supply/demand equation, now imports nearly half of its oil compared to about one-third in 1974. It is a depressing record. We are becoming more, not less, vulnerable to foreign sources of petroleum.

Price regulation: The next time you find yourself complaining about the high price of gasoline, consider this: It's been getting cheaper ever since the gas lines of five years ago.

That's right, in January, 1979, the price of gasoline in constant (uninflated) dollars was a nickel a gallon less than in January, 1974, according to the Department of Energy. So you've been doing

the smart thing: buying more of a commodity which has been getting cheaper.

Energy analysts use this example to illustrate gas-guzzling. The alternative is to increase prices to try to get the public to use less. The easiest way to increase gasoline prices is to decontrol the price of domestically produced oil. Government price controls have kept domestic oil well below the world price of \$14.50 a barrel. Deregulation not only would raise gas prices, it would be an incentive to boost domestic oil production. But by how much is very uncertain. And the is-

sue of deregulation is a veritable political briar patch.

Stockpiling: The government is far behind in its effort to stockpile as much as 500 million barrels of oil for embargo-caused shortages. Stockpiles now total 80 million barrels and are expected to reach 100 million by June. However, they were not scheduled for withdrawal until the early 1980s, and the government has not installed a pumping system to extract the oil from the salt caverns where it is stored.

Imports: Instead of reducing its

dependence on imported oil, the United States is more dependent upon it than ever. Crude-oil imports during a recent four-week period were a whopping 125 percent higher than for the same period in 1978. The Iranian oil shutoff came at a critical time, reducing American's oil supply by 5 to 10 percent just when demand was on the upswing.

Fuel economy: Despite foreign-car sales and Detroit's growing emphasis on 20-mile-a-gallon vehicles, fuel efficiency has increased little since the Arab embargo. Five years ago, automobiles averaged 13.49 miles a gallon. Through 1977, that average had increased only to 13.94 — less than half a mile to the gallon more.

Substitute fuels: Government and industry efforts to substitute other fuels for petroleum where possible have been only marginally successful. Using electricity as an example, petroleum-fueled generation increased between 1973 and 1978 by 15 percent. But the percentage would have been much higher if it were not for nuclear power (which tripled in generation) and coal, which increased by about 16 percent. Future expansion of nuclear generation is in doubt because of safety problems and permit delays, however. So the burden for supplanting petroleum may fall on coal, in which the United States is fairly rich. Environmental and air-quality problems remain as obstacles, however.

Conservation: Industry has been about the only sector to conserve energy dramatically since the Arab embargo. Meanwhile, America's insatiable energy appetite has been growing steadily. And now the pinch is here again.

theirs



yours

Anti-nuke 'sanity'

The response against nuclear power in the wake of the 3-Mile Island accident is by no means out of hysteria as argued by Michael Lacey's letter on May 7. It is the result of a growing awareness among the public of an issue that has heretofore remained obscure to them. It is a plea for sanity and honesty in developing our energy future.

To say that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has joined the "hysteria" is ludicrous. Anyone who has been paying attention to NRC actions in the past realizes that this agency is one of the strongest advocates of nuclear power. For them to make such a recommendation as shutting down eight plants (8 not just 1) proves that things are more serious than the media has been conveying. And now with the radiation figures double the original estimate it is clear that we need a completely independent investigation, one that is free of the participation of those with vested interests as those in the Committee recently appointed by Carter.

As to Mr. Lacey's argument that "nuclear power is only an infant technology" I wonder about his definition of infant. Nuclear energy has been under intense research for 25-30 years with a funding of billions of taxpayers' dollars. What have we gotten for our money? Nuclear energy appears to never be able to realize its "potential", whatever that may be.

I'm surprised that a senior in political science such as Mr. Lacey even made the statement that we could use nuclear power until the less dangerous alternatives can go on line. He has allowed a major oversight in his analysis, that once we put the billions of dollars and years of development into nuclear power production we will be locked into the technology. A switchover is extremely unlikely and furthermore it will be 50-100 years before the plant is paid for completely and net profit investors ever realize a net profit on their investment. Will they shut down the plants before then?

I agree with Mr. Lacey when he says that we need to "subject the (Nuclear) question to honest scrutiny. We need constructive criticism." And again quoting Mr. Lacey, "Let us criticize, by all means, but let us use our criticisms to build rather than to destroy."

We need to put our money into research and development of alternatives. We need to make the switch now!

John Jennings
Students for a Nuclear Free Future

Christ and draft

As I mused on the recent Armed Services Committee's approval of a "Defense bill that includes a provision to reinstate draft registration by 1981" (ODE, 5/11/79) I was constrained, as a concerned Chris-

tian, to address the evangelical community.

As evangelical believers we have often reversed the full gospel mandate to be "ministers of reconciliation," "salt" and "light" in the world, and "ambassadors for Christ." We have become mute and dangerously reticent concerning issues outside of our "religious" circles when, by Holy Commission, our "circle" of influence is the undivided totality of God's creation. We are hypocritically content with button and bumpersticker theology devoid of substance and application.

Where is the evangelical voice concerning the major social issues of registration, draft-reinstatement and war? — which unfortunately is the logical sequence. Do the pulpits speak? Are the "citizens of heaven" (Phil 3:20) fleeing the world their Master prayed they would not be taken out of? (John 17:15).

"Subjection" to the governing authorities (Rom. 13) does not suspend the inspection of their principles and intentions; nor does it extinguish a consistently Christian response to them. (Daniel 3,6; Acts 4:5-22, etc.). As Senator Mark Hatfield has said in his important book, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* "... our allegiance as Christians to any State is conditioned by our commitment to a higher authority, to God." (p. 113).

Is military conscription really needed? Can a Christian who

adheres to Christ's Sermon on the Mount contribute to its cause? Many of we evangelicals must be loosened from our fossilized tradition (Matt. 15) so as to realize that scores of true Christians have found it impossible to further the Kingdom through such action.

These issues are not easy — they are demanding, and until we evangelicals realize that the cost of discipleship requires an investment in Culture and not a flight from it or a captivity to it, that unheeded demand will haunt us.

It is our prayers and not our Christ that belongs in the inner closet. Christ is the true light that shines in the darkness. (John 1:5,9). Christ is public. The divine compassion and righteousness of his life, teaching, crucifixion and ascension were and are public. This compassion and righteousness of Christ becomes public now through us as we fully submit to his absolute Lordship.

The Great Commission doesn't end with baptism, nor can it be fulfilled in silence.

Douglas Groothuis
senior, philosophy

Boyd, Quacks

I have refrained from writing another statement on the Senior Quack issue until after I could meet with Howard Farling, author of the letter published on May 14. Further exchanges could serve no pur-

pose, I thought, except to exacerbate a situation that ill serves the University.

Now, having talked with Mr. Farling, I do wish to add what I hope will be a few final words. While I have no independent memory of calling the Quacks "obnoxious," Mr. Farling, whom I trust, assures me that he heard that attributed to me or spoken by me on a local television station. I agree with his judgement that such a designation is unbecoming and warrants the chiding he administered. He and I may have some disagreements, but I concede that he is right on that point.

With respect to next year, I repeat my earlier assurances that I will welcome a larger involvement of prospective graduates in the planning of commencement exercises. I shall work with ASUO President Scott Bassett to achieve that goal.

William Boyd
President

Limerick IV

I have not yet thrown in the towel,
but shall continue to growl
at the felonious offender
who concocted "notenda,"
a grammatical murder most foul.

C. Bennitt Pascal
Professor of Classics
Monday, May 21, 1979