

The Dalhousie GAZETTE

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LETTERS

...mawkish...

Sir: I should like to join Dr. Clairmonte in condemning the mawkish editorializing about the visit of the Russian students.

In the December issue of Motion Picture (Vol. 50, No. 599, P58), Debbie Reynolds reveals that 'America is synonymous with freedom of thought, speech and press.' Neither you, Sir, nor Miss Reynolds analyses the concept of freedom.

My reason, of course for this digression about Miss Reynolds is that she was making a statement very similar to those made by the Russian students, and by yourself, Sir, namely, that my country is the best one, and that all others fall lamentably short of it.

In the last issue of the *Gazette*, you pontificate about the necessity of charity towards foreigners. Of course you are in a special position; as an editor, you have a duty to print platitudes — but in future, please reconcile your platitudes with your policy.

William H. James.

Morality and the Wars

By HENRY ROPER



Mr. Roper is a senior honours student in the History Department here at Dalhousie. In view of the controversy that has arisen over the *Gazette* editorial on Armistice Day (it was even read in All Saints Cathedral), the editors who are quite divided among themselves, asked Mr. Roper to elaborate his views on the subject. His thesis is, substantially, that all that can be said about the war dead is that they are dead, as dead as the moral justification of their purpose.

In a brief article a general discussion of the morality of war must be omitted. My remarks and opinions are limited to World Wars I and II.

Can any country justify its part in these conflicts upon valid moral grounds? I think not. These wars were, in the final analysis, orgies of mass destruction about which nothing was worthwhile. Their only meaning was delusion, error, suffering and death.

...smug...

Sir: Referring to the article "Experience with Espresso" by Mr. Myers, we should like to criticize his smug approach to the subject. We feel that if this establishment is worthy of advertisement in the *Gazette*; a positive instead of detrimental approach should have been adopted by the writer.

Any college student who patronizes this establishment is well aware of the unique atmosphere created by the proprietor's exuberant personality. Rarely do you find, in Halifax, a place where intelligent conversation and good food are accompanied by a warmth and hospitality that allows no class distinction or social snobbery.

We would like to suggest that Mr. Myers give this place a second chance by returning with us for another cup of espresso—he might even learn to like it!

Elizabeth Bayne
Nancy Wetmore
Carol Cassidy
Anne Davies
Linda Crowe
—Alexandra Hall

Ed's Note:

Mr. Myers hastens to assure us that he agrees totally that the establishment referred to in his article has a warm and hospitable atmosphere and that the personality of its proprietor is more than friendly. He says also that he would jump at the opportunity to try espresso again in the company of five feminine escorts; under those conditions he is sure that he would become addicted to the beverage. He can be reached at 3-6298.

...intolerable...

Sir: My comment is on Betty Archibald's review of *Bell, Book and Candle*. I feel I should point out a few things which she missed or failed to understand. There is, firstly, no need for Ruth MacKenzie to prove Gillian is human after transformation. The mere fact that we are told she is human should suffice. Her big problem was the witch before transformation which, we can agree, she did admirably. I thought she was the worst reader at the trials, but she held me spell-bound throughout the public performance.

I disapprove strongly with Miss Archibald's sense of humor. I found Shep Henderson likeable but not amusing.

If Nicky's threats of revenge did not appear Miss Archibald must have seen a different play than I did. The fact that the threat did appear was the complication which set the scene for the entire second half of the play.

The play was not without faults. One fault was Dave Nicholson's intolerable act of turning his back on the audience. The other grave fault was the director's, who should have realized that in real life a show of love between man and woman is a private and personal matter. The final embrace at the end of the play, although it may have been desirable, was totally uncalled for in the preceding lines of the play

and poverty on the one hand, and a tainted, but rich, reputation on the other.

It is not hard to guess which course most Dalhousians would choose.

Pause that Refreshes

Gazette editors have been observing with considerable interest in the past two or three weeks the somewhat amazing usages of the Christmas season exercised by the commercial interests in this and other North American centers. We were, for example, somewhat surprised to see that Santa Claus delights in the "pause that refreshes," to hear advertisements for a local department store presented with the theme "O Little Town of Bethlehem," to listen as mass communication media urged children to ask Santa Claus for Article X for Christmas, and to watch finance companies provide loan-plans to get hard-up fathers over the holiday season.

It is, of course, common knowledge that public relations personnel and Madison Avenue advertisers have developed a complete system for creating "needs" and desires for the unsuspecting consumer. By their instigation, automobiles emerge with hidden phallic symbols, hardware articles are advertised as instruments for acquiring social status, and beautiful girls engagingly embrace signs bearing the trade-marks of large oil and gas distributors.

But there seems to be something even more disgusting about exploiting the generosity of individuals wishing to pay a kindness during the Christmas season, indeed, about driving the expense-levels of such "kindnesses" well above what most people can honestly afford. It is incredible that a local department store should encourage people to gather to sing Christmas Carols on its main floor every morning throughout the Christmas season. Were the motivations behind this custom purely in the interests of increasing the communal spirit of the holiday period, we would have no objection. But the objects are clearly not these: they are, rather, to attract the dollars of potential customers.

Similarly, it seems to us somewhat shocking that the wants and aspiration of children should be fanned in order to increase toy sales. Perhaps sales promotion men can defend many of their under-hand, psychological methods by pointing out that adults are expected to have minds of their own, but they can offer no such defense in the case of appeals to small boys and girls.

If the dollar has become the twentieth century's almighty god, then at no time do his disciples show their religious fervor so much as during the Christmas season.

Strippers Significant

The outcome of the trial of the three "exotic" dancers and the manager of the Garrick Theatre last week may prelude some interesting developments in the Halifax entertainment world within the very near future.

The trial followed the arrest of the trio of "strippers" on charges of participating in an immoral performance, and of the Garrick's manager for providing the theatre facilities for it. The arrest took place after the first two presentations of the dancing act on Monday of last week closely observed by several Halifax police constables.

The accused were released on five hundred dollars bail, and were permitted to go on with their show until the trial Friday, with the proviso that the show-girls modify their costumes. Accordingly somewhat less revealing dress was substituted for the "G-strings" they had worn earlier, and the show continued on a more subdued plain.

All four were acquitted of the charges on Friday, and the performances were renewed that evening on the basis of the more flimsy original attire.

The importance of the judgement, however, goes far beyond the mere satisfying of those who wished to leer at the Saturday performances in all their flaunting, earthy glory. For there have been relatively few cases of this nature in Canada, certainly in Nova Scotia, with the result that this particular ruling, despite its low-court origin, entertains considerable importance as a precedent. Now that the first public strip-tease burlesque in Halifax has been officially recognized as legal by the judiciary, other entertainment agents will be greatly tempted to dip into what is everywhere a highly lucrative field.

There remains the possibility, too, that the Royal Commission presently investigating Nova Scotian liquor laws will produce a report leading to a relaxation of restrictions on the distribution of alcohol. If the government, in consequence, eventually decides to permit the establishment of cocktail bars, liquor lounges, "wine and dance" clubs, and so forth, Halifax will have the makings of a coastal night-club center fit to rival the fame, or notoriety, of Montreal and Miami.

Such a move would, of course, give a tremendous boost to the province's pathetic, yet vital, tourist trade. At the same time there is no question that it would lead to a definite change in the moral characteristics of the city's entertainment facilities.

To put it bluntly Nova Scotians are faced with making the decision between morality

Historians generally agree that World War I was not instigated by the malicious intentions of one particular power. It was, rather, the result of the mistrust, stupidity and pride of all European countries in combination with other factors that for many years had been pushing Europe toward war. The war having begun, each government set out to convince its citizens that their country was innocent. Generally speaking human beings are gullible, and the propaganda of every country distorted the story to give their claims the ring of plausibility.

In Britain this idea of innocence became attached to a highly emotional form of idealism. People not only felt they were defending themselves against an aggressor, but that they were the Knights of Freedom and Democracy, slaying the dragons of ignorance and barbarism. The propagandists had outdone themselves, for this nonsensical but potent combination of patriotism and idealism inflamed the people to a fever pitch of hate.

It is rather ironic to think how successfully the various governments, none of whom wanted the war, not only sent millions to their deaths, but sent them convinced that they were dying for something worthwhile. Everybody thought that Flanders Fields were heroic battlegrounds of the armies of justice, a belief well perpetuated by John McRae's poem.

In reality they were indescribable and pointless bloodbaths presided over by ambitious, and sometimes ignorant, generals. Through the errors and miscalculations of these so-called leaders, thousands upon thousands were killed.

What about World War II? There is no doubt that Hitler had to be eradicated. But how much were we, the victors of World War I, responsible for the unfortunate happenings of the twenties and thirties? Immediately following the war the allied governments were forced by their peoples, whose hate could not be as easily allayed as aroused, to "squeeze the lemon 'till the pips squeak." Consequently at Versailles the allies were most vindictive and grasping.

Germany underwent many hardships during the twenties, and in 1933 turned in desperation to Hitler. In view of our actions at this time, and our conduct during World War II (Hiroshima, the fire-bombing of Tokyo, "saturation bombing") it seems presumptuous for us to label ourselves just, or the defenders of the right.

It is time we faced the truth of these wars and stopped deluding ourselves with idealistic platitudes. Reality is harder for us to stomach, but it does greater service to the dead than a sugar-coating of sentiment. On Remembrance Day, let us not venerate or honour our casualties, but pity all the fallen, Germans, Jews, Italians, Russians, Japanese, everybody. It was all abused, and they the victims.

and should never have been enacted in the centre of the stage.

There are also a few technical errors in the review which may, however, have been the fault of the printer, so I will refrain from pointing them out.

Ralph D. Ferguson.