

# you were saying . . .

## The Day After

To the Editor:

My letter is mostly in response to the feeling of inevitability I felt after watching *The Day After*. Nuclear war is not inevitable! World War III is not inevitable. We must not allow ourselves to believe it thus allowing it to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. One should believe that *disarmament* is possible. We, the people who believe in a right to life, which nuclear weapons and military institutions around the world threaten, do make a difference. If we did not, then not so many people would be trying to discredit us. We have the ability and the power to change this world if we believe we can; just like the "Little Engine that said it could," if you put it in simple terms.

The war mentality of the world must be changed.

Peace and love and good will to all peoples and life and beauty and children are not dirty words.

If there is a World War III everyone will be the "baby killers" because we didn't work hard enough to change the world's present system which is bent on destroying itself.

Ivor MacKay  
a non-communist believer in life

## Indulgence

To the editor,

I like writing letters to the paper. It makes me feel good to see my own words in typeset. It's so much better looking than my handwriting. More importantly I get the satisfaction of knowing that a whole lot of people are reading my ideas. Why in the few minutes that it takes me to dash off a bit of anti-imperialist, anti-warmonger invective I can accomplish more good for the people than in a whole month of peddling communist newspapers. And what's more, they'll publish anything I write, which is another big advantage of letter writing over paper pushing. I'd really like to thank the staff of the Gazette for all of their help with the cause.

thankfully, Charles Slurr.

Stephen Conrad

## The Conflict

To the Editor:

I wish to take issue with two points raised by Glen Johnson in his letter of Nov. 10.

Firstly, Mr. Johnson asserts that it is now established that a foetus is a human being. This conclusion is flawed by its premise that "human-ness" is capable of scientific proof. Undoubtedly society agrees that the "bundle" of characteristics present in a baby after birth constitutes a human being. Equally obvious is that one of those common characteristics is birth itself. Whether or not society chooses to accept any different or lesser bundle as "human" is purely a matter of choice, not science. As scientific measuring devices become more and more sophisticated, of course scientists will become more capable of identifying characteristics in a foetus which are also present in an actually born baby - albeit, in the case of the foetus, in a greatly reduced or inferior form. I fail to see how this sort of inquiry can conclusively resolve the question of whether we collectively choose to regard birth itself as a critical distinctive feature of a live human being.

Secondly, absolutely nothing (except sensationalism) turns on whether or not a foetus is defined as human. Mr. Johnson would have us believe that it ought to conclude the argument. Accepting, for the purpose of discussion, his view that a foetus is human, and accepting for the same purpose his characterization of an unwanted pregnancy as an "inconvenience", surely we have to recognize that society often condones "killing for convenience". We do not prohibit driving, for example, even though we know that the inevitable consequence is the death of thousands of innocent people each year -- all for a convenience that we were quite able to do without until recently. That society chooses to permit driving is just one illustration of the fact that we constantly balance moral values against practical values. There are no moral absolutes.

I conclude by observing that if Mr. Johnson is ever going to come to grips with the abortion issue, he will have to face the reality that people have reasonable grounds for distinguishing between the "human-ness" of an actually born baby and that of a sperm attached to an egg; he will have to recognize that an unwanted pregnancy cannot be so easily dismissed as a mere trifling inconvenience; he will have to acknowledge that society balances values; above all, he will have to stop looking for easy answers in scientific journals and his stockpile of simplistic moral absolutes.

P. Rogers

## On Herbicides

To the Editor:

In the November 17th edition of the Gazette an "objective" opinion was put forth recommending the use of herbicides in Nova Scotia's forests. The writer went on to say that the risk to the general public would be negligible and not to worry because government agencies would oversee the program.

This future member of the medical profession, obtained this "objective" viewpoint while working for the New Brunswick government. It is interesting to note that since 1948, this same government has conducted aerial spraying. Only in the last few years have they seen fit to monitor their spray program.

While this writer argues that there are no dangerous effects; why then have a number of provinces banned the chemicals that Nova Scotia plans to use? The chemicals themselves are no longer manufactured, and users would have to obtain these from stockpiles which chemical companies have kept.

The scientific literature is not at all clear as to the effects of these chemicals on humans, as well as on the forest ecosystems.

The Nova Scotia government has recently established a Royal Commission on Forestry and it is not at all clear as to the value of herbicides in forest management. At present Nova Scotia has had little or no reforestation. The pulp companies are not independently owned as the writer went on to say. Rather they are large multinational corporations which have played scant attention to any form of forest management. Clear cutting is used because it is the cheapest method in the short-term. As more and more of the province is becoming devoid of trees, the industry hollers for the use of herbicides to save the industry. Reforestation or manual pruning would employ large numbers of people during the summer months (work for students). This would provide much needed jobs in a province, while in some countries unemployment runs at over fifty percent. It does seem funny that the people who are most effected by the forest industry are the people who are making the most noise about not using herbicides.

The writer also mentioned the lack of responsible reporting by the media. This issue has attracted a great deal of press coverage in Europe and south of the border. They have associated the herbicides with Agent Orange. Tourism is one of the largest employers in the province. Will people still want to come to Nova Scotia when they know we are spraying our forests with chemicals?

At present we still have a choice, I don't think many people would want to take a tour on the Dioxin Trail. That is my "objective" view on the subject.

Joe Spears  
Law II

## Progress ?

Alas—the pinball machine has seen her day. The already accepted invasion of video games as the mainstream of parlour amusement sadly darkens the future of a "good game of pinball". Since the breakaway success of PAC-MAN, ASTEROIDS and all their relatives, PENGU, FROGGER, EYES, etc., the arcade is now ruled by King Video and his army of supplants, JUNGLE BOY, PHEONIX, and HAMBURGER.

The computer age is upon us. The video game is the modern amusement, combining contemporary ingenuity and contemporary technology. In this new world one can battle star systems, demons, or the ingredients of a hamburger, for one quarter. The relentless pro-

grams in these games can lead to hours of perilous battles with ketchup, lettuce, or salt and pepper, dependent upon one's skill. There is no denying the harmless fun these computers prostitute. Note: It could take many quarters to master the battle of these satanic sesame seeds!

Of course, with this modern world of video comes the game that offers no reward. I have yet to play a video game that offers the retribution of a credit. Sometimes there is the small consolation of writing three initials in the winners circle but that will likely be erased by the ten-year-old waiting to play.

A pinball machine offers rewards beyond the ecstatic pleasure of plummeting sesame seeds to their death. Free games, free balls, extra balls in play, and the ever present "match" system are still exciting enticements to play and while playing. Added delight to a game that gambles is the pleasure of playing a three-dimensional panel. The two-dimensional video screen plays automatically compared to the more challenging demands of pinball's manual labour. Speed control, ball placement, planned rebounds and the ability to give the machine a good twist or shove are much more involving rewards than the crazed knob-twisting or button-smashing of video.

Thus, in this modern world, the late-great pinball machine is in a state of disrepair. She no longer sits in the arcade window but bides her time in dark corners. Her bumpers need new rubber and some of her markers are missing. A "new" game refers to one we haven't played before, and not one fresh from the factory. Yet, new video games infiltrate our surroundings daily. There's one at the door of Dominion, another where the Coke machine stood or a miniature one on the coffee table substituting for Monopoly.

Farewell to the Queen of the arcade—all hail triumphant King Video.

Bill Barratt

## Canada's Prince of Peace

To the editor,

Once again the drama is being staged, the "prince of peace" has returned from his "pilgrimage" to the NATO capitals, and a "debate" is being orchestrated on his "proposals". According to the Globe and Mail of November 12, one major element is to present Trudeau and the Liberals as a "moderate" voice, while Mulroney and the Conservatives are put on the "right" and as warmongers.

In 1979 all the problems were blamed on Trudeau and nine months later the drama was re-enacted, with the actors reversing their roles. The budget of Crosby, declared "man of the year" by "Financial Post", was implemented, generally speaking, by Trudeau the Trudeau Liberals and the 18¢ surcharge on gas is a distant memory. In the foreign policy, the same: after the overthrow of the Shaw Pahlavi regime and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, all the parties, including Broadbent, declared the "vital interests" of Canada to be affected—in the Persian Gulf—while Trudeau presented himself as the voice of "detente" between superpowers. But now the Canadian navy carries out regular exercises in the Tasmanian Sea. Behind these programmes, whether "right", "centre" or "left", stand the oil barons, the bankers, the corporations of the war industry, the military-industrial-academic complex, etc.

These and other facts show the necessity to still further develop the large-scale movement against the war preparations and the danger of war, to stay the hand of the warmongers and prevent them from embroiling the Canadian people in a catastrophic imperialist war. They show the necessity to get Canada out of NATO and NORAD and for the country to take a stand of active neutrality and vigorously oppose the superpowers and their war preparations. Not faith in the warmongers but faith in the people and their capacity to halt the criminal plans of the merchants of death through their own efforts, strength, unity and self-sacrificing struggle—such must be the orientation of the movement to disarm the warmongers and bring genuine and lasting peace.

Charles Spurr