

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

MORE ON ABORTION

A reply to the two anti-abortion letters recently published in *Excalibur*: Mario Capriani, "Pro-Abortions Fail to Bear Responsibilities of Sex Act," January 6, 1983, and Miss Rebecca Galanis, "It's Murder," January 13, 1983.

I would like to approach the question of abortion from a different angle than that taken by Mr. Capriani and Miss Galanis. Rather than "let the bomb drop" or brand "anyone partaking in an abortion" as a murderer, I feel we must use the opportunity that the movement to open a Morgentaler-style abortion clinic in Toronto has presented us with, to reexamine the abortion process in our hospitals, which is the root of the problem.

The therapeutic abortion committee system which some of our hospitals are operating under has clearly not been able to respond adequately to the needs of a large sector of society and, thus, the rise of the abortion clinic issue. In my

student co-op house, I have lived cooperatively with several women who have worked at an Ontario Ministry of Health "Birth Control and Venereal Disease Information Trailer" in various points around the city. The mandate of the BC and VD clinic, as it is known, is to provide an information centre for men and women on venereal disease, birth control and pregnancy. In the case of a pregnancy, the workers at the clinic are mandated to counsel women on abortion or carrying the pregnancy to birth. I have had discussions with them on both accounts, and they go through situations that many of us would not want to take on. For instance, I have been told of cases of pregnant women ready to commit suicide upon learning that they are pregnant, and many cases of both young and mature women caught up in the red tape of the system.

Often the delay of the therapeutic abortion committee in hospitals (which are dwindling in numbers) causes complications in the pregnancy. A simple vacuum suction

abortion can be conducted up to 12 weeks of pregnancy. The process is safe and results in little emotional complications for the woman. After 12 weeks a saline instillation is the only recourse, but for medical reasons can only be performed after 16 weeks of pregnancy. Often the delay in the decision of the committee causes the latter to be the only option, which is potentially dangerous to the women and often results in emotional complications.

In effect the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) is saying that this delay should not take place, and a woman has the right to decide on an abortion or not, and should not have to come before a review committee to state her case.

On the issue of contraceptives and abortion, it must be stated (as it has on many occasions) that contraceptives *do not always work*. The most careful person (or couple) of any age is not immune from technical failure.

In summary, may I say that I am not pro-abortion, but pro-choice, and I feel that society through its

hospitals must provide women with the right to govern their own bodies. There have been and will be abuses of the system. This is unfortunate, but should in no manner negate the important underlying principles at stake. Further, may I sum up my argument by pointing to a saying that for myself provides a guiding principle, and that is, "every child a wanted child."

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ABORT MRS. STEIN

I would appreciate the opportunity to respond to Mrs. Gaye Stein's comments in a January 13 letter to the editor.

You asked why the anti-abortionists don't expend their energy on lobbying for back-up services to assist women who are having difficulty caring for their children. At present, Mrs. Stein, an effort such as that would have to involve the spending of money. Government agencies and family

planning services do not have that kind of money. It's presently being spent on Dr. Henry Morgentaler and his band of selective breeders. This then leaves us back with debating about the existence of a soul in a two-inch fetus. If, as the pro-choice women believe, the existence and size of a soul is directly proportional to the size of a person, then it surprises me at all that a person of your stature found it physically possible to bear two children. As far as we know, Mrs. Stein, the soul may exist at the moment of conception. With that possibility in mind, we give the fetus the rights of any other human to live. Despite the rights of the women to do with her body as she sees fit, the Charter of Rights states, "the rights of an individual cease when they infringe upon the rights of another individual." By this rationalization, abortion can clearly be seen as murder. However you rationalize that the child is being saved a miserable life with an irresponsible parent, it's sad, but that does happen. If you look further into this situation you'll find that for the most part, these unfortunate children develop into functional, willful people with absolutely no desire to cease living. I agree that there are also those who do not wish to live, who turn out to be very disappointed in life. If it cannot be determined or decided who will turn out with a positive or negative outlook on life until years after birth, then how can

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