

In defence of Xaviera Hollander

We understand that a group of ministers in this area - 18 in all - object to our invitation to Xaviera Hollander. Their letter is carried on the Comments page, just opposite this one.

Let us examine their letter for a moment: first, Miss Hollander's books do *not* glorify drug taking. Their statement that her books also glorify "immorality" can also be questioned. What, after all, is immoral, and who is to decide that?

They state that "The Happy Hooker" has been banned in Toronto and Saint John. When they were banned in Toronto, a member of the Ontario legislature began selling the books from his office. He stated publicly many times he didn't do it because of any great affection for Miss Hollander, but rather out of disgust at the limitation of free speech imposed by the police.

To our knowledge, the book has not been banned in Saint John. At any rate, it's on sale there now.

The ministers further state that "drugs and immorality" are a constant threat to city and university. We've already said immorality depends on your point of view. We would however agree partially with the statement that drugs are a threat.

Some drugs, yes. The drug used once in one of Miss Hollander's three books was hashish, a drug that has so far proven to be no more dangerous than alcohol.

The Brunswickan and the student council are accused of a "crass lack of conscience" in inviting Miss Hollander to UNB. They also say we are "impressionable youth."

May we remind you that by law, people 19 and over are now adults. Most students here fall into that category. And we're hardly "impressionable youth."

We are quite capable of forming our own opinions on any subject. We've heard the ministers' side in our churches for years. Now we have taken it upon ourselves to hear Miss Hollander's view.

Last Christmas when US General William Westmoreland visited this campus, some people wanted to stop his speech because it promoted war. We stated at that time that we weren't likely to become war-mongering students after one look at the General.

Likewise, we are not so stupid as to become sex-crazy drug addicts by hearing Miss Hollander speak.

We must point out that both the General and Miss Hollander have the right to speak where they choose. It's also interesting to note that these same ministers did not protest Westmoreland's visit, even in light of the number of deaths he is responsible for. Would the ministers have us believe sex is worse than murder?

And yes, gentlemen of the cloth, UNB is an institution of higher learning. What, may we ask, could be more noble than learning about all aspects of life? Sex, war, and any number of other topics should be the rule here, rather than the exception. If we can't discuss things as we choose, why are we here? To go out into the world and take our "place" in society? Bullshit.

The ministers call the invitation "liberty turned license." In essence, what they are saying then is this: Do whatever you like - be a free person in all your thoughts, words, and deeds - but don't ever exceed the boundaries we have laid down for you.

Doesn't that sound an awful lot like restriction of the freedom of speech and assembly?

Incidentally, Miss Hollander

stressed many times she would never recommend prostitution to anyone. As she so aptly pointed out, why not give ex-prostitutes the same chance we give ex-alcoholics and ex-convicts?

Instead of "promoting prostitution" as the ministers would have us believe, she emphasized cleanliness and care to avoid disease. She did promote "soul relationships" - much to the dismay of the ministers, we must assume. She spoke with an openness and wit that entertained her audience well.

By no means did she discourage pre-marital sex. As a matter of fact, she told us to have fun. But respect for the other, keen attention to contraception and cleanliness were very important, she said.

The ministers said they would like something better than "prostitution and drugs" for "our young people". Two points gentlemen: when do we "young people" finally get to act on our own? And finally, please note that Miss Hollander's lecture drew 1600 people. Have your congregations ever exceeded that amount?



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