

Pro-choice or no choice?

by Del Atwood

The execution and subsequent concealment of the para-military spraying operation conducted in New Brunswick in 1967, whereby considerable amounts of the highly-toxic 'Agent Orange' were discharged near populated areas, were certainly matters of indubitable impropriety of which the public had a right to be informed. I was very pleased last week to see the *Gazette's* editorial column address itself to the issues in such a balanced manner.

However, most of that pleasure was lost when, a bare six pages later, I cast my eyes upon Pina DiPierro's article on

The first: "...AIRS is composed of fifteen women... They and the other eleven pro-choice women feel that any information given will help the individual make a wiser decision. Information given includes birth control, **post-abortion information, lists of reliable clinics and the names of sympathetic doctors.**" (Emphasis mine.)

Pro-choice women, eh? Some choice. If the only assistance AIRS can provide is post-abortion counselling, and the names of discreet practitioners and clinics, then the choice is certainly very limited indeed — almost non-existent.

having to resort to so-called 'therapeutic' abortions. For with gynecological medicine at the advanced state of development it is today, no woman need fear any sort of grave physiological impairment in consequence of child-birth — provided, of course, that proper medical attention (which is readily available) is obtained. As to mental health, there are numerous government and private child-welfare agencies that are ready, willing, and able to find good, sound home-situations for children of reluctant and desperate parents. Another consideration which ought to be taken into account here is the well-established

thing for her, she should not be denied one (sic)."

This passage really requires little comment, as it is clearly anomalous. "When a woman wants an abortion, she should get it." That is the long-and-short of what is being proposed — and what a ridiculous proposition it is, too. For what branch of modern medicine operates under such a rule that you get what you want? Does the cardiologist conduct an arterial by-pass just because someone says, "I want it"? Would an osteologist go about setting the radius of an individual who had bruised his arm and complained that it was broken simply because it hurt? To both questions, the obvious answer is "of course not!" There is no form of modern medical treatment — at least none of which I am aware — that is performed on the basis of the subjective judgment of the patient. Clinical operations are always preceded by expert diagnostic evaluation; so it is with every field of medicine today. And there is no physician who, being mindful of his practitioner's oath and his professional duties, would ever prescribe therapy involving the direct, deliberate, and conscious taking of a human life.

Finally, and this takes us full circle, back to the beginning of the article:

"The Abortion, Information and Referral Service gives information to women who must decide whether or not to **terminate a pregnancy.**" (Again, the emphasis is mine.)

To terminate a pregnancy.

Doesn't really sound that bad, does it? But strip away the words, and all that is left is the distressing reality of taking human life. Clothe it in any kind of verbal disguise you like ('pre-natal interruption', or whatever is most palatable): the heinous act remains — stark, brutal, and terrifying.

We, all of us, are very prompt to stand up and declare that the human life is of immeasurable value. We say this in the face of war and oppression; and in the face of dangerous experimentation, when the safety of the public is jeopardised (take for example, the case of the Agent Orange project). Yet, where do we stand on abortion? When the subject is the natural environment — the forests, the birds, the animals — our positions are firm; but when it comes to human nature, what are our positions? Still firm?

We tend to forget, in the face of hard times, when there are bills to pay and peer pressures to contend with, that our humanity — and our ability to extend that humanity — is a great gift; in fact, it was God's greatest gift. The hard times of our age are only transitory; soon, they will pass to be replaced, of course, by other difficulties. However, humanity is not of the same nature. If it is taken away, it cannot be restored.

I pray that, in the future, we might all come to recognise the great gift we possess by virtue of our very nature, and that we might come to cherish this gift with intelligence and love.

COMMENTARY

the Abortion Information Referral Service.

The contrast between Ms. DiPierro's feature and the Agent-Orange editorial is obvious: the latter addresses itself to questions of public welfare and individual rights; the former throws these considerations to the four winds, while it deftly, but only speciously, attempts to legitimise its cause by imprecating such hollow euphemisms as 'pro-choice' and 'women's rights'.

What do these words mean? So as not to be accused of taking things out of context, I propose to analyse selected passages of the DiPierro article, in **extractu.**

As to whether the information given by AIRS will help the individual make wiser decisions, I should like to know what sort of expertise the Service possesses or purports to possess; certainly none was disclosed in the DiPierro article.

Next:

"What are AIRS beliefs on obtaining abortion? The first is that women have rights. This includes the right to choose what is best for her health and well-being."

First of all: women **do** have rights, rights to life and to peace of mind. And I can say with substantial certainty that these rights can be easily maintained without women

fact that initially-unwanted children are frequently sought out by and returned to the custody of their natural parents once familial disruptions are resolved. It is plain, then, that, far from a solution, an abortion could easily lead to a lifetime of regret.

And let us never forget the rights of the unborn child: a sentient and fully-responsive human person — completely alive, yet totally mute and defenceless. His rights, too, must be observed and protected.

Again:

"According to the AIRS representative a woman feels that an abortion would be the best

Not enough student coverage by Gazette

By Terry Nehiley — Arts

I wish to address the problem of apathy at Dalhousie. No, not student apathy, but apathy of the *Gazette*.

By apathy I mean that the *Gazette* seems to believe that any student activity, academic or otherwise, deserves only minimal coverage if it receives any coverage at all. Apart from the functionally brief reports on council meetings, and lesser occurrences (destruction of student facilities by students, the effects on students by government's reaction to MPHEC recommendations, why the SUB lost approximately \$14,000 in programming, etc., etc.) there is not reporting on the student population at Dal.

Is not the *Gazette* a student newspaper? Do we not, by our student fees, pay \$20,000 a year to cover its deficit. We as students by allowing this money to be spent on a student paper, are voicing our desire to have this service provided. Yet are we as students, actually receiving any service from the *Gazette*?

Every week the *Gazette* sports a newsworthy cause or two (be it uranium, agent orange, nuclear proliferation etc.) to its readers (the students). Yet

the vast majority of students don't even read these articles and those that do are rarely moved to action or reaction. Does the *Gazette* attempt to find out why this happens? No. The *Gazette* simply chalks it up to student apathy and retreats to its third floor bastion in the SUB to console one another by saying, "it was still a damned good piece, even if only six people read it."

No this is not a service to students, it is a disservice. By blaming reader apathy, the *Gazette* has only addressed a symptom of the problem. The problem here is the *Gazette* is talking *at* their student reader. Shouldn't you be talking *to* your readers? The news may not have reached your ivory tower but most students are intelligent. Yes, I know it's a harsh reality but there it is. So when the *Gazette* persists in their patronizing, one way communication, they are insulting their readers intelligence. Should you not, as a student newspaper, be talking to your readers?

I am not saying the *Gazette* shouldn't be a forum for pressing social issues. It is not the content that I disagree with but the manner in which the articles are presented.

Even though we are in our own little insular environment at Dalhousie it should be an environment that is conducive to student dialogue, and if you took the trouble *Gazette*, you would realize that this dialogue is taking place.

Where are your articles on the noontime lecture series at the Economics Department; where are your articles on visiting lecturers at the African Studies Department; where are your articles on the lecture series taking place at the Killam? These are events which allow students to not only gain knowledge on world events but also allows them an input.

What is worse, where are your articles on African night, the upcoming International Night, the Commerce Week (just because it's one of the largest faculties, doesn't make it unimportant), Pharmacy Week, Euphoria, the Winter Carnival (which is involving 18 student societies and faculties and approximately 6,000 students)?

For that matter, do student activities really matter to you? Don't you think that interaction among students is worthy of your talents. Isn't it important that the totally diverse group of people that make up the stu-

dent population at Dal, learn to co-exist before they can worry or even comprehend the problems of the world. Shouldn't students of different socio-economic backgrounds experience one another and grow from this experience. Shouldn't those students of different racial and eth-



(I call 'em as I see 'em)

nic backgrounds be sharing their respective heritages. Shouldn't we as Canadian students be imparting to those foreign students, a taste of what it is to be a Canadian and in return shouldn't we be gaining a feel for these other nationalities.

A University is a place for

learning. Not exclusively book learning, but of learning from our fellow students, no, learning from our fellow man.

What's more, what is wrong if some of this social interaction takes place under pleasant circumstance. Insight and understanding need not always be coated by guilt and shame (as you seem to believe). Anything that can increase man's spirit can only be a positive experience.

So why isn't the *Gazette* doing something to foster the fellowship of man among its readers? Why aren't you promoting or even reporting those events that students may participate in and receive a benefit from. Aren't you always preaching understanding and compassion for our fellow man. There isn't a more perfect place for it to begin happening than at a University with such a diverse population as ours.

Leave the pulpit *Gazette* and join your fellow students in their daily reality. Let them know what's going on. Sometimes you are on the right track but always you are in the wrong ball park. Give the students of Dalhousie a paper that serves a better purpose than clogging toilets in the S.U.B.