



Playing by the rules

MORGENTALER HAS LEFT, the protestors have come and gone, but the debate on abortion lingers on.

And that, in itself, is great. Debate is the means by which decisions are reached in a democratic society such as ours.

There's one thing we find disturbing, however. A number of people on the pro-life side of the debate have taken *The Gazette* to task for what they consider biased, pro-choice coverage of Morgentaler's visit.

So let's lay it on the line. We at *The Gazette* are biased. Without a doubt *The Gazette* is in favour of women's freedom of choice on the abortion issue. We believe women will not truly be free until they have the right to control their reproductive function through safe, effective contraception and, when necessary, through access to medical abortion facilities.

To have said anything different during this debate would have been, we feel, the height of hypocrisy.

Although we have not been "objective," we feel that we have been fair. Even though we haven't agreed with them, we have, with one exception, published every pro-life commentary and letter that has come into the office. Last week alone we devoted nearly a half page to letters on the abortion debate.

So we feel, with some justification, that we have lived up to our mandate to provide a forum for public discussion.

Even in small ways we have tried to be fair. We have, for example, consistently used the terms "pro-life" and "pro-choice" to represent the two sides because this is what the two sides prefer to call themselves. It also keeps the debate on a higher plane than when terms like "fascist" and "baby-killer" are used.

Just remember: *The Gazette* may not always be on your team, but we always try to play by the rules.

Politicians cop-out on Curtis affair

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL Bruce Curtis have to wait before the governments of Nova Scotia and Canada muster the courage to speak out on his behalf? This 'would be' Dalhousie student has spent the last three years of his life and faces the prospect of 17 more behind bars in a New Jersey prison, the victim of a trial which was, at best, a judicial farce.

While Canadians from coast to coast are taking up the fight for the young Nova Scotian, neither the federal nor provincial government has felt the need to join the struggle. Why is this? Do members of the governments know something we don't or are they just afraid of disturbing the American giant?

The governments claim there is nothing they can do for Bruce Curtis because he is not in their

jurisdiction. This is a cop-out! We realize the politicians of Halifax and Ottawa have no power to enforce their will on the state of New Jersey, yet their collective influence, especially in light of the recent positive turn in Canada-U.S. relations, cannot be underestimated.

To this point, both governments have refused to use this influence. They have abandoned a Canadian when he most needs and deserves their help. Can we call these people leaders? Would real leaders sell-out one of their people simply because it was the most politically expedient thing to do?

Both governments have a moral obligation to do everything they can to see that Bruce Curtis receives justice. This is a test of their character; so far they are failing.

Catholic Church not "double-speaking"

By THERESA MACDONALD

WENDY COOMBER'S ARTICLE "Church doublespeak" (*Gazette*, March 28) contains a number of errors which deserve to be corrected.

The author's comments about the Catholic Church's inconsistency on the abortion issue are erroneous. The Catholic Church's official position on abortion has been consistent since its earliest days. The Roman Empire into which Christianity was born practiced abortion and infanticide on a wide scale. The first official document to address such practices was issued around 80 A.D. Known as the *Didache*, it stated the Church's official position on abortion very clearly: "You shall not procure abortion. You shall not destroy a newborn child."

Since that time, there have been literally hundreds of official Church documents which testify to the same position on abortion: "abortion, at any time, is a sin of murder by intent" i.e. induced abortion represents "a direct attack on the unborn fetus" with the "willingness to destroy innocent human life." According to the Catholic Church this constitutes the essential sinfulness of abortion.

It is impossible to mention all the official Church documents on abortion here. I would invite readers who wish to establish the existence of such documents, to read a recent Catholic catechism. Individual documents can some-

times be found in parish libraries or the more extensive library at the Atlantic School of Theology. For a more detailed discussion on the subject of abortion and the Catholic Church, I recommend a book by John T. Noonan, entitled *The Morality of Abortion: Legal and Historical Perspectives*. Noonan has also published a summary history of abortion and the Catholic Church in *Natural Law Forum*, vol. 12, pp. 125-131.

It is clear from Ms. Coomber's comments on the Catholic Church's teaching on abortion, that she has no idea what that teaching constitutes. In order to understand what is meant by the "Catholic Church's teaching" on abortion, it is necessary to make the distinction between the official teaching of the Catholic Church and various writings of ecclesiastical authorship, such as Saint Thomas Aquinas. What these ecclesiastical writers may have had to say about abortion does not represent the Catholic Church's official teaching on abortion. This has been determined by those members of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church who have the authority to establish that teaching as official teaching.

These commentaries have included speculations concerning the time when a fetus becomes "animated" or when the soul becomes instilled. It is erroneous to suggest that theories on when the fetus becomes "animated"

constitute the Catholic Church's official teaching on abortion. The Church specifically warned against making distinctions about "formed" and "unformed" life in the womb based on such theories, in order to justify induced abortions. For example, in 375 A.D., St. Basil the Great wrote, "A woman who deliberately destroys a fetus is answerable for murder. And any fine distinction as to its being formed or unformed is not admissible among us." To quote from a recent Catholic Catechism, "The exact time when a fetus becomes "animated" has no practical significance as far as the morality of abortion is concerned." Why? Because the Catholic Church's official teaching on abortion consistently states that abortion is a grave sin of "murder by intent." Whether the fetus has become "animated", or not, is irrelevant to the morality of abortion as taught by the Catholic Church.

I assume that even if Ms. Coomber were to concede that the Catholic Church has been consistent in its position on abortion, she would still maintain that it represents "an attempt to control women's bodies and minds." Again, I would disagree. There is nothing in the Catholic Church's official teaching on abortion to substantiate that claim.

Finally, I suggest that if Ms. Coomber takes journalism seriously that she have the consideration to more adequately inform herself about her subject,

was welcome news for me too. The leaflets you personally handed out at the SUB doorway and the many others pinned around campus, urged us to vote YES and YES, we voted.

Now, why is it that foreign students, who will also have their \$15 deducted, are facing a 13 per cent increase in fees instead of the 4 per cent you have led so many of us to believe in?

To take you, Alex, to task on this issue is kind of late now. You have certainly carried out a first rate CON JOB on the one thousand-odd foreign students, for your "crowning glory" deal for "ALL" Dalhousie students!

P.S. Hey, maybe you forgot to read the "fine print" in the deal YOU made, eh?

Yours sincerely,
cheated and lied to...
Ng, Boon Lang



Open letter to Lex

To the editors,
Re: outgoing president of the D.S.U., Mr. Alex Gigeroff

To the majority of Dal students, you certainly seemed like a "knight in shining armour" when, you even announced on ATV network, the news of your 'deal' of the limited fee increment and again like so many others, it