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Letters

Beliefs

In response to P. Rohrer's letter (ODE, Oct. 22), while it is true that not everyone believes that life begins at conception, it is also true that not everyone believes that the Jewish holocaust took place. No amount of evidence or testimony would convince them to believe otherwise. Both groups of people are refusing to believe an aspect of reality which they want to be true.

Attempting to change biological or historical reality, however, by simply refusing to acknowledge it, in no way alters that reality. We merely separate ourselves from the objective world and place ourselves in a subjective one.

We will probably gather plausible-sounding arguments around us to insulate us from that which we are unwilling to face and seek out like-minded people who will support us in our foolishness. Again, none of this will change what is true, and we will always have to avoid that area of thought so as not to let the truth stare at us.

C. Everett Koop, surgeon general of the United States, has stated, "Biologists take the uniform position that life begins at conception; there is no

logical reason why the pro-abortionist should try to arrive at a different definition when he is talking about people...."

We do not get to vote on whether or not these things are true. We can, however, choose whether or not we will deal honestly and with integrity with established facts.

William Moore
 Music

See and feel

It's a shame that today's youth doesn't know or remember the error and horror of Vietnam, and that many others seem to have forgotten. It's easier that way.

Perhaps history is more alive in places like Europe, where concentration camps and destroyed buildings still stand. Germany has the added misfortune of being a strategic battleground, housing U.S. nuclear missiles, chemical weapons and troops. In part, this translates to hundreds of thousands in the streets demonstrating their disapproval.

And here we are, glorifying war on television, in the movies, magazine ads, video games, children's toys: CIA and marines recruiting on campus — freedom fighters. What do we know? Materially, a comfortable life.

Take a trip to a "developing" nation. Spend a few months in the midst of abject poverty. Get a first-hand feel for how most of the "Third World" lives. Try to understand why so many are so poor and so few are so rich.

Then don't excuse your government for supporting another dirty war in Nicaragua, or another dirty government in El Salvador, Guatemala and Chile, to name a few. The issue is not East-West. The issue is hunger, exploitation and ongoing paternalism.

Let's open our eyes and our hearts. We have the responsibility and luxury to think and

feel behind our tax dollars. Taking a stand on the side of compassion and cooperation, instead of fear, greed and militarism (or apathy) might restore some international respect for this county — the kind of respect our spirits can feel good about.

Bonnie Souza
 Graduate, international studies

Brutality

This is in response to Roch Steinbach's criticism of my poem, "the crucifixion," (ODE, Oct. 13) in which I criticize the U.S. government's arming of terrorists inside the sovereign nation of Nicaragua.

The use of the crucifixion theme comes from my own experience in Vietnam in which I found myself staring into the photograph of the family of a man whose head we had blown off; over the photograph was draped a silver crucifix.

Vietnam is another nation conquered and brutally forced into submission by a European government in the name of Catholicism. The ancient ones in the poem are not Maria's Catholic ancestors, but her Indian ancestors, slaughtered in the name of Christ.


The poem could have been called "twice betrayed": once historically when her ancestors had their religion brutally taken from them and again when she is murdered by soldiers armed by right-wing "Christian" Americans.

It is a fact that the Contras target not the Nicaraguan military but the civilian infrastructure of their society in order to instill a state of terror in the people.

This is not a condemnation of Catholicism; there have always been priests who have spoken out against brutality. Nor is it an attempt to ignore the mistakes of socialist governments, but the government of Nicaragua has a much cleaner civil rights record than many of the right-wing dictatorships we support, including such places as Guatemala, Korea and Chile.

Ron Phillips
 Clergy And Laity Concerned

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