

kind of simple-minded dogmatism humanists should strive to avoid. It illustrates the growing blight of misrepresentation and intolerance, an intolerance nourished by the belief, the most dangerous of all beliefs in a political democracy, that truth may be suppressed in defense of a good cause.

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Abortion

Professors Noel Smith and William Fink raise important issues in their discussion of abortion (FI, Letters, Summer 1983). Smith makes a great point of the fact that having mere biological life must be distinguished from having a meaningful life. That is quite true. But even if we grant this and his further point that having a meaningful life is more important to nearly all people, it follows neither that meaningful life, being human, and having moral standing are necessarily synonymous, nor that nearly all people would choose to die if they were in a feral state with only meaningless life as their potential. It seems to me that most people, if they would choose to die, would do so if they were reasonably convinced that their lives were to be completely and irreversibly meaningless. That these conditions are problematic or nonexistent in circumstances of abortion may, in part, explain why this issue is generally overlooked.

I think I have seldom read a better example of how the fanatical advocacy of abortion withers one's reason than Professor Fink's letter. His arguments, as far as I can follow them, are as follows: (1) Kohl is pro-abortion. But, since he holds abortion to be a mixed and not a pure good, it follows that he espouses the Falwellian doctrine that the zygote is a human being. (2) In order to defend a good cause the truth must be suppressed. Abortion is a good cause. But Kohl does not believe in suppressing the truth. He insists that many anti-abortion arguments are *plausible* moral issues. Therefore, Kohl is anti-abortion.

Having stated in my article (FI, Winter 1982-83) that I support a liberal abortion policy and having argued for a pro-choice position, it is tempting to dismiss this letter as a passionate exercise in the use of the non sequitur. Yet we are in Professor Fink's debt. For his letter brilliantly illustrates the