



the  
brunswickan

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# OPINION...

## Sad Thoughts on Terrorism

By BARRY PARKINSON

A number of months ago, I was speaking with a Tunisian labour leader. At one point, politics reared its ugly head and my friend came up with a wonderful phrase: Il viendra un jour - There will come a day.

The idea behind this is that there will come a time when there is justice and equality in the world, or at least in their part of it. There's this wonderful hope that all the multinationals, all the foreign interveners and all the strange internal factions will learn to act with restraint and cooperation.

In more practical terms, it means that there will come a day when the nasty yankees, or the West in general, will be put in their place. And you can't help but feel the validity of this sentiment.

Part of the attitude expressed was that terrorism (as westerners would refer to it) is an unfortunate, but acceptable, means to this end. That's something folks over here are going to have to learn. In a sense, much of the third world is at war with the west, either actively or by being in sympathy with the "activists".

Okay, so maybe things aren't so dramatic. God knows I don't want to reinforce that twisted seige mentality that seems to bubble up every now and then. Still, it has to be realized that there are a lot of people all over the world who've been screwed to the wall, sacrificed, for this society. Not all "imperialism" has been bad, sure, but for the most part, "we" have been taking advantage of "them". The north-south dialogue is actually a monologue.

This is confusing and depressing stuff. We all know it's wrong for a young American girl to be shot by Arab extremists. But is it any less evil to have a young Arabic girl working long days under horrendous conditions just so the west can indulge in cheap consumer products? Or to be caught in the crossfire of American and Soviet made automatics? Or to see foreign soldiers wandering through her neighbourhood?

Take a look at the living and working situation in the third world, get an idea of how much of a region's wealth is being taken into the hands of the industrialist nations compared to what's being put back, consider just how much frivolous waste there is in this society... Christ! It's shocking. No wonder people become embittered and spit as you pass them in the medina.

The fact is that there is no balance in this great little world of ours. No neat formulae exist to solve the mess. We're stuck in this terrible conflict, forever it seems.

That being said, we obviously can't just shrug our shoulders, and get on with the status quo, forever hoping that we're not booked on the wrong flight, or caught in the wrong backstreet. To do so would only ensure that violent acts will increase, that more people will suffer.

There *are* ways in which the global system can be made fairer. Still, the basic nastiness will remain, as will the terrorism/freedom-fighting. Ce jour ne viendra pas.

## International Freedom of the Press

by MARK STEVENS

According to a report published last Thursday by the InterAmerican Press Association, this year has been one "of the darkest periods in recent memory for the freedom of the press."

During the four day meeting held in Vancouver, the 350 or so delegates heard some horrific statistics regarding the suppression of the press throughout the Americas.

It was a catalogue of the grotesque. Journalists in El Salvador, Bolivia, Honduras, Guatamala, Paraguay and Peru have been threatened with death, physical attack and prison sentences. Four Mexican journalists have been killed since the beginning of the year - and the list continues ...

Such a brutal form of press censorship upsets our ideals of democracy and fair play. But unfortunately, as the report points out, "much of the onslaught on the press comes from governments that are, or profess to be, democratic." Could it be that in our enlightened society, press censorship is just a little more subtle?

Last year in Britain, the world saw how pressure from the Cabinet prevented a documentary dealing with political extremism in Ulster from being screened in its unedited form. The BBC's Board of Governors patronisingly claimed that the "programme's intention would continue to be mis-read and mis-interpreted." (Daily Telegraph, July 31, 1985). Mrs. Thatcher was reported as saying that she would utterly condemn any programme on television about a leading member of the IRA.

British journalists working in Ulster found themselves unconsciously conforming to this prescribed linguistic code. For example, "terrorist" and "terrorism" were words used when dealing with the outlawed Irish Republican Army, while outlawed loyalist paramilitary organisations such as the Ulster Volunteer Force were generally referred to as "extremist." Likewise, victims of the IRA are "murdered", while the security forces "kill" or "shoot dead" their often innocent suspects.

Naturally other parallels exist. American involvement in Nicaragua has led to a narrow distinction between "terrorist" and "freedom fighter". Never before has Marshall McLuhan's oft quoted observation that the medium is the message, been so true.

Fortunately, people are beginning to question the press. The "oh, it must be true because I read it in the papers" attitude is being replaced by a healthy scepticism which is already undermining the power of the printed word.

Meanwhile, as debates concerned with the ethics of journalism echo round seminar rooms, journalists in Chile, Mexico and Columbia will keep on dying.