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tion by the children's librarian at Stratford, Ontario, Public Library because they were not of "high enough literary quality."

An item Gibson did not mention was the recent instance in British Columbia where an edition of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* being used for high school instruction was found to be significantly "expergated"—more simply, censored. A portion of the well-known Porter's scene, in which the Porter describes the effects of alcohol on sexual desire, had been omitted.

Gibson read a list of names of artists whose presence is banned completely in the United States. This included Canadian writer and critic George Woodcock, Argentinian author and Nobel-laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Italian playwright Dario Fo, actress Franca Rame, and others.

Gibson says not all challenges against writers and their work are successful, but even the unsuccessful demonstrate that considerable pressure is being applied to writers. Governments, religious groups, commercial organizations, individuals—in short, *anyone* may object to certain forms of expression. Gibson said that "we have to

learn to be alert to and respond positively" to such pressures against freedom of speech.

Exactly what form a positive response should take is, Gibson admits, a complex problem. "We can argue that depiction of violence must be controlled in TV, film and video," he said, adding that "there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that depiction of violence is infectious—among susceptible people."

Gibson said he would also like to see some form of control against hate literature.

"If we can demonstrate there is harm—*real* harm—to others, I don't think there is a problem (with some form of control)."

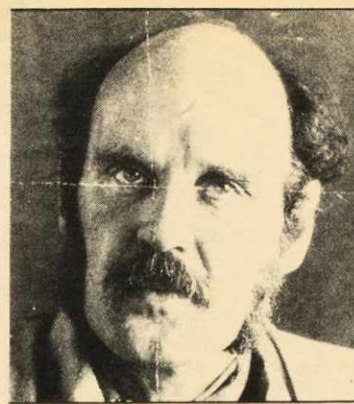
"I do not believe that *everything* is permissible," he continued, citing as an example the so-called "snuff films," in which actual murders are filmed and then sold underground as a macabre form of titillation. "Clearly, some things are *not* permissible."

He was quick to point out, however, that he did not wish the impression that he is in favour of censorship. On the contrary, he said, "It's dead easy to argue for that which is our own point of view, but we must also find a way to argue for that which is not our own."

To give a sense of a culture in which suppression of freedom of speech is a way of life, Gibson described his visits this summer to Czechoslovakia and Poland. There he met both official and unofficial people, some of whom were writers. He described the unofficial writers he spoke with as "frustrated, demoralized, resigned and afraid" due to the close surveillance of their work.

In some instances the only possibility for Polish and Czechoslovakian writers to have their work read is through blackmarket publication. Material found on the blackmarket may or may not bear the author's name and usually contains some form of prefatory note stating that the material has been published without the author's knowledge or permission. However, in these countries where governments so closely monitor any form of social criticism, going underground does not necessarily afford protection against the author's being prosecuted.

As a result, Gibson explained, people there tend to feel isolated. "They have no idea how many other writers there are and have only sporadic contact with people from other cities. Whether their



movement is growing or decaying they simply can't tell."

All this is part and parcel of totalitarian "interference with freedom to read, to write, to own and exchange books," he said. "And the implications are ultimately that what cannot be said in a book, cannot be said elsewhere, and ordinary thought is inhibited."

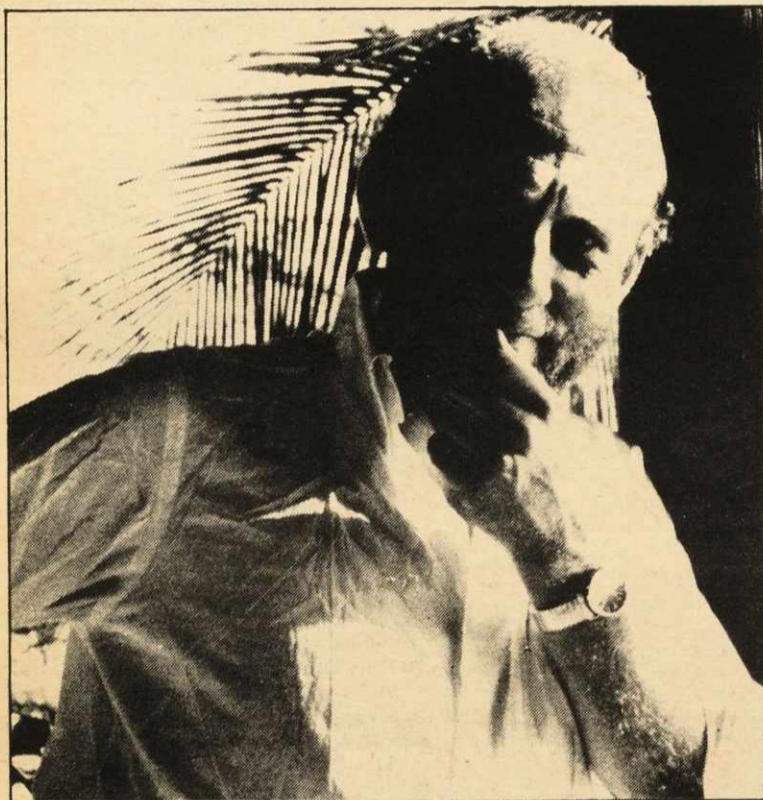
In Canada, we at least agree in principle with the idea of freedom of expression, he said, proceeding to quote the Voltaire passage that appears at the top of this article. "But even here, while the press may be free from government intervention, it may be subject to the intervention of owners and advertisers."

In the field of book publishing,

Gibson says that in Canada writers are in danger of being dictated to by accountants as is the case with some publishers in the United States, for example. "How did their last book do? Did it sell? These are the kinds of questions that are asked and which show a preference for quantity over quality."

Gibson described the present as a difficult time in Canada. He spoke of a loss of values and an uncertainty about moral questions. "Our society is undergoing profound and dangerous changes," he said. "And to deal with them we must better understand who we are in this context." □

National Freedom to Read Week is sponsored in Canada by the Freedom of Expression Committee of the Book and Periodical Council. Graeme Gibson will be Writer in Residence at the Dalhousie School of Library Service until Sept. 30. His visit is being sponsored jointly by the Canada Council and the School. On Sept. 26th at 8 p.m. Mr. Gibson will give a reading from his work at the Canadian Book Information Centre, Killam Library, Dalhousie. The public is invited to attend.



Rick Salutin, author of *Marginal Notes*, challenges the mainstream.

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done it before shows an absence of humility, of respect for the accomplishments of others, and of the historical perspective, along with a worrisome elephantiasis of the national ego—at least on the part of those putting out the hype," he writes.

A gamut of cultural trends are covered in the book, from the failure of C-Channel—the Canadian pay-TV cultural channel—to the purging of so-called "reds" in the CBC and NFB.

He portrays a country in search of culture, trying to salvage what it can from the shadow of the United States and other countries.

He writes of the national mosaic: "Mosaic—a form, by the way, of Mediterranean and particularly Italian derivation, is the more you think about it, a very odd metaphor for a national culture. It connotes a joining together of disparate and individual pieces,

usually very small, on what—a blank background?"

"There has always been a notion in Canada that you could create a national identity through the schools," Salutin says. "It's not so. It just doesn't work that way. It's just too earnest. It's too bourgeois a notion. A culture is created out of the need of the people to express itself and to create. That creation will be expressed through the schools and other institutions."

He sees the lack of national cohesion in English Canada as a result of history.

"English Canada, politically speaking, came into being largely as part of the British ploy to hold down French Canada. That's not a good basis for people to develop a national sense of themselves."

Will English Canada ever develop a sense of itself?

"Stranger things have happened," says Salutin, ever the optimist.

Luba pulls in crowds despite Pope

By DAVID OLIE

The Pope had competition as top bands Luba and Itsa Skitsa held their own sold-out youth rally in the Dal SUB.

Headliners Luba, one of the best up-and-coming Canadian acts, pulled the crowd to the floor in what was less a dance than an enthusiastic concert scene. Luba herself is a female performer in the Janis Joplin tradition; bouncy, energetic and dramatic. The band's music, though more pop than meaningful, was definitely polished, crisp and clean. Luba is an act that seems practically made for the concert stage and the video screen, and will undoubtedly be around a long time.

Luba, however good, is a known quantity; we knew and got what we expected. The real story of the night was the lead-in band, Itsa Skitsa. This group, just one year out of London, Ontario shows all the signs of making major breakthroughs on the Canadian and international music scenes.

The four young men—Paul Scriven on guitar and lead vocals, Damian Seguin on guitar and



Photo: Kimberley Whitchurch, Dal Photo

vocals, Iain Staines on bass and Doug Campbell on drums—seem able to blend styles and influences with accomplished ease. (Their name hints at the schizophrenic nature of their sound.) The sound merges a British new-wave base with calypso and pop dance music to produce a likeable, danceable act that, at the same time, doesn't fail to deliver meaning and content. (Think of The Clash's "Rock the Casbah.")

The SUB audience, slow to respond to something new at first, were getting into it when the group ended their set to make way for Luba.

Ista Skitsa discussed their origins and future plans after the show. In their year of existence they have done things that many more established bands only dream of, such as playing the famed El Mocambo in Toronto. Having just recorded a three-song demo at home, this trip east marks their first expedition beyond Upper Canada. With the good response they received here, including full houses at Mount St. Vincent and Mount Allison Universities, the band is inspired to try their luck south of the border, specifically New York, before heading home to start work on an album of original material. □