

What cost freedom of the press?

In Chile, a media cameraman filming gun-waving military on a city street himself becomes the target of their bullets. The first shot hits him, causing his camera to wobble. The second shot misses. The third shot kills him. His salvaged film becomes part of a CBC Fifth Estate documentary on Journalism in Latin America.

A photographer from an American newsmagazine lies paralyzed in a hospital bed after being shot while on assignment in El Salvador. He dies several weeks later. For him, perhaps, it was a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

In too many parts of the world today there is no right time for journalists to practice their trade. Picking up a pen or a camera to record what they see places them in danger of losing their lives.

An American reporter was arrested and tortured for five days by Columbian army officials last year. In one eighteen month period four foreign journalists were killed in the capital city of El Salvador. Other journalists, disappearing mysteriously without warning, are feared dead.

Increasingly, western journalists are becoming afraid to go to Central America. The media is a constant target for death threats. Native newspapers are censored or closed down, and government propaganda under the guise of news makes a mockery of responsible journalism.

If foreign correspondents are not actually forced to leave a country, or native

journalists forbidden to write, many reporters become self-censors, fearing imprisonment, torture or death if they report truthfully.

People have a right to know what is happening in the world. Journalists have the responsibility of presenting the information, in as fair a manner as is humanly possible.

The press must be free to observe and record events as they occur, without constraint by governments, the military, business interests or other bases of power.

That repressive, murderous dictatorships find it expedient to muzzle journalists who would spread the word of their reign of terror is easily understood.

That it is essential that the world hear from the victims of such oppression, that we may learn the truth, is equally obvious.

People are being murdered for disagreeing with the manner in which they are governed. More people are being murdered for attempting to tell us that this is happening. We in the western world, accustomed as we are to basic human rights and a lot more, must ask questions.

What really is happening in El Salvador? In Chile? In Columbia? And why?

Are our governments involved? Are we, as American and Canadian taxpayers, unknowingly giving money to support the murder of people whose only crime is to desire what we all take for granted?

For us, it is safe to ask such questions.



LETTERS

Cheap cartoon

Dear Sir;

Your cartoon titled "The Hash Smokers" (*The Gazette*, December 3, 1981) is a manifest example of cheap journalism, poor taste and stupendous ignorance. One would have hoped that the Dalhousie community is capable of seeing through the sabre rattling of Reagan (and Haig) in preparation for their adventurist wars against Libya (and Nicaragua for a good measure).

Furthermore the cartoon, besides its racist connotations, is offensive in its reference to Islam. It was the Muslims who provided a hospitable shelter for the Jews fleeing pogroms and massacres in Europe.

The Gazette might serve its readers better if it paid some attention to the fact instead of sensational superficiality.

Yours faithfully,

Ismail Zayid, M.D.

A Response to: A look at daycare in N.S.

I find it utterly shocking that Elizabeth Bisset-Sagar would rather her department educate people as to how to set up a day care operation than place the initiative on the government to create new centres. The prospect of private day care may ultimately meet the needs of the families who can afford them; but, what about the thousands of children from low income families? These families cannot possibly afford private day care fees and the total of 816 subsidized day care spots in this city is pathetically inadequate. You can speculate the gross inadequacy of subsidized day care when you compare the results of a research study. The unemployed single parents in this city have a total of 2,746 dependents who are twelve years old and under. This one small group of low income families alone constitute a shortage of 1,930 potentially needed day care spots. So do you say: "If the parents cannot afford day care

their children should not have it"? But how can parents possibly pursue training and employment if they cannot obtain acceptable child care?

All children should have high quality childhood experiences. Jean Piaget, a renowned psychologist has proven "The more variety of models the child has to imitate the more his ability is increased, not only for the play at hand, but in his intellectual performance later on." It is my personal belief that high quality day care should be part of the education system. I believe that it is desirable and should be available for all children, not just for children of prosperous parents.

W.C. Fletcher

To the Editor,

The following statement is from the Strike Committee of the port and shipyard of Szczecin, Poland, December 14, 1981.

To all nations and people of good will who value the cause of democracy, freedom, and worker's rights: At the risk of

their lives and personal freedom, despite the Draconian orders of martial law, despite the attempt to fetter us with fear, hundreds of thousands of Polish workers and patriots went on strike, voicing the following demands:

- that the declaration of a state of war be revoked;
- that all those arrested be freed;
- that all democratic and union rights won by the nation in August be restored.

We appeal to you: Support us in our struggle with mass protest. Support us with moral aid. Do not stand idly by while democracy in the heart of Europe is in danger of being stifled at birth. Be with us in these difficult moments. Solidarity with Poland has not yet perished.

I appeal to all members of the Dalhousie community who believe in the Polish people's right to basic freedoms to make their feelings known by writing to Minister of External Affairs MacGuigan in hope that the Trudeau government will alter its present stance from one of indifference to one of strong

protest backed by concrete action.

Respectfully,
Jack Robinson

Logan style is great

To the Editor;

This is only my second year at Dal but even in this short time I have noticed a great change in the attitudes of and towards the Student Council. I'm sure many of the students have felt this change right from the campaign and election of "Logan's Heroes." The truly unorthodox campaign undeniably represented a lively twist to an apparently dreaded event: the election. If nothing else, these tongue-in-cheek tactics have attracted quite a bit of attention to the Student Council. Thus, if one were to ask me if I thought this change were for the better, I would have to answer "yes." The reason is this: I believe that the first step in getting people involved is to snag their attention so that you stir some kind of reaction out of them.

continued on page 5