

IFC decision attacks freedom of the press

Wednesday evening, the Incidental Fee Committee struck a brutal, if not fatal, blow to freedom of the press on the University campus.

The Oregon Commentator, the University's conservative monthly student magazine, was declared nonfundable because the committee believes its content attacked equality for women and minorities and did not provide for the cultural diversity of University students. The Commentator also was criticized for discouraging minority participation through content the IFC called unsupportive of minority groups and rights.

The IFC has every right to level these charges. It does not, however, have the right to deny funding to the only conservative publication on campus because of its content.

One of the most basic supports the Commentator has is the Bill of Rights, specifically the First Amendment. The founding fathers determined that a free press and an open exchange of ideas are integral to a free society. Freedom of the press is a cornerstone of the American political process. Furthermore, this freedom must be rigorously protected within the learning atmosphere of university campuses.

By not funding the Commentator, the fee committee is enforcing policy analogous to prior restraint. Where prior restraint prohibits articles from being published, the IFC is preventing the publication of an entire body of thought.

We understand the committee must follow its own guidelines to fund groups that provide for the cultural and physical development of students. However, the IFC's assertion that the Commentator does not enrich student cultural development does not take into account the University's conservative community. The fact is, some students do not support Affirmative Action as a means of ensuring minority rights and cultural diversity. The Commentator provides a right-of-center forum for those students while at the same offering a different viewpoint to liberal students.

While the Commentator's views may swing toward the right, this does not mean its views cannot be considered valid.

Whether an individual or a group such as the IFC agrees or disagrees with the views set forth by the Commentator should have no bearing on the Commentator's right to be heard.

Finally, if the IFC is attempting to maintain a liberal attitude while protecting the rights and equalities of minorities (issues attacked by the Commentator in the past), it is doing quite the opposite. A truly liberal attitude would be to recognize the many different (i.e., diverse) points of view on any issue — even if the issue is as sticky as equality. The Commentator certainly is not the only publication that has stepped on a few toes or hurt a few feelings.

We hope the IFC realizes in retrospect the injustice it has done by withholding funding from the Commentator, and we urge it to withdraw its decision. It certainly should not be playing financial and power games with freedoms granted by the U.S. Constitution.

Bartlett's program freeze deemed prudent measure

Thomas Bartlett, Oregon's chancellor of higher education, has announced that he plans to restrict additions or expansions of instructional academic programs in the state system.

We applaud him for his controversial, yet sensible, move.

As Bartlett has pointed out, resources are too scarce to fund new programs, without perhaps damaging or killing the existing ones.

This has not been Bartlett's way of saying new programs never again will be introduced into the system. Rather, he is attempting to strengthen existing programs and has promised to subject new proposals to a rigorous test to determine if they are needed.

Bartlett also has taken into account the abominable tuition increases that state system students recently have suffered. He has recognized the incredible costs of securing existing programs. In an attempt to avoid further financial burden on the students, Bartlett has chosen to freeze new programs.

Bartlett's emphasis on maintenance of existing programs is designed to "keep us competitive." Certainly it should do this, and a whole lot more.



Comparing Israelis, Nazis unjust

Forum

By Richard Lyons

We should be concerned with why supporters of the Palestinian cause feel so deeply the need to label Israel's suppressive violence with the term "holocaust," with the compulsion to compare Israel with Nazi Germany. Why is such a need felt; why isn't it enough to condemn violence, brutality, evil for what they are, in and of themselves?

It seems clear that the reason is political — and that includes in this case linguistic, propagandistic. If Israel's acts of sup-

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pression can be defined as holocaustic, the perpetrators of violence who support the Palestinian cause would be freed from responsibility. It would be as though they had not participated in a conflict with Israel, but rather were only, always, victims. But that is, clearly, not the case. For years — no matter with what justice or lack thereof — supporters of the Palestinian cause have committed acts of violence and terror against Israel, Israeli citizens, including women and children, supporters of Israel, and even against politically innocent bystanders. In this way, then, the application of the term "holocaust" to Israeli suppression is at best doubtful; at worst, it is a deliberate attempt to corrupt the truth of the issue, one in which a conflict rages because of responsible participation on both sides.

During the period in which Jews suffered at the hands of the Nazis, no Jew had ever rallied forces for the purpose of utterly destroying Germany and ridding the world of the German people. The horror perpetrated by the Nazis was not rooted in a terrible need for revenge (which does not justify horror at any time, but that acknowledges an impulse that suggests responsibility occurs on both sides of the conflict); it is in fact an historical dilemma,

attempting to account for just why the Nazis acted as they did, no matter with what political or social rationalization offered by the Nazi leadership. Perhaps the people involving themselves in the brutality were operating out of the kind of cold, pure hatred, or a heartless cynicism, but based on what reason, to what in particular were they reacting?

It is essential to observe, however, that in the conflict between the Israelis and supporters of the Palestinian cause, those on both sides kill and kill over and over, using great terms to justify what they do — nationalism, pride, the rights to homeland and the protection of boundaries, security, history, law, and vengeance. But both sides are involved. The supporters of the Palestinian cause have killed and the Israelis have retaliated.

The conflict grew corrupt in that innocents were killed by terror, more corrupt in that retaliation included the killing of more and more innocents. A great deal of killing and evil — who can disagree? But surely the term "holocaust," as we understand it applying to how the Nazis brutalized an enormous segment of humanity — Jews and Gypsies and at times Catholics and blacks and whoever else became human conveniences to justify genocide — surely "holocaust" is not the term to apply to the actions taken by the Israelis, no matter how terrible they are. Aren't the terrors inflicted by the supporters of the Palestinian cause just as deplorable? Can anyone say they have not inflicted terror in Israel, all around the world, in fact?

When the Nazis began the annihilation of Jews, there was no imminent threat to Germany from any quarter. The Jews were not a menacing influence toward the nation or its government. Yet the Nazis attempted to exterminate them. Therein lies the difference so dangerously disregarded by those who propagandize for the Palestinian cause. Those whom the Nazis killed were killed with no provocation, with no history of conflict between them. The killing that takes place on both sides of the Palestinian issue is as awful as killing ever is. But it does take place on both sides; responsibility exists on both sides; historical motives for warfare and violence are observable. Isn't it a crucial point of the history of the holocaust that those victimized by the Nazis were in fact victimized without provocation?

The continuing crisis in the Mid-East is not that of Europe in the late '30s. To isolate one concept associated with that Europe is to do an injustice to what is taking place in and around Israel today — to the history of the Mid-East and to the enormous complications of nationalism and justice fighting for support and control. In the heat of battle, virtually any form of defense is reasonable, even desired. But here, where there's time and chance to act without the threat of aggression, to attempt to create issues of conflict — through the ill-considered or deliberate use of misleading language — is a danger against which we all should be on guard.

Richard Lyons is a creative writing professor in the University's English Department.

Commentary Policy

The Oregon Daily Emerald welcomes commentaries from the public concerning topics of interest to the University community. Comments must refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Commentaries must be between 750 and 1,000 words, legible and signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified upon submission.