

The Daily Tar Heel

95th year of editorial freedom

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Fight apathy, promote rights

In June 1986, Chilean security forces set afire Rodrigo Rojas de Negri, who was protesting Gen. Augusto Pinochet's totalitarian government and its routine human rights violations. The Chilean government violated his most basic right — they killed him.

board opinion

By sponsoring Human Rights Week, Campus Y hopes to educate students and the community about such incidents through speeches, forums and drama.

At first glance, the group appears to have overestimated its capabilities. Its publicity poster lists 23 areas of human rights violations that the week's events will address, including Indian land rights, race relations, apartheid, Soviet Jewry and sexual assault.

Despite the difficulties involved in such a broad approach, Campus Y has succeeded in organizing a comprehensive program. Given the diversity of the topics, each student should be able to find at least one event of interest.

Liberals consider apartheid in South Africa and death squads in El Salvador among the worst examples of oppression. Conservatives ask why liberals rarely protest atrocities in Marxist countries. Yet the question of human rights transcends ideology. If these concerns remain partisan, human rights will never be universal.

It is easy for those who live in a peaceful and prosperous nation to ignore human rights violations. The horrors of famine, modern warfare and totalitarian governments are unimaginable to most Americans. The Constitution supposedly guarantees equal rights to all citizens.

Yet such violations are not endemic to communist countries or Third World banana republics. Photographs of burning protesters and stories of political prisoners in the Soviet Gulag grab headlines, but thousands of Americans face abuses at home.

In North Carolina, husbands may rape wives without fear of legal punishment. Homosexuals are fired because of their sexual preference. Minors are sentenced to death in courtrooms.

In a country abundant with food, helpless children go to bed hungry. In the world's wealthiest nation, thousands are homeless. In a country with unsurpassed medical technology, poor people are denied care at private hospitals.

America can improve itself. It must feed the hungry, house the homeless and care for the poor. It must guarantee equal rights for all citizens.

Take part in Human Rights Week. Go to a forum, educate yourself and then act. As Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Egypt opens door to Israel

As Iran repositions its army and revolutionary guards along the Iraqi front, its next major offensive draws nearer. The likely target will be Basra, the Iraqi city where each side suffered 100,000 casualties last December.

Meanwhile, the Arab League has decided to allow its members to re-establish relations with Egypt, the nation condemned and disinherited by Arabs for the 1979 peace treaty it signed with Israel. The league's actions are clearly related to Iran's latest moves. Egypt is the key to Arab unity against Iran, even if it means changing Arab priorities and overlooking Egypt's recognition of Israel.

In 1979, when Anwar Sadat signed the Camp David peace accords with Menachem Begin, the agreement was viewed as a stab in the back, a betrayal of the Arab cause. Eighteen of the 21 Arab League nations severed their relations with Egypt, which was kicked out of the organization.

Until last week only one country, Jordan, had re-established any ties with Egypt. However, since last week, four nations have again welcomed the country. More are expected to do so this week.

The reason for bringing Egypt back is fear of an Iranian victory in the Persian Gulf, which would destabilize the religious and economic structure of the region. Egypt is the Arab world's

main counter to Iranian advancement. More than one-fourth of all Arabs live in Egypt, and it has the largest standing Arab army, at 500,000. The nation has already shown a resolve to thwart Iran's advances by supplying Iraq with \$1 billion worth of arms annually since 1984.

Taking a stance against Iran has become more important to the Arab world than Israel and the Palestinian question. This change in priority offers the United States a chance for breakthroughs in gaining recognition for Israel.

Contrary to the rhetoric coming from Teheran, re-establishing ties with Egypt does not mean that Arab nations have accepted the 1979 peace accords and exonerated Egypt. Bitterness still remains, or the Arab League would have unanimously welcomed Egypt back instead of having member nations do it individually. But because of the common threat of Iran, the opening is there for pragmatic negotiations.

The Reagan administration should use this policy shift to step up its efforts for peace between Israel and the Arab nations. Even though Nicaragua, disarmament talks and shipping in the gulf have been grabbing headlines, the chance in the Middle East for constructive development should not be allowed to slip by. — Jon Rust

Readers' Forum

Join human rights pressure on South Korea

To the editor:

South Korea is moving toward democracy, and recent reforms have brought important changes, but these have not helped political prisoners such as Kim Chong-sam.

Kim was arrested in 1979 for membership in an "anti-state" organization called the Preparatory Committee of the South Korean National Liberation Front. The SKNLF was accused of plotting to violently overthrow the government of President Park Chung-hee, who was faced with growing opposition and dissatisfaction with the domestic economic situation.

Despite the accusations, no evidence of any criminal behavior was brought against Kim. At the time of his arrest, Kim was the Director of the Catholic Farmers' Association. He had conducted research which concluded that the impoverishment of farmers resulted from the governmental price controls on agricultural products. Though not charged with any recognizable criminal act, Kim was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Amnesty International has adopted Kim as a Prisoner of Conscience, which means Amnesty believes he is being detained for his beliefs and has neither used nor advocated violence. Kim is not alone. More than 100 people were detained in investigation of the SKNLF, and 73 were brought to trial in 1979. Of these, 14 remain in detention. According to Amnesty, more than 900 other political prisoners remain

in detention, and there is evidence that some of these are being tortured.

Amnesty does not want Kim and the other political prisoners to be forgotten. An international campaign has been launched to press for further improvements in the Republic of Korea. Amnesty members are writing on behalf of nearly three dozen Prisoners of Conscience. Other members are writing Korean legislators asking for political and legal reforms, and still others are writing U.S. legislators explaining concerns and requesting assistance.

One reason Amnesty is pressing for reforms now is that the time is right for change in South Korea. The government has shown itself to be newly sensitive to human rights concerns and international opinion. More than 530 convicted political prisoners were released July 6-7, 1987. Several days later President Chun Dohwan restored the civil rights of more than 2,300 former political prisoners. The upcoming elections in South Korea have provided a useful forum for discussion of human rights and other legal concerns, and the new constitution is promising.

Amnesty International is urging the government to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Any officials found in violation of this convention should be brought to justice. Reforms also should be taken to ensure that all political prisoners receive fair and

impartial trials. This would require the end of practices such as detention without charge, prolonged incommunicado detention, denial of access to attorneys, and the use of confessions allegedly taken under torture. Finally, as part of the campaign, Amnesty calls for the abolition of the death penalty, on the grounds that it violates the right to life and the prohibitions against cruel and degrading punishment.

In Chapel Hill, the focus of the Korean Campaign will come during Human Rights Week, Nov. 15-20. Professor Sun-II Choi will speak on the South Korean human rights situation today at 5 p.m. in Room 206 Student Union. Opportunities to write Korean legislators on behalf of Kim Chong-sam and other political prisoners will be available throughout the week, and a display case in the Union will feature artwork and other articles from the Republic of Korea.

Amnesty International Group 84 invites everyone to participate in these and other events on campus during Human Rights Week. We especially need support through petitions and letters encouraging South Korean legislators to further reforms in that country, and to ensure that Kim and other political prisoners will not be forgotten.

BETHANY CHANEY
 Sophomore
 Interdisciplinary Studies

AIDS policy morally sound

To the editor:

Mark Donahue has taken it upon himself to enlighten the students of this campus who are not engaging in premarital sex that they are psychologically harming themselves ("CGLA to protest Martin's AIDS policy," Nov. 11). This is certainly news to me! You probably think I'm just misreading his quote, right? Well, how else can you interpret this statement: "Total abstinence is psychologically harmful."

Donahue says he is protesting Gov. Jim Martin's policy because he does not mention "safe sex, the use of condoms, or the use of clean needles for drug users." First, this policy is for the education of "students younger than high school age." If our educational system tells these impressionable young students to use a clean needle when they do drugs, it implies that it is OK to do drugs as long as you do them safely.

The same argument applies to sex. The educational system is supposed to endorse the highest standards. Of course, we may not be able to keep up that standard, but if we set lower standards we are certain to turn out a society with lower moral standards, though I can't expect Donahue to object to that. In fact, maybe that's what he is really after — a society of gays and drug users. No, thank you. I just thank God that we still have some politicians who care about the conditions of this nation's youth.

DAVID LUTZ
 Sophomore
 Mathematics

Thanks for school spirit

To the editor:

I write to thank all of the Carolina students in attendance at Saturday's Carolina/Clemson football game for their tremendously vocal support of the team. I don't think I have ever seen any greater support in Kenan Stadium. It was a tribute to the Carolina spirit and was greatly appreciated by the team, as well as the entire department.

Let's do it again for the Duke game and carry it over into the Smith Center for the coming



basketball season. I am continually proud of our fans, led by the student body.

JOHN SWOFFORD
 Director of Athletics

CGLA isolated in debate

To the editor:

I am writing to make a few points about the funding of student groups, the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association in particular. Most of these ideas are not new. However, since many students still do not completely understand the funding process, I think some education is in order.

Some conservatives, in arguing against CGLA funding in

the past, have quoted Thomas Jefferson's statement that no individual should be coerced to fund a group that he finds morally repugnant. However, America's political system is not based entirely on Jeffersonian ideals. For example, even though I find the military morally repugnant, I must still pay about 40 percent of my income taxes to the military, or face imprisonment.

Similarly, the process of funding UNC student organizations is not based on the desires of any individual student. I don't particularly want to give my money to sports clubs and certain other organizations, but I realize that funding many diverse groups enhances opportunities for all students.

I believe that, if given the choice, many students wouldn't fund any organization. Even though only a small portion of student fees goes toward funding student groups, students might prefer to spend the money on themselves. Each student could buy a piece of bubble gum with the five cents that would have gone to the CGLA.

Why not hold a referendum for every group that receives student funding? In the end, singling out the CGLA could only be attributed to ignorance and prejudice against lesbians and gay men.

JOHN GANTT
 Junior
 Psychology

An ode to the habit that gives life meaning

To the editor:

One of the truly amazing things about America is that we, as citizens, are granted virtually unlimited freedom to pursue happiness. While out strolling beatitude, I often pause to engage in a pastime that gives me no end of joy: smoking a cigarette. This is not a hostile act; in fact, it is quite the opposite. After ingesting the recommended daily allowance of nicotine, I become a generous, benevolent, self-actualized individual. I read poetry. I smile at children. I give to the United Way.

Why, then, would anyone have me abstain from smoking, my emotional life support? Some fanatical non-smokers object because of the alleged health risks smoking poses. Although I am touched by their concern for my well-being, I would like to point out that those years of which smoking might deprive me occur in the twilight of life, long after one's hair, teeth

and sex drive are likely to have departed. I'll never miss them.

For the less altruistic in the non-smoking section who are more concerned with their own health, I submit that the University shuttle bus spews more carcinogens into the open air than I could ever hope to, were I chain-smoking Camels until Judgment Day. Given that everything from Honda Spree scooters to Three Mile Island vents its less-than-aromatic wastes into the big sky above, I would assume non-smokers contribute only a minute fraction of the carcinogens that seriously afflict those with fleshy-pink lungs.

Still some people insist smoking should be banned in public. They find the smell offensive and the habit itself unnecessary. I must concede that cigarette smoke, like classical music or modern art, cannot be justly appreciated by the uninitiated. This

is not justification, however, for banning smoking in public. Many things that I consider offensive occur in public. Some people use profanity. Some people rave about left-wing religions. Some people band together and sing Bob Dylan songs. Unfortunately, subjection to such irritants is the price that must be paid for entering the public domain. Rather than divide the world into "folk singing/non-folk singing" sections or similarly trivial divisions, the general public should be tolerant of the general public's legal (if not tasteful) behavior on public property. Individuals who cannot accept public behavior need not immerse themselves in it. Cable TV was invented for a reason.

JOHN HONEYCUTT
 Junior
 English

The Daily Tar Heel

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