

[4-25-1970]

Sometimes a fact is much more important than many words.

When, through some great good fortune, the American Association of University Professors named me winner of their 1970 Alexander Meilkejohn Award for Academic Freedom, it seemed appropriate to enunciate to the university world at large the principles of academic freedom that I had been voicing so loudly within the Catholic university world. We were not the only one with problems. Freedom will always be a problem for everyone, especially so in the university world. Whenever we get troublesome, which is almost always when we are doing our critical best, someone gets the bright idea of imposing controls. The first thing that the new military government in Chile did after deposing Allende was to put admirals in charge of each university. When I met the one who was trying to run the Catholic University in Santiago, I asked him, "Since you would be upset if I tried to tell you how to run the Navy, what makes you think you know anything about running a university?" He said, "It was out of control, I am just purifying it."

Purify us and we die. Long live academic freedom. The following adds a few cautions, but not regarding purification.