

government hopes that by means of behind the scenes negotiations it will be able to influence the policies of the Eastern bloc countries on such issues as family reunification, freedom of movement, and the unjust imprisonment of Soviet dissidents. The over-all results have been less than satisfactory.

Yuri Orlov is only one of several dissidents who have been harassed or imprisoned this past year for attempting to monitor the Soviet government's performance under the Helsinki Accord. Though it has become somewhat easier for a westerner to travel in the Soviet Union, the movement of Soviet citizens is still severely restricted, and the whole question of family reunification is far from resolved.

The Canadian Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society, in cooperation with the Department of External Affairs, recently undertook a project of conducting a Canada-wide compilation and analysis of the reunification problem. The results indicated that in the majority of cases there has not been settlement for periods of over 30 years and, in many instances, for over 50 years. Most tragic of all is the length of time involved. Many have been attempting to reunify immediate families for over a quarter of a century, and some for half a century.

It is time our government took a more vocal and outspoken position. It is apparent that the situation will not be solved through the use of regular bureaucratic channels, or by so-called quiet diplomacy.

To effect change, the violations of the Helsinki Accord must be brought to public awareness, for in the present state of international law on human rights the most effective sanction is the force of international public opinion, which is something to which even the most authoritarian governments are sensitive.

"Public opinion is the most powerful medium of all. Like religion it penetrates into the darkest corners." That is from a letter written over 150 years ago by Metternich, the authoritarian Austrian foreign minister.

I have another quotation also from a source not usually associated with concern for human rights. It is from the *Wall Street Journal* and states:

There is little question that the dissidents have been able to survive as they have because people abroad were listening to them.

That was in reference to Soviet dissidents.

The point is that an outspoken and vocal condemnation of the violation of human rights will have more effect than a policy of quiet diplomacy in arousing public opinion and putting pressure on Soviet authorities.

Undoubtedly, Canadians have a lot to be thankful for. Canada is a far cry from being a police state. However, can we really settle back in our chairs secure in the knowledge that Canada is a true democracy where social, economic, political, and cultural rights are fully respected? I would suggest that we cannot afford to get too complacent. One has only to read the daily press to realize that Canada has its own problems in the area of human rights.

Human Rights

Of course infringements on civil and human liberties in Canada are not nearly as severe as in the Soviet bloc countries. However, our own failings will have to be faced and dealt with if we are going to accept the task of acting as watchdogs over human rights in the rest of the world.

Canadians have achieved equality before the law, but in reality we fall far short of reaching the ideal of democratic freedoms. Incidents of racism and discrimination are growing at an alarming rate. It was for this reason the House felt compelled to pass a human rights act setting out the prohibited grounds of discrimination. The House also passed legislation to establish a commission to monitor the implementation of the Human Rights Act.

Unfortunately, no government can legislate away racism or discrimination. Human rights and human dignity in Canada, as elsewhere in the world, have not been and are not likely to be realized by lofty rhetoric even when enshrined in a constitution. The only way they can be achieved is by those relentless forces of social change, and by our timely response to them. It is a question of giving substance to words, by taking positive and constructive action in order to attempt to create a climate in which racism and discrimination will not flourish.

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In Canada a concept of cultural pluralism and human rights is being encouraged and actively pursued in the belief that our society will become stronger and more enriched. There is no doubt about the realism of the concept. However, to attain that goal we have to translate that concept into practice. Action, not empty words or empty promises, is the course we have to take if we are really sincere in the building of our nation. It is for this reason that I support a multiculturalism policy for Canada.

I have no hesitation in stating that multiculturalism is the most suitable way of assuring not only cultural freedom but all our basic human liberties in every corner of our country. A recognition of multiculturalism in Canada assures that ethnic groups in Canada will be guaranteed their right and desire to practise and keep their traditions, language, and culture.

The universal acceptance of multiculturalism in Canada by all its citizens will mean, as well, greater respect and understanding of each other. It will also mean the disappearance of personal and institutional prejudices and the creation of a more friendly and open climate. Without the eradication of the disease of prejudice and racism, no basic human rights will ever be a reality in Canada and we will never earn the title of a truly great nation.

Because I feel so strongly about the value of a multiculturalism policy as a means to enhance human rights and human dignity, I cannot help but be very concerned about the manner in which it is being implemented by this government. It is apparent that the government is far from committed to a multicultural Canadian society, despite any outcry to the contrary. The government's hesitation to commit itself has been illustrated on a number of occasions. For instance, since the announcement of the policy in October, 1971, there have