

women despite the proclamation of the Canadian Human Rights Act a few years ago. Let us examine our own record in human rights and civil liberties a little further.

Burning of buildings because of political dissent, trial of a consultant in the name of national security, treatment of immigrants and their shooting by police, imposition of religious prayers in the public schools, to quote a few, are grim warnings that we are not above reproach.

Now I come to the much publicized issue of treatment of scientists in the U.S.S.R. Are we any better than the Soviets? Only in degree, perhaps! We may not have imprisoned a scientist or sent him to a mental asylum or a concentration camp because of his political views. Generally speaking, however, we use the same methods usually employed for isolating, oppressing, demoralizing and persecuting scientists because they dissent from doctrines, loyalties or attitudes which are widely held and imposed in their countries. The majority of scientists in Canada work for the government and you can imagine how a civil servant can be intimidated by the employer. A government scientist's travel to scientific conferences could be stopped on flimsy grounds, funding to his projects could be cut, his locked drawers could be broken into at night to harass him and when under these conditions he cannot perform well, his work could be labelled "unsatisfactory" and he is then ready to be released from employment "legally" under the Public Service Employment Act due to incompetence.

In closing, let me say that I am not against the new morality in foreign policy as it applies to human rights and which Douglas Roche advocates. What I am suggesting is that until we clean our own house we are as hypocritical as the U.S.A. (see "President Carter and human rights: the contradiction of the American policy" by Louis Balthazar in the same issue of *International Perspectives*). Miss MacDonald's suggestion in her UN

General Assembly speech to create a post of Under Secretary for Human Rights, in my opinion, would not have solved the problem. An Under Secretary is not going to be any better than the UN Commissioner on Human Rights which we already have. What the world needs is a UN system comparable to the European Commission of Human Rights at Strasbourg where even an individual from a signatory country can take his complaint against his government. If the Commission finds the complaint admissible and it cannot be amicably resolved, the case may go to the European Court of Human Rights which can issue a judgment binding on the defendant government.

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Boat people

Sir,

1979 saw an outpouring of righteous indignation over the plight of the "Vietnamese boat people". The images of drowning, overcrowding and despair are horrendous. We must indeed be concerned, lest we abrogate our sensibilities, our morality.

Let us cry, and let us help. But let us not be hypocritical in our eagerness to assign blame. The desperate poverty that fueled some of the exodus is our fault more than it is Hanoi's. Devastation of the agricultural potential that fed the "Viet Cong" was a deliberate policy of war. Vietnamese provinces famed for their agricultural exports had their soil and vegetation destroyed by herbicides manufactured in the U.S. and Canada. The land will remain dead for years to come. Leaves will not grow, seed will not sprout.

We might also take greater note of the fact that most of the refugees belong to Vietnam's Chinese minority. It is a minority which refused to be integrated, which manipulated

control over export/import trade its peculiar advantage, and which established and operated a black market that seriously undermined the dictates of national planning and distribution. China openly encouraged its development of a "state within a state", and insisted on the right of its members to retain Chinese citizenship. Within the context of escalating Sino-Vietnamese tensions, tensions that erupted into this spring, it was inevitable that the "fifth column" spectre would begin to haunt Vietnam's policy makers.

Under similar circumstances during the Second World War, U.S. and Canada put their Japanese citizens and residents into concentration camps. The Japanese their civil rights, their homes, their businesses. Vietnam's Chinese minority was not incarcerated. seas threatened, and took their but survivors were free to enjoy the hospitality of those who espoused their cause. That they have faced instead with overcrowded refugee camps and minimal prospects is not an eventuality decreed by noi. Rather, it points to another aspect of hypocrisy in our attitude. We demand that Vietnam, Russia and other countries (though not perhaps China, since we find her friendship convenient — permit their satisfied to emigrate. But we do admit that we have a responsibility to accept the fruits of our labour trumpet the numbers that we do not the fact that these numbers count for but a fraction of the total. Not only does it account for a fraction of the "Vietnamese" problem when contrasted with the far larger problem of the world's refugee population, the forgotten millions of South Asia and elsewhere.

Our concern must not be ended. But perhaps our posture should.

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