

Letter to World Citizens

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National leaders are in confrontation over human rights. Suddenly the West with President Carter in the lead have discovered that human rights make sense ... and news. It is a people issue, thus popular. It permits a global strategy without sacrificing any national interests. The Pentagon still exerts its megalomaniac influence, the CIA still skulks in the world's dark alleys; taxes escalate and inflation gallops on. But the Western world or one lone man in the White House has found a cause to fight for, one he calls "absolute: human rights.

In his first address to the United Nations, President Carter spelled out the national commitment to human rights: "All the signatories of the U.N. Charter have pledged themselves to observe and respect basic human rights. Thus, no member of the United Nations can claim that mistreatment of its citizens is solely its own business. When gross or widespread violation takes place - contrary to international commitments- it is the concern of all. The solemn commitments of the U.N. Charter of the U.N,'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of the Helsinki Accords and of the many other international instruments must be taken just as seriously as commercial or security agreements."

Chairman Brezhnev, on the contrary in a major address on March 20 to the national trade union congress, stated: "We will not tolerate interference in our internal affairs by anyone and under any pretext." Dissidents, he claimed acted "against their homeland as accomplices if not agents of imperialism." A direct challenge to President Carter was contained in his words "Washington's claim to teach others how to live cannot be accepted by any sovereign state."

Brezhnev has fingered the central problem.

Lets be frank. With all the good will in the world, Jimmy Carter is not exactly innocent of temporal power over millions of his fellow humans. A man with a small black box is never more than ten feet from him anytime. One three-ounce punch of a few buttons on that box and you and I would wake up in the next world. There might be some delay at the port of entry since a few hundred million of us would arrive at the same time.

Brother Brezhnev undoubtedly has his black box counterpart. It doesn't make me feel any better.

Messrs. Carter, Brezhnev, Sadat, Rabin, Giscard d'Estaing and company are at a terrible impasse. Leaders of modern juggernauts in deadly competition, yet as chief executors of legal fictions called nations, they each face an impossible task: execute the internal national laws, good or bad. And at the same time, manipulate the entire state as a unit against all other states.

What's the answer? Human rights and world citizenship go together. World citizenship is the political counterpart to fundamental human rights. Why else would the Universal Declaration of Human Rights state explicitly that human rights must be protected by a regime of law?

Streaming into out tiny Washington office, five minutes from the White House, and writing to our Basel office, are human beings of all hues and national identities: Ghanian, Chinese, Eritrean, Korean, Israeli, Norwegian, Palestinian, Vietnamese, Brazilian, America et al. Each is seeking visible proof of their essential humanness. Why? Because we, the world's people are in continual confrontation with the nationalist myth. And how can you claim human rights if you cannot even prove to the state official violating those very rights that you are the one concerned? The national prisons around the world are filled with "dissidents: who threaten the state with their naked humanity, having no other identity.

Dear friends and fellow humans, let us not continue to make the colossal and fatal blunder of thinking that national leaders can represent humankind's and each human's legitimate rights. If world peace is too important to be left to the national politicians, how much more so are human rights.

As of 1977, human rights are on the offensive. We must identify ourselves as human beings, but legitimate. And it's so simple. The tools are all at hand: international law, human rights declarations, conventions and protocols, the Good Books replete with moral justification and sound wisdom. And now since 1953, there is an operational world government with a fast-growing administrative agency, the WSA serving one and all with documentary proof of our fundamental humanity in acceptable bureaucratic, standard form.

That's the name of the game: self determination. That's the essence of democracy: your right to choose *your* form of government (Art15.1 UDHR)

As fellow human beings, Jimmy Carter and his national counterparts worldwide need our help. America's Founding Fathers foresaw this day by referring sovereign decision making power back "to the people"

The choice is startlingly clear: legal human rights or no humans.