

VIEW OF THE WORLD

Abraham Martin Murray

THE BURDEN OF MORALITY. As though it were one campaign promise nobody expected President Carter to keep, the foreign policy establishment expressed surprise bordering on shock at Carter's prompt and candid statements about human rights in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. A *New York Times* editorial fretted about the wisdom of "burdening foreign policy with morality." Almost immediately the new team at the editorial page must have realized their choice of words was unfortunate, for a few days later another editorial exuded enthusiasm for morality, suggesting that, if it is a burden, it is a blessed burden. The second editorial we thought both more sensible and more edifying.

As Elizabeth Petersen Spiro recently wrote (*Worldview*, January/February), a change is taking place in the "linchpin metaphor" of U.S. foreign policy. Numerous pundits have been suggesting that "the human rights bit" is all right so long as it isn't pushed too far. What they seem to be saying is that it shouldn't be permitted to interfere with the *real* business of foreign affairs, which is presumably the power games they learned from Mr. Kissinger. Mr. Carter, to his credit, seems to be insisting that the advancement of the values represented by American society is very much part of the real business of our foreign policy. Briefly stated, those values are personal and political freedom, combined with the welfare state's commitment to elementary economic rights.

So far nobody knows how far "too far" may be in pushing human rights issues. The whole idea is too new and has scarcely been assimilated by most policymakers and observers. We should not dismiss lightly some of the questions that have been raised. It is noted, for example, that it is easier to criticize human rights violations in Rumania than in "friendly" countries such as Brazil or South Korea. William Barnds of the Council on Foreign Relations recently addressed this issue at a "Conversation" sponsored by the Council on Religion and International Affairs (CRIA). He urged that in dealing with an ally such as South Korea it may be necessary to make a more private linkage between human rights and other issues, lest we unnecessarily embarrass one of our own, so to speak. The point is, however, that the linkage must be made if the new foreign policy is to be credible. We agree.

Others argue that, in the case of the Soviet Union, human rights protests may jeopardize negotiations

on armaments, technological exchange, and the such. This is hardly persuasive. The USSR needs armaments negotiation as much, and technological exchange much more, than we do. The Helsinki agreements may indeed be jeopardized, and Carter must be ready to take that risk. The discrediting of Helsinki would seem to be no great loss, and some thoughtful analysts see very positive gains in that prospect.

Yet another argument is that actions such as Carter's letter to Sakharov will provoke the Russians to clamp down even more, thus making life still more difficult for the dissidents. Obviously, the dissidents welcome Carter's initiatives and are prepared to pay that possible price. We are suspicious of those who, out of professed concern for dissidents, think they know what is best for those who are on the spot. Perhaps there will be, as many hope, a repeat of the "Prague Spring" of 1968, but this time with a different outcome. Certainly the Administration is sending no signals of implied military support such as those that, perhaps inadvertently, encouraged the Hungarian uprising of 1956.

If there has to be an initial testing between the Soviet Union and a new administration—and apparently that is required ritually—it is splendid that the testing is over human rights and not another Cuban missile crisis. Our different understandings of freedom, and not who has more bombs or bluster, is the outstanding issue between ourselves and many others, the Soviet Union specifically. Not only has Carter chosen the right issue for the testing, but this time a new President has taken the initiative, instead of being forced to react to a Soviet challenge. It is altogether a promising change in the posture of U.S. foreign policy.

BLOODY MINDED CHURCHMEN. It was not long ago that the World Council of Churches and American denominations hailed Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa of Rhodesia as a great champion of liberation. Now there are (to some) disquieting rumors that Muzorewa may cooperate with the Smith regime in seeking a nonviolent transition to majority rule (see Daniel Fine's article in this issue). In recent weeks *The Christian Century* and other voices of liberal Protestantism have distinctly cooled in their evaluation of Muzorewa. "A deal" involving Muzorewa, says *The Century* (February 16), "might suggest to the outside world that signifi-

cant changes were taking place....But no transfer of power would be involved." So quickly does a champion become a putative quisling when he explores alternatives to the violence that so enamors some churchmen.

Apparently the approved Christian approach is to call for a holy war, as did Canon Burgess Carr of the All Africa Conference of Churches. Speaking recently in Nairobi, Carr urged the countries of Africa to declare war on Rhodesia, predicting that Rhodesia would be defeated in three days. In another comment Carr said that the U.S. and its NATO allies have a "grand design" to ensure that Rhodesia and Namibia "become vassal states of South Africa at best, in order to secure the West's vested interests in the usurped and stolen privileges which the white minorities have plundered from our people." As Gordon Zahn has written (*Worldview, March*), some Christians demonstrate marvelous flexibility in transcending the outdated morality of "Blessed are the peacemakers," and all that.

Andrew Young is a churchman, as well as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. A lot of people are betting that he will soon fall prey to the syndrome that did in Adlai Stevenson and Arthur Goldberg; that is, the U.N. post will be relegated to the department of rhetoric and idealistic posturing, safely removed from real power. While the vultures speculate about Young's fall, we are more impressed by his record of demonstrated political skills combined with a thoughtful compassion. It is especially noteworthy that, for all the criticism about his being "reckless" and "undiplomatic," his comments on Southern Africa have consistently emphasized peaceful alternatives to race warfare. We hope the desk-bound guerrilla fighters in Geneva (World Council of Churches) and 475 Riverside Drive, New York (National Council of Churches) will be open to learning something from Andy Young about both spirituality and strategy.

MORE ON UPDATED PACIFISM. On February 11 the American Jewish Congress let go with a blast at the American Friends Service Committee, an arm of the Quakers. AFSC had urged that Israel negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), contending that the Middle East conflict was essentially one between "two nationalisms." Not so, says the American Jewish Congress. The issue is that the PLO refuses to recognize the right of Israel to exist. The Congress release cites a January 18, 1977, statement by Abu Jihad, a leader in the PLO: "We will accept a state on any land in Palestine, but we are not prepared to pay a price for that state in terms of conciliation with or recognition of Israel." Theodore Bikel, chairman of the Congress, says: "The Quakers would never have asked the NAACP to bargain with the Ku Klux Klan. Yet they have no hesitancy in demanding that Israel sit down with a gang of murderers whose policy is to reject Israel's

right to exist and whose practice is to slaughter Israeli civilians."

Perhaps the American Jewish Congress is making the mistake of confusing the AFSC with the traditional ideology of the Quakers. It is an understandable confusion, since AFSC money-raising promotions do present the organization as firmly committed to Quakerism's abhorrence of violence, terrorism, and other nasty things. The Congress says the Quakers are letting their "good name" and "humanitarian reputation" be used. But one suspects that there is a growing number of people able to distinguish between Quaker belief and AFSC policy. After all, there are Quakers, and then there are Quakers, as we began to learn a few years ago when, on the other end of the political spectrum, Quaker Richard Nixon publicly reaffirmed his devotion to pacifism.

CHINA: BACK TO THE MINOR LEAGUES. It seemed like only yesterday that we were being assured that China had finally entered the world stage with a significance appropriate to its sheer size. Now, after months of exposés of its internal problems, it is being suggested that the great power stature of China was but one more trick conjured by Kissinger-Nixon. Joseph Kraft writes in his syndicated column (February 7): "China's current preoccupation is overwhelmingly internal. Peking cannot play an active role in the great power game—certainly not as a big counterweight to Moscow." Kraft notes that China feels it is being egregiously and persistently slighted by the Carter Administration. Carter's reported comment, "Perhaps it's time for the Chinese to visit us for a change," apparently did not go over well. The proposals that the U.S. pull troops out of South Korea and recognize Vietnam are also viewed negatively by China, since it sees both moves as strengthening Soviet influence in that part of the world. Kraft ends up urging that the U.S. at least resume negotiations with the Chinese on some minor technical matters, lest they feel left out altogether. "The Chinese leaders know they cannot play in the diplomatic big leagues now, and they seem to understand that there will be no early American desertion of Taiwan. So they have proposed discussions on a technical issue that would keep the connection alive until more active cooperation proved possible."

As has often been remarked, American attitudes toward China seem to swing to extremes. From the despised Red Menace it became overnight our "partner in peace." Now Kraft implies that an indispensable leg of Nixon's "pentagonal" world is in fact but an awkward appendage to the four-sided table at which the big boys play. It seems we do indeed have a very hard time keeping China in perspective.

Abraham Martin Murray is the collective name of those who contribute to "A View of the World." The opinions expressed sometimes coincide with those of the editors.