

Soviet Union Must Honor Helsinki Accords

The Times has agreed to print the following entry to the National Peace Essay Contest, sponsored by the United States Institute for Peace.

by Jason Levy

In a 1986 address to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, then Secretary of State George Shultz said that "the Helsinki Final Act provides us with guidelines for our work. It sets forth the promise of a more secure peace and greater cooperation between our peoples." He then explained that world peace can only be achieved through the recognition by every nation of human rights and fundamental freedoms for each individual.

Recently, the United States Senate reiterated the importance of maintaining basic individual rights, similarly citing this to be a factor leading to the "development of friendly relations between the United States and the Soviet Union." But exactly how large a role has been played by the Helsinki Accords towards achieving world peace?

Unfortunately, it seems that more has been said than done with respect to the peaceful intentions of the Helsinki Accords. For peace to exist between the Superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—both nations must have similar policies regarding basic individual rights.

Although the main principle of the Helsinki Accords is the respect for human rights, it is here where the basic difference between the United States and the Soviet Union lies. The backbone of American democracy remains the Constitution, which provides American citizens freedoms and privileges that are, for the most part, taken for granted. Unfortunately, Soviet citizens have it much tougher than we do. According to a 1986 report by the United States Helsinki Watch Committee, the Soviet Government remains one of the world's worst violators of human rights.

Apparently, the Soviets violate their citizens' human rights in the most severe manner: by

practicing physical coercion, torturing or imprisoning of citizens, the Soviets are perhaps the most repressive nation in the world. According to the report, the treatment of convicts and of suspects awaiting trial has recently deteriorated. Recently, hopes have been raised by Mikhail Gorbachev's new attempts at "Glasnost," which, if continued, could eventually curb the unfair repression so widespread in the Soviet Union.

Although the Soviet Union under Gorbachev has made some effort to improve the human rights of their people in order to end continuous violations of Helsinki's human rights accords, the meager human rights system which peaked in the 1960's has been virtually destroyed by ruthless government crackdowns. Nearly all Soviet citizens interested in forming non-governmental groups with the purpose of monitoring their country's compliance with the Accords have been harassed, and many have been imprisoned. Weren't the

Helsinki Accords created to stop this kind of unfair treatment?

What is important about the Helsinki Accords is that they have made it more difficult for governments to claim that anyone complaining about their abuses is interfering in their internal affairs. Similarly to Moscow's recent changes under Gorbachev, the United States also has initiated several changes regarding human rights. In the 1970's Congress wrote standards for human rights into foreign aid and other legislation. Although the Reagan Administration started with an apathetic approach to the idea of international human rights, many decisions were made that agreed with the purpose of the Helsinki Accords. An example of this was when Mr. Reagan ended support for Ferdinand Marcos, the Philippine dictator. Today, the American government is also against such right-wing tyrannies as the Chilean regime.

The Helsinki Accords were voluntarily signed by thirty-five

nations who realized that peace is not just the lack of physical conflict. It was understood that in order for true world peace to be established, international recognition of basic human rights and support for individual freedoms are imperative. The final part of the Helsinki document was designed to guarantee certain human rights in Europe. All nations agreed to allow more human freedom and free contacts between the peoples of their nations. Some feel that the underlying message in former Soviet Party Chairman Brezhnev's address at the Helsinki meetings was that the United States could no longer complain about human rights or emigration policies of the Soviet Union. However, if they are not making efforts to comply with the Helsinki Accords, why should they be left alone? By pressuring the Soviet Union into honoring the responsibility framed by the Helsinki agreement, the United States could come closer than they ever have to world peace.

LETTERS

Staff Speaks Out Against "Pass The Blowtorch"

Our schools are staffed by a wide variety of personnel. Each person is hired to do a specific job, to perform a particular service, with the duties and responsibilities of each position clearly defined. Although some of these positions entail policy making, most involve enforcing existing policies. Whatever rules, regulations and/or policies that exist do so not for whimsy but for reasons deemed necessary by our educational system to ensure the most effective and productive learning environment for the students.

One group of employees recently suffered what we consider to be a tasteless and unjustifiable attack. Though cloaked in the questionable guise of "humor," the insensitivity displayed toward these people was astounding. This attack was said to stem from dissatisfaction with the way certain things were run and supposedly hoped to bring about some changes. Our contention is that when

there is this type of dissatisfaction, the criticism should be directed at the policies creating the situations, not the people hired to enforce these policies. Personal attacks ultimately negatively impact and reflect on everyone.

In the future, rather than taking the easy way out, we would hope to see an extra effort made to provide well researched, meaningful, constructive critiques with intelligent and realistic suggestions for possible policy changes.

This letter was signed by 60 members of the Schreiber staff.

Hall Monitors: Trying to Earn a Living

I fail to see the humor in your recent article concerning hall monitors. These monitors help maintain the sanitary conditions of the cafeteria and halls. This is no easy task when you take into consideration that the students seem to have left their table manners at home. They are constantly leaving the trays on the table, throwing food, leaving wrappers on the floor, etc. Naturally, this is a thankless

job.

It is highly uncalled for to look down upon the educational requirements for this job. Perhaps they were less fortunate than you in receiving a good education, but they are doing an honest day's work. Can you say the same?

You must remember that there is dignity in work no matter how menial the task. You fail to have learned the basis of the American work ethic, an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. I salute the hall monitors for a job well done!

Elaine Hernandez

Hall Monitor Criticizes Article

Please allow me to respond to the illuminating journalistic "piece de resistance" published in *The Schreiber Times* of February 15, 1989, written by master Brian Stein.

Your article, "Please Pass the Blow Torch, Marge," I will assume was written with "tongue-in-cheek." If that is the case, as a budding young jocular journalist, you have just insulted the writer Mr. Art Buchwald of *Newsday*.

Your priggishness and elitist

snobbery does not enhance your future journalistic endeavors.

If I misspelled any words I do profusely apologize, because, after all, I am only a "hall monitor."

May I also express my kudos to *The Schreiber Times* faculty advisor.

Frank C. Quinn

Times Responds to Criticism

The Times has undoubtedly been aware of the serious concern generated by the printing of the article "Please Pass the Blowtorch, Marge." Response has ranged from stark criticism to wholehearted approval and appreciation.

Regardless of what has been said, the editorial board stands by the initial decision to print the article. To begin with, the piece was first and foremost a feature. As such, its purpose was entertainment. And while some people were offended by the article, an equal amount of students found humor in the piece.

The second point to be considered is that much of the humor inherent in Stein's satire lies in its sense of the appro-

pros. Hall monitors are looked upon by students as "the enemy." Much student complaint is directed not at school policies themselves, but at the attitude of various monitors. While *The Times* was by no means on a crusade to "bring about change," we did wish to confront a situation that has engendered concern. We chose to do so in a humorous manner.

The Times regrets any hurt feelings, but we issue no apology; we are a newspaper and stand by what we print. We encourage written response.

Judi Rimerman
Editor-in-Chief

Abortion Article Unfair

This letter is being written in response to the Opinions article concerning abortion. Simon Chin, are you a female? I'm not implying you can't have an opinion on this issue, but I feel it was wrong for a male student to write this article.

The male population will never know the feeling of having an unwanted baby growing inside of them. They will never understand the mental anguish a woman could suffer if she carried to term a baby that she could not care for. They will never have the nauseating feeling overcome them when they find out they are pregnant and do not want to be.

"Life is the most precious gift in the universe. Is it ours to throw away?" I agree with this. However, the question is, "Is it fair that a predominantly male Supreme Court make the decision of what is right or wrong?" I think not!

Tracy Persson

PORT PHOTO SUPPLIES

Michael Gross, Pres.

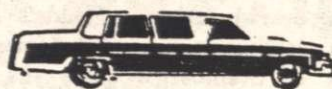
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