

# Correspondence

## "The Question Is Peril"

To the Editors: Re: "A View of the World," *Worldview*, November. There were more questions than peril in that brief item ("The Question Is Peril") about the National Council of Churches condemning the United States for deporting Haitians.

The first question that comes to mind is, if it is the Haitian Government that is jailing or killing Haitians, why did the NCC condemn the U.S. for "violation of human rights"? Why not a resolution against the Haitian Government?

Secondly, the implications of that resolution and the article (The U.S. cannot deport illegal aliens unless it will guarantee their safety) are staggering. For example, it is entirely possible that a country that is already overpopulated will not want its refugees back; all the government has to do is threaten them and the U.S. is stymied. Or if the U.S. must guarantee the safety of all refugees from everywhere, the U.S. is right back to being "Policeman of the World." The NCC would be the first to condemn the U.S. for even trying to play that role.

The United States does have a *moral* right to enforce its immigration laws—the most generous in the world. Controlling the borders is a basic responsibility of government in any country. The NCC and, unfortunately, *Worldview's* correspondents, have muddied the issue: Deportation and persecution are not the same thing. If an illegal immigrant is likely to be persecuted in his home country, the U.S. has always offered to deport him (or her) to any third country that will accept him (or her) as a legal immigrant.

The choice of who comes in, and how many at a time, must remain within each country—and the United States is not an exception. For a government to abdicate that control is morally irresponsible, for an open border in an overpopulated world is an invitation to destruction. It is suicide.

The United States will continue to take in as many political and economic refugees as it can without endangering its citizens, to whom it owes *primary* responsibility. The present administration has some ambivalence about its *right* to enforce the law, which is unfor-

unate. It is teetering on the ledge of a high building, and the National Council of Churches is saying, "Jump!"

Sharon Lynn

*The Environmental Fund  
Washington, D.C.*

To the Editors: We are extremely concerned by the alarmist, overly simplistic, historically and legally inaccurate response by the Environmental Fund to the item, "The Question Is Peril" in "A View of the World."

As legal counsel representing the National Council of Churches in their concern for Haitian refugees, the International Human Rights Law Group for the past several months has been investigating allegations of denial of due process and violations of basic human rights. It is evident from a thorough examination of the situation that the U.S. Government, in its present treatment of Haitian refugees seeking political asylum, is acting in contravention of constitutional principles, federal statutes, administrative regulations and obligations imposed by international treaty. This disregard for domestic and international standards of fair and just treatment of refugees poses potentially dangerous consequences for Haitians who may be unjustly deported.

Apparently, the Fund, as well as the Immigration and Naturalization Service, has proceeded not from an analysis of the facts involved or the legal obligations imposed, but from a theoretical premise that the very arrival of these refugees on our shores poses an irreconcilable conflict of interest and inherent danger to the U.S. public. This posture permits neither an analysis of cause nor a prescription for solution—only a continuation of the problem. We respond to the major points raised in the Fund's letter in light of our factual investigation and legal analysis of the current situation in Miami.

1. Initially, it should be noted that the National Council of Churches has already filed a complaint against the Haitian Government for its violations of human rights with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States in May, 1976. New information continues to be submitted as it is received. It now becomes apparent that international censure will be necessary to force the

(Continued on page 57)

## WORLDVIEW

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of *Worldview* is to place public policies, particularly in international affairs, under close ethical scrutiny. The Council on Religion and International Affairs, which sponsors the journal, was founded in 1914 by religious and civic leaders brought together by Andrew Carnegie. It was mandated to work toward ending the barbarity of war, to encourage international cooperation, and to promote justice. The Council is independent and nonsectarian. *Worldview* is an important part of the Council's wide-ranging program in pursuit of these goals.

*Worldview* is open to diverse viewpoints and encourages dialogue and debate on issues of public significance. It is edited in the belief that large political questions cannot be considered adequately apart from ethical and religious reflection. The opinions expressed in *Worldview* do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Council. Through *Worldview* the Council aims to advance the national and international exchange without which our understanding will be dangerously limited.

Philip A. Johnson, *Publisher*

#### Editorial Board:

Hans Morgenthau, *Chairman*  
William J. Barnds  
Eugene B. Borowitz  
Noel J. Brown.  
Jorge Dominguez  
James Finn  
J. Bryan Hehir  
Donald F. McHenry (on leave)  
Paul Ramsey  
Seymour Siegel  
Paul Sigmund  
Kenneth W. Thompson  
Howard Wriggins (on leave)

