

# *Human Rights*

Jimmy Carter may well go down in our book as the worst president of the century because of his administration's treatment of Alaska Native and American Indian issues. Gerald Ford was a great president, and Richard Nixon an outstanding one, if one compares how Native people fared under those administrations.

The most glaring example of the Carter administration's transgressions is the callous disregard shown for the human rights of Alaskan Eskimo people of arctic whaling villages. The President has surrounded himself with insensitive zealots who profess love for the wildlife of Alaska and who, paternalistically assume it needs elaborate protection from the aboriginal Native people who have peacefully and gently harvested their livelihood with skill and respect from the riches of the arctic for generations.

It is beyond our capability to comprehend how an Administration can demonstrate deep concern for the human rights of Soviet Jewry at the same time as it shows a complete lack of concern for the human rights of Arctic Eskimos.

This month, the Administration's Secretary of the Interior visited Alaska, sampled whale muktuk and pronounced it to be tasty, and assured villagers that the Carter Administration "has supported subsistence all along."

At the same time, the Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is making noises which indicate the federal government may attempt to enforce the grossly unjust quota on Native bowhead subsistence whaling.

Alaskan Eskimo whalers have been honest and forthright in dealing with the Carter Administration and the International Whaling Commission on the issue of subsistence whaling. Voluntarily, the arctic Native whalers abided with the whale quota this spring while at the same time taking the lead in bringing about scientific research to back their argument that Native whaling would not force extinction of the bowhead.

The Native whalers have not had the support of their government in dealing with the International Whaling Commission, which has no business in the first place in trying to regulate Eskimo subsistence whaling. It is abundantly clear to us that the self-righteous human rightists in the Carter Administration are politicians above all else, unacquainted with the idea of humans as animals that belong on the earth—an integral part of the global ecosystem. An attempt by the Carter Administration to enforce a quota would be further evidence of human rights hypocrisy among the President's men and women.

The Arctic Eskimos need to go whaling in order to maintain their physical and cultural well-being. Is not cultural survival a human right? Is not the traditional, customary subsistence harvesting of whales and other arctic food sources to feed Eskimo families also a human right?

An attempt by the Carter Administration to enforce the quota, while it would have a devastating effect on the lives of Alaskan Arctic Eskimo villages, would probably accomplish one significant act. It would force the hypocritical Carter human rightists out of the closet. Instead of secretly, gradually and callously destroying Arctic Eskimos through unjust national policy, the Carter environmentalists would be forced to mobilize federal troops against the Eskimos.

We expect that nothing short of dispatching federal troops to the arctic will succeed in stopping the Eskimos from engaging in their rightful livelihood. Then, maybe the true face of the Carter human rights hypocrites would be revealed. And then, maybe the Soviet Union would advocate on behalf of the human rights of Alaskan Eskimos.