

This insert contains the statements from the presentation of the First Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize. Extemporaneous remarks have been transcribed from recordings of the ceremony. Where a written text exists, it has been given in its entirety.

THE CARTER-MENIL
HUMAN RIGHTS
PRIZE

Introductions, Acceptances, and Statements

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The Rothko Chapel
December 10, 1986

On December 10, 1986, the 38th anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the First Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize and the Second Rothko Chapel Awards for Commitment to Truth and Freedom were presented in a joint ceremony at the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas.

Welcome

Thompson L. Shannon
Executive Director, Rothko Chapel

Good evening and welcome to Rothko Chapel.

In the sixteen year history of the Rothko Chapel, thousands of people from the four corners of the globe have come to this place: practitioners of Judaism—Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative; Christians—Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, all shades of Protestant; Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Bahais, Zoroastrians, humanists, agnostics, atheists. They have all come to this sacred place, and together they have become one human family. Many have come just for the private meditation this chapel provides. Many have come for solace. And many have come to engage in serious dialogue about Man's predicament and the problems of the world.

But no theme or focus has tied us all together throughout the chapel's history so much as human rights. So tonight, once again, we celebrate the magnificent affirmation of the human spirit in the face of dire circumstance and trouble.

It is a particular delight to welcome President Carter and to have the first presentation of the Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize to occur in this chapel. And we are all honored tonight by the presence of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who will give a keynote address at the conclusion of the awards presentations.

As you will see in your programs, Ambassador Donald Easum was to be our master of ceremonies; unfortunately he is ill, so we have asked Dr. Peter Wood, one of our Directors and a professor at Duke University, to be chairman.

Transcribed

Presentation of the Awards

President Jimmy Carter

Chairman, Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation

In our private and individual lives, all of us have a need to seek for heroes. In our own personal ambitions and life—analysis of what opportunities present themselves to us, the talents that we have, the unpredictable future—we need those on whom we can depend as a pattern. How can we live an exemplary existence? The measurement of that, the pattern for it, the guide for our own lives, comes from our heroes. How can we justify our dreams? How can we confirm our beliefs? How can we prove to ourselves that what we have been taught as children is true? How can we alleviate our doubts? How can we, in our own often naturally dormant lives, be inspired to action, sometimes even at the sacrifice of our own immediate well-being? We derive those inspirations from heroes. And tonight we are here to meet with some heroes who have been inspirational to everyone assembled.

I have never really suffered in my life—from deprivation, from fear, from the prospect of personal torture or suffering, or the abortion of my own abilities to speak as I wish or to move where I choose or to make choices from among a wide menu of opportunities. But I can imagine the unbelievable hopelessness that people feel when they are arrested without cause, found guilty without an adequate opportunity for defense, separated from their own families, and left in doubt about why this affliction came on them; held incommunicado without access to legal assistance or even the love and encouragement of one's own spouse or parents or children; incarcerated for long periods in jail without cause; tortured and sometimes even murdered by one's own government. The hopelessness in situations like that must be overwhelming enough to dampen a timid spirit and to subjugate those who are not filled with extreme personal courage and commitment.

There are times when, within one's own country, within one's own environment, a struggle to alleviate persecution can be successful, as was the case in our own nation a number of years ago in the civil rights movement, when the purpose of Martin Luther King, Jr. and others was to educate those around them—in their own congress, in their own government, among their own neighbors—about unwarranted persecution or deprivation. Recently we've seen an example of that in the Philippines where people rose up on their own and became able to prevail.

But there are other times when this is not possible, when a government is so powerful that it cannot be successfully challenged by its own persecuted citizens. And then what do you do? Well, tonight we have examples of what can be done. One of the obvious things is to be so heroic, so self-sacrificial, so persistent, so stubborn, so willing to accept punishment, that one's own government has to acknowledge the rightness of a cause, or, if that is impossible, so that the rest of the world can acknowledge the rightness of a cause and bring the pressure of public opinion on the persecutors themselves, because almost every persecuting power would like to put a good face forward to the rest of the world.

Even though we don't suffer ourselves, we can provide some sustenance, some acknowledgment, some awareness of the suffering of others. Amnesty International, the Lawyers' Committee on Human Rights, the Americas Watch, the Helsinki Watch, and other similar organizations around the world provide a stable opportunity for those of us who are private citizens to join in these kinds of efforts. And the fact that an imprisoned person or a tortured person or a deprived person or an isolated person knows that there are others who share with them their grief is a very powerful, beneficial factor.

And we must act in other ways. We must draw attention to heroism, attention to human rights deprivation or violations. We must publicize what is going on in places like South Africa or Central America or the Soviet Union or others. And we must honor those who exemplify the heroism which perhaps we ourselves have not personified, but which we certainly admire.

Tonight I can report to you that Mrs. de Menil and I have formed a very nice partnership. The Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation has been organized. And because of a long-standing commitment to the human rights cause, I am very proud to be her friend and partner. We have decided to give, every year, a major monetary award and to honor those, whom we have chosen with a lot of advice, who represent the heroes around the world in the field of human rights, those heroes who have been not only courageous but also effective in revealing and counteracting human rights abuses. And tonight it's my pleasure to give two awards, the first two annual awards of the Carter-Menil Foundation. Next year we'll go to Atlanta for the ceremony, and the following year to Paris because this is an international award. And we've been helped by those human rights organizations I just named to you, who have analyzed the situation throughout the world and

said, "These are those who are worth consideration." Through long and tedious talks and discussions and analyses, we've chosen the two recipients tonight. Sometimes there will be just one recipient of an annual award, not ever more than two. Either people or organizations.

The first award that I would like to give is to the *Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo*, or the Mutual Support Group. In Guatemala, a few years ago, Amnesty International and others said, "This is the most abhorrent example of human rights violations on earth." Literally thousands of people in that relatively small country were taken away in the middle of the night, never to be seen again; incarcerated or killed, often with their bodies mutilated. And those who perpetrated these crimes were the military of Guatemala, charged with the responsibility of protecting the people.

But there was a heroic group, I would say mostly women who had lost a husband or a young son or perhaps others, who said, "We will not stand for this any more." There had been other groups like this organized in Guatemala but because of direct attacks on them by the military, the secret police, their punishments were so severe that the groups disbanded. Not this group, known by the acronym GAM—*Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo*. And tonight, we are giving one of the Carter-Menil awards to this group. They have never yielded, even though their leaders were captured, mutilated, and assassinated. Some of the tiny children and teenage children of the leaders were killed. But the group never yielded. And tonight, I would like to ask Nineth Montenegro de Garcia to come forward.

I would like to read the award, and then Nineth de Garcia will respond.

The Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize

The Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation recognizes the exceptional courage and leadership of individuals and groups who further the cause of human rights around the world. For their courage and determination in bringing about answers and solutions to the human rights abuses in Guatemala, the Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize is presented to the Group for Mutual Support, known as GAM, on this 38th Anniversary of The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. December 10, 1986, The Rothko Chapel, Houston, Texas.

It is signed by me and Mrs. de Menil.

Transcribed

Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo

Acceptance by Nineth de Garcia

Thank you very much, and good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

I hope you understand that, as we are actually suffering the drama, the pain of our own flesh and blood, we cannot prepare speeches, we can only speak straight from the soul. We will speak of concrete truths even though they may be very hard and painful for us.

Believe us, citizens of the United States, that the drama, the anguish, the uncertainty of having one's loved one, the father of one's children, held prisoner or disappeared, is extremely painful—not to know where he is, to know that he has been subjected to cruel tortures, to know that he is being kept in secret jails. It would be preferable, we think, in the final analysis, if our family members were dead—we don't know if they are alive or dead—but it would be better if they were already dead, so that they could finally have respite from such crimes and from psychological and physical torture.

It is very ironic for me that we are celebrating "Human Rights Day" today. I wonder, what human rights are we celebrating when there are 40,000 Guatemalans either being held prisoner or who have disappeared and whose whereabouts are unknown, Guatemalans who have been abducted violently by the Guatemalan army? We are truly anguished, because we had hopes and expectations that with the arrival of a civilian government the situation would change for us. However, we have not received any answers, and even worse, the disappearances, the political assassinations continue to occur in my country.

It only remains to say that I hope that you, as mothers, as fathers, as husbands and wives, understand the pain, the anguish that we feel, and the moral obligation that you, the people of the United States, have to us, the people of Guatemala.

I should just like to end by saying that no one is ignorant of the fact that the government of the United States also plays a role with the economic and military aid it has given to the different dictatorships that my country has had.

Thank you very much.

Transcribed and translated from Spanish

President Carter

The other Carter-Menil award is given to a man who has become world famous for his heroism. His early life was one of activism in the Soviet Union. One of the first men who spoke out in defense of Nobel Prize winner Sakharov is our honoree tonight. He is a noted physicist. When the Helsinki agreement was consummated under President Gerald Ford with 35 signatures in 1975, immediately thereafter there was organized a group in the Soviet Union to assure that their own nation complied with the agreement that they had signed, particularly involving human rights. And there was a famous group, as you well know, who comprised this Moscow group. They chose as their leader Yuri Orlov because of his intellect, because of his heroism, because of his leadership qualities. For his activities as Chairman of the Moscow Helsinki Group, Dr. Orlov was sentenced to a long prison term in 1977.

In July, there was no doubt in my mind or Mrs. Dominique de Menil's that Yuri Orlov should be one of the winners of our first prize. We had no idea that he would be here in person. We thought that we would have to give him the award in absentia. But in October we found, on the day that we announced the prize, that he would indeed be released from the Soviet Union.

We are delighted to have him here this evening, a wonderful hero who exemplifies those hundreds of people still imprisoned in the Soviet Union because of their outspoken condemnation of human rights abuses. And I would like to ask Dr. Yuri Orlov to come forward.

Transcribed

Yuri Orlov

I am grateful to the Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation for the tribute paid me today. President Carter will go down in history as the person who was the first to raise human rights to the level of government. His open support played an immense role in releasing political prisoners. Under pressure, chiefly from Western public opinion, this year in the U.S.S.R. some 30 people were released from imprisonment ahead of schedule or pardoned.

The KGB, however, is getting its revenge on those who still languish in labor camp. Here in a note I have just received, secretly smuggled out of Perm Labor Camp Number 36, it says that after the Reykjavik summit, "The regimen in the labor camp became more brutal and continues to deteriorate."

In the last four years in the Soviet political labor camps and prisons, 20 people have died, 15 of them in the last two and a half years. The greatest loss has been the death of Anatoly Marchenko, writer and Helsinki monitor, who perished in Christopol Prison. He did not live to see the day of his release.

What can we do in this situation? I have three proposals:

It would help tremendously if organizations like Doctors Without Frontiers, Doctors of the World, and Doctors for Human Rights, and other medical groups, would lobby for the inspection of labor camps, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals in the U.S.S.R. Let it be under conditions of reciprocity, that is, so that Soviet doctors could inspect American prison facilities as well. We should also urge the International Committee of the Red Cross to do the same; after all, we in the Soviet labor camps repeatedly demanded that the Red Cross be permitted to visit the camps.

I also appeal to the American Bar Association to attempt to gain permission to observe political trials in the U.S.S.R.—again, under conditions of reciprocity, with access for Soviet lawyers in U.S. courts.

Thirdly, I would like to read an appeal made today by members of the Moscow Helsinki Group:

Anatoly Marchenko, writer and human rights activist, founding member of the Helsinki Group, died in a prison hospital after four months on a hunger strike. He demanded a universal amnesty for political prisoners. He demanded an end to the beating of prisoners. He demanded that the guards who had brutally beaten him in 1983 be

punished. He demanded a visit with his wife and son, whom he had not seen in three years. He declared a hunger strike until the end of the Vienna Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In an appeal to the Vienna Conference on August 4, 1986, Marchenko wrote:

The Soviet government uses prisons and labor camps to crush human dignity by applying physical and mental torture against those who oppose official ideology and policies.

Gentlemen, you do not seem to be able to find a way to demand that the U.S.S.R. live up to its obligations. Therefore it is up to me, alone, to demand what had been guaranteed in the agreement signed by your governments.

Anatoly Marchenko never used or advocated violence. He was destroyed by the regime as its ideological opponent.

We appeal to all the leaders of the countries that signed the Helsinki Final Act. In the U.S.S.R., we know the names of at least 800 political prisoners. There has not been a political amnesty in 30 years. Political prisoners in the U.S.S.R. are not people who have resorted to violence. We call on you to demand from the Soviet government an immediate and universal amnesty for political prisoners. We call on you to use sanctions against the U.S.S.R. if it refuses to declare an amnesty for political prisoners. The Concluding Document of the Vienna Conference cannot be signed a demand is not formulated in it for a universal political prisoners' amnesty in all participating states.

The situation of a number of Soviet political prisoners is a special cause for alarm now. Academician Andrei Sakharov, Dr. Anatoly Koryagin, poet Viktor Nikipelov, Mustafa Dzhemilev, an activist for the return of the Crimean Tartars to their homeland, Hebrew teacher Iosef Begun, all the prisoners of the special regimen labor camp—Levko Lukyanenko, Ivan Kandyba—and others. We cannot allow them to meet the fate of Anatoly Marchenko!

Ludmilla Alexeyeva
Yuri Orlov
Anatoly Shcharansky

The following have added their names to the statement:

Nadiya Svetlichna and Nina Strokata, members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group; Tomas Venclova and Eitan Finkleshtein, members of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group; and Shagen Arutyunyan, a member of the Armenian Helsinki Group.

Thank you.

Translated from the Russian