

of others. SAVE SOVIET JEWRY is an important lead, but not a sufficiently large national objective. HUMAN RIGHTS IN EASTERN EUROPE is a more humanely stated program.

Such a program should not entail the reopening of the cold war or cold war rhetoric. It should be a campaign of careful investigation, publicity, and diplomatic bargaining. It would express quite naturally both the presuppositions of détente and the actual realities of competition between authoritarian institutions and institutions of civil liberties.

The Soviets have no hesitation about announcing their own revolutionary aims in respect to our civilization. We need not be embarrassed to note, quietly but unmistakably, our confidence in the de facto revolutionary power of our own institutions of free speech, civil liberties, and due process. Our society is flawed, and is in no position to preach or to missionarize. Yet the ideas established here are, even despite ourselves, a dynamic leaven in human consciousness. The shots fired at Lexington were "shots heard round the world." There is today scarcely a regime anywhere that does not try to picture itself, for public propaganda at least, as "democratic," as a defender of "human rights," as a vehicle of "due process." Even when such claims are hypocritical, they are a tribute paid to central principles of the human spirit, principles larger than East or West, since nations everywhere now profess them.

At some remote time in the future this planet will be even more interdependent and interrelated than it is at present. We are obliged so to work now that its organization then, whatever unforeseen forms it might take, will hew closer to recognizable achievements of freedoms of speech, person, and movement than to patterns of state authoritarianism. To that end we must use the moral means of persuasion still possible to us within our own system, and now possible to us in the atmosphere of hard bargaining and critical mutual dealings that constitute détente. Détente does not mean—need not mean—*laissez-faire*. It ought to mean hard concrete bargaining.

At the very least we should monitor very closely every act of censorship, imprisonment, torture, economic penalty, confinement for "psychological care," house arrest, abridgment of publication or free speech, or other such assault in Eastern Europe (and in other parts of the world). Often there will be little that citizens of one nation can do about the plight of citizens of another nation. But one thing they can do is to assure the world that no suppression of human liberties can occur in secret, anonymously, without publication of the story. If authoritarian states

insist upon their own methods, they will at least have to bear the cost of seeing those methods announced to the world.

Organizations like PEN, Amnesty International, and many others active in this field deserve support. Their findings and systematic inquiries need a larger public.

A friend of mine recently returned to his native land in Eastern Europe, a writer and a professor; he begged me to form a group to monitor his fate and that of his countrymen. He didn't know whether he would be thrown immediately into prison, or confined to hard labor, forbidden to teach or to write. He only knew he must now, despite everything, return (like Bonhoeffer) to share the fate of his countrymen. Another friend of mine, a distinguished young novelist, escaped his country with his wife some years ago—but could not bring their two infants. The children now grow up without their parents. The silent anguish of his wife is too high a price; these stupid cruelties must end.

Let us hope that the cutting edge of FREE SOVIET JEWRY becomes HUMAN RIGHTS IN EASTERN EUROPE. Indeed, wherever around the world negotiation and cultural history give such a cry teeth that bite, let us be hardheaded and pragmatic and utter it. It is not our task to reform the world. But it is within our power and our duty to make specific cases part of any deals in which we engage. Every concrete instance of relief sets a future pattern. Every instance of publicity raises the price authorities must pay for the suppression of elementary liberties.

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EXCURSUS VI

Loyalty: Political, Personal, Pernicious

Do you admire the kid who rats on his friends, or the one who looks the other way? The stoolie whose evidence allows the police to crack a case, or the silent one who accepts imprisonment to protect his crooked colleagues? The West Point code of honor which demands that one report serious infractions of the rules, or the Mafia code that imposes silence? The man who deceives to protect the President, or the one who chooses another alternative? John Mitchell, or H. R. Haldeman?

In the August issue of *Harper's* Sidney Zion

faced some of these questions when he counterposed his own attitudes—composed of street loyalty, affection for bosses he had known, appreciation of patronage, willingness to swear false witness for a friend—with those of an effective, relentless, morally committed, crusading prosecutor Herbert Stern. Part of a conversation they had about Zion's children went like this:

"What would you tell them to do if they saw a classmate cheating in school?" Stern asked.

"I'd tell them to shut up about it, it's none of their business."

"Ah, . . . Then what if they saw a murder?"

"Herbie," I said, "ratting on friends isn't the same as letting a killer get away, don't you think?"

"Ah, but how do you make the distinction?"

Zion doesn't make the distinction. After floundering around on all sides of the question, he says he can't square it. He knows that the kind of loyalty he values leads to special privilege and supports bossism, which is a threat to representative government. But he cannot think his way through to a conclusion.

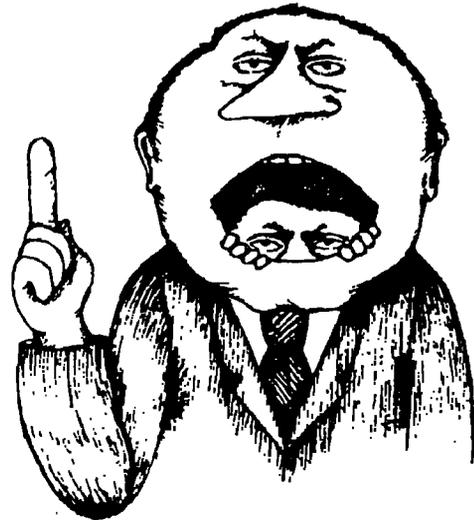
Distinctions are in order, however. Traditional moral casuistry, now neglected and abused, would distinguish between seriousness of the event, purpose of the act, knowledge of the participant, etc. The same principles applied to various situations would yield different results. Suppose we move from cheating in schools and ward politics to the Government of the United States and ask what we think about personal loyalty, political loyalty, and bearing false witness.

William Safire, who is frequently incontinent on the Op-Ed pages of the *New York Times*, liberally dispensing advice and exhortation, recently asked some of these questions—and then answered them. His answer put him on the same side of the issue as Richard Nixon. In the Presidential transcripts, one recalls, Nixon expressed admiration for a couple of stonewallers, i.e., perjurers, and contempt for Jeb Magruder, who, under pressure, showed he had no, uh, character, i.e., he decided to tell all to the investigators.

Mr. Safire sees Mr. Nixon as a loyal, sentimental, compassionate leader who intended to "protect our people, if we can." And this he attempted to do, according to Safire, on a personal rather than a principled basis. "Mr. Nixon's choice was to be loyal to Bob Haldeman and disloyal to John Mitchell." And how did these two loyalists respond? Called upon to testify on matters that could directly incriminate the President, "Mitchell, at no small risk, came forward, his memory conveniently fuzzy on most matters, but

reaching heights of total recall in taking the President out of the [Howard Hunt] payment chain." And Haldeman? He informed the Judiciary Committee that, if called to testify, he would remain silent as he is legally entitled to do.

Safire's conclusion? "Students of loyalty and gratitude could not help but observe that it was the double-crossed John Mitchell who stood up for Richard Nixon while the well-counselled H. R. Haldeman stood mute."



Janice Stapleton

Students of loyalty could make other observations. There was spun out from the White House a sleazy network of corrupt and corrupting agents. They acted in disregard of the law and in defiance of the law, and of the trust invested in their offices by the American people. Their loyalty was not to the Constitution, the law, the mainstream of traditional political action, historically grounded ideals, or to the American people. It was to themselves and their corrupt masters. One can, of course, make distinctions even between the people involved in a corrupt administration and feel compassion for people who have been brought low from high places. But it is a dangerous frivolity to think we should honor or admire those who—through either perjury or silence—obstruct all that is meant by the Watergate investigation and the proper finding of evidence.

If honor among thieves is still honor, thieves are still thieves. And when the larceny involves the highest officials in the country depriving the American people of a good part of their legacy, we can ill afford to invoke the admirable elements of street loyalty or the elastic measures of ward politics as if they were applicable. For they are not.

JF