

overwhelming majority of Americans. It is not too much to say that many thousands of resisters and deserters are now being penalized for having opposed the war before it was popular to do so. No doubt there are others who acted out of less honorable motives. Proponents of a general amnesty argue that it is neither possible nor appropriate for the government to explore individual motivations and intentions that prompted decisions made five or eight years ago. Whether they wish to exercise it or not, these tens of thousands of Americans should have the right to come home again.

We are faced simultaneously with the issues of Watergate and the American exiles. If policy is ruled by mood, people will choose between strictness and liberality, perhaps even between compassion and vindictiveness. If we reflect upon principles, however, the distinction between the two issues is not hard to make. There is no serious questioning of the legitimacy of the laws Mr. Nixon has violated. The Vietnam resisters opposed policies and supporting laws that have been overwhelmingly delegitimated by the people and their representatives. In a democracy that is a very crucial difference. Those who see the difference should not be distracted or inhibited by the quite different considerations pertaining to Watergate.

Fortunately, some do press on, undistracted and uninhibited by momentary moods. Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General, Paul Moore, Episcopal Bishop of New York, and others have recently formed Americans for Amnesty (235 East 49th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017). The group is headed by Mrs. Louise Ransom, whose son, Michael, was an officer killed in combat in Vietnam. The amnesty issue has been with us for a long time, too long. Many people are tired of it. But those who take their cues from what is right rather than from what is faddish should not be deterred. "Wars and Watergate have mired us down," Ramsey Clark has written. "To restore our faith we as Americans desperately need to do something decent for a change. Amnesty is a decent thing to do."

RJN

### How Many?

The last time, more than two years ago, Mr. Nixon addressed the issue of amnesty for Vietnam-related offenses, he said his views "remain exactly the same." "We cannot provide forgiveness for them. . . . The price is a criminal penalty for disobeying the laws of the United States. If they want to return to the United States they must pay

the penalty. If they don't want to return, they are certainly welcome to stay in any country that welcomes them." He spoke of "those few hundreds who went to Canada or Sweden or someplace else, and chose to desert their country because they had a higher morality."

Advocates of a general and unconditional amnesty suggest we are dealing with somewhat more than a "few hundreds." Using government and independent sources, Americans for Amnesty comes up with what may be the shocking figure of 534,700 Americans "in need of universal, unconditional amnesty." (Meaning that every offense would be legally blotted out except those offenses that would be punishable under criminal or civil law in the nonmilitary world.)

The figure breaks down in this way: There were 52,143 draft resisters during the Indochina war. 7,443 of these were convicted and classified as felons. 3,666 were imprisoned for up to five years. 39,000 cases were referred to the Department of Justice as draft "violators." 5,700 more face outstanding indictments and further legal action. In addition to the 52,143 there are unknown numbers of young men—believed to be in the thousands—who never registered for the draft at all and are subject to prosecution if discovered.

Then there are 32,557 members of the Armed Forces "at large" and listed as AWOL or as "deserters." The Pentagon has another list on which it includes only those whose whereabouts have been determined through intelligence information. As one commentator notes, "Obviously, large numbers of deserters have been remiss in reporting changes in address."

The largest number in need of amnesty, according to Americans for Amnesty, is the 450,000 young men handicapped by a "less than honorable" discharge. Most of these discharges, they report, resulted from 550,000 courts martial for sundry military offenses, many under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice ("all other acts prejudicial to good order and discipline"), which has since been ruled "unconstitutionally vague" by the Washington Court of Appeals.

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## EXCURSUS III

### Brazilianization of the Hemisphere?

Latin America today presents a gloomy picture for the American radical, liberal, or civil libertarian conservative. Thirteen years after the start

of the Alliance for Progress there are fewer constitutional democracies and more repressive military regimes than before. The early Kennedy era produced books with titles like *The Twilight of the Dictators*. Fifteen years after Castro's advent to power *The Coming Explosion in Latin America*—to cite another book title of the early sixties—has been a long time in coming.

No other country has followed Castro's example, and Cuba itself remains heavily dependent on Soviet economic support (recent high sugar prices have temporarily reduced that dependence) and, despite the announcement that elections will soon be held in one remote eastern province, is still dominated totally by the personality and often erratic policy of the leftist *caudillo* Fidel Castro. Chile, after three years of "the transition to socialism" has now begun a process of "Brazilianization" far more vigorous and repressive than anything seen in Brazil since the military took over there ten years ago. Peru's military rulers, while more radical in social orientation, have not hesitated to close magazines and newspapers and expel writers and intellectuals with inconvenient opinions.

Experts on Latin America, whether academic, governmental, or ecclesiastical (for example, the Catholic bishops at Medellin in 1968), underestimated the strength of the forces of stability, the lack of revolutionary potential among the peasantry and newly arrived urban migrants, and the response of the military to the recognized need for modernization. They did not learn the lesson from the history of revolutions elsewhere: Fundamental changes in social, political, and economic structures come only in periods of great upheaval, of foreign and domestic warfare, of total internal collapse of the psychological and physical capability of the government. Rather, experts of all sorts projected their own vision of the ideal society on a continent that appeared to be in ferment and spoke of the inevitability of revolution, or at least of drastic social and economic change.

Now that quite different changes have taken place and the hopes raised by the Cuban revolution or the Alliance for Progress have proven to be exaggerated, the response is to put the blame on U.S. policy. Sharing with the Kennedy liberals what Senator Fulbright nearly ten years ago called "the illusion of American omnipotence," both liberals and radicals are distressed by Latin America's failure to conform to their expectations. They attribute that failure to U.S. measures to isolate Cuba and to the American programs of assistance to the Latin American military. The forces of stability (and of repression) are thus "propped up" by U.S. aid pro-

grams, which, according to movies like *State of Siege*, are principally devoted to instructing the Latin American military on the very latest techniques of torture. The Nixon "low profile" policy is viewed as a more sophisticated and subtle way to achieve the same objectives. Crucial to the Nixon strategy is the promotion of what Gary MacEoin in his new book on Chile, *No Easy Peace*, calls the "Brazilian prototype which President Nixon has offered to all Latin Americans as the direction they must ultimately follow." Brazilian "subimperialism" will thus replace the direct action of the United States in opposing democracy, freedom, and national and continental liberation.

Apart from a U.S. decision to support it, the Brazilian model does have attractions for the new breed of Latin American *tecnico* and development-minded man. With a growth rate exceeding 10 per cent per annum for the last six years, Brazil is on its way to becoming a great power and is initiating aid programs of its own. Brazil's poor are receiving a reduced share of the national income, but their absolute income is rising as wage readjustments in excess of the cost of living give them some part in the rising prosperity. The middle classes (which in Latin America are not in the middle but in the upper one-third to one-half) are rapidly increasing their consumption and support the regime; since the repression is aimed principally at students, churchmen, and intellectuals, it does not affect them.

A closer look at Latin America will reveal that there is nothing inevitable about the spread of authoritarian rightist military regimes like that in Brazil. Peru is ruled by a military group that has maintained the momentum of its nationalist and left-reformist impulses since 1968. Mexico has been able to maintain almost as successful an economic record as Brazil for a much longer period. In the process it has reduced the military to one pressure group among many, alternately placated and controlled by the dominant political party. Constitutional democracy now seems to have taken firm root in Venezuela, where until 1963 no elected government had finished out its term in the entire history of the country. Colombia has recently elected a reform-minded liberal in its first presidential elections since the dismantling of the National Front, by which the traditional parties had excluded all others from power since 1958. Costa Rica continues to function as a model for civil liberties, constitutionalism, and democracy. Argentina is making efforts to reestablish free government in the midst of enormous difficulties posed by extremists of Left and Right. The Argentine case also demonstrates

that military governments are not necessarily any longer lasting or more effective than civilian governments.

If there are more authoritarian regimes in Latin America now than in the early 1960's, that fact must be viewed in light of the notable lack of democratic regimes throughout the Third World. The realities suggest that internal factors such as civilian incapacity, military monopoly of forces, and enormous economic problems have much more to do with the prevalence of military rule than does U.S. policy. The last fifteen years of U.S.-Latin American relations demonstrated that, aside from some small client states in the Caribbean and Central America, there is little that the United States can do to alter the fundamental direction of national development in Latin America. The kind of reverse missionary complex which holds that if only U.S. influence is removed everything would be just fine is just as simplistic as its predecessor.

The Latin American nations are so different, their problems so immense, that no easy prescription of democracy, socialism, or development-oriented military rule provides an evident solution. Some obvious modifications of U.S. policy have been postponed too long, such as the reopening of relations with Cuba and the ending of AID training programs for foreign police. But in general our attitude should be one of recognizing the complexity and diversity of Latin America (while maintaining an explicit preference for regimes that maintain democratic procedures and civil liberties). That is a wiser attitude than that of seeing Latin America as inevitably and necessarily undergoing a process of Cubanization, Americanization, or Brazilianization.

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## **EXCURSUS IV**

### **Africa Calls for a Commitment**

For six years now drought and famine have drawn a noose tighter and tighter around the people in that broad band of countries known as the Sahel (an Arabic word meaning border), including those countries which border on the southern edge of the Sahara. In the best of times the existence of these people was marginal. In the

north, where the desert touches more fertile land, nomads have wandered for centuries. The Touareg and Peul people, driving their flocks and herds before them, dressed in traditional costume, riding camels, ignoring the boundaries of Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, and Chad, have wended their way in traditional paths.

Since the *sécheresse* the flocks and herds have dwindled and died. The nomadic people have moved farther south to seek food and water from the more settled places. Here the drought has dealt devastation as well, and the crops have failed for lack of sufficient water. Nor do the sedentary people welcome the nomads when they arrive. In earlier times the nomads, a Caucasian people, had dominated and oppressed the black tribes among whom they moved and did business, trading meat for other staples at a good profit. Sometimes they even captured or bought the black inhabitants as slaves. Today slavery and the slave trade still go on quietly below the surface of modern change in Africa. But the blacks, the objects of the slave trade, are resentful and angry about the world's concern for the nomads. They have no special love for the nomads, no special sense of urgency about their plight.

In addition, emphasis on the present emergency overlooks the doomed quality of everyday life in the Sahel. Hunger and disease are the staples of the daily life of the African there even when no drought threatens. Since there is little storage capacity for food and grains, few all-weather roads, fewer transport vehicles, limited railroad trackage and boxcars, there is no commercial network that would facilitate the distribution of sufficient food, even if the land could produce it.

Everyone has malaria. In Niger the dispensary reports do not even list malaria among the reportable diseases because it is expected that all the patients will have it. What is listed? Leprosy is not uncommon, epidemics of cholera come and go, measles, all the more devastating because of the malnutrition of the bodies it seizes upon, syphilis, tuberculosis, and of course the exotic and parasitic diseases we never see in our own climate and culture.

These are poor countries with a history of bitter exploitation going back for centuries. The colonial countries did little to provide a base upon which the native population could build independence. In Niger there are 65 physicians for 5.5 million people. And only 14 of them are Nigerian! The largest hospital in Niamey has 700 beds. It has one EKG machine. And that is the only one in Niger! There are only four patients