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Jaworski's Nightmare: A Rebirth Of Nazism

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This writer does not personally know Leon Jaworski, the man President Nixon has named to succeed Archibald Cox as special prosecutor for Watergate and associated crimes. But one thing is certain: Jaworski came back from helping prosecute the Nazi criminals after World War II with a deep and burning hatred of the Hitler men and a nagging worry that Nazism could happen here.

Fifteen years later his fears had not lessened.

"Apathy and indifference to a course of wrongdoing of political leaders and acquiescence in their evil practices can prove to be as helpful as active assistance," he said in 1961. "... it was the business of each German citizen to know what went on in his nation." Yet, he said, many Germans remained silent "when opposition should have been sounded." Jaworski has asked himself time and again whether Americans will always have the will needed to expose and oppose leaders who go astray.

He regards as especially dangerous those leaders who take illegal actions in the name of patriotism. That is no mitigation, he has said. "Many of the Nazis — in the wrongs they committed — were inspired by a sense of patriotism ... when the means employed are wrong, the results cannot be of lasting good."

Jaworski believes he and all of us have learned from Hitler what institutions must be kept strong and unimpaired if we are to keep this nation from heading in the direction of Nazism:

A free press willing to unmask demagogues and tyrants.

A strong judiciary willing to strike down oppressive official acts.

Churches which fight for love and against hate.

Home and schools which teach us regard for our fellow man as well as the folly of rule by force.

"It is well to take an honest inventory," Jaworski has said. "In the early 1920s, there swept across the United States a movement in the form of a secret order based on prejudice, hate and oppression. The participants marched, threatened and flogged; they seized power and exercised it with flagrant disregard of the constitutional rights of American citizens ... They infiltrated public office — even judicial office. They took an oath of allegiance to their organization in conflict with the true principles of Americanism. . . It was not surprising that the less desirable elements of our citizenship found this order so much to their liking but it was alarming that good men, righteous Christian citizens, joined this movement."

Jaworski went on to say that even though the organization clearly advertised that it sought to take the law into its own hands and that it stood for principles which violate our constitutional guarantees "still good men joined." There were, says Jaworski, "floggings and burning crosses and eerie parades and secret plots. And still good men joined. . . One shudders at the thought of what this movement would have done to our land had it not been checked."

But Jaworski has written "... is it not true that we still find in our midst ... movements predicated on some of the same diabolical principles that formed the background of Nazism? ... So intent do we become to force our views on others that at times our adversaries are smeared and blackened and even subjected to economic reprisal."

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