



Letters to the Editor

NYTimes Of Mr. Nixon and a National 'Trauma'

JAN 22 1974

To the Editor:

I am somewhat dismayed to read that many Americans are reluctant to accept the idea of impeachment because of its possible traumatic effect on the country. This seems to me a shortsighted and potentially dangerous attitude.

Impeachment is the only constitutional safeguard that exists as a curb on the actions of a President. To set it aside without providing a replacement would be to give a future President carte blanche for any actions he might care to take. He becomes in effect a monarch, subject only to recall every four years. He could indeed commit murder or take such actions during his term as to postpone or eliminate further elections. And if there is no impeachment procedure, what is to stop him?

Congress, in the present case, may decide that there are or are not grounds for impeachment. But I hope profoundly that this decision will be made on the facts of the case and not on some fear of a trauma to the nation. Better a trauma now than a tyrant later.

EDWARD M. GOLDBERGER
Tenafly, N. J., Jan. 15, 1974

To the Editor:

As a practicing psychoanalyst, I would like to comment on Douglas Hallett's perceptive Jan. 6 Op-Ed article, entitled, "Mr. Nixon, the Would-Be Kennedy."

Using convincing examples, Mr. Hallett ably supports his central thesis that both in behavior and in speech Mr. Nixon appears to be obsessed by the Kennedy image and by his desire to adopt it. The only flaw in Mr. Hallett's article appears at the close, when he writes: "Richard Nixon has

had only to be himself, and to communicate who he is and what he is doing, to be accepted by the American people."

Here, alas, is the rub, for to all appearances Mr. Nixon cannot be himself, there being no authentic or identifiable self there. Psychologically he seems to fall within the definition of the *As If* person, the individual who, seeking to cover over a hollowness within, decks himself out in the shreds and patches of other personalities and thinks and talks and acts "as if" he were they.

It is not only with pieces of Kennedy that he has sought to patch over his porous identity; he has made similar use of the words, the gestures and the behavior of other impressive models, notably Churchill and de Gaulle. This is the real tragedy of Richard Nixon and of the people he was elected to serve: He cannot "communicate who he is" for, like all *As If* persons, he simply does not know.

BERNARD C. MEYER, M.D.
New York, Jan. 6, 1974

The writer is clinical professor of psychiatry, the Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

To the Editor:

The climax for me came last Sunday when Mr. Nixon's opponents wouldn't even let him worship his God in peace. Where will it all end?

Your newspaper reported that the "cat-calls and boos" were heard plainly all during the church service when Mr. and Mrs. Nixon were worshipping at the San Clemente Presbyterian Church. No matter what he has done or not done, when in the name of common decency is this country going to stop tormenting this man?

ORIN R. DUDLEY
White Plains, Jan. 8, 1974