

More on Watergate . . .

Watergate, APR 28 1973

If any good comes from the Watergate Scandal, it may be in the area of treatment of convicted criminals. Some time ago, President Nixon urged "justice without pity" excoriating soft-headed judges who impose short sentences. However, on April 23, 1973, Henry Kissinger urged us to have "compassion for these [Watergate-involved] people" wondering whether an "orgy of recriminations" is wise.

I agree with Dr. Kissinger as I have compassion "for these people" just as I and the so-called "soft-headed" judges have compassion for much less financially and socially blessed defendants most often convicted of far less serious crimes. Orgies of recrimination are far less in order for the vast majority of criminals yet the administration clearly advocates compassion-less penalties.

STUART STILLER.

Washington.

Your criticism of our beloved President Nixon—as we find it in The Washington Post yesterday, April 22 and today—is a disservice to America.

KARLIS BILZENS.

Washington.

We have heard it all so often: crime in the streets; law and order; drugs and sex; the permissive society; and none have been more articulate in reminding us of our ills than Billy Graham and Richard M. Nixon. Indeed, the President has come to institutionalize the Sunday morning church service in the White House, presumably as a kind of symbolic statement of what is good and right and how we, the citizens of the republic, can imbibe in his vision of that goodness. And now Watergate.

We have begun to hear from Mr. Nixon, however inadequately, but I have yet to see or hear the righteous indignation of the Reverend Billy Graham to this massive moral corruption of our public life. Where is Billy Graham when we really need him? Will his voice be added to those seeking to drive the money-changers from the White House?

WALTER HAUSER.

Ivy, Va.

Dr. Kissinger advocates "compassion" for those persons responsible for the Watergate bugging and other politically organized activities. He questions whether, as Americans, "we can afford an orgy of recriminations".

Compassion (according to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary) implies pity coupled with an urgent desire to aid or spare.

It seems strange that, on one hand, administration officials should deny amnesty (a form of compassion) to persons of ordinary position who behaved as they did in the Vietnam War and, on the other hand, advocate compassion for persons of high select position who behaved as they did (and still do) in the Watergate affair.

It must be that the double standard is "operative" and acceptable in the latter case—for the good of the country. Oh, how the good of the country could be served by some truly moral leadership.

GEORGE F. SCHILLINGER.

Arlington.

I have read with great interest Mr. Kissinger's comment that "one should ask for compassion for these people", when discussing the Watergate situation. But why, Mr. Kissinger? Because the people involved are powerful? Because they meant well? Because they knew what is best for us?

Most Americans must now feel compassion for each other because we have all been tarred and feathered by the "Watergate mess". Justice can be tempered by mercy and I do hope mercy is shown but if the truth is a sad one, most of us will feel shame.

HELEN HART.

Alexandria.

The Watergate incident may well be the worst scandal of our time in these United States, and what makes it even more distressing is the doubt it places on the integrity of our democratic system since it involves so many men close to the President.

However, it could turn out to be a blessing in disguise for, now more than ever, it points to the urgent need for a revision of just how monies are obtained for the election of our officials. I am not only referring to presidential elections but to the elections of all public officials—city, state or national. No elected official should receive contributions from any source, individual or corporate, which could, at some later date, be used as leverage to demand favors. Campaign expenses should be paid by the government thus making the politician totally responsible to the people who have placed them in office to work for the people's best interests.

If just a one dollar tax were placed on every man, woman, and child in the United States, it should certainly be sufficient to pay for all such elections. What better way could we spend a dollar than to ensure the continued democratic process that we now enjoy.

Now is the time for all groups, civic, consumer, and charitable, in the United States, to unite as one and back legislation of this nature. It will take this type of action to defeat the private interest lobbies who are today benefiting from the present system. Now, today, while the issue is at hand, is the time to demand such action. Tomorrow may be too late!

WILLIAM ISAACSON.

Rockville.

The closing paragraph of this morning's Post (April 19) story regarding the Watergate, that Mr. Nixon and his aides are retiring to Camp David, brings to mind an old country saying: "Head for the hills, boys, the dam's broke."

GERTRUDE TRUMBO.

Warrenton, Va.