

JUN 29 1973

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## Of Watergate and Guilt

To the Editor:

An overriding preoccupation with national honor and security, obsessive fears of Communist conspiracies within and without national boundaries and fanatical appeals for law and order add up to the sobering realization that under such conditions the present Administration was swept into office in the 1960's. It is even more chilling to recall that under similar circumstances Hitler was swept into power in the 1930's.

How striking the similarities are when we perceive governmental excesses and abuses of civil rights again condoned under the guise of national security and observe the recurring adulation of and loyalty to an individual rather than a principle.

We cannot now feign shock and surprise at the Watergate revelations for we failed as a people to protest repressive and retrogressive administrative proposals and actions directed against the poor, the black, the young and the powerless. Such silence encouraged high-handed misuse of executive power which led inexorably to the shoddy and immoral behavior now being exposed. Our failure to protest makes us all participants in a sort of national complicity and thus we must all bear some of the burden of guilt.

We must never forget the story of the Protestant clergyman in Germany in the thirties who, when the storm troopers came and took away the Jews, because he was not a Jew, did not protest; then the troops came and took away the trade unionists, and since he was not a trade unionist, he

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did not protest; then the troops came and took away the Catholics, and since he was not a Catholic, he did not protest; then the troops came and took him away, and there was no one left to protest.

FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS  
President, Phelps-Stokes Fund  
New York, June 22, 1973

To the Editor:

There is a lamentable change in some of the writing about Watergate that Watergate is the responsibility of us all. Watergate is not the responsibility of us all.

It is not the responsibility of those of us who deplored the Vietnam war: the young who were conscientious objectors, those who took part in marches for peace, the many who for their principles were forced to leave their homes and country or be jailed; those of us middle-aged and older who, more belatedly perhaps, remembered Helen Gahagan Douglas, McCarthyism and the rise of Hitler.

Watergate is not the responsibility of those of us who protested the erosion of the Bill of Rights, including the sabotage and espionage plot that the Watergate break-in brought to light.

Watergate is not the responsibility of those of us who joined John Gardner in Common Cause to work for an honest, open, decent and sane America.

Watergate is the responsibility of the White House leadership, which now denies that very responsibility. It is, in fact, the responsibility of Richard M. Nixon.

PATRICIA L. BROWN  
New York, June 9, 1973