

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: *The Watergate*

## *Ends Don't Justify Means*

It has always been my understanding that the end of government, besides the establishment of laws and the protection of its citizens, was to set a standard that reflected the aims, objectives and democratic principles of the people. If this is true then it is particularly disappointing when those we elect and place our trust in undermine the very standards we believe in. We were reminded of this on Monday, July 22, when the President refused to relinquish the White House tapes. Mr. Nixon operates from a double standard when he abrogates the law for some "greater good" (breaking into Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office for national security reasons) while at the same time invoking that law (the constitutional argument for the separation of powers) to sustain the prerogatives of his office.

It takes some kind of arrogance and political elitism to suppose that the American people are going to swallow that brand of double-think. We are forever reminded from the Vice-President on down to our civics teachers that there is *one law* (and order), one principle that goes beyond the transitory issues of the day. It is disconcerting, then, when our leaders do not practice what they preach, for beyond the cynicism this engenders in politicians in general, there is a weakening and erosion of faith in what they say. The message that comes through is that pragmatism comes ahead of principle, that credibility has gone the way of expediency.

Taken one step further, this attitude can, and does, have disastrous effects throughout our country. It sets loose a whole panoply of *ends* justified by any number of rational *means*. Thus the rioter can plot and burn because it will dramatize the cause of racial injustice; the drug addict can steal to satisfy his need; and we can all cheat on our income tax because, God knows, we need the money more than the government does.

In short, the lesson that comes out of Watergate and other cases of corruption in high places (and now the Cambodian deceit) is that respect for authority and the law is undermined in the eyes, not only of those who treat it so loosely anyway, but by those very people who have staked their lives upon it. It is a slap in the face to the man who has placed his trust in the system. And who loses? Well, the peo-

ple lose—their faith is diminished—the *law* suffers for having been so loosely interpreted, and finally, any call for order becomes an empty phrase of men who should have known better.

JOHN HOLLAND.

Anaheim, Calif.



## *The Public on the President*

We are faced with a constitutional crisis. The President and his assistants seem to conceive his powers as resembling those of an absolute monarch, subject to constitutional limitations only when he chooses to accede to them.

*Once to every man and nation*

*Comes the moment to decide*

*In the strife of Truth with Falsehood*

*For the good or evil side."*

James Russell Lowell's poem, written over a century and a quarter ago,

was called, "The Present Crisis." That crisis resulted in a bloody, tragic war, followed by the impeachment of a president considered too friendly to the rebels. By a narrow margin the President was saved from removal.

Impeachment is a painful and soul-searching operation for the country. It should certainly not be undertaken lightly. However the doctrines and practices of Nixonism, as demonstrated in the present Senate hearings, constitute a malignant reversion to absolute power.

The President should be impeached, and if the Senate finds him guilty, by a two-thirds vote, of high crimes and misdemeanors against the laws and the Constitution of this country, removed.

A. J. MORGAN.

New York, N.Y.

Our forefathers set up the three branches of our government with the spirit to work harmoniously as a team for the benefit of our people, not for each branch to fight for its own power, nor to fight against each other.

Those defendants who were caught in the Watergate break-in were in the process of prosecution by the law of this land. Need we continuously destroy the President's image, while in fact, we destroy our country's and our own people's image?

In our beloved America, a person is innocent until proven guilty. Yet, some of the TV commentators, newspaper columnists, cartoonists, and some members from the Capitol have long actually indicted, prosecuted, and convicted the President by saying that "there is no doubt in their minds that the President is guilty except the degree of guilt." Is this fair? Is this justice?

We elected him to this high office twice; he fulfilled his promise of ending the war in Vietnam; he brought our prisoners of war home; he brought about a thaw in the ever-strained position of near-war with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Shouldn't we give him more of a chance to solve our internal problems?

I urge the Democratic majority of the Congress to give our President its support by initiating, with the President, bipartisan solutions to our most pressing needs. It can gain great prestige; and there will be plenty of credits for all to share among the politicians.

STEPHEN TENG.

Springfield.

# Dilemma . . . President Nixon . . . Mr. Ehrlichman

## End the Hearings

Watergate is a dead issue and everyone, including a lot of Democrats, is fed up with hearing about it. Most people I know are switching off their TV sets or turning to other channels to avoid hearing the endless "hearings" aired on coast-to-coast television.

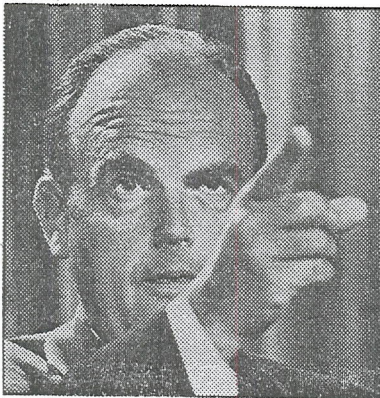
The U.S. Senate, as I understand it, has no right to sentence any of these persons—all they can do is listen to hours and hours of talk and then (make) recommendations. They have had ample time to discover who is at fault and get on with much more important things such as passing some new legislation or changing some already on the law books. The Congress was labeled a "do nothing" under President Nixon's last term. Is it to do even less during these four years. As a citizen of the United States, I, like many others, did not help elect a body of men to sit around day after day drawing large salaries, which we taxpayers pay, for conducting hearings.

I believe, as do most people, that such things as Watergate must be investigated, but matters such as this and much worse in many cases have been taken care of in half the time. We have heard of many election irregularities all through the years, but not much was done about them. It seems the Senate is bent on destroying President Nixon and his image when he seems to have been able to do the near impossible by ending the war and bringing home our prisoners, visiting in China and meeting with Russian leaders, just to mention a few things. Five years ago President Nixon took over as President when our country was in turmoil, fighting an unpopular war; there was campus unrest, demonstrations, rioting, looting, etc. Today, we have a peace agreement, campuses are quiet and minority groups seem to be trying to get along. It will take many years to right all the wrongs, but I think we have made a big step in the direction we need to go.

The President has the right to keep some secrets and to investigate things in secret which might cause the country harm or trouble, and I don't think even the U.S. Senate has the right to all the answers to things he might term "top secret". Let's finish with Watergate and get on with the business at hand, both domestic and foreign.

H. L. FOUTS.

Thomasville, N.C.



## The Public on Ehrlichman

Joseph Kraft's article of July 26th ("Ehrlichman: Power and Arrogance") in which he accuses Mr. Ehrlichman of "maniacal arrogance" is itself an example of incredible arrogance. Mr. Kraft would set himself up as psychiatrist (capable of detecting mania) and judge ("I think Ehrlichman is deep into the cover-up").

As if that were not enough, Mr. Kraft would also like to believe that he was in some way responsible for Mr. Ehrlichman's fall ("I suspect that many of us in Washington were to blame"). Accepting responsibility for someone else's sins is the epitome of self-serving arrogance. Such arrogance is the source of considerable power within religious institutions of our society, and Mr. Kraft would seek to exercise this power to humble Mr. Ehrlichman into a breast-beating display of self-reproach and contrition, a la John Dean. Displays of remorse may be gratifying to some observers, in particular those who feel no sense of compassion or human involvement with the individuals caught up in this complex and serious matter ("I do not feel sorry for Ehrlichman in any way"). But they are hardly the sole or even most important criterion for judging the credibility of a witness. If Mr. Kraft thinks so much of the qualities of detachment and intelligence, which he believes Ehrlichman once had but has now lost, he would do well to suggest the reasons why Mr. Dean is any more believable than Mr. Ehrlichman, since they were both henchmen of a President whom Mr. Kraft describes as "defiant," "suspicious" and "contemptuous."

Perhaps Mr. Kraft would give Mr. Ehrlichman a better example to follow by being himself somewhat less arrogant and somewhat more contrite. We will have to wait to see if Mr. Kraft may have some public apologizing to do for his eagerness to impeach the President who has thus far been implicated in Watergate by only one witness of clearly dubious character.

HENRY R. NAU.

Gaithersburg.

Any one who has read Joseph Heller's "Catch-22" should have no difficulty understanding John Ehrlichman's Law of the Implied Right of Presidential Say-So, or Catch-23. It's all quite simple.

1. The President is forbidden from violating the Constitution, according to the Constitution itself.

2. The President *may* violate the Constitution only in the interests of national security, according to Ehrlichman, John Wilson, *et al.*

3. National security interests may be defined as matters so grave as to require violation of the Constitution, and shall be determined such by the President.

4. Therefore, the President may not violate the Constitution except when it becomes necessary to violate the Constitution, and it becomes necessary to violate the Constitution only when the Constitution is being violated by the President, since the very act of violation of the Constitution by the President means the national security interests were involved, since the President is the sole-determinator of security interest constitutional violations. Furthermore (and here's the catch), even if the President *didn't* believe the national security interests were at stake, he could not say so since (A) defining the national security interests might endanger national security and (B) the President is protected from self-incrimination by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

I'm surprised a good constitutional lawyer like Sam Ervin can't understand the obvious logic to Ehrlichman's argument.

JOHN H. CORCORAN, JR.

Washington.

Has it occurred to any of your special writers to mention or note that Ehrlichman (in German) means honest man?

NELLY E. KAZZE.

Washington.