

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Pardon for an Ex-President

Editor — President Ford's pardoning of Richard Nixon, announced on the heels of his expressed desire for amnesty for Vietnam draft evaders, will surely erode the bipartisan support that he has initially enjoyed.

Moreover, his action challenges our traditional concept of American justice for wrongdoers, as well as suggests some kind of political pre-inaugural contract with his predecessor.

What bothers me most, however, is how we can continue with a straight face to preach to our young people the efficacy of the democratic political system when they can witness such apparent rewards for callous abuse of it.

After having survived the horrors of the campus revolts of the late-60s, we were just getting to the point of winning over significant numbers of young converts to the system. Now I wonder whether we'll be back where we started.

HENRY L. INGHAM JR.,
history instructor
City College,

San Francisco.

Editor — I commend President Ford's new policy of pardoning folks in advance of their being accused.

The precedent must quickly be extended to cover those of us who in the past haven't even thought of committing criminal offenses, our imaginations having been oppressed in the direction by the thought of undesirable consequences ensuing.

C. WREXEL,
San Francisco.

Editor — The system really works — if you're a wealthy, influential Republican.

Mr. Nixon differs from the ordinary crook only because his

power permitted him to threaten us all. Many a criminal surrenders when he's cornered, but we don't immediately run out and pardon him when we trap him.

Welcome to the new model Ford coverup.

DON ADAMS,
Corte Madera.

Editor — . . . I believe that following the hurricane wave of rhetoric and hogwash that we'll be weathering for sometime to come on the pardon question . . . the simple fundamental question will be this:

Does the President have the constitutional right and authority to exonerate totally his predecessor of any wrong doing whatsoever? If the answer is yes, I submit that we need another amendment to our beloved and treasured Constitution.

JOHN J. BOYLE,
San Francisco.

Editor — "When we fail to make the criminal pay for his crimes, we encourage him to think that crime will pay." (Gerald Ford, March 11, 1973.) Sums payable to Richard Nixon, totaling in the hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars annually. Indeed, sir, as Dr. Johnson might have put it, we do encourage the criminal (or one of them, anyway) to think that crime pays.

JOHN S. EWING,
Los Altos Hills.

Editor — In granting presidential pardon, the Constitution says, ". . . he shall have the power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment." It is not specified that impeachment must have occurred, and, taking this in conjunction with the widely quoted authoritative opin-

ion that resignation does not legally preclude impeachment, I am curious about the constitutionality of Mr. Nixon's pardon.

KATHERINE BRYAN,
Palo Alto.

Editor — Lest we forget. Perhaps our most revered President, Abraham Lincoln, believed in amnesty and compassion for the Confederate leaders of the South. Their crime was by definition, insurrection and treason against the United States of America: a crime punishable by death. . . .

President Ford's act of pardon for Richard Nixon was courageous. He not only immediately put his initial high popularity on the line, but made his decision for a higher sense of purpose for the country. For after all, it is we as a nation who have suffered collectively.

Certainly Richard Nixon, whether or not by self-admission, has sentenced himself to a life term without parole or punishment by his disgrace of the highest office in the land.

JOHN S. LEIPSIC,
Kentfield.

Editor — . . . It is a shameful vindication of the powerlessness of the average person to seek equality before the law. Mr. Ford's ukase has debased and undermined the fine principles upon which this country is founded. Once again when we cry out for leadership we have been ill served by a mediocre politician.

RAYMOND W. LAING,
San Francisco.

Editor — It's a lucky thing for Mr. Nixon that he didn't do something serious, like smoke a joint or burn a draft card.

MIKE JOHNSON,
El Cerrito.