

Monday's Commentary

'Foreigner' stigma growing

Emotions have never run higher, in recent years, than the collective disgust by Americans over the seizure of 62 American embassy employees held hostage by Iranian students in Tehran.

Xenophobia, the hatred of foreigners, is flourishing in the name of national unity. It seems that the next logical step of the Ayatollah is to cut off the hand of all clocks as a gesture against American decadence.

Now is no time for levity. The lives of many people are on the line.

But this deplorable action taken by a reactionary, religious fanatic does not give the American people the right to hate all Iranians nor lump all Arabic, Iraqi, Chaldean or Mediterranean people on the enemy list.

A week ago Saturday, a young man picketed a combination party store/gas station in Royal Oak with a sign that said "Boycott Arabs." Daily Tribune reporter Robert S. Ball detailed that incident and a cross burning at a Madison-Heights party store in last Monday's paper.

The protester refused to give his name to Ball, explaining that his anger with "Arabs" intensified after the hostages were seized by Iranian students and exploded after Iranians made an unsuccessful attempt at kidnapping Minnesota Gov. Al Quie.

Trouble is the owner of the party store wasn't an Arab and he wasn't Iranian. His name was Frank Kasha, and he's a Kurd who lived in Iraq, not Iran, until 1968. He became an American citizen in 1973.

INSIDE KASHA'S store is a photo clipped from Life magazine showing blindfolded Kurdish rebels being shot to death in a firing line by Iranian troops. Many Kurds are housed in refugee camps in Iran at this moment.

Apparently, the protester didn't let facts get in the way of his hatred. When Kasha tried to identify himself as a Kurd, not an Arab or an Iranian to the protester, "He said he didn't care," Kasha said last week.

"He said 'I don't think anybody who doesn't have blue eyes and blond hair has a right to live.'"

Kasha figures that even rules out his wife — "a complete American" — who has blond hair but green eyes.

Iranian flopsters—zany solutions

There are millions of Americans who are irate at Iran, but not quite so many who have devised schemes guaranteed to free the 62 U.S. citizens held hostage in our embassy in Tehran.

One of those is a sergeant in the Garden City Police Department, who shall remain blessedly anonymous.

"Tell them they can send the Garden City Police Department over there," remarked the sergeant one morning last week. "We've got plenty of ticket books."

This suggestion is not as stupid as it sounds. Given the record of the 21st District Court, Lord knows we wouldn't have to bother with the expense of jury trials for all those Iranian students.

Anyway, it's a better suggestion than some of the others I've heard around town in the past few days, because most of the other suggestions ignore the ultimate fate of the hostages.

I mean, if we take that fellow up on his idea to nuke one Iranian city for every dead hostage, we'll run out of Iranian cities. On the other hand, if we place an embargo on Iranian ports by sending aircraft carriers to block them, we'll end up with a lot of dead hostages.

IT'S BEEN SAID, and I wouldn't know, that no single incident has so stirred the ire of Americans toward a foreign people since the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. I've certainly seen nothing in my life like the reaction caused by the Iranian embassy take-over.

But I wouldn't call what I've seen patriotism, really, and I'm somewhat disturbed to see other people call it exactly that.

What I've seen lately is a smattering of outraged pickets, usually college students, toting American flags and burning dummies dressed like the Ayatollah.

Maybe that means a widespread outpouring of patriotism to you, but not to me. To me it sounds like a pep rally for the Michigan-Ohio State game.

I don't think it's patriotism, either, to call for the execution of some half-mad, aging religious leader who seems to have forgotten what he should have learned in 17 years of exile — tolerance.

The Ayatollah is 78 years old, his days are more numbered than mine or yours, and when he dies, it seems to me that in all likelihood his Islamic Republic will die with him.



Craig Piechura

They asked Royal Oak Police to make the protesters leave the storefront. Police told Kasha's wife the man had a legitimate right to public protest. The police were probably right in protecting this nut's right to spew his misguided vitriol.

But what worried Kasha is that many people who drove by the store honked in support of the protest. "What if it would've come on the radio that the Iranians had killed some hostages while the man was outside my store?" said Kasha. "They might have dragged me out on the street to take revenge. Definitely, I was afraid. Of course, I was afraid."

FEW PEOPLE are as ignorant or as racist as the party store protester.

Yet I hear friends of mine saying we should send every Iranian in this country packing. I see students on campus holding posters with such bright slogans as "Nuke 'em."

I read about an upsurge in Ku Klux Klan activity against "foreigners."

But in talking to foreign student advisers at two Detroit area colleges, I am told there are many students here from Iran who only want to be left alone to learn such things as engineering.

Some, undoubtedly, fear returning to Iran if they are from upper-class families who supported the Shah.

What some Americans fail to recognize is that many people have a good reason for wanting the Shah brought to justice in a fair trial.

The Savak secret police force and the executions ordered by the Shah didn't upset most Americans. The seizure of American hostages has.

I just hope Americans don't let international acts of terrorism cause them to exchange similar acts against people with difficult last names.



Mike Scanlon

After all, we really have no reason to believe that the Iranian in the street is any more, or any less, religious than the American in the street who goes to church mainly at Christmas and prays mainly when he thinks a car accident is imminent or his pony is going nose-to-nose to the finish line.

But the unmentioned aspect of this whole affair is the shah himself.

United States foreign policy since World War II has been heavily based, to all outward appearances, on the premise that any government is better than a communist government. This philosophy has put us in the position of offering aid, comfort, cash and guns to rotten, seedy dictators scattered all over the globe.

Witness the shah and his 60,000 dead political enemies, witness Korea, Vietnam, any of a half-dozen South American republics — the list is a long one.

The shah is gone, so is Vietnam, so is Park Chung Hee in Korea.

By now you would think we would have learned our lesson. Is the shah worth 62 American lives? I don't think so.

I'm not suggesting that the shah be returned to Iran, even though I believe that by any sane standard one would have to say that the shah is, indeed, guilty of crimes against the Iranian people. If we return him, though, then our embassies all over the world will be snatched right and left.

But it was our guns, our cattle prods and our cash that kept the shah in power and allowed him to terminate his enemies. We should have provided none of them.

Above all, we should remember that the Ayatollah and his Islamic Republic are doomed. We should take whatever steps are necessary to make sure 62 Americans aren't on hand at the funeral.



by Jackie Klein

"Around the edge"

Synanon—a cult or a cure?

Synanon was lauded for its successful drug and alcohol rehabilitation program when it started 21 years ago.

But the California-based organization recently has been criticized for unorthodox techniques and alleged criminal activities. It has been labeled a cult and a non-profit tax exempt charity which has a profit-making, tax-paying business arm.

Synanon has been soliciting money or donated products from big businesses in Michigan since the late 1950s. The State of Michigan still recognizes Synanon as a religion, though the Internal Revenue Service maintains it's a non-profit charity.

The program quietly collapsed in 1973, but Synanon now announces it wants to renew its program and expand its sales force in Michigan. The group still bills itself as the most successful drug rehabilitation program in America.

Many teenagers ran away from the program. I know one who stayed. Nancy was hooked on pot, uppers, downers and almost every other mood changer on the 1960's drug scene. She checked into Synanon in Detroit, where she was welcomed with the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood which permeates Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings.

For Nancy, Synanon became a new lifestyle, but not a free one. She said she was watched like a prison inmate, and when she tried to run away, she was caught and punished like a prison escapee. She said her suitcase and personal articles were taken and donated to Synanon. This smacks of the cult syndrome.

THE LAST I heard of Nancy, she was in a Synanon community in California using her skills as a hair dresser. I don't know if she gets paid for her work or if she's at the foundation against her will or by choice. But as far as drugs are concerned, she's gone straight.

My father, who was violently opposed to cults, was impressed with Synanon when he was approached by the group's salesmen in 1977 to help support the drug rehabilitation program. Synanon reported assets of \$21.6 million. Before he died, I think my dad gave a donation.

The salesman gave my dad what's called "Synanon Punk Squad Fact Sheet." The Punk Squad is supposed to be Synanon's answer to the prob-

lems of young persons in trouble.

"Punk Squad describes the condition of the younger people who come to Synanon for help," the fact sheet read. "It incorporates the successful notions and philosophies pioneered by Synanon. They have changed the nation's attitudes towards the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and other people in trouble since 1958. They have spawned more than 2,400 Synanon-like programs throughout the country."

LIFE IN the Punk Squad on Synanon's Tonalas Bay ranch in California is rigorous. Kids from 9 to 18 years old get up early, exercise vigorously and work hard. But, according to the fact sheet, they also have fun.

Fun on the ranch is hiking, camping, sports, healthy competition, a sense of accomplishment and friends — in a crime-free, violence-free environment with no drugs, alcohol or smoking.

The fact sheet says nothing about kids selling products to support Synanon the way Moonies support Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Hare Krishnas beef up the Krishna movement's coffers. But young persons in the Synanon program solicit for the "cause." Most cults are anti-drug.

"Young persons start growing up in Synanon with the help of people who set firm boundaries for their behavior," according to the fact sheet. "Synanon founder, Chuck Dederich, has put it succinctly. The operating philosophy is the 'reality principle.'"

"The principle is conditional love based on accomplishment and earning one's way. Good boys and girls get good things, and bad girls and boys get bad things."

LIKE ALL Synanon residents, the "Punks" play the Synanon Game, described as an unorthodox forum which allows them to articulate whatever feelings or views they may have about any person or subject. It's supposed to be the key to changing their lives.

One former Synanon member described the therapy game as undermining, dangerous and controlling, making the players feel like non-functioning, emotional cripples. It sounds like a variation of cult mind control.

After six months of housebreaking, the Punks are supposedly ready to begin assuming the responsibility

of being full-fledged members of Synanon. The "Punk Squad" is a special approach to juvenile problems, according to the fact sheet, but it's also a part of the greater community. "Punks" aren't isolated. They're part of the daily life of Synanon which supposedly provides total development and schooling in behavior, character and skills.

Synanon professes to be a charitable, scientific, educational and religious organization. It allegedly engages in research into the causes of anomalous and delinquent behavior as manifested in drug addiction and alcoholism.

SYNANON CLAIMS its population is a cross section of America — old, young, black, white, the disturbed, squares, fanatics, singles and the educated and uneducated. Retirement-age persons, doctors, lawyers, college students, craftsmen and engineers live in Synanon.

Every day that an addict is in Synanon and not using drugs, he or she has lived "a clean man day," the fact sheet says. In 1975 and 1976, drug addicts in Synanon produced 150,715 clean man days. At \$100 a day, a conservative estimate of what a "dope fiend" costs society, Synanon professes to have saved society nearly \$20 million.

In my opinion, anyone who uses the archaic term "dope fiend" is either out of step or trying to inject sensationalism into public relations. And Synanon's letter heads say, "Synanon: The People Business."

This is the Synanon Prayer — "Please let me first and always examine myself. Let me be honest and truthful. Let me seek and assume responsibility. Let me understand rather than be understood. Let me have trust and faith in myself and my fellow man. Let me love rather than be loved. Let me give rather than receive."

It isn't easy to have faith and trust in one's fellow man when supposedly tried and true institutions like Synanon and Boys Town are exposed as profit mongers. Would they rather give than receive?

Synanon was once a new hope and a second chance for drug abusers. And there are those who claim they were cured by the program.

But in an era when religious cults are growing like noxious weeds, breeding alienation and fear, it's hard to believe in "dope-gone" organizations promising panaceas for all the ills of society.

Iranians add an insult

Not even in a fantasy of a thousand and one nights could you fabricate a story like the continuing saga going on in Iran.

First, the Iranian government stands by while fanatic students invade the American Embassy in Tehran. Sixty-two Americans are taken hostage, blindfolded at times and tied hand and foot.

These include U.S. Marines, embassy personnel, and no one's really sure who else.

As I write this, it's been more than 10 days since the outrage was perpetrated and still the nightmare goes on. Condemned by Iran's present ruler, the Ayatollah Khomeini, every protocol of diplomacy has been violated along with the human rights of those hostages.

Pope John Paul II sent an envoy to the Ayatollah and was rebuffed.

Iran's ruler countered by saying that if Christ came back to earth, he would condemn the United States. By this he means our government is guilty of granting sanctuary to the former shah of Iran, being treated for cancer and other ailments in a New York hospital.

Ayatollah Khomeini asks for a session of the Security Council. Why? Because the United States is creating a warlike atmosphere.

In Denver a 15-year-old youth is shot to death and an Iranian chemistry student is being questioned.

All over the country, Iranian students by the thousands, saying they're not against the American people, only the government, demonstrate openly, asking that the shah be deported to certain death.

AMERICANS also are outraged and applaud when President Carter halts oil purchases from Iran. They ask for the ouster of Iranian nationals studying here. They ask for action. They want to be able to stand straight and be proud again.

Now Iranian assets in the billions are frozen in banks around the country in anticipation of Iran pulling these assets out of the U.S.

The crisis has united Americans as none other recently. Unaccustomed as we are to being embarrassed and abused, we will act and stand together attempting to make it right.

And then add another insult. A letter in the mail from Bill Brodhead, congressman from these parts. "Dear Shirlee: I thought you would be interested in the enclosed."



Shirlee Iden

Enclosed was an invitation to Brodhead from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was received on Tuesday, Nov. 6, two days after the assault on our Tehran Embassy.

Would Brodhead like to come to the Iranian Embassy in Washington that Friday, Nov. 9, to the opening of a photo exhibit of the Islamic Revolution in Iran?

OUTRAGED Brodhead replied that under normal circumstances he would welcome such an invitation as an opportunity to "improve the damaged relations between our countries."

"However, because of the outrageous violation of our embassy in Iran and the kidnap of our diplomats, your invitation is little short of ridiculous." Brodhead went on to point out that the Iranian government's apparent acquiescence and encouragement of those actions was a breach of civilized diplomacy honored for centuries.

"Diplomats are always protected by the host country," Brodhead's response went on. "Even when nations have been at war, the lives of diplomats and embassy workers have been held sacred."

"Under these circumstances, your invitation is insulting, and I reject it."

No American can remain untouched or unmoved by the plight of those hostages in Tehran. Every American is insulted and angered by the irrational actions of the so-called Iranian Republic.

Even in Southfield, 67 Iranian students are enjoying the advantages of studying at the Lawrence Institute of Technology. Happily, neither those students or their American counterparts have behaved in a violent manner to this date.

As we begin Thanksgiving week, we are grateful for that and hope by Thursday to be saying thanks for the freedom of our fellow countrymen, and the end of the crisis.

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