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THE TREATMENT OF FOREIGN DETAINEES AND CONVICTS IN THE PRISONS OF THE WORLD

All cultures have contradictory attitudes and practices towards the strangers in their midst. On the one hand, the stranger is regarded as a guest, to be treated with a hospitality exceeding even that granted to one's own kind. On the other hand, the stranger is often regarded with suspicion and arrogance; ordinary humaneness and legal processes are denied; he or she is sacrificed to chauvinism.

Xenophobia in the treatment of foreign offenders is distinct from the case of offenders accused of political crimes and requires its own beneficial correctives. International organizations concerned with human rights have an especial interest in the problem and steps towards meeting it are not only logical and necessary, but quite possible.

The jurisdiction of the comity of nations over the foreigner in trouble is indisputable, in theory if not in fact. Moreover, the inability of large poor nations and of almost all small nations to follow up, investigate, and help their imprisoned nationals abroad is obvious. Nor does any nation actually undertake its full responsibilities in this area. No one knows how many prisoners from what countries are held in what jails or where.

The problem is especially severe among the students and youth of the world. Full of unattainable ideals and a feeling of one world and one people, they fall victim to harassment and unequal applications of the laws wherever they go. In effect, they are often jailed for practicing their own kinds of internationalism and one-world ideals. Whatever their misconduct, they hold the promise of the future, and should not be abandoned to cruelty, degradation, and demoralization.

Much can be done with little. Ultimately a world network of correspondents, international organizations, and lawyers, who share humane ideals, can be established. Working on a voluntary basis, they can help in the surveillance and

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treatment of foreign prisoners. (It may be well understood that, when foreign prisoners are treated humanely, the level of prison treatment of nationals generally rises in consequence)

But what is needed first is to open up the problem to world awareness. A report is needed to explain the situation. The report would also estimate the extent of the problem. It would describe, too, some preliminary visits to observe and present first-hand accounts of conditions in various prisons and recommendations for improvements that may be achieved. This research and appraisal can be accomplished within the next twelve months, at a modest cost.

Alfred de Grazia

Professor of Social Theory
in Government