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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Treatment of nonregistrant is criminal

Last Tuesday afternoon, while many of us did Thanksgiving food shopping, Edward Hasbrouck was taken to prison to serve a six-month sentence for not signing a piece of paper.

Edward had earlier been sentenced to 1000 hours of unpaid "community service." Although his probation officer considered his nonviolence educational work to be community service, it did not fit the probation department's guidelines.

Edward's criminal act, or non-act, was to refuse to sign a draft registration form provided by Selective Service. All information about Edward needed by Selective Service to enable an emergency military mobilization was available to the government a year ago when

Edward was indicted: only his signature had not been granted.

Edward is in prison for symbolic reasons; he was not able to manipulate political symbols to the state's satisfaction. This is not so dissimilar from the Soviet Union's punishment of those not ideologically adept enough to affirm the "liberated proletariat."

As a fellow nonregistrant and friend of Edward, I know his decision was one of conscience. It came after much thought on the right not to kill and to refuse the bureaucracy of killing. It came from a deep place inside him.

When our society and laws allow people to be locked up and to be called criminal for such decisions, we ought to cry in repentance.

JOHN LINDSAY-POLAND

Allston