

# Wanted: a Word

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*COMMUNICATION TO THE EDITORS*

Dear Sirs:

The contribution from intelligence officers who defect from the Communist services has been one of the mainstays of our counterintelligence effort, and we have accordingly sought in various ways to create as inviting an atmosphere as possible for further defections. One of the most difficult aspects of this effort, and one of the biggest stumbling blocks to defection, is the implication of cowardice, treason, and desertion not only in the act itself but also in the terminology applied to it. Deserter, turncoat, renegade, apostate, etc., are words of opprobrium, and even the usual term defector, though less indignant than the others, carries a connotation of dishonorable motives, a touch of the subconscious revulsion Organization Man feels for any deed that undermines his organization.

This deed is not necessarily dishonorable, however; it is usually the only effective action within the capabilities of an intelligence officer caught in the meshes of tyranny if disillusionment or his principles drive him to oppose that tyranny. Defection from a Communist service requires courage as well as adroitness. And even if a defector's motives are unworthy we don't attract him by the use of stigmatizing names.

It has long been recognized that the terminology we use is infelicitous from the point of view of encouraging defections, and there have been sporadic efforts now and then to develop a new semantic approach. These have not been successful; a new word or phrase is still being sought and is badly needed. What we are looking for is a readily

understandable expression conveying the idea of a courageous act to liberate not only oneself but other victims, one that is translatable or transliterable into foreign languages and not susceptible to invidious or comical perversion. If any of your readers has a suggestion we should be happy to hear it through your good offices.

Gordon Cooperwood

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Posted: May 08, 2007 07:58 AM