

ANDY YOUNG

Following his recent statement about "political prisoners" in the United States a number of individuals pounced on Andy Young, hoping to score a few political points against the embattled Carter Administration. But few, if any, dealt with the substance of Young's comments. Instead, many critics -- like Republican Chairman Bill Brock -- focused their attacks on Yong's personal character and competence.

Brock, who patiently endured Gerald Ford's ridiculous assertion that Eastern Europe is free from Soviet domination, fired off a harsh condemnation charging Young with "puerile ignorance and incompetence." But the issue at hand transcends the question of competence, timing, or motives. The real issue is the radical differences between totalitar-

ianism as practiced in the Soviet Union, and democracy as practiced in America.

It is true, as Andy pointed out, that he and countless others -- including myself -- were arrested and imprisoned during the great civil rights struggle. Every step toward racial equality and freedom was met with a barrage of political attacks and, in certain instances, even physical violence. Freedom riders and demonstrators were beaten and kicked while local police looked away. And some of our closest friends and most respected leaders died in the struggle. Yet there are important, differences between the American system and the Soviet system. Let's look at the basic and indisputable facts.

Even in the darkest days of the civil rights movement, black Americans had two important advantages not enjoyed by today's Soviet dissidents. First, America has always been a relatively open society. Blacks in the North had strong and influential organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League to champion

the cause of equality. Through the free press, through free speech, and through peaceful assembly, blacks could appeal to the conscience of white America for justice and compassion. Indeed, it was this openness and free flow of information which prevented a wholesale assault on Southern blacks.

The second advantage was equally important: blacks did not confront a monolithic government committed to the preservation of segregation and injustice. Quite the contrary, while some state and local governments vehemently resisted integration, the federal government was, in large measure, an indispensable ally of the civil rights movement.

In the Soviet Union, however, dissidents can neither appeal to public opinion, nor expect protection from the government. The Soviet version of Bull Connor never appears on television, and the dissidents -- unlike

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Shooting Stars

A spectacular show of shooting stars will highlight a free public astronomy session Aug. 12 at Floyd Lamb State Park.

Dr. Ed Grayzeck assistant professor of astronomy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, will direct the watch. Observation begins at 9 p.m. and continues until the park closes at 11 p.m.

The astronomical display is called the Perseid meteor shower. The meteors are bits of cosmic debris which crash into the earth's atmosphere at high speeds, leaving trails of colored light.

A brief talk by Grayzeck on the origin of the Perseids will prelude the observation session. A number of portable telescopes will be stationed at the back of the park, but the naked eye or low power binoculars are suitable, Grayzeck said.

This is one in a series of regular observations sponsored by the UNLV department of physics.

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