Draft alternatives presented at national conference

(The following is the report by Ries students Ralph Barth and Barney McCoy of the three day National Conference on the Draft which they attended last week at Washington University in St. Louis—ed.)

By RALPH BARTH and BARNEY MCCOY

“A theme of youth today is a revolution against imposed structures,” this quotation from Marshall McLuhan, "the sage of the age," would well have been the keynote of last week’s National Conference on the Draft organized and conducted by the American Friends Service Committee.

Six plenary sessions, each concerned with a major effect of the draft, constituted the formal meetings.

Chancellor Elliot of Washington University addressed the first session and did little more than question the student de- ferment policies of Selective Service if nineteen-year-olds are to be drafted first, then why not eighteen?

He opposed abolishing graduate deferments for the loss of skilled and erudite manpower such a change would probably effect to the nation.

Burn, Baby, Burn

On Friday afternoon at the close of a session a dynamic young activist from Morehouse College in Atlanta stood up and expressed his disappointment, and others, that the conference was all talk and no action.

He then proceeded to persuade all the participants to gather in front of the hall to hear a list of seventeen proposals that he and several others, as it turned out, radical activists, had drawn up. These proposals, each of which received its share of support from different authors of the list, called for such actions against the draft as refusal to pay taxes, hiding AWOL’s, encouraging resistance within the armed forces, and “rendering induction centers imperable.”

One hirsute individual, who claimed he represented Stanford, found that his personal dissent was best channelled into destruction of property, “Why not burn down a draft board here and there?”

Young Turks

This group of “Young Turks” was obviously trying to subvert the purpose of the conference and use it to voice their own violent objections to the draft (and Vietnam and Negro poverty). The conference directors were horrified at this turn of events and eventually reminded all that the conference was not a representative assembly and could not speak as one.

The writers felt that the Quakers have themselves to blame for this debacle and for the gross lack of respect shown to such speakers as Colonel Omer and Mr. Dokerty of some of the audience.

The Friends (Quakers) organized the conference pre- committed to the conviction that the draft was conscious. Hence they invited mainly speakers who they knew would reinforce their general convictions with intellectual strength.

The speakers chosen to defend the Selective Service system could hardly be considered responsible for our draft policy today.

About two-thirds of the participants attending were college students. Most of these students had read certain chapters of the American Friends Service Committee’s report on the draft, though a list of participants shows that official student body organizations, as such action groups as SNCC, SDS and “we won’t Go” did not well represent the draft.

Congressman Thomas Curtis, Republican of Miami, based his objections to the draft on the fact that his minority party, the Republicans, and the Selective Service and Administration of Selective Service, Curtis found for the Johnson administration for not making the working papers of its studies public.

Volunteer Military

Curtis also criticized Congress for neglecting its proper function in determining who should be in the army with a large and real ready reserve. This would show the Selective Service that volunteers, who would be better qualified.

Along with a volunteer military, Curtis would insist that skilled personnel be provided with pay based on the current wage market. The Navy’s Sea- men’s wage is twelve dollars per round pegs in round holes.”

The Great Leveler

Colonel Philip Leslie, Deputy Director of Selective Service, delivered a sober, enlightened rationale of conscription. He granted that the debate over selective service must not avoid discussion of the possibility of conscription, which he calls “the definition of all, while concerning itself only with the draft laws and mechanics.”

Omer argued that the draft is desirable because it keeps us aware of our freedom that is non-free,” and increases the stature of the armed forces in the public view because “our boys in uniform” represent a true cross section of society. Hence the draft is the great leveller, and teacher of democracy to all walks of life and all levels of society.

Most of the conference par- ticipants regretted the inability of Colonel Omer’s argument because it was based on the blind assumption that this country must pursue it foreign policy requiring a huge army.

Another American Spirit

Dr. Vincent Harding, Professor of Sociology at Spelman College, a Negro, delivered a strong and articulate diatribe on how the draft, Vietnam, and the plight of the underprivileged minorities all illuminate the “other American spirit” that ugly feature that enabled Americans to own slaves, slaughter whole Indian nations, and conquer Mexico in years past.

These faults have been visible to the rest of the world, according to Dr. Harding, Pat- riotism never equals blind, irrational obedience. Is it possible in Vietnam really anti-communis- m. And what’s so horrible there is a delirium for Southeast Asia?” he asked.

A New Humanity

Dr. Richard Wurmbrand, who explained that a new humanity must be cre- ater after the defeat of criminal America.

With regard to the draft and American tradition of civil liberty, Marvin Karprakpin, Acting Legal Director of the Civil Liberties Union, elaborat- ed on the resolution of the ACLU on the draft today. “The draft is such a severe depriv- ation of liberty that it can be only made justifiable by a genuine emergency, and the burden of proof is upon government to show that there are no less rea- sonable means of averting that emergency.”

They’re Going To War

Karpitskind demonstrated how the Selective Service Act has subverted the courts, the army, the right of travel and resi- dence, the First Amendment be- cause it is not well established (draft card burning) and asso- ciation are curtailed, and the Thirteenth Amendment, and the draft approximates invol- untary servitude.

In addition to injustices of re- ligious liberty were thrown to the winds when conscientious objection was voided by legislation as to criminalize atonement. In- dividuals in the Selective Service— the processing of individuals under the man- power network and its contin- uing pattern of bias—amount to unequal protection under law. Totalitarianism.

Karpitskind saw much damage being done to young Americans and condemned the draft, not because it is less than democracy.

Journalist Bruce Chapman, author of “Wrong Man Under- form,” felt we might have to wait until after Vietnam to dis- cuss the draft.

Chapman inserted an appropriate remark of Adolf Hitler: “Fascism is the ad- vance of one’s adversary to adopt totalitarian methods.”

Chapman found many faults with the draft as it is operated today and deplored the complete arbitrariness of a lottery. He granted the necessity of the military, however, and that it is a practical step to draft in relative peace with volunteers.

No Deferrers

The elimination of systematic deferments was called for by Dr. William R. Keast, President of Wayne State University in Detroit. The II-S and the de- sires to retain it encourage the student to pursue what may be for him the wrong choice of major. It prevents student risk- taking, like setting out to travel and experiment. Keast saw student deferments removed as a way to provide a highly inadequate system of grades, credit hours, etc., as a measure of influence and achievement. The system is un- fair to the student who must leave the university at the end of the semester, and is rank solely with volunteers.

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Draft alternatives

(Continued from Page 4) trial, basic, human issues at a much too early age.

This idea was reiterated bylyavhove Donaldson, New York of the St. John's Nove is stated that the draft was all part of the "big conspiracy" on the part of the older generation and their in- termenment to inoculate conserva- tism in the youth.

New Freedom

Robert Penny, graduate stu- dent in sociology at Washing- ton University, delivered a pa- per on social control seen from the point of view of the indi- vidual and group rather than the "suffered their views of the dis- dited Plato and Augustine, Marx and Lenin, by asserting that man need not remain ser- vile to his society, that society should be his tool, not his mas- ter.

To Penny, the technological potential now exists to free the individual from many of the fetters that have been born; a new affluence should mean a new freedom. Hence conscription is anarchistic; it is part of a system of al- terative life styles which today could and should be available.

We have come so far toward individualism, according to Penny, that we must not stop here. (One is forced to conclude that Penny was implicitly advcating democratic socialism.)

Chicken Hawk

During the session on the draft and foreign policy General S. L. A. Marshall, noted writer and military analyst who dubs himself a "chicken hawk" with respect to our pol- icy in Southeast Asia rejected the notion of disarmament as impossible and unrealistic. Standing armies are needed for stability in a world in continu- ous revolution?

Edward Woods Doherty, member of the Policy Planning Council of the State Depart- ment, expressed his views of the draft as a working bureaucrat. Doherty explained that his council was really just a re- search branch of the State Depart- ment, which was actually wasn't responsible for the policies he was being called upon to de- fend.

A Fact of Life

Doherty respected pacifism, but said that the political con- sensus of this and other coun- tries was not pacifist. Most military powers, large and small, maintain conscripted forces. Conscription is a fact of life, he said, which with we simply have to live.

Doherty chanted the long lit- any of conscripting nations, the size of each nation's mili- tary and their respective draft requirements, and then dealt with the five nations who do not use conscription. Of those five, he claimed, the United Kingdom, which abolished its draft in 1967, has since abdi- cated its military responsibilities to the world, and Canada and Canada Japan cannot ful- fill their manpower authori- zations.

Invasion Imminent

Doherty saw wide variations in foreign policy among be- cause cooperating states; a state re- sor ts to conscription because of its particular policy and not the other way around. To Doherty it was not a question of aggression with conscription or non-aggression without.

Stoughton Lynd, the Yale history professor who received national publicity last year with his trip to North Vietnam in defiance of the State Depart- ment, opened with a blockbas- ter. He demanded that Edward Doherty answer to the ques- tion of whether a land invasion of North Vietnam is imminent within the next few weeks. Doherty evaded the question, as- serting he was not in a position to know.

Counter-revolutionary

Lynd went on to argue that an invasion of North Vietnam be- cause its foreign policy is coun- ter-revolutionary, and no one else will die for us. "The legitimacy of the draft is a subtrac- tion of the legitimacy; a choice of aggression with conscription or non-aggression turned in upon itself.

Possibly the most intellectu- ally unavailable criticism was that the draft was that offered by Dr. John Swamley, Professor of Social Ethics at St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City. Ac- cording to Dr. Swamley, the U.S. can pursue its military- oriented foreign policy only be- cause of the draft and the abil- ity to mobilize almost unlimited manpower without an act of Congress, by administrative ac- tion rather than legislative ac-

Economic Imperialism

Swamley blames a military- industrial complex with a co-

incidence of interests. The mili- tary has steadily fostered a mood of emergency since 1948 and kept their numbers large. Industry requires large and safeguarded markets around the world.

Hence conscription has been pushed too, because of alleged dangers from Russia (China) and conscription has made pos- sible the vast military complex which is used to enforce Amer- ican foreign policy, i.e. economic imperialism.

The basis of Swamley's the- sis is the lack of congressional control over foreign policy. And this policy is heavily responsi- ble for the failure of the United Nations.

For Swamley, America's real enemy is within—our "Patri- otic" attitudes, our military octopus.

Haven to the North

Another session was devoted to responses to the draft, which came down simply to conscien- tious objection and flight to Canada. Arlo Tatun spoke again on the rights and me- chanics of conscientions objec- tion under law, and John Po- cock, a Toronto artist who counsels young American draft- dengers who find themselves in Canada, explained the official Canadian position on the issue.

According to Pocock, Canada will return only an induee or a deserter to American authori- ties. There are, moreover, groups in Toronto and Montreal who gladly provide a haven for the young "refugee" and help them find jobs and housing.

The problem here, said Po- cock, is that there is no statute of limitations on the prosecu- tion of the draft laws, and the former American may never again return home.

Sought the Truth

We were told by one of the conference organizers that the reason the Quakers have been able to survive so many years was not due to their strength of numbers or money or even theology, but simply because they always sought the truth.

Regardless of the fact that our sympathies converge with many of those expressed in St. Louis last week, the writers feel that if the American Friends Service Committee were truly dedicated to examining the total impact of the draft in America, the conference they ran to do so would not have demonstrated much a built-in bias.

A Symposium on "Soldiers in Peace and War—Manpower Needs of the United States"—

implied new life on the Rice campus. See story on page 1. —ed.)