

Editorials

The case for

Military training has its place

Editor's note: Today's editorial page has been given to representatives of both sides in the debate to abolish credit for ROTC. The first column is written by Robb Miller Emerald Business Manager and senior ROTC cadet.

The question of whether ROTC will remain on the University of Oregon campus with academic credit is once again facing our faculty, as has periodically been the case since 1922 when the Oregon Emerald openly attacked the "militaristic and silly" ROTC program. ROTC credit has been the subject of numerous curriculum committee investigations, administrative debates, student protests, and editorial commentaries. The arguments are not new. They revolve around one central issue, "Is ROTC worth it? Does military training really deserve a place within a liberal arts community?" The author believes it does.

I must begin my argument with the basic premise that a scholar in liberal arts is a student of humanity, eager and willing to examine every aspect of human experience, and that force is an unfortunate but real aspect of that experience. Therefore, the study of military science is an important ingredient of a liberal education.

Recent criticism of ROTC has undoubtedly been catalyzed by the Vietnam war and the constant attacks upon the military-industrial complex; attacks which are partially justifiable. But our concern is not the integrity of the entire military strata, for it, as every institution, exists in an imperfect state, constantly in need of improvement and innovation. Rather, the armed forces must be looked upon as a protective necessity; protecting the freedom that allows one to write such articles as this. As the provider of national security we must ask ourselves what type of personnel should administer its functions. Do we want stereotyped, uneducated, military amateurs? No. Qualified college graduates who are aware of social and political problems and change are the brand of officers needed. So is it not more beneficial

to have officers with a university background rather than drawing them from Officer Candidate School, whose ranks originate from enlisted men; some with and some without the benefits of civilian higher education? If such an assumption is correct there must certainly exist a program which is attractive to the college male; a program in which academic credit as well as education is included.

Criticism of accredited ROTC on campus has involved curriculum, instructors, and actual work load. By examining each of these arguments perhaps we can better understand the conflict at Oregon.

ROTC course substance includes classes in military history, weapons, tactics, leadership, management, logistics, military law, and military bearing; classes which are professional and technical in character and which are no less cultural than many other professional training programs on campus. Military literature and textbooks are employed in ROTC instruction simply because they are the most readily available sources of information concerning the armed forces. As math texts written by mathematicians are employed by the math department, so are military manuals written by militarists used in ROTC. If other applicable texts were available they would be used without hesitation.

There has also been criticism concerning the faculty; the officers who instruct ROTC classes. As cited by the University curriculum committee's report on the ROTC, each officer has received a bachelor's or master's degree at some standard civilian institution of higher education. They have also received an extensive degree of training through service schools and actual field experience. Perhaps they do not have all the conventional credentials that automatically label one as "qualified," but in a liberal institution administrative flexibility would seem to be an asset rather than a detriment and absolute administrative uniformity an absurdity.

A further argument against ROTC lies in the relative value of its credit hour commitment when weighted against the same number of hours spent on other, more

"beneficial" courses. At Oregon an army ROTC student must take a total of twenty-four hours of military science to receive a commission upon graduation. AFROTC requirements are the same. Thus, the work load amounts to approximately one-seventh of their undergraduate education. When one considers that no one is required to take ROTC and that one voluntarily enrolls with the intention of earning a commission in the army or air force, the time and energy spent in achieving those ends is minimal, leaving the student ample time to broaden his liberal education and to expand in numerous academic areas.

Perhaps even more important than any of the preceding arguments for the retention of ROTC as an accredited academic alternative lies in the conclusion of Dr. Herman B. Wells, President of Indiana University, in his response to the university community:

"If in this time of war hysteria we should be persuaded to cancel out the ROTC program for political reasons, we would in effect be yielding to precisely the same kind of pressures which from time to time have demanded that we cease teaching anything about Karl Marx, Russian history, and Slavic languages and literature. There is little practical difference to the university whether those demands come from inside or outside the university community. Secondly, while it is understandable that many people who bear the terrible brunt of war should be opposed to war, our national involvement in Vietnam is nonetheless a fact, as is the draft. The likelihood that many of your fellow students will be called upon for military service still remains unfortunately strong. In our zeal to end the war and promote peace, consider the effect of your attack upon ROTC. Its existence is less essential to the war effort than to fellow students who wish to have the advantage of preparation in the skills that will equip them for a better chance of survival in the performance of their mandatory military service. Opposing ROTC may satisfy your hunger for action but its crucial effect will be to remove the option of valued training for many of your classmates."

The case against

Abolition of credit imperative

Editor's note: The case to abolish ROTC is an SDS position paper compiled by Emily Kelly, Steve Holland and Paul Gratz.

By EMILY KELLY, STEVE HOLLAND and PAUL GRATZ

The abolition of the Department of Defense's ROTC programs on the college campuses is imperative.

The liberal position on ROTC is to make it extra-curricular or to remove its academic credit. The liberal argues that ROTC courses do not meet the high professional and intellectual standards of higher education; that they are an indoctrination of ideas rather than a learning experience; or that the University should be politically neutral. Furthermore they argue that students have the right to join ROTC if they so desire, because ROTC is a legitimate operation. All these arguments are politically weak and avoid the real issue.

Academic reforms that allow ROTC to continue to function are meaningless. The structure and operation of ROTC courses are unimportant. What is important is what ROTC does. ROTC is used to produce military officers to oppress people throughout the world.

No one can deny that ROTC is an essential supplier of the American military machine currently embroiled in Southeast Asia. Many Americans now think that their country's policy in Vietnam has been misguided and, perhaps, even immoral or illegal, but that their leaders seem to be ready to admit this error in judgment.

We dispute this analysis. We believe that the involvement has always been harmoniously integrated in the larger pattern of America's political and economic interests at home and abroad.

U.S. AGGRESSIVE BUT SUBTLE

The United States is the most aggressive and expansionist power in history, but its style is more subtle than that of previous colonial powers. The U.S. does not have the outdated forms of empire which might bring to mind tropical colonies, colonial governors, and the righteousness of the "White man's burden."

It has chosen to call the modern empire, "the Free World," a euphemism that has nothing to do with the quality of life of the great masses of the people who live in it. The term "Free World" can refer only to the freedom that large U.S. corporations exercise in the exploitation of the people and the resources of the Third World. This is the type of "freedom" for which the U.S. is fighting in Vietnam, Thailand, Guatemala and Watts—the "freedom" to exploit and oppress.

In the U.S. the concentrated power of the large corporation is fully intertwined with the political and military power of the state, whose policies have become newly indistinguishable from the needs of these corporate giants. The top 300 corporations like G.M., Boeing, I.B.M., Dow and Weyerhaeuser proudly boast that by 1975 they will control 75 per cent of the resources and the markets of their "Free World."

Policy and administration in the full interests of American capitalism is handled abroad through the State Department, the AID, the Peace Corps, the CIA, and the worldwide network of military missions. Neo-colonial rule is maintained behind the facade of "independent" governments. But the oppressed people of these neo-col-

onies have first hand knowledge of day to day exploitation and are resisting.

In Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and at home in the Black and Brown colonies, popular movements are growing in opposition to the imperialism of America. These people have learned that they must fight for their national liberation because they know that American business interests are certainly unwilling to relinquish their profits graciously.

GUARDIANS OF EMPIRE REACT TO THREAT

When profits are threatened, the guardians of the empire respond with all the means necessary to protect their interests. This can be seen in the present attempt to "save" its investments, markets and resources in Southeast Asia: 500,000 Americans troops fighting in Vietnam, more than 40,000 troops in Thailand, special forces troops fighting in Laos and in Cambodia to the accompaniment of bombing of villages. Not only can it be seen in Song my, Saigon and Santo Domingo, but the blood flows in Birmingham, Montgomery, Dallas, Detroit, Berkeley, Chicago, and on and on . . .

We in the movement support the oppressed and the exploited people both abroad and at home in their just struggles for freedom and self-determination. We have begun to see the increasing manifestations and effects of American imperialism and we must now fight against it, to lend more than passive support to our brothers and sisters who are the daily victims in the sharpest onslaughts of the imperialist empire.

American working people pay for the war in Vietnam through higher taxes and the growing inflation resulting from a warfare state economy. Their sons are drafted into an army not only fighting in Vietnam, but whose presence in some 3,400 bases in more than 30 foreign countries serves to contain and suppress the popular resistance movements and further insure the continued profits of American corporations. Rising unemployment and high interest rates are a direct consequence of imperialism. When high profits are sought abroad and in wasteful defense programs the result is a lag in domestic capital investment in much-needed social reforms.

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PLAYS BIG ROLE

The American university plays a very critical role in supporting the smooth functioning of imperialism. Its proclaimed "isolation," "political neutrality," and "ivory towerism" are all myths. As an integrated social institution controlled and administered by the powerful few, the modern university serves the corporate needs of the American empire through recruiting and training of students to manage its corporations, through support of defense research, through indoctrination in courses that foster "the Free World" myth and a myriad of other myths and through the training of the army of imperialism with its ROTC programs.

The nationwide attack on ROTC is an integral part of the anti-war and anti-imperialism movement that is growing in the U.S., in Puerto Rico, in Eugene and all over the world.

To a power like America it is not money or law and order that keeps it functioning but, in the final analysis, it is always the mass, organized violence of the state, embodied in its military that is essential to its existence.

The warfare state is in desperate need of officers to lead its conscripted armies. ROTC is the major supplier of new officers.

Col. Pell has noted that more than 11,000 ROTC graduates fill 85 per cent of the annual input needs for new officers in the active army. About 45 per cent of all army officers on active duty are ROTC graduates, while 65 per cent of the 1st lieutenants and 85 per cent of the 2nd lieutenants come from ROTC. Col. Curtis once referred to Oregon as "a good producer," but now the Army's freshman ROTC program at the University is currently down 71 per cent in enrollment.

ROTC feeds off the class nature of the educational system. Grade schools and high schools in low income communities provide poor education for their students and track young people into non-academic and vocational areas. Young people from these schools are systematically excluded from colleges and universities by "entrance requirements," bad high school counseling, high tuition, etc.

Meanwhile, schools in high income communities orient their students to higher education counseling and college prep courses; kids from high income families go to college, get 2-S deferments and have the "opportunity" to join ROTC—they are the privileged.

ROTC SUPPORTS CLASS SYSTEM

Kids from low income families go to college on a token basis; most get jobs, if they are lucky, or join the ranks of the unemployed, get drafted or in the face of the inevitable or out of desperation, join the Army. Poor youth, especially poor Black youth, become the foot soldiers and well-off youth becomes the officers. ROTC supports this class system and plays on it.

Col. Pell comments: "The armed forces simply cannot function . . . without an officer corps comprised largely of college graduates. Who is prepared to trust their sons, let alone the nation's destiny, to the leadership of high school boys and college drop-outs?"

Privilege obviously breeds privilege. "Nationwide, less than 5 per cent of eligible college students take ROTC. Yet out of this come 10 per cent of our congressmen, 15 per cent of our ambassadors, 25 per cent of our state governors, and 28 per cent of business leaders earning over \$100,000 per year." (Pell)

It is clear that if ROTC is abolished, the ability of the armed services to function is hurt. Col. Pell says, "Let it be understood beyond question that there is at present no acceptable alternate source of junior leadership if ROTC is driven from the college campus." If ROTC is abolished, the struggle against imperialism is advanced.

There is no obligation for the University of Oregon to provide professional training for military officers who will use their tools in the oppression of others. It has been argued that the central role of the American military is to implement a systematic, long-standing policy of securing world-wide markets for American investments and trade. This objective implies the installation and support of reactionary governments and suppression of popular revolts.

The case for abolishing ROTC rests on evidence that ROTC is essential to the smooth functioning of the American military in the pursuit of these policies. This is the real issue.