

# opinion

## Draft system is already waiting

The Selective Service has completed putting together local "stand-by" draft boards in the likelihood that Congress will authorize a military draft.

It's a safe bet the draft will be reinstated at some time in the very near future — unless something is done now.

All those who saw registration of draft-age individuals as a major step toward the return of the draft should view the "stand-by" draft boards as yet one more deliberate step toward conscription. The return of the draft is — in our view — a cautiously orchestrated inevitability.

The Selective Service's psychology appears to be to move toward the draft with a series of feints. They are keenly aware of how the draft angers Americans who still vividly recall the fiasco of the Vietnam era draft.

The Selective Service, rather than make one sweeping reinstatement of the draft is feeding Americans an ill-tasting medicine by drops.

That ill-tasting medicine may cause more than just stomach irritation, as those who remember how the Vietnam era draft alienated the families of those who resisted. It took years to repair the damage done. And then, instead of amnesty, only a limited clemency was granted — branding those who chose to resist the draft more criminal than pacifist.

When registration was authorized there was a general outcry that it signaled the new draft. That was two years ago.

In the meantime Selective Service repeatedly reinforced the notion that a registration of draft-age individuals was in no way the return of full-scale conscription.

The registration issue was given time to run its course. It's an unfortunate trait of the American people, but issues are argued vehemently at first, and thereafter, ignored.

The new draft boards are quite different from those of the Vietnam era. They will not be the major mechanism for handling draftees. The drafting will, in fact, be handled on a national basis, far removed from the local boards.

All drafting will be done by social security number at a government computer center. This totally anonymous — numbers-only — system will probably happen before Orwell's predicted 1984.

The local draft boards only contact with the draftees will be to deal with appeals of classification or induction orders, and for those claiming conscientious-objector status.

It will be fair to say that the rights of a draftable individual will be much better known in the white middle-class suburban areas. The ghetto draftee will have little knowledge of the procedures involved with appealing classification and applying for conscientious-objector status. The inequities are built into the system.

If the draft is reinstated, will it tear this country apart as it did during the Vietnam era? That possibility has been taken into account by Selective Service, and is the motive behind their carefully measured moves.

Next month, a cabinet-level committee will meet to re-evaluate the current registration policy. The present rate of compliance is 70 percent. Some 134 names of persons who have allegedly not registered have already been referred to the U.S. Justice Department for possible prosecution. And that 70 percent figure is down from the 90 percent that registered in the first two rounds. The decline may be used to justify a reinstatement of the draft.

The apparatus for the draft is all set-up — all that it requires is for Congress to authorize. And that may not be too difficult to imagine with the decline of registrants and the militaristic mood that's prevalent in the administration.

The reinstatement of the draft reminds us of the French saying — "The more things change, the more they remain the same."



## letters

### Too far

It is becoming trendy these days to suggest that state and federal budget cutters have "gone too far" in reducing human service programs. There is, however, a simple and obvious local alternative to sending money to Washington or Salem for human service programs.

Each of us has the personal opportunity now to return our tax cut "bonuses" (an average of \$4-5 monthly) directly to human service agencies in our own community. For example, United Way payroll deductions will allow the regular, personal commitment of this sum to be used by 54 local human service providers, many of the same agencies reduced in ability to serve because of public budget cuts.

A personal commitment of this kind would provide the human services the community requires and would do it without the expensive overhead of the bureaucratic middleman role. For the sake of those who truly need these services, I hope these personal commitments are made by all those who feel public budgets have been too deeply cut.

Jane Bigelow  
Eugene

### Alternative?

This letter is a response to the article of Oct. 7, "Right-wing wave helps rebel with a cause." In this article, the Young Americans for Freedom claim to provide a political "alternative" for University students. The question is: an alternative to what?

The YAF has sponsored efforts to "Save Our Canal" and "Stop Salt II", as well as supporting the recent, massive U.S. military build-up. The YAF claim to advance the cause of freedom, as their name implies, but their efforts make it clear that it is only a doublespeak. When the YAF uses the term freedom they are referring to economic freedom. In this sense they are for freedom; freedom from social security programs, unemployment benefits and minimum wage laws. In other words, the YAF is for freedom of the old and poor to

do without food, for the unemployed to do without financial support, while the economy fails to provide jobs and freedom of the wage-earners to receive a decent dignified wage for their labor.

The YAF claims, in their celebrated "Sharon Statement," that "when government interferes with the work of the market economy, it tends to reduce the moral and physical strength of this nation..." During the Depression, the moral and physical strength of this nation was at its lowest ebb and it was government interference, in the form of Roosevelt's New Deal, that revived a crippled economy.

In truth the YAF is a pro-big-business, pro-military, conservative group that preaches conflagration instead of peaceful co-existence with other nations.

The "Sharon Statement" dictates, "the forces of international communism are, at present, the greatest single threat... that the US should stress victory over, rather than coexistence with this menace..."

The menace is not communism, but groups like the YAF, who would just as soon provoke a nuclear war with the Soviet Union than seek a peaceful means to the geo-political issues that confront both countries.

The YAF is a reactionary group whose aim is to strengthen the grip of big business over government at the expense of the common weal. What this nation needs now is a real alternative.

Michael Solomita  
University of Massachusetts  
Political Economy Student

### Inertia

I would like to blame some of those in charge of publicity and of coverage of the then upcoming event, in part, for the low student turnout. Speaking for myself, by the time it was Sunday noon and I had made up my mind to go to the investiture I became aware of not knowing place or time. Neither did I remember it to be adequately (i.e. in keeping with the importance of the event) announced. So I found it too cumbersome to go to the university and dig up last week's issues of the Emerald to find out, and decided to

spend the afternoon otherwise.

Conclusion: If you have to work against people's inertia, don't give it a chance.

Nikolaus von Barga  
Graduate, geology

### Greed

Before you decide not to bring up a family because of the alleged "worldwide food shortage" examine the situation more carefully. You might discover that greed — not scarcity — allows some to go hungry. Even if Americans stopped having kids altogether the situation wouldn't change at all! Those stressing limitation of family size should attack the real problem instead of pushing for elimination of children.

Many could be fed if land presently wasted for non-food items was converted for growing beneficial produce. Millions of acres of the most fertile regions in the south are used to grow tobacco, which only helps bring in money for farmers and cigarette firms. It does the average person no good — only harm.

Let's not forget grain and grapes used for alcoholic beverages. Millions of acres are devoted to making the beer and wine companies rich — the media also profits through advertising. Results? Thousands of people die on our roads, crime rates increase and families are ruined due to this product. Beneficial? Food shortages? Ha! Farmers plow under tons and tons of food to maintain high prices and profits. Government actually encourages this waste.

How much food would be available if Americans changed their gluttonous eating habits? Our population is greatly overweight, out-of-shape and preoccupied with taking pills and going to spas to lose fat acquired through overeating.

Society in general — especially the rich elite elements — is so selfish it would rather encourage young couples to abort their children — rather than alter present practices. I for one urge people to fight the real problems instead of attacking the family.

Ed Crockett  
1011 Abbie Lane

## letters policy

The Emerald will accept and attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on issues, ideas and topics of interest to the University community.

The letters **must** be limited to 250 words, signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in to The Emerald offices, EMU 300.

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