

Resolution - Removal of Draft Board

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council February 22, 1971

		YEA	NAY	ABSENT	Present
	Mrs. Ackerman	✓			
	Mr. Clinton		✓		
	Mr. Coates	✓			
	Mr. Crane		✓		
	Mr. Danehy		✓		
	Mr. Mahoney	✓			
	Mr. Moncreiff		✓		
	Mr. Sullivan		✓		
	Mayor Vellucci				✓
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Crane - Reconsideration

RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

February 22, 1971

- WHEREAS: The expanding Indochina War is destroying the peoples and cultures of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; and
- WHEREAS: The Indochina War is resulting in the deaths of American young men; and
- WHEREAS: The war is destroying the social fabric of this society; and
- WHEREAS: The vast majority of the American people are opposed to the continuation of the war; and
- WHEREAS: This Cambridge City Council is in favor of ending the war and revising national priorities as recorded in the Council Resolution of 6 October, 1969; and
- WHEREAS: The compulsory draft system contributes to the continuing war; and
- WHEREAS: The draft system is not a fair system for the young men of Cambridge; and
- WHEREAS: In light of the Shea Act Draft Board #17 is part of an illegal process which is forcing young Massachusetts citizens to fight in an undeclared war; and
- WHEREAS: The Draft Law and Draft Board #17 are racially and sexually discriminating; and
- WHEREAS: The Selective Service System is a federal agency and its presence in a community City Hall is unnecessary and inappropriate; and
- WHEREAS: Draft Board #17 provides no constructive services to the residents of Cambridge; and
- WHEREAS: The citizens and government of Cambridge are in need of more conveniently located facilities for health care, housing information, vocational and educational counselling and other legitimate community needs; and
- WHEREAS: The community and the City Council care for the quality of the lives of young men and women in the Cambridge area, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED: That this City Council hereby urges the City Manager to take immediate appropriate action to remove Draft Board #17 from Cambridge City Hall.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this City Council hereafter does not want a Draft Board in any public building under the jurisdiction of the City Manager.

Dean Mitchell
Unitarian Universalist
Service Committee, Inc.
78 Beacon St., Boston

SUPPLEMENT ON DRAFT REPEAL

The draft law now in effect is due to expire at the end of June unless Congress acts to renew it. Historically the law has been renewed every four years with few changes, but today there is greater public sentiment favoring an end to the draft than at any time in recent history. Although the presidential Gates Commission on the Draft was unequivocal in its support of repeal and a volunteer Armed Forces, the unofficial word from Washington is that the law will be extended for two years, giving the President time to reduce draft calls to zero, and to 'reform' the draft to make military service a more attractive option, largely through higher pay.

In considering draft repeal, it is important to understand the terminology used. Reducing draft calls to zero, as the President and the Pentagon recommend, means that the legal machinery for unilateral draft calls by executive order (the President) will remain intact, but no call will be made. This is not draft repeal. Another proposed scheme provides that draft calls be by Congressional action, ie. a vote by both houses. Though an improvement over the present structure, this still is not draft repeal. Draft repeal means that the entire system of procurement by conscription will be abandoned. The Selective Service System would be dissolved, and there would be a voluntary Armed Forces.

A fairly small number of reasons are continually being advanced by those persons who oppose draft repeal, and in every case the facts do not substantiate them. The following discussion should clarify these issues.

I. The Poor and Black would be unfairly overrepresented in a volunteer army.

Of the more than 50% of young men who fail their pre-induction examinations, the majority are from the lower social strata. Roughly the bottom 15-20% of the population as measured by aptitude tests are excluded by military standards, and most of them are poor and under-educated. Exemptions based on health conditions or moral deficiencies also are concentrated in this group.

Currently 9.5% of all servicemen and 10.4% of those stationed in Southeast Asia are black. Blacks comprise 12.5% of the total population and 13.4% of men aged 17-20, thus a 30% increase in the number of black servicemen would be required to reach populational parity. Reenlistments by blacks have diminished from 22.3% in 1965 to 11.8% in 1969. An all-black army would be literally impossible anyway, since too few black males turn 19 each year to fill draft quotas. Black leadership, from Edward Brooke to Eldridge Cleaver, supports full repeal.

II. A volunteer Armed Forces might well lead to a professional military elite free of civilian influence.

History shows that militarism and conscription are found together. Without excessively belaboring the issue, the investigator can see that conscription has provided the manpower for virtually all major wars. Since this country was founded, Napoleon, the Hessians, the Prussians, etc. have relied upon conscription to provide manpower. During both World Wars the opposing

sides each made extensive use of draft programs, and today American draftees are going to Southeast Asia.

Nearly all officers above the rank of first lieutenant and enlisted men above the rank of sergeant are true volunteers not motivated by the draft. A draft simply provides these 'professionals' with an unlimited and unchecked source of manpower with which to implement their policies. Therefore, it is natural enough that an overwhelming majority of high-ranking military officers favor retention of the authority to draft. America has the worst aspects of both alternatives. In 1969 88% of infantry riflemen in Vietnam were draftees, 10% first-term volunteers and two per cent career Army men. First-term men who are drafted or draft-induced are also doing most of the dying in Vietnam, not the professional soldiers.

What all of this means is that we already have a military elite of sorts, since the expendables, the men at the bottom of the service, are primarily draftees or short-term volunteers who will use their first opportunity to leave the military. Because of the rigid and authoritarian structure of the military, with its manipulative group pressures, draftees have little influence on military policy. Draftees are usually nineteen or twenty years old and are hardly a match for their seasoned superior officers. Furthermore, the draft does not produce isolation (a common contention), since most draftees spend the shortest time in the service. Rather, this danger centers with the professionals who largely are a society unto themselves and one quite removed from civilian influence and participation. Also, draftees are removed from the public view, where they might have influence through protest. A responsible solution over the draft would include methods of reintegrating isolated elements of the military structure into the larger context of the civilian world.

III. What about draft reform or National Service?

Two general changes, which have certain variations, have been proposed by some legislators. National Service, whereby registrants would perform civilian or military service, merely compounds the effect of the present draft and perpetuates the practice of conscription under a more superficially comfortable heading. Draft 'reforms' short of outright repeal ultimately have the same shortcoming, since conscription is not eliminated. Moreover, idealism, which in its most inept expressions still has shown the deep concern of America's young people, would suffer under these systems, and the result, coincidental or not, might be a fall in civilian morale much like what has taken place in the ranks.

This final comment is probably the strongest, since it renders further discussion irrelevant. It simply is sheer folly to contemplate a program in which raw, 18-year-old recruits would find themselves facing the world's most difficult and frustrating social problems. For example, the Peace Corps and Vista could handle no more than one per cent of these servicemen. Eighteen is the age most often suggested for those who would serve in such a program. Two million men reach this age each year. Government estimates set the bill for a universal program (universal in the interest of equity) at \$20 billion. If women were included, these figures would double.

Both reform and national service preserve the power to draft. Gen. Hershey says, "You can't make the draft fair." Sen. Mark Hatfield says, "One does not reform inequity. One abolishes it."

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AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, INC.

New England Regional Office

48 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

AREA CODE 617 864-3150

THEODORE PAULLIN
Chairman
ROBERT A. LYON
Executive Secretary
ABRAM W. SANGREY
Associate
Executive Secretary
THELMA W. BARBITT
ROBERT G. HINDMARSH
Interpretation and
Finance Secretaries

16 February, 1971

Paul E. Healy, City Clerk
Cambridge City Hall
Cambridge, Ma. 02139

Dear Paul Healy and Members of the Cambridge City Council:

Enclosed are copies of a resolution the Nonviolent Direct Action Group (N-DAG) wishes to submit to the Cambridge City Council during the Council meeting of 22 February, 1971.

The resolution notes the relationship between the Draft system and the expanding war in Indochina and enables the City Council to take positive action against the war and the Draft by removing Draft Board #17 from City Hall.

I and several other Cambridge community supporters of the enclosed resolution would appreciate the opportunity of presenting our views before the City Council at the Council meeting of 22 February, 1971, or whenever the resolution is considered.

At a future Council session, N-DAG will introduce another resolution suggesting that the space now misused by the Draft Board be used for the work of Vocations for Social Change or any other agency which clearly serves the community.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Sincerely,

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Enc.

Edward Lazar, Program Associate
Peace Education
(home: 62 Howard St., Cambridge)
for the Nonviolent Direct Action Group

AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Communication from Edward Lazar, Program Associate Peace Education transmitting copy of a resolution the Nonviolent Direct Action Group wishes to submit to the City Council concerning the relationship between the Draft system and the expanding war in Indochina and requesting an opportunity to present their views at the Council meeting of February 22, 1971 or whenever the resolution is considered.

February 22, 1971

Resolution Failed of Adoption