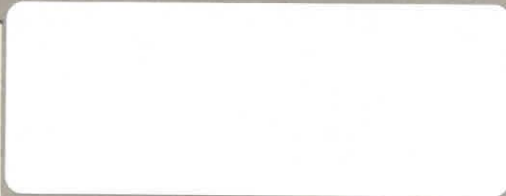


Fall 1988

New Conversations



**National
Service:
*is it for us?***



New Conversations

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Conversation Piece: National Service, *is it for Us?*

Carl A. Bade

*Secretary for Special Programs
and Services
United Church Board for
Homeland Ministries*

Many of the writers, conceptual developers, and advocates of a National Service Program for the United States credit William James with issuing, in 1910, the first call to youth to be enlisted in a program entitled "The Moral Equivalent of War." The program was envisioned to engage youth in industrial work and social service, according to their skills and interests. While that did not come to fruition, we saw some forms of it instituted during the bleak days and years of the Great Depression in the 1930's. Thousands of youth were enlisted in the Civilian Conservation Corps beginning in 1933, and even more thousands of youth were employed under the National Youth Administration. These programs came to an end as we entered World War II, and the nation sent its young men and some young women to war. Meanwhile, all of America entered a war economy.

Immediately after World War II, the American Friends Service Committee, Service Civil International, and many of the churches began workcamp and voluntary service programs to help rebuild war-torn countries and address social problems. These programs grew, reached their peak in the 1960's, and continue today in somewhat modified form.

In addition to the church programs, we saw the creation of the Peace Corps in 1961, and of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) in 1964. These programs, like the church programs, peaked in the late 1960's; they continue today in somewhat modified form, with a smaller number of participants.

Parallel to these developments in church and state voluntary service programs in the private sector, a call for a National Service Program was initiated and has continued unabated through the years. The suggestion is thought first to have surfaced on the campus of Oberlin College in the late 1940's. Since that time, persons or groups inside and outside of the government have been advocating such a Service Program. At first they advocated a universal program for all youth 18 to 20 years of age, who were to serve for two years in either military or civilian service. Such a program has never been established by Congress. Consequently, more recently, the call has been for more modest, noncompulsory National Service programs, engaging at the maximum 3,000,000 youth. We have also seen in recent years the establishment of city and state youth service programs which are modeled after the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps.

At present we are experiencing a resurgence of service amongst our youth, college students, and older adults. Simultaneously, we have the establishment of a new Coalition for National Service, whose goal is the ultimate implementation of a National Service Program in the United States. Legislators and political parties are giving increased attention to the concept, by introducing a number of bills in Congress attempting to establish some form of a National Service Program.

Over the past several decades, church voluntary service administrators, along with others in American society, have consistently opposed a compulsory National Service Program. Today such a program is not being advocated. Instead, a variety of non-compulsory programs are being discussed and promoted. Given these changes, and aware of the renewed interest in Congress in some form of National Service, the Commission on Voluntary Service and Action and the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors organized a Consultation on the subject in Washington, D.C., November 2-4, 1987. The articles in this issue emanate from that consultation, and bring the issue to your attention.

The Continuing Need for National Service

Donald J. Eberly

*Executive Director
National Service Secretariat
Washington, D.C.*

John Swomley and I had a brief debate on national service on the pages of *The Christian Century* in 1967. His article appeared on January 11 and my reply on April 5. Now, a generation later, each of us has a chance to address the same topic under changed circumstances.

The changes are readily apparent. Young men are no longer being drafted, but they are being required to register for a possible draft in the future. Some young men agonize over the registration issue, and a few refuse, but their numbers are minuscule compared to the numbers who, two decades ago, agonized over the draft and the numbers who sought alternatives ranging from going to Canada to conscientious objection, from the military reserves to divinity school.

Some things haven't changed. The need for service remains high. In a 1965 survey for the War on Poverty, Greenleigh Associates found a need for some four million people to work full-time on the alleviation of poverty. Most of the work suggested could be done by 18-24 year olds. In 1984, a Ford-funded survey found a need for a little over three million to do similar kinds of work.

In 1967, the federal government supported some 15,000 persons,

aged 18-24, in full-time civilian service with the Peace Corps and VISTA. Today that figure has fallen to about 3,000. This drop is only partly compensated for by the rise in state and local programs. Such programs now engage approximately 5,000 of these 18-24-year-olds in full-time, year-round civilian service.

Several of the larger religious denominations sponsor youth service programs, but, like the programs of today's federal, state, and local governments, their efforts are nominal compared to the need and to the resources available. Only the Mennonites and a few of the other, smaller denominations engage a substantial fraction of their young people in full-time service. We did a very rough calculation last year and estimated that, if the mainline churches sponsored full-time youth service projects to the extent the Mennonites do, there would be several hundred thousand young people in service today!

Although the issue of the military draft has faded, other issues are much the same as they were in 1967. The best national service proposals are multi-dimensional, providing benefits to those served, to those who serve, and to future employers as young people gain constructive work

experience, as well as to the nation as they invest in it. This characteristic complexity makes national service difficult to present to a public that prefers answers that can be read off the television screen and digested in thirty seconds or less.

A continuing issue to some people is, "Where does the responsibility lie for meeting these unmet social needs—in the public or the private sector?" If all the energy that has gone into debating the issue and passing the buck had gone into meeting those needs, there would be fewer needs facing us. The magnitude of need is sufficient to engage the energies of the church, other private sector entities, *and* the state.

Probably the biggest problem in the extended debate over national service is that the debaters so seldom agree on what would constitute national service. Those opposed to the idea sometimes call it slavery, and those in favor sometimes call it freedom. Such confusion is partly understandable, since something with the name "national service" could take a number of different forms.

The National Service Secretariat made an attempt to break through this confusion in 1970 with its issuance of a "Statement on

National Youth Service." It sets forth, in fairly broad brush, a set of principles which many students of youth policy believe should form the basis for national service. I think most of my colleagues would agree with me when I say that I would rather see something based on these principles and called "XYZ" than something counter to those principles called "National Service." The Statement in full reads as follows:

Statement on National Youth Service

The service needed by society—in such fields as education, care for the very young and the very old, conservation, and municipal services—is enormous. Many of these needs could be met by young people from all walks of life. By helping to meet these needs, young people would be able to test themselves through service to society, and would receive valuable experience for their careers. By having invested in their country while young, they would become better citizens as they mature. By having first-hand, constructive experience with major problems in society, they would be better equipped to deal with them in future years as parents, employers, leaders, voters, and volunteers.

In order to meet many of our most pressing needs, and to permit young men and women to become engaged in the building of a better society, WE ENDORSE A PROGRAM OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE, which would have these basic features:

1. *Service opportunities would be available to all young people.* The main criterion for admission would be willingness to serve. All young people would be encouraged—not required—to serve, and would be rewarded with an educational entitlement upon completion of service.
2. *Each participant would both serve and learn.* Learning would range from development of specific skills to growth in self-knowledge, problem solving, and working with people.
3. *Service activities would be directed and financed at the local level to the extent permitted by available resources, and would include projects organized and directed by young people.* Thus, maximum local initiative would be encouraged.
4. *Service activities would be underwritten by a public foundation at the national*

level. Such a foundation, which should be removed from political pressures but which would receive both Congressional appropriations and private contributions, would assure support for all needy projects.

5. *The basic raison d'être for national youth service is the need society has for the service of youth.* Main areas are tutoring, literacy training, day care, elder care, conservation, and various kinds of community service. By serving in these fields, young people would be able to test themselves through service to society and would receive valuable experience for their careers.

6. *Young people who seem poorly qualified by conventional standards could serve effectively.* High school dropouts are today serving as tutors, and doing a good job; others are receiving specialized training for responsible hospital positions. Each participant would receive the training and supervision needed for the assignment.

7. *There would be a transition phase.* Growth of national youth service would be constrained by identification of useful tasks, finding enough

trainers and supervisors, and obtaining sufficient funding. The transition phase would permit experimentation with various techniques and activities.

8. *Participation would be by means of a contract, voluntarily entered into by all parties.* The contract would spell out the responsibilities of the participant, the sponsoring agency, and the funding agency.

9. *Duration of service would range from a minimum of six months to a maximum of four years.* The value of the educational entitlement would be proportional to the time in service.

10. *Participation in national youth service would be viewed as fulfillment of a person's peacetime service obligation.* If a peacetime military draft is reinstated, persons who are liable for the draft, and who complete a period in national youth service equal to the draft period, would be placed at the end of the draft queue, together with those who had completed military service.

This statement has been endorsed in the past two years by Senator Daniel J. Evans; Representatives John Lewis and Leon Panetta;

Mayors Henry Cisneros, Dianne Feinstein, Don Fraser, and Vincent Schoemehl; college presidents Derek Bok (Harvard), Johnnetta B. Cole (Spelman), Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh (Notre Dame), Donald Kennedy (Stanford), and Donna Shalala (University of Wisconsin); and former Cabinet members John Gardner, Ray Marshall, and Willard Wirtz. Other leaders who support the Statement include Ernest L. Boyer (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching), George Gallup, Jr., LaDonna Harris (Americans for Indian Opportunity), John E. Jacob (National Urban League), and Jacqueline Grennan Wexler (National Conference of Christians and Jews). Among the organizations supporting the Statement are the American Veterans Committee, the National Alliance of Business, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Inter-religious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors.

With support for the Statement from so many who are vitally concerned with youth policy, and who would help to shape national service once it comes into existence, it is surprising that opponents of national service tend to go outside this framework for their assumptions about national service.

There is plenty of room for various national service models within the framework, as was the case with the Peace Corps. From mid-1960—when Sen. Hubert Humphrey introduced the first Peace Corps bill—until early 1961—when President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps by executive order—persons interested in the idea have offered a wide array of designs. The Peace Corps debate lasted less than one year. The debate on national service has been going on since William James gave his “Moral Equivalent of War” speech at Stanford University in 1906!

The Statement offers a standard against which to judge current proposals for national service. The major proposals now before the country are the proposal of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) for a Citizens Corps; the Youth Service Act of 1988, making its way through the House of Representatives; and the nascent national service plan of Gov. Michael Dukakis.

The major political figures behind the DLC plan are Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia and Chuck Robb, former governor of Virginia, and a 1988 candidate for the U.S. Senate.

The DLC envisions a Citizens Corps of some 800,000 persons.

There would be 600,000 young people in one-year civilian service receiving a subsistence stipend; 100,000 young people in two-year military service receiving one-half the usual pay and allowances; and 100,000 elderly persons working part-time for \$5 per hour. The young people in civilian service would earn a \$10,000 voucher (\$20,000 for those who serve two years) that could be utilized for education, training, or the purchase of a house. Those in military service would earn a \$24,000 voucher that could be used for the same purposes. To enter the Citizens Corps, young people would need a high school diploma or its equivalent.

The DLC proposes to pay for its Citizens Corps by replacing Pell grants with the above vouchers, by restricting loans to students who have completed a period of civilian or military national service, and by reducing expenditures for a variety of current budget items.

The DLC plan is in fairly close accord with the Statement except for its high school graduation requirement. Most mentally retarded persons—who could provide useful services and whose lives would be enhanced as a result of the experience—would be excluded. The same is true of school dropouts, who comprise about one-quarter of the youthful

population. They would be denied the chance to serve, and with it the opportunity to find themselves and re-direct their lives.

Some national service advocates oppose the provision of the DLC plan that calls for making higher education grants and loans contingent on a period of national service. It is largely a matter of timing. Had the DLC plan been proposed 35 years ago, before Sputnik and the federal aid plans that followed it, many higher education supporters would have applauded it for its support of higher education. Today, many educators consider Pell grants as a cornerstone of federal support for higher education, and would oppose any attempt to eliminate them, even though an equal amount of money might become available as vouchers.

The Youth Service Act of 1988 is a consolidation of several national service bills introduced into the House of Representatives in 1987. From Rep. Leon Panetta's bill, it provides \$50 million for matching grants to states and localities with youth service programs. From Rep. Morris Udall's bill, it provides \$70 million for an American Conservation Corps. From separate bills by Reps. Gerry Sikorski and Robert Torricelli, it provides \$2 million for a study and evaluation of national service. Finally, the Sub-

committee on Employment Opportunities, chaired by Rep. Matthew Martinez, added \$15 million for in-service education and training and an equal amount for post-service education and training.

This combined bill, H.R. 18, is also closely akin to the statement. Its major divergence is that it would be run out of existing federal agencies rather than a new public foundation.

Gov. Dukakis's approach to national service suggests no overall plan, but has recommended several elements of national service. He has called for a Literacy Corps, a National Teacher Corps, and for student loans that could be written off through a period of community service. Dukakis has not as yet spelled out his proposals in enough detail that we can measure them against the Statement.

An underlying national service issue is illustrated by the different approaches pursued by John Swomley and toward the delivery of needed services. Both of us reject the argument of those like Milton Friedman who contend that a non-military service is not really needed unless the marketplace provides for it. Swomley would meet the need for day care, elder care, and so on with a public employment

program at prevailing wages. Given the huge budget deficits of recent years, I don't believe such an expensive measure will be enacted any time in the foreseeable future. By contrast, a national service program—with stipends below prevailing wages, with earned educational benefits gradually replacing those which are unearned, and most of all, with the growing recognition that this kind of experience is a good thing for our children and grandchildren—has a chance.

What to Look For

Persons interested in national service should maintain close watch of these developments:

What the Presidential candidates have said about national service and, following Election Day, what the newly-elected President promises to do about it, if anything.

What the Coalition for National Service recommends in its action agenda for national service in the 1990's. This booklet is scheduled for publication in late 1988. (Write: the Coalition for National Service, 5140 Sherier Place, NW, Washington, DC 20016.)

Whether Sen. Sam Nunn (joined by Chuck Robb if he is elected) introduces a bill for the Citizens Corps and whether

he pushes hard for it. Compare the bill with the DLC plan put forward in May 1988.

The fate of H.R. 18. If authorized by Congress, watch what level of appropriations it receives. If it does not pass in 1988, watch whether it is re-introduced in 1989.

If the Congress decides to move forward with national service, how it reconciles the DLC plan with H.R. 18 and possibly other measures.

A Footnote and a Hope

On only two other occasions in the past 50 years has the United States been as close to introducing national service as it is today.

The first time was in 1941, when youth unemployment was seen as a persistent problem in need of governmental intervention, and when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and National Youth Administration (NYA)—both temporary New Deal measures—were seen as sensible solutions. President Franklin D. Roosevelt decided to combine these youth service programs and place them in a permanent agency to be known as the Civilian Youth Administration. The bill for this initiative was introduced by Rep. Lyndon B. Johnson within a few days of the American entry into World War II on December 8,

1941. That war and the subsequent economic boom solved the youth unemployment problem for many years.

The second time was in 1966, when an unpopular war and an unpopular military draft system led President Johnson to recommend consideration of national service, with both military and civilian options, as a way to make the draft more equitable. Before his own commission had completed its study, he had decided—in late 1966—to escalate the war in Vietnam at the expense of his domestic initiative known as the War on Poverty. The decision effectively ended serious consideration of national service for rest of the 1960s.

Interest in national service on those occasions was sparked by employment problems and an inequitable draft. Today it is sparked by a sense of service and a sense of citizenship. With no draft, and with war much less of a threat than it was in 1941 and 1966, there is a clear opportunity to advance toward the promise of national service. Let's do it.

Donald Eberly has written several books on national service; the latest is *National Service: A Promise to Keep* (John Alden Books, P. O. Box 26668, Rochester, NY 14626), an autobiographical account scheduled for publication in December, 1988.

National Service and Religious Values

Introduction

The idea of national service covers a range of proposals for organizing young people and, in some cases, senior citizens to do work of national importance to satisfy unmet needs in the society. How people at middle age would be engaged in service is rarely discussed.

The tasks that would be pursued range from conservation work to child care and assistance to the elderly. Supplementation to the education and health care functions in the society is also included. Almost all the needs anticipated are to be met through services requiring a low skill level. Only one proposal aims at developing highly skilled service. The impending shortage of recruits for the armed forces places military manpower as the first priority in the needs many national leaders anticipate satisfying through national service.

The models for administering such proposals range from local, government and private projects of limited size, to a centrally administered federal program. The military service component would, of course, operate as part of the Department of Defense, and some planners anticipate that all participants should be mobilized in a national defense

emergency. Some proposals would be school based and part-time. The incentives for participation range from modest stipends, academic credit, loans and grants for higher education, special training, job readiness, the altruistic motive of service to others, alternative service to the military draft, to the punitive sanctions associated with compulsory military service.

Some think of national service primarily in conjunction with returning to an active draft. Others wish the two ideas to remain distinctly separate from one another.

The concept of national service attracts support from some because it seems based on high ideals and offers apparent solutions to many pressing social problems. The concept creates anxiety among others because they fear the governmental intrusion it could create in matters traditionally left to private discretion or because they doubt that any workable program can be devised.

The National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors was founded in 1940 to develop a constructive way to involve conscientious objectors in service to the society as an alternative to military duty under the conscription system. It

coordinated the extensive program for conscientious objectors in the Civilian Public Service camps during World War II. It later provided a job finding service for COs during subsequent periods of the draft that resumed in 1948 and ended in 1973. Its work has support from the major (sometimes called "mainline") religious traditions in America, who seek to defend and extend the rights of the minority of in their own constituency who are called to be conscientious objectors, and also from the many smaller religious bodies (often called peace churches) that have major commitment to civilian service for all their members as an alternative to participation in the military.

The discussion of national service involves momentous value questions—questions that are close to the hearts of all citizens, but especially to religious people. Service is for the sake of cherished values. The discussion of such values and how we shall achieve them cannot be excluded from the debate just because church and state are constitutionally separated. Religious values affect public policies, and religious experience and perspective can inform the deliberative process of a free society.

L. William Yolton & Staff of NISBCO, and Edward L. Long, Jr.

Because of NISBCO's experience with national service, it is very skeptical of the claims about effectiveness by national service proponents. Because of its sensitivity to religious values, it views the pretensions and dangers of national service proposals with genuine fear.

Bane or Blessing?

The current stage of discussion.

National Service has again surfaced as a timely topic for discussion. Nearly a dozen bills about national service and the related issue of the draft were introduced in the 100th Congress. Books and reports about it cover both general considerations and the particulars of local model projects. *Time*, *The New York Times*, and *The Army Times* have discussed the matter in news reports, editorials and "Op-ed" essays. The Democratic Leadership Council endorsed a full scale plan just in time for the Presidential campaign.¹ Senator Sam Nunn says, "It's an idea whose time has come."

After several hearings in the House of Representatives, committee staff are attempting to consolidate the bills into a committee version. (The Senate Armed Services Committee first projected hearings then postponed

them because of other pressing matters in that chamber and committee.) Whatever the case, in the 100th Congress, national service will surely be proposed in the context of pressure for a return to active conscription in the next few years. . . .

The present discussion has been developing for some time; there are few new ideas in it. When, in 1984 Sen. Gary Hart reintroduced the idea of a commission to study national service as one of his "new ideas," it was a retread of the bill by Sen. Paul Tsongas from 1979. That same proposal has been kept alive in current legislation sponsored by Rep. Torricelli.²

The Democratic Leadership Council pronounced favorably on national service in 1986. They had breakfast over it in the spring of 1987 with the supporters of national service programs and proposals. Their March 1988 meeting considered a "working draft" proposal, and a final version, *Citizenship and National Service, A Blueprint for Civic Enterprise*, was published in May of 1988.³ It reflects the ideas of Prof. Charles C. Moskos for civilian service or citizen soldier volunteers, participation as a condition of federally funded education, job and housing benefits. Conservative

Democratic presidential candidates and other politicians have been saying fine words about national service, and some, like Sam Nunn who is the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and also the new chair of DLC, favor a return to the draft. Though national service didn't make it into the platform at the Democratic Convention, it was a platform without specifics.⁴

As if in response to the coercive DLC proposal, Sen. Barbara Mikulski offered a less disruptive plan in July, more on the model of National Guard training and service.⁵ The political winds are favorable.

A number of interested individuals, foundations, and independent organizations have contributed to the current interest.⁶ The Potomac Foundation sponsored a study and published a report of its conference in 1969.⁷ The most recent full report,⁸ 1986, was sponsored by the Ford Foundation, which made still more grants for national service related projects in 1987.⁹ The Moskos study sponsored by the Twentieth Century Fund is due in 1988.¹⁰

A National Association of Service and Conservation Corps was established in 1985, bringing

together the burgeoning state and local programs.¹¹ In the next year, the Youth Policy Institute conducted a conference surveying the issue.¹² The Campus Compact was formed in 1985 to coordinate college and university programs, under the leadership of President Swearer of Brown University. Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, who has a long history of support for national service and of military R.O.T.C., proposed, in 1986, a peace corps version of R.O.T.C.

The longstanding influence of the National Service Secretariat, founded in 1966 under the leadership of Donald J. Eberly, has affected nearly all the legislation about national service since then.¹³ Its first plan was rushed into form to meet the request of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service (the Marshall Commission) in November 1966. Its consultations and research have helped keep the ideas alive and current. The recurring idea of a national, public corporation to coordinate the programs free of direct political influence is a central idea of Eberly. In 1986 he put together a Coalition on National Service around principles of local initiative, voluntarism, and pluralism. In its 1988 conference at Wingspread, funded by the Johnson Foundation, further consensus was developed among

some of the coalition members to urge an International Volunteer Youth Service with multi-lateral and bi-lateral approaches, and a National Youth Service Foundation with both government and private funding.

More skeptical assessments have been made by the religious communities: The Commission on Voluntary Service and Action held a consultation in 1972.¹⁴ The United Presbyterian Church prepared a study and report in 1973.¹⁵ The Church of the Brethren cooperated with NISBCO in 1972 in a report which was followed up by another in 1979.¹⁶ The American Jewish Committee, however, reported favorably in 1984.¹⁷ NISBCO and the Commission on Voluntary Service and Action sponsored a consultation November 1987, "National Service, Is It for Us?" The consultation did not issue a report, but one group did formulate a statement in opposition to all forms of national service.¹⁸

The basic legislative proposals have circulated for over a decade. . . .

Limited, federally sponsored projects administered by the states were implemented at the end of the seventies. The Job Corps had modest limited success in dealing

with youth unemployment, but it was supplemented by CCC type programs; however, both the Youth Conservation Corps (1971-1982) and the Young Adult Conservation Corps (1977-1982) sputtered to a halt under the Reagan administration. Though the American Conservation Corps, designed to be their successor, sponsored first by Senator Jackson (1971) and again introduced by Rep. John Seiberling, passed the Congress in 1984, it was vetoed by President Reagan. (Rep. Morris K. Udall (D-AZ) has reintroduced the bill, and hearings have been held in the 100th Congress.)

These measures built on the perceived success of the Peace Corps and its off-shoots, such as VISTA which was begun as a "service to the nation" version of the popular overseas corps. They capitalized on the high idealism and sense of national destiny; but, standard notions of the virtues of hard work, earned privileges in the society, and appeals to straightening-out our wayward youth are part of the mix of support from all sides.

All the discussions involve complex variables and intangibles. The factors are operating at different levels of policy and practice, and they combine concrete problems with

untried solutions for unforeseeable results. For instance, the proposals mix ideals of duty to the nation-state with problems of youth unemployment, and the urge to train young people for social responsibility with perceived problems of the ineffectiveness of our educational system.

Much of the discussion turns on whether or not the government will return to active conscription. While the Secretary of Defense has stated a preference for the volunteer army, saying that he prefers those who serve willingly, some military officers, such as the retired head of NATO, General Rogers, have urged a return to the draft. Together with congressional leaders they believe that a draft is necessary to assure force levels in the future, will cost less, and is fairer. The question is debatable. A study by Syllogistics, Inc., shows that there are hidden costs in operating a draft and in training those serving only two years which exceed the costs of a professional/volunteer armed force.¹⁹

The basis of the concern for military manpower is the declining pool of potential recruits. The cohorts of draft age young men will decline until 1993 because of the "dearth of

births." Then the number of young men of draft age begins to rise slowly. By the end of the century the size of the cohort will still not be what it was in 1984, when it slipped below 2,000,000 eighteen year old men. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) claims that the recruiters will have to take one of every two eligible draft age males in 1993 to maintain the authorized force level.²⁰

Another, far less predictable factor will be the state of the civilian economy. If the number of well-paying civilian jobs stays high the potential number of volunteers may shrink. The shortage of available youth is already pushing youth unemployment down and many entry level jobs are well above the minimum wage. If, on the other hand, there is more youth unemployment, the Army may find it easier to recruit, and the incentive of a national service program and draft induced enlistments is less necessary. Economic conscription has always been involved in the labor supply, with the military being the employer of last resort. If, however, unemployment is widespread, national service programs will be part of the relief system, as they were in the Great Depression. The government will also be disposed to increase war preparations as a stimulus to the

economy, and therefore resort to the draft as it did in 1940, and in response to the recession of 1947.

A third factor is the world situation as it affects national security. If nuclear arms reductions are agreed to, but corresponding reductions in conventional forces are not achieved, then pressures for more military personnel will build. The Navy is already in need of more personnel to support a fleet expanding from 450 ships to 600. The same factors will also work to affect the need for national service and the draft. A national emergency stimulates enlistment. Reenlistment of existing personnel and the use of women and civilians in jobs that would have required some of the males reduces the need for compulsion to meet force levels.

The problem of equal burden, "who serves when not all serve," is exacerbated by the spread of conscientious objector sentiment far beyond the "historic peace churches."²¹ The difficulty in determining conscientious objector status for those who would oppose being drafted has also led some policy planners to suggest that having national service as an option in a universal system of conscription, as in West Germany, would reduce the need to have stringent

requirements to qualify as a CO.²² These considerations of fairness led first to shrinking the deferments, then to the abandonment of the draft and to reliance on an all-volunteer armed force at the end of the Vietnam war.

A new factor has emerged since the sixties. State and local government sponsored programs of community service and conservation projects have sprung up and flourished. They add to the voluntary service programs that have operated under church and independent auspices since the missionary movement of the nineteenth century which began educational and social services in both urban and rural areas.

Proposed ideas for National Service, some of them embodied in proposed or soon-to-be proposed legislation, run across the spectrum of ideas. Some of these are only trial balloons, some may have a chance of being made into law.

The particular proposals can be categorized as follows:

1. Incentives for service activity such as subsidy to other programs,
 - subsidy to educational costs in the form of individual loan postponement or forgiveness for voluntary service activity,
 - direct payments to service education programs or participants.
2. Required participation in national service/military service as prerequisite for educational grants and loans, or
 - post-training service requirements for recipients.
3. Direct funding for service programs such as the American Conservation Corps.
4. Universal training and service programs.

A recurring proposal, as in the Torricelli bill (H.R. 1468) and the Sikorski bill (H.R. 3096), is to appoint a commission to study this matter. These bills assume that there is a shortage of information about national service. But, given the foundation supported research and independent studies, it has been well studied in recent years. The one body of information that has not been adequately considered is the fund of experience that the independent and religious sectors can contribute. . . .

Historical Background

Almost all the arguments for national service have historical antecedents going back to the turn

of the century. William James, the Harvard psychologist and philosopher of pragmatism, proposed a service program as the "moral equivalent of war."²³ James was speaking in the context of an Ivy League setting where such a program would involve an elite whose contributions could make war unnecessary. He was not proposing a program for the masses who might do national service as a way of escaping military duty. While personally opposed to war, he was also critical of the passive style of doctrinaire pacifists, seeking instead active involvement to solve the world's troubles.

Leading up to the first world war, through the early twenties, there was an active movement—complete with a journal—advocating for compulsory national service. The thrust, however, was for military readiness. The policy proposals included fixing the health and economic motivation of the working class, along with their morals.

The rhetoric for national service was nativist, xenophobic, and concerned for absorbing the waves of immigrants still flooding America's shores. The journal, *National Service*, enjoyed the patronage of cabinet members, the financial elite, and academia's

leaders. The first issue made it clear: national service is "for the security and best development of American institutions," and the "equal assumption by the youth of the Nation of the burden of military duty." "There must be not only mandatory training but mandatory service." "It is for the Nation to determine when and how each shall serve and whether in the field or in the factory."²⁴

National service got support from both the left and right: It would develop "the real American citizen," be anti-labor movement, anti-immigrant, and anti-pacifist, while inculcating "care of the person," "care of the kit," and "implicit obedience." It would also arrange the "removal, at the critical age, of youngsters from pernicious surroundings."²⁵ "The final effect of such a national army will be, not to militarize the democracy, but to democratize the military system."²⁶

Philosopher Henry Dwight Sedgwick argued that Socialists would lose their opposition to war when it came closer. "The Socialist ideal of a people's army must rest upon universal service."²⁷

From the first military training camp financed by businessmen in 1913 (the Plattsburg Plan), there is a combination of civil religion and commercial interest.²⁸ In an

article on "The Red, White and Blue Camps" the "commercial, disciplinary value of insistence on punctuality, organization, authority, etc." was lauded by Secretary of War Newton Baker.²⁹ Dr. Rufus J. Tucker argued that national service would "relieve unemployment," "relieve immobility of labor," "take care of immigrants," and provide "the benefits of outdoor life and exercise."³⁰ An anti-labor, union busting temper of the times was prevalent in the movement.

When the war came, the supportive language was already provided: "The war awakens our latent virtues." "It means the enthronement of *service* as the greatest of all public virtues."³¹ "It will mean a better nation physically and morally, and a more efficient nation from the economic standpoint . . . It is sometimes necessary to break the peace to keep the faith, . . ." National service would heat up the melting pot to fuse the discordant elements "into one common mass of Americanism." "There is nothing in the Spirit of true Christianity which identifies it with peace at any price."³²

President Charles Eliot of Harvard connected "Universal Service and World Peace." Other university leaders joined in support.³³

The concern for youth (males only) was a central theme, (this was also the period in which the Boy Scouts were organized). "Activities for boys should include physical training, constructive endeavors [i.e., learning building construction skills], and personal hygiene and sanitation."³⁴ It was argued, despite contrary evidence of epidemics in the camps, that it would control communicable diseases. New York State enacted a law that those who failed to enroll in the military training program would be denied a permit to attend school or to be employed. The measure failed to be implemented despite the support of Governor Al Smith.

The national service movement of that period established the terms of discourse. It contributed greatly to the acceptance of the Selective Draft Act of 1917. Its lasting result was the military reserve system and the National Guard, and physical training in the schools. Thus the movement begun by William James to provide a moral alternative to war was coopted for military purposes.

The Great Depression in the thirties brought about the first civilian working model. The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration

were responses to the high unemployment among youth. Each participant in the CCC sent some of his wages to his family. In a little more than nine years over three million young men, age 17-25, enrolled. The training and organization were under the direction of military officers. The CCC ended when the war provided plenty of employment for everyone, little need for welfare, and a draft. The CCC had alleviated the plight of the poor, and left a legacy of trees and parks.

When the U.S. entered the second world war, the former CCC camps were used by the government to house conscientious objectors in Civilian Public Service. (The Burke-Wadsworth Act had been pushed through the Congress in mid-1940 by the old guard of the training camps association, quite to the surprise of the administration.) The National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) was formed by the historic peace churches, (Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren) who shared in administering the camps and advocating for the COs. Representatives from the Methodists, the Disciples of Christ, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Federal Council of Churches were added later to the Board. The churches

paid the costs of the COs in the program of government service.

The COs did work like that which the CCC men had done, but often work was meaningless. For instance, COs at the Luray, Virginia, camp swept snow from a mile of the Skyline drive, even though it was closed because of gas rationing. For some men of strong convictions and greater maturity the program was not satisfactory. By the end of the war other options did develop, such as service in mental hospitals, or as "guinea pigs" for medical research.

Some COs were engaged in work outside the camps. At first their earnings were to be transferred to the Treasury, where those funds would be used for the war. Some felt this made the work they were doing actually war-related. After they protested this arrangement, General Lewis B. Hershey, Director of the Selective Service System, promised that the funds would be put in escrow, "the frozen fund," for post-war peaceful reconstruction determined in consultation with the COs.³⁵

Many COs ended up not cooperating with an increasingly repressive government control. NSBRO was ignored by officials. The American Friends Service Committee and the F.O.R.

withdrew from the Board. Some COs walked out and took their chances in court. They preferred prison, along with the absolutists, to the boredom and the growing sense of compromise with war and killing.

Insofar as the CPS program was an instance of compulsory national service, it may teach us more what not to do than what to do. While many participants still remember the experience as important for themselves personally—in terms of confirming their ideals and setting them on a vocation of service, the program as a whole was a failure.³⁶ The conditions for such a test were unfavorable—but probably not that much more so than would be the conditions that govern any such program.

The link between national service and conscription was almost forged soon after the end of World War II. Confronted by the Iron Curtain and the Cold War, America expressed again its sense of national destiny confirmed by victory over Fascism in a surge of national purpose to oppose communism. Congress amended the Selective Service Act of 1948 to make it the Universal Military Training and Service Act of 1951. But, Congress never did fund the service corps portion, and only the military draft

remained in force until it ended in 1973.

Beginning in 1951 conscription of COs was authorized, but in a new pattern of individualized alternative service which had been piloted by the detached service of CPSers in WWII. This arrangement left the assignment of men to alternative service up to the local draft board. The government came to the Mennonites and to the National Service Board to help place the backlog of 5000 COs. Most COs found their own jobs, usually with the help of the network of voluntary service agencies and draft counseling agencies, especially the job-finder program at NISBCO. Frequently the local board rejected the job that the CO had a right to propose as "in the national health, safety, or interest," and a more punitive assignment was ordered. Men served in mental hospitals, or as orderlies in other hospitals, but many worked in community service agencies, some even doing draft counseling. . . .

Voluntary service agencies among the churches and other community programs discovered a pool of young men for tasks that were awaiting. Regrettably, the creative edge was dulled by the cynicism that many COs developed over the entire

Vietnam enterprise and the deceptions that successive administrations undertook. CO placement in alternative service did demonstrate that a pluralistic, locally based program, a form of national service in cooperation with private and public agencies, was a viable option.

The Sixties brought the high water mark of federally sponsored voluntary service programs. In his inaugural address President Kennedy called for the creation of a Peace Corps. He struck a note of idealism. "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." The Peace Corps furnished an outlet for the service impulses of a college elite wanting to put their talents to work. While many of the participants would have found some way to express their idealism, the Peace Corps gave them a special mystique.

The initiative of the Peace Corps was followed closely by Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), a domestic peace corps aimed at "national service." The Teachers' Corps, Foster Grandparents program, and other projects of an optimistic age were organized under the umbrella of ACTION. VISTA took the "war on poverty" seriously and began local organizing to change the

structures that foster poverty rather than aiming merely to mitigate its devastating consequences. Joseph Blatchford, the director of ACTION under President Johnson, proposed a program involving eventually 41 million Americans. When the Nixon administration came in, it cut back financial support for these programs and "reined in" VISTA for ideological reasons. Since then, VISTA has shrunk to 350 participants. Most of the programs in ACTION have been abandoned under the Reagan administration.

Contemporary Government Programs

Beginning in the Eighties, mini-projects of national service under the auspices of state and local government have sprung up across the country. They took up the agenda abandoned in the cut-back of the Youth Conservation Corps and the Young Adult Conservation Corps.

The first of them, the California Conservation Corps, actually started out as the California Ecology Corps, designed to absorb the large number of conscientious objectors in California at the end of the Vietnam era. The COs were placed in former prison camps that had been abandoned as

unsuitable for prisoners. The administrators colluded with Selective Service to deny workers transfer rights and even threatened arrest for those who were dissatisfied. With the end of conscription the California Conservation Corps lost its punitive features and became a better model for what a program of this sort can be.³⁷

There are now forty conservation and service programs, counting the summer programs, sponsored by state and local governments. Some include a mixture of public and private funds, as in the Marin County Conservation Corps. The San Francisco Service Corps accepts only one out of ten applicants, maintaining a high selectivity ratio. Nevertheless, the emergence of government programs apart from federal control or a link to military service displays a new option in service programs to the society. It can be expected that the sponsors of these programs will resist efforts to centralize or militarize them.

Privately Sponsored Programs

It must also be remembered that along with those government programs, private groups (especially churches) sponsor a vast array of programs for service

to the society. They are already a form of national service.

The independent programs are so divided among the various sponsors and covered over by public acceptance that policy makers tend to ignore them. The Roman Catholic Church through its religious orders has a worldwide program of social service and education which operates on the basis of people giving voluntarily all or a portion of their lives. In a similar way, other denominations maintain social services and voluntary service corps of their own that vastly enrich the whole society. They engage not only youth, but people of every age. The Brethren, Mennonites and Quakers are well known for their service programs, but the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Methodist and United Church of Christ programs, Presbyterian Volunteers in Mission, the Lutheran Volunteer Corps, among others, are also church-run service programs of one or two years duration.

Shorter term or part-time programs for high school and college age young people have also been part of the American religious and educational scene. Work camps for young people to give service to others and to broaden their own outlook are

standard in religious education programs of major denominations. Many high schools have service programs, and increasingly, religious and independent secondary schools require service credits to graduate.

The recent appeals by Father Theodore Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame, and by President Swearer of Brown for university programs of service have ample precedent. Dwight Hall at Yale, the Phillips Brooks House at Harvard, and the Christian Association at the University of Pennsylvania have sponsored structured programs of voluntary community service since the turn of the century. Berea College and Warren Wilson College are organized around workstudy programs with strong service emphasis. The Campus Compact, a new coalition of 120 colleges engaged in voluntary service programs, expands on the tradition. Fr. Hesburgh's call for a peace corps training program along the lines of the military Reserve Officers Training Corps (now Title II of Senator Pell's bill, S. 767, sponsored by Rep. Morella in the House) is in that same tradition.

Service learning is a component of many degree programs. There is a Partnership for Service

Learning and a Council for the Advancement of Experiential Education. Most professional schools are giving increased emphasis to field education and "clinical programs." Medical education has the longest required apprenticeship. Patricia Budd Kepler introduced to Harvard Divinity School in the seventies the concept of learning the "arts of ministry." The classroom analysis of particular cases of law that Langdell introduced to the abstract legal education curriculum in the nineteenth century is now being supplemented by increasing emphasis on the legal clinics.

The notions of national service and its links to education and the goals of the society interlock with thousands of existing programs and long-standing interests. The religious organizations and the educational institutions are already deeply involved in what is being proposed as national service. Their destinies are intertwined with what the government will do. Every citizen has an interest in a satisfactory outcome of the new appeals for service to the nation embodied in the particular proposals for new legislation.

The Deeper Issues

The proposals to involve youth in

service opportunities are both laudable and dangerous. They present both possibilities for achieving good consequences and opportunities for doing great harm. They require that a careful assessment be made of the will and the capacity for the nation to enter into such programs with sufficient resources and understanding to insure it will not be a debacle. Without such a will, talk about national service becomes irresponsible.

The most dangerous course of action would be to enter into a program of national service, thinking that it possesses some special (almost magical) power to end all that ails us: poverty, unemployment, drugs, and crime, lost sense of duty, diminished patriotism, and the failures of education and parenthood. The money that would go into the support of national service, 6-to-10 billion dollars for the DLC proposal, \$30,000,000,000 for a universal program, could easily solve the problems national service might solve. It also correlates with the cost of the super-carriers in the fleet.

The first requirement for a sober assessment of national service is an adequate concept of service. Being motivated to serve, the opportunity to serve, learning how to serve well, are essential to

the civilizing process. But translating that idea into actions and into policies for engendering such actions requires utmost sophistication and dedication.

In the first place, it is sobering to remember that service itself is more of a means than an end. Service takes on moral value only when such service is rendered for good ends. Good ends involve not some fixed and absolute set of standards and loyalties to which blind obedience is expected, but rich and perceptive understandings of complex realities that call for the exercise of empathy and compassion.

Some of the theoretical framework for the ethics of the push for national service is provided by a renewed conservatism in formal ethics, an emphasis on duty. This deontological theory, or stress on the "oughts" or doing the right thing, is a stress on the formal character of the action rather than the result. It is a traditional mode of religious reasoning. It sometimes is associated with authoritarian societies. It permits the question of ultimate ends to be set aside.

The dark side of service is the danger it presents when the context and purposes are distorted. The service of false gods is idolatry. Service rendered

the Devil is false service—demonic in character. The possibility of distorting service is present in every human situation, as when civic orders make totalitarian claims upon their citizenry or religions require blind obedience. Patriotism can lead to fanaticism, not only in a fascist state but in a democracy that makes its own claims absolute. Any system of service, and particularly any that is mandated by direct compulsions or controlling indirect sanctions, is safe only to the extent it engenders a kind of loyalty that includes searching and probing assessments of the nation's agenda. Indoctrination does not produce good citizens for democracies; unthinking belief does not make good religion. No state can be at its best if it does not have within it religious forces that are free to speak truth to power, and no religions are at their best if their conduct is totally immunized from public scrutiny and criticism.

The most effective way to maintain the openness requisite to a healthy attitude about service is to keep the range of options diverse. A program of national service recognizing as equally valuable service rendered under philanthropic or religious auspices holds more promise than one that sets up a single regimen under

governmental control. On one level this would make each group compete to keep its program attractive. On another level it allows various groups to put into practice the wisdom and experience that they have.

The repository of wisdom in the religious communities of America is rich and full. Many religious communities have long carried on programs premised on the importance of service. Religious orders are organized for service. Reflecting Max Weber's observation that Calvin emptied the monastery out into the world, whole denominations have organized their entire mode of being around a mission (*i.e.*, service) agenda.

Some way will need to be devised to see that the choice between doing service under private auspices and doing service in a governmental program does not become dependent upon financial wherewithal. It would be counter to good public policy for one to be available to persons of means, the other the only possibility open to the poor. The constitutional difficulties in keeping the choice of service fully open could prove enormous, particularly since the separation of church and state precludes (as it should) making payments directly by the state to

religious bodies to aid their religion.

Moreover, the ideal of free choice can be undermined if large-scale governmental programs are implemented in ways that compete with or overshadow what the philanthropic and religious sectors can accomplish. That can wash out the possibilities in pluralism and create the functional equivalent of a monolithic system even when that is not the intent of policy.

Just as all-embracing national service is dangerous—that it becomes interesting in the wrong ways—more dangerous still is a scheme that makes service uninteresting. If there is a danger in coerced service being distorted because it is directed to ignoble ends, there is another danger in debasing service by making it trivial. The experience of unsatisfactory service can extinguish the will to serve. Lacking passion, boring programs and restrictive environments can ruin appreciation of the joys of service to others. Unserviceable service serves another devil, *acedia*. As both Ann Boyd and Harvey Cox have suggested, *acedia*, sloth, is the only one of the seven deadly sins that is still alive. And it is cousin to boredom.

Service is too important a matter to be trivialized by routinized, least-common-denominator tasks done over a prescribed time. Certainly the wrong notion of service is taught if the work is limited to picking up cans by the roadside, and conceived of as a year or two after which one can go back to being selfish, or even to doing really significant work.

A central factor in proposals for national service is the pretension to educate young people in the meaning of service. The educational preoccupation of religious bodies is with children and youth and their faith, which includes values and morality. Therefore, any program that intends to define a regimen of service for youth, to instruct them in its virtue, takes up one of the major concerns of the religious side of our society.

When the state indicates it is also going to inculcate the value of service, the religious sector feels its special competence is being invaded. These religious bodies constitute an independent and collateral set of institutions alongside the state in the pair of "church and state." When large-scale government-run programs for service are implemented, they almost inevitably compete with the agenda of the religious and independent sector. And they do

it at a least-common-denominator level, washing out the distinctives of the pluralistic society. So the life of religious communities is bound up in what happens to "service" in the total society.

The religious institutions should support the state's effort to provide opportunities for service, despite the unreflective pretensions to teach service. Insofar as the apothegm "experience is the best teacher" is true, the opportunity to serve is of prime importance. The resources necessary to provide those opportunities are increasingly in the hands of the state, for the services that would be provided are now increasingly regarded as entitlements of all people. Just as the provision of services is now regarded as a duty of the state, so also opportunities to serve are inevitably connected.

The state should consider the concerns and experience of the religious communities both for the support they offer to the goals of service the state espouses and for the critical wisdom they bring to the question of what is serviceable service. The religious community can provide a motivation that the government cannot. . . .

The experience of religious groups in America is the richest

repository of experience with service programs, both voluntary and compulsory. The religious community favors service unequivocally. The background study for the Presbyterians says: "Instead of depicting service as a reluctant, passive, menial role, Jesus defined service (diakonia) in terms of joyful, voluntary, active response to ultimate reality.³⁸ Thoughtful people can support government programs that are not compulsory nor coercive, that honor private conscience and religious beliefs, and that do not constitute a link with military service. . . .

In order to teach service, significant tasks should be undertaken and the full apparatus of the educational system should be engaged in the teaching of skills. One of the often spouted theories as to the benefit of national service is that people will be taught service automatically. And, that the deficiencies of the educational system will be compensated for in such a program. Rather than being an alternative to the education system, service to the society requires the full cooperation of the education system.

Service that is serviceable cannot be learned apart from the participation of those who are being served in the prescription

of service. "Nearly all proposals focus on the needs of those who would do the serving, and portray a general picture of social problems that the participants might alleviate. The wishes and self-determination of potential service *recipients* are hardly mentioned. The proposals thus perpetuate a notion of service which is being repudiated by enlightened social agencies, including voluntary service agencies of churches."³⁹ If service is to be something other than condescending charity, we must learn to fit the provision of help to the promotion of independence rather than dependency-inducing relief. Development aid requires the cooperation of those who are on the receiving end.

Service also requires individualization. In the same way that the Aid to All Handicapped Children Act, PL 94-142, requires an individualized education plan (IEP) to be prepared for each client, so education for service needs an IEP. Every person is different and their education should be fitted to their personal needs and capabilities. Those talents should then be turned to the service of others. Many of those talents are discovered in the context of service learning, and so contextual learning is the favored

mode in many programs in schools and churches.

Service should not be limited to age specific groups. The opportunity and incentives for service should be provided to every age. If service were to be made compulsory, then should we not require those at their prime of their skills and wisdom to give a year? Would not a service draft of men and women forty-five be the best use of our human resources?⁴⁰

The modeling to the young of service by those who are older is an important dimension of teaching service. Like religion, it is not so much taught as caught. When the society exhibits a concern for service, when the leaders are willing to pledge their lives, fortunes and sacred honor, then others will follow. Service is not age specific. A national service policy should foster service by people of all ages, both sexes, and by the rich as well as the poor.

Still another issue to be faced is the impact a national service program might have on patterns of employment. . . .

If the reason some work that is valuable for the general welfare does not get done lies in the fact public and private sectors cannot pay for such work on a

commercial basis—does that not raise an issue as to how to get national priorities straight in the allocation of resources? Is it socially beneficial to extract such work by coercion, or should sufficient resources be found to pay for it at going rates? Is there enough such work to keep any sizable service corps busy on a continual basis, and would the nation foot the bill for having such work done even on a reduced level of outlay? Moreover, will it not be recognized as a form of socialism? Will a society that has never wanted its educational system or its military services to offer competition with private productivity be likely to welcome with open arms a national service program that does so?

Then too, questions must be raised as to whether eighteen or nineteen year old young people with little advanced learning or particular experience (and less and less training at home in helping arts) can accomplish the tasks which most need be performed. The notion that the needs for child-care or for geriatric services can be satisfied by floods of young people on short-time assignment may be wishful thinking at best, or even folly. The long-term needs in our society are for persons with "high-tech" abilities, particularly

with advanced abilities in interpersonal relations. It could be a major mistake to divert to low quality services young people who might better be turned to the intensive cultivation of their potential talents in programs of professional education. . . .

More Questions & Observations

Would a program of national service be talked about at all if there were no draft or prospects of a reinstated draft? Are these seemingly benign proposals mainly designed to make military conscription more palatable?

Would a program of large scale national service survive a challenge to its constitutionality unless it was tied to the war powers part of the constitution? A study of this matter prepared by the American Law Division of the Library of Congress assessed national service as a form of involuntary servitude forbidden by the Thirteenth amendment.⁴¹ "It is highly questionable whether power exists in Congress to conscript men for other than military service. It is also possible that any such system, would be held to constitute 'involuntary servitude' within the meaning of the Thirteenth Amendment."⁴²

We cannot answer these questions conclusively, since they would

have to be decided in the courts. However, the following precedents would undoubtedly figure into the deliberations:

"The undoubted aim of the Thirteenth Amendment . . . was not merely to end slavery but to maintain a system of completely free and voluntary labor throughout the United States. Forced labor in some special circumstances may be consistent with the general basic system of free labor. For example, forced labor has been sustained as a means of punishing crime, and there are duties such as work on highways which society may compel. But in general the defense against oppressive hours, pay, working conditions, or treatment is the right to change employers." *Pollock v. Williams*, 322 U.S. 4, 17-18 (1944).

The power to conscript for national defense relies upon a Supreme Court decision rendered at the peak of patriotic fervor in World War I, *Selective Draft Law Cases (1918)*, interpreting the constitutional clause at Article I, sec. 8, cl. 18. That decision has been regularly reaffirmed, most recently in *O'Brien*. "The constitutional power of Congress to raise and support armies and to make all laws necessary and proper to that end is broad and sweeping. (citations omitted). The

power of congress to classify and conscript manpower for military service is 'beyond question.' " *U.S. v. O'Brien*, 391 U.S. 367, 377 (1968). But the extension of that power to order persons to civilian work, except in lieu of induction, is certainly questionable.

Will national service inculcate a "civil religion" which is a rival to true belief in service? Will the program divert young people from the beliefs and vocations for service in the religious community? Will the program constitute an educational context that will secularize young men and women at a crucial point in their development when they most need to be in sympathetic touch with the family and church or synagogue and the values they represent? Will the service that is taught be a truncated version of what the depth of religious belief would seek?

Religious bodies have a right, indeed, a duty to ask these questions because a truncation or secularization of the idea of service could directly and adversely affect their own efforts to instill the idea of lifetime service into young people. Young people and their vocations are a central focus of religious concern, and the constitution may well indeed protect their right to

exercise that concern without interference or even competition from the government.

Schools and service programs are central to the pedagogical interest of those in the religious community. Some religious schools require the completion of service activities as a condition for graduation, still others were founded for the sake of developing the service motivation of students, and the specialized schools and religious communities often focus on the meaning, skills, and purposes of service as a life-long principal activity. Service or "ministry" is now the accepted translation for the biblical *diakonia*. Thus ministry, understood as service, is becoming understood as the purpose of the life of the believer. Service is not limited to those in the leadership, but it is for every believer from their baptism or initiation into active religious life. Service is not limited to the nation-state, but is "for the life of the world." . . .

Our traditions and rights of free exercise mandate that service will always be an open question, to be defined by the initiative of the servers, morally accountable to those who are served, and limited by the just constraints of a free society.

Conclusions

Service, while particularly appropriate in the pedagogy of the young, must be part of the value system of the whole society. Service is not a duty that is to be discharged in one or two years by the young who may then go on to "making it" in a selfish world. Short term and part-time programs of service are often sufficient, however, as a beginning, so that high school and college based service programs are ideal for many young people. The example of others who live out their service, public servants without corruption, for instance, sets the expectation for the young. It is the life of service that needs to be developed in the context of communities of faithful people of all ages and employments who teach each other the meaning of service.

Service experience is most fruitful when worked out, as it can be in voluntary associations, on an individual basis, taking into account the convictions, motivations, interests, and commitments of the person who is expecting to do the service, and the needs and expectations of the persons who are to be served. While that kind of careful tailoring might be possible in a small, voluntary, governmental

program, it would undoubtedly be impossible in any large scale program, especially a system of universally required service.

The inherent contradictions between the ideal of a free society and enforced servitude, between true servanthood and compelled service giving, between the free and full exercise of religion and governmental programs to train character and morals, are very great. The government might put its resources to best use in strengthening and expanding existing programs. Even the small-scale government programs such as the service corps of state and local government, will inculcate a commitment to serve only if the programs actually serve well an independent purpose well worth achieving.

In conclusion, we strongly express our contention that any public policy to encourage service should:⁴³

- 1) guarantee pluralism of initiative and organization, limiting the unit size and competitive scope of any national programs, and enable religious groups to participate without compromise;
- 2) be truly voluntary, and thus free from coercion, including

- ties to the right to educational opportunity;
- 3) avoid connection with military manpower needs, including any agency for recruitment or for administering conscription;
 - 4) provide for conscientious objection to national service itself in any coercive system;
 - 5) avoid age specificity while encouraging the young;
 - 6) engage participation of those who are served in defining the content of service;
 - 7) subsidize all programs equally or not at all;
 - 8) involve both men and women while respecting the concerns of women for special protection, especially as they are expressed in some religious communities;
 - 9) give significant work and education, while not competing unfairly in the labor market and the education system; and,
 - 10) serve purposes beyond sectarian and limited national interests.

NOTES

¹The D.L.C. first supported national service and a return to the draft in its survey of national security, *In Defense of America*, Sept. 1986.

²Toricelli was the principal sponsor in the House in 1984.

³Available from the DLC, 499 South Capitol St., Washington, DC 20003. 71 pp., \$5. See the review in *The Reporter for Conscience' Sake*, June 1988.

⁴"Sen. Nunn's Push for National Service Points Up Use of Conventions for Causes," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 21, 1988.

⁵*The Washington Post*, July 17, 1988.

⁶e.g., "A Policy Blueprint for Community Service and Youth Employment," Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project, Frank J. Slobig and Calvin H. George. Sept. 1984.

⁷*Youth and the Needs of the Nation*. Washington: The Potomac Institute, 1979. *National Service: What's at Stake?*, 1980.

⁸Richard Danzig & Peter Szanton, *National Service: What Would It Mean*, Lexington, Massachusetts, Lexington Books, D.C. Heath, 1986.

⁹*Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 4, 1987, p. 34. The largest grantee has been Public Private Ventures, Philadelphia, which received over half a million dollars to assess the state and local government programs.

¹⁰Charles C. Moskos, *A Call to Civic Service: National Service for Country and Community*, New York: Free Press, fall 1988. See also: Charles C. Moskos, *The Military: More than Just a Job*. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1988.

¹¹810 Eighteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

¹²October 17, 1986.

¹³Eberly publishes an occasional newsletter on developments in national service, 5140 Sherrier Place, N.W.,

Washington, D.C., 20016. Sherraden, M.W. and Donald J. Eberly, eds., *National Service Social, Economic, and Military Impacts*. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1982. He is preparing a book for 1989, *Forty Years of National Service: A Promise to Keep*.

¹⁴*National Service*, Commission on Voluntary Service and Action, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115. The Commission publishes *Volunteer*, which catalogues opportunities for voluntary service.

¹⁵"National Service and the Church," *Journal of Church and Society*, Vol. LXIII, No. 4, (Mar.-Apr., 1973). See also, *Social Progress*, Vol. LVII, No. 2, (Nov.-Dec., 1966).

¹⁶*The Coming of National Service*, Steve Esbensen, World Ministries Commission of the Church of the Brethren, 1972. *The National Service Debate*, Luann Habegger Martin, NISBCO, 1976.

¹⁷"National Service," *National Affairs Backgrounder*, Oct. 1983. New York: American Jewish Committee.

¹⁸The proceedings will be published in the fall of 1988. The statement is available from NISBCO.

¹⁹"Democrats, Joint Chiefs Choose Sides on Draft Question," by Cynthia Mason, *The Reporter for Conscience' Sake*, Vol. XLIV, No. 1.

²⁰550,000 must be recruited annually. In each cohort of young men in the 20 year-old first priority group that is eligible for induction in the draft, half will fail the mental or physical examination. Conceivably, with only 1,600,000 young men available in 1992, no inducements would be sufficient to maintain the all-volunteer armed force at 2,166,000. The last time the pool took one of every two was during the draft for the Korean War.

²¹The Selective Service System estimates 3-8% will be COs. (letter to NISBCO, 1984) NISBCO estimates 10%. West Germany is holding steady at 13%.

²²Many participants in a conference on Selective Conscientious Objection, held at the Catholic University of America in the spring of 1987, urged this solution. *The Reporter*, Vol. XLIV, No. 2, (Apr.-June, 1987).

²³In a speech at Stanford in 1906, published in 1910.

²⁴*National Service*, published by the Military Training Publishing Company, of the Military Training Camps Assn. of the U.S.A. Physical training—Military Training—National Health and Safety. New York, New York. The first issue is dated Feb. 1, 1917.

²⁵"A Plea for Universal Military Training," R. Adm. Casper F. Goodrich, U.S.N., Vol. II, No. 5, pp. 367-372.

²⁶"Democracy and Military Service," Major John R.M. Taylor, U.S.A.; Vol. II, #3, p. 166.

²⁷"Socialism and Universal Military Training," Vol. I, No. 3, p. 152.

²⁸See also "Commercial Value of Military Training," Dr. Lewis Sanders, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, #1, p. 44.

²⁹Vol. I, No. 1, p. 10.

³⁰"Economic Aspects of Universal Military Training," Vol. II, #2, p. 146.

³¹"What It Means to Be 'In the Service,'" Margaret McIvor Tyndall, Vol. V, pp. 32-33.

³²"The Plattsburg Idea of Universal Military Service," General Leonard Wood, U.S.A., Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 12-14.

³³Vol. I, No. 1, p. 8.

³⁴"Under Military Age Training," Chas. A. Taylor, MA, Commandant Camp Penn, Vol. II, #3, pp. 177-188. See also: "Boy Building at Camp Roosevelt," Vol. 8, #5, p. 269, and "Military Training Means Physical Fitness," Dr. Victor C. Vaughan, Late Colonel M.C. U.S.A., Vol. 8, No. 5, p. 209.

³⁵Despite major legislative effort—including testimony by Gen. Hershey—which would have made NSBRO the administrator of the funds, the fund was lost and the promise never kept.

³⁶When Curtis Tarr, the Director of Selective Service at the end of the Vietnam War (1970), proposed instituting a system of orientation camps for COs, none of the groups who had shared in NSBRO supported his proposal. Tarr was convinced that universal national service was the logical next step in replacing the draft, although in retrospect he preferred voluntary national service coupled with the draft. Tarr had discussed with other officials in the government and "influential people in private life as well. . . . [the establishment of] a

broader program." *By the Numbers*, by Curtis W. Tarr, Washington, DC., National Defense University, 1981, pp. 88-89.

³⁷Col. McCann moved on to work for the Selective Service System where he directed the alternative service program.

³⁸"National Service and the Church," *Journal of Church and Society*, April-May 1973, p. 25.

³⁹*Idem.*, p. 20.

⁴⁰Income averaging was a tax incentive for volunteers who could give a year or two in service if the loss of income could be spread over several years. For instance, mission agencies use physicians, teachers and technicians in subsistence work for short periods, and those volunteers are sometimes restricted because of the loss of income they must cover.

⁴¹Opinion letter from the American Law Division of the Library of Congress, to the House Armed Services Committee, p. H2352-H2354, *Congressional Record*, April 21, 1971.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. H2352.

⁴³Approved in principle by the NISBCO Board and Consultative Council, December 6, 1987.

Voluntary vs. Mandatory Service

Remarks by Charles Ludlam

*Staff of U.S. Senator
Dale Bumpers, Dem.,
Arkansas*

The issue for us is whether to require that U.S. citizens perform a period of service to the community. In short, the issue is whether we should require Universal National Service.

Such a universal service requirement could be imposed in the absence of any military draft, or it could apply with the military draft being only one of several ways in which such service could be performed. There is, however, a special rationale for requiring universal national service if there is a military draft, which rationale does not exist if there is no draft.

Obviously, if there is a military draft, there will be no need to draft all eligible citizens—only one-in-five eligible males would be needed—and the draft may not include women. With a draft for military service, those who are drafted are put in an unequal position relative to those who are not drafted. As a matter of fairness, it can be argued that all citizens who are not drafted into the military—including women—should be required to perform some form of civilian, “alternative” service.

The existence of a military draft does not, however, establish a sufficient rationale for requiring service of all those who are not drafted. We have had a military

draft before without any mandatory National Service requirement, and we certainly can choose to do so again. We have never imposed any service requirement on women. There is some unfairness in drafting only some citizens into the military and requiring nothing of those who are not drafted, but, if the draft procedures themselves are fair, and there is no discrimination against certain groups of citizens, few would be offended by the unfairness. If drafting only some citizens is burdensome on them, this fact does not justify imposing a burden on all other citizens as well, on a “misery loves company” basis.

The issue of National Service should be faced directly, not in terms of its relationship to a military draft. The debate about National Service should focus on whether there is a valid rationale for requiring Universal National Service, not whether it should be required because of the existence of a military draft.

Framing the issue this way forces one to present a free-standing rationale for universal service. If there exists a rationale for universal service, then we should require National Service even if there is no military draft.

Rationale for Mandatory Service

There are several possible rationales for requiring National Service, and each should be analyzed.

1. *DEBT TO SOCIETY*: It can be argued that citizens “owe” the society some period of service, just as they owe taxes. The argument here is that some period of full-time service to the community should be a routine obligation of citizenship.

Let me analyze this argument:

This argument must recognize that citizens already repay the debts they “owe” to the government in many ways other than through national service. The individual must not endanger other citizens (traffic laws, criminal laws, health regulations, environmental regulations), must attend school (compulsory attendance), must disclose information (tax forms, applications of various sorts), must pay taxes, must serve on juries and, if there is a military draft, must serve in the military (or alternative service).

This argument must then be that the individual “owes” National Service to the society. One must argue that the individual specifically “owes” National Service, and that National Service is an additional obligation which

the individual "owes" to society. The society can, of course, impose new and additional obligations on the individual. But there is no standard which determines "how much" the individual owes to the society, and there is no special standard which says that the individual owes this particular type of debt to the society. What is the separate and distinct debt which must be repaid by—and only by—National Service?

There is a separate and distinct rationale for the other debts which the individual owes to society. If individuals disobey traffic laws, there will be accidents. If the government has no sources of financial support, it will not be able to govern. If no one will sit on juries, we will have no juries. But there is no separate and distinct rationale for a National Service requirement.

Imposing a national service requirement would be an especially onerous additional obligation to impose. Given the obligations which society already imposes on the individual, there would need to be a strong and specific rationale for depriving an individual of his or her freedom of movement, and preventing him or her from pursuing a career or other interests.

2. *CITIZENSHIP TRAINING*: It

can be argued that the citizens of the society will develop a greater commitment to the welfare of the community if they are required to perform community service. They will learn about the community's needs and be better citizens as a result. National Service is a "socializing" process which will help to bring the society together.

Let me analyze this argument as well:

Our government already attempts to teach good citizenship in many ways, with public school programs, national celebrations, speeches of government leaders, public T.V. programs, national monuments and parks, museums, social welfare organizations, etc. The government may not be successful in encouraging all citizens to demonstrate civic spirit, but it is not clear that requiring a period of National Service would be any more successful.

In fact, it is predictable that those citizens who would benefit from the service would be persons inclined to be generous and public spirited citizens anyway, and those who would find the whole experience obnoxious would be persons destined to be selfish and irresponsible. Indeed, it is possible that the National Service requirement might make the latter group more hostile to

the needs of the community, and more hostile to pitching in to help the community after the mandatory service is completed, than it already is.

3. *NEEDS OF SOCIETY*: It can be argued that the society has pressing social needs which cannot be fully met by current government programs and non-mandatory service. With the availability of a large group of citizens to whom the government does not have to pay the going wage, these pressing social needs could be met.

Again, let's analyze this argument.

If government is not able to hire at the going wage the staff which it needs to fulfill its functions, there are many ways in which it can proceed other than to enlist forceably the service of private citizens. It can seek to raise additional revenue so it can pay the going wage to full-time professional civil servants; it can solicit contributions from private businesses or citizens to help fund government programs; or it can provide financial assistance to other institutions to provide the services the government is unable to provide. A National Service requirement is simply a way to "hire" additional staff without paying them the going wage.

The enlistment of private citizens to perform government functions is not without its own costs. Private citizens may not be well trained or motivated to perform the needed service. The government would therefore need to train each new group of individuals and supervise their work.

The government would confront special problems which arise from the involuntary nature of the service. Many individuals will resent the requirement for service, which will create special discipline problems. One would have to impose penalties on those who refuse to serve or who provide poor service.

Practical Issues with National Service

Even if it was determined that there is a rationale for a national service requirement, there are a myriad of practical issues which would make it very difficult to design and implement a universal service requirement. These issues include:

EXEMPTIONS: In practice any universal service requirement would not, in fact, be universal. Inevitably, there would be exceptions. For example, there would be "hardship" cases which would justify an exemption from the service requirement, *e.g.*,

exemptions for individuals who provide the sole support for indigent or handicapped persons, or for individuals who have contagious diseases or physical infirmities. Women too might be exempted. And the more exceptions which are granted, the more the whole requirement would be resented as unfair by those who do serve.

TERMS OF SERVICE: There would be intense debate over the terms of any service requirement, including its duration, the type of work which would be performed, the degree to which the individual would be consulted about where he or she works, and the level of financial and other support which would be provided.

RESISTERS: Inevitably there will be individuals who will claim that they are "conscientious objectors" to compulsory non-military national service. They will claim exemptions, and they may well refuse to serve if they are not exempted. These claims will raise constitutional issues and will generate litigation.

PLACEMENTS: Citizens will want to be matched up with a form of service that they prefer, but such matching would be difficult to manage. Some citizens will object to certain types of service but not to others, and these objections may not be able

to be accommodated in the placement process.

PRIVATE SECTOR

PLACEMENTS: The government may wish to place some persons with private, non-profit organizations rather than in government programs. If the program involves non-profit groups, the government will have to pick-and-choose which non-profit groups are pursuing "appropriate" goals with "appropriate" methods. The government may even want to place persons with for-profit organizations, which would raise a different set of questions.

PENALTIES: One would have to determine how to enforce the service requirement. There might be criminal or civil penalties, or citizens who do not serve might be deprived of some government benefit that they would want and need (*e.g.*, the right to vote, tax exemptions, etc.)

COST: Organizing a universal service program will cost several billion dollars. There would be several million persons performing mandatory service at any given time.

These practical problems should lead one to examine whether a stated rationale for National Service is specific and strong

enough to warrant attempting to resolve these problems.

Tradition of Voluntary Service

There is a strong American tradition in favor of voluntary, private-sector, decentralized service, and there are many ways in which the government can and does encourage such voluntary service. As a result of these government incentives and our cultural and historical tradition of voluntary service, our society has a vigorous and massive non-profit charitable and community service sector.

The government already promotes voluntary service in many ways. Most important, it provides a general exemption from taxation for all non-profit, charitable, and community service organizations. This tax exemption has stimulated the growth of a non-profit sector in the United States which employs one-in-five workers. There are 286,000 tax-exempt organizations in the United

States. Hundreds of billions of dollars are contributed to these organizations each year. We have schools, hospitals, and social service agencies in the non-profit sector which are major industries.

There are great advantages in the diversity of these tax-exempt organizations. They are organized by entrepreneurs who show ingenuity, dedication, and skill in dealing with the problems they seek to ameliorate. Persons who serve voluntarily show a greater enthusiasm for their work, and they are much more effective in providing service as a result than are persons who are forced to serve.

To require a period of National Service, one must argue that these government efforts to promote voluntary service through private, non-profit organizations are insufficient. Before proceeding to require service, one should first intensify these efforts to promote voluntary service.

This non-profit sector is uniquely American; in most other countries the services performed by our non-profit sector are performed by government. We are better off for not having many of these functions undertaken by government. Government programs tend to be more costly, more bureaucratic, and more intrusive than private sector programs. Americans are very suspicious of government. We fear its power; we want it limited in size and powers. This is what the bill of rights is all about. We must be very careful in authorizing the government to assume a major new power and to coerce citizens to give up their personal liberty.

To impose a mandatory service requirement is inconsistent with this tradition of voluntary service. Mandatory and voluntary service are concepts which conflict with one another. Indeed, imposing a service requirement may undermine the tradition of voluntary service.

National Service:

A Radical Dissent

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National Service is a way of getting American youth who have no jobs to work for the government or private enterprise at less than the going rate of pay, even in a minimum-wage, service economy. In that capacity, they would perform needed functions that otherwise affluent corporations and adult Americans would have to provide through higher wages or taxes. National Service would also take attention away from the flight of business overseas and the expansion of U.S. imperialism. Unfortunately, National Service is being presented under the spurious guise of patriotism and community building.

Background: The Military Issue

The proposal for National Youth Service for both young men and women has been advanced by a small, determined group of politically influential and military-minded Democrats, who call themselves the "Democratic Leadership Council." Among them are Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, former Governor Charles Robb of Virginia, and Representative Dave McCurdy of Oklahoma.

Some of these military-minded politicians prefer a draft or compulsory military service. In fact, an *Army Times* editorial on

March 21, 1988, began with this sentence: "The notion of national service—the draft, in plain Army English—is gaining ever more support from politicians." The same editorial described the motivation of the pro-draft politicians. They are "worried that the country's elite is becoming increasingly isolated from military service. For the first time in history, less than half the members of Congress have served their country in uniform." This complaint implies that there is a virtue in military life and indoctrination which members of Congress should have experienced. As the *Army Times* editorial puts it, "They say that national service would give a greater cross-section of society a taste for and appreciation of military life, its challenges and hardships."

The *Army Times* lauded these motives, but rejected the idea of a draft because, "We've got a pretty good Army now, and we worry about tampering with it." The Democratic Leadership Council's position is that "The coming manpower pinch will make it difficult to maintain the current quality and size of the All-Volunteer Force without driving up its already considerable cost." However, the *Army Times* responds: "One of the great myths about the draft is that it would cost less than the All Vol-

unteer Force; studies prove that this just isn't true. While a drafted force would get paid less than a recruited one, the costs of training and equipping a large Army would be much greater."

Neither the Democratic Leadership Council nor the *Army Times* mentions the most reasonable alternative—a smaller armed force. There is no need to have 400 major bases and 3,000 lesser ones all over the world. They do not by their presence prevent war in the locality where they exist, and in most cases they cannot be used to launch invasions or air strikes against neighboring countries without serious damage to U.S. foreign policy.

The Proposals: The Appeal to Patriotism

Because the draft would be politically unpalatable, and the Pentagon itself is not asking for conscription at present, the Democratic Leadership Council is currently proposing a *voluntary* national service program that would, if enacted, prepare the way for a compulsory program.

The current proposal is to induce young men and women to enter the armed forces for two years at a lower rate of pay than that of regular enlistees, with the expectation of a reward at the end

of their two-year stint. Those who would not want to enter the military could engage in civilian service. The over-all name for both the military and civilian service is tentatively, "The Citizen Corps." Under the proposal, youth would receive \$100 a week, plus health care and vouchers worth \$10,000 per year (civilian) or \$12,000 (military) for each year. The vouchers could be used for college tuition, vocational training, or a down-payment on a house.

All national service proposals call for paying youth less than the minimum wage, and envision national service as a substitute for a genuine effort at full employment of both adults and youth. The proposals assume that individual young men and women will be able to get employment after their stint of national service, although no program for employment thereafter has been proposed.

Perhaps because these proposals do not deal fundamentally with the desire of most youth to be productively employed at living wages, there has been a heavy overlay of patriotic talk. Former Senator Gary Hart wrote, "America needs national service for our young people. A national service program would develop their sense of citizenship and a

feeling of true patriotism." Hart also said, "A new system of national service will ask young Americans to return some of the advantages and investments they have received from our society." Hart's assertion might be more acceptable if national service were applied to 50 and 60-year-old Americans, who have presumably prospered in our society. But it is a great mistake to assume that Black, Hispanic, native American and even many white youth have received "advantages and investments." What Hart and other older Americans mean by national service is a program by which unemployed and low-income youth should aid the affluent adults by working.

Military service is not the only proposal. Proposals in addition to military service include such tasks as tutoring school children; renovating shelters for the homeless; working in senior citizen centers, nursing homes, hospitals, health clinics, and day-care centers; or helping in recreation and other municipal programs. Young people might also work in conservation and public works projects, or in Native American and migrant programs, according to some advocates of national service. Such projects suggest that it is better to start an expensive

National Youth Service program, (the Democratic Leadership Council estimates that it would cost \$7 billion just for the civilian part of the program), than to pay Native Americans, migrant workers, and health and day-care personnel decent wages.

When a person is induced or forced to contribute his/her labor at a subsistence wage to do needed work for the government or private business, we have a form of taxation on youth for the benefit of those who would otherwise have to pay higher taxes or wages. One writer, Bob Weimer, said that this is actually a proposal for a massive tax increase, which would be "distilled directly from the sweat of our children instead of indirectly through income, sales, or property taxes."

A principal argument used in earlier times against the draft and for the all-volunteer armed force is that high school graduates, drafted into the armed forces at low rates of pay, would be taxed for the benefit of older and more affluent Americans. A high school graduate who could earn between \$500 and \$1,000 a month, but who was drafted and paid \$75 or \$100 a month, would be providing the difference between the two amounts in the form of a tax saving for other

Americans. The same argument can be applied to a voluntary or induced system of national service, where jobs are available only at less than a minimum wage.

The Economic Issues at Home and Abroad

Voluntary or coerced national service of a civilian nature is related to imperialism overseas and economic exploitation in the United States. Government policy, influenced by the very people in and out of Congress who are proposing National Service, began the process of deindustrializing entire regions of the U.S. by closing thousands of factories that employed young as well as old workers.

This process was encouraged by Congress and the Executive branch through the Foreign Tax Credit, which permits a foreign subsidiary of an American corporation to credit any taxes paid to governments overseas against any tax owed by the corporation in the U.S. Profits made abroad that are reinvested overseas are not subject to tax in the U.S. This device not only increases corporate profits but expands American hegemony through economic operations overseas.

This process has increased youth

as well as adult unemployment, thereby providing the pool of unemployed youth for National Service. The U.S. Department of Commerce reported that 3,540 U.S. firms had 24,666 foreign affiliates in 1977, with a direct overseas investment of about \$200 billion. Seymour Melman, Professor of Industrial Engineering at Columbia University, indicates that "for every billion dollars of direct foreign investment by U.S. industrial firms, about 26,500 domestic jobs are eliminated in the U.S.," which means that the investment of \$200 billion "had by 1980 transferred about 5,300,000 jobs from America to overseas enterprises." (*Profits Without Production*, p. 36)

Since 1980 the same process has continued and even accelerated. In March, 1986, *Business Week* issued a special report entitled, "The Hollow Corporation," which stated that U.S. companies have been shifting their manufacturing to other countries with cheap labor, or have been buying parts and products from other countries and selling them in the U.S. The result is a service rather than an industrial economy in the U.S., with many jobs paying low or minimum wages. The Labor Department projection is that, in the next ten years, 90% of all new jobs will be in the

service economy.

Even the new service economy drags down the wages of Americans. The December 14, 1986, issue of the *New York Times* reported that many service jobs have gone overseas. It asserts that in Chinese cities, about 500 key punch operators, most of whom have no knowledge of English, transfer . . . information to computer tapes or discs. The electronic data are then flown to the U.S. While the salary and benefits for an American doing equivalent work might be \$6 to \$12 an hour, the Chinese worker earns about \$6 a day. A growing number of companies in the U.S. are transferring their routine data processing and other service jobs to Asia, the Caribbean, Ireland, and other places where people can be hired at low cost.

The Appeal to Citizenship

One of the arguments used for national service by the Democratic Leadership Council is that "it embodies a principle we deem fundamental: that the American ideal of equality applies to obligations as well as rights." (*Defending America*, p. 20). Obviously, "the American ideal of equality" does not apply to economic equality, to tax equality, or to equality in health care, etc.

The same Council said, "The responsibility for defending America must be shared by all citizens." But the important questions are: How does national service for private enterprise defend America? And why is this responsibility solely that of youth? If the concept of national service is valid, and if the ideal is equality, why should not everybody, aged 20 through 55, be expected to engage for three months or more in some community service?

The chief idea-man behind the Democratic Leadership Council's national service proposal is a professor at Northwestern University, Charles Moskos, whose chair was established at the University to serve as a bridge between academia and the military. His military enthusiasm is such that a writer in the March 14, 1980, *Army Times* describes him as a man "who never got over his love affair with the Army." He has gone on infantry patrols with U.S. troops during the war in Vietnam, and has "lived in the field with the British, Canadian, and Danish armies." In addition, "every year since 1965 Moskos has spent two weeks, sometimes more, with those on duty," living with Army outfits in Korea, Germany, and Honduras.

Professor Moskos is primarily concerned with getting influential youth into the armed forces, youth who will attend the better colleges and come from the upper classes. "America's future leaders are not serving in its enlisted ranks today," he complains. He asserts that "the fundamental benefit [of military service] is to society itself, in reinstating its sense of comity, community, and service that we all seem to have lost."

Moskos and those like him either ignore or are unaware of the vast group of Americans already engaged in voluntary community service. Almost every religious denomination involves youth and adults in community service in the U.S. and overseas in health, social justice, peace, and other ministries. Numerous cities, counties, and civic clubs are also involved in such voluntary service. One of the dangers of national service is that it would tend to jeopardize existing religious and community service programs by seeking to coopt or integrate them into voluntary service programs under a national government system. This integration could easily damage any private initiative, innovation, or action that seems counter to a particular administration's ideology, or to a nationalist or militarily-oriented program.

National Service/Voluntary Service

Many of the arguments against National Service apply to both a voluntary or a compulsory program. One such argument questions whether Americans should or must serve the nation-state, and challenges the implication that they do not learn citizenship or patriotism except as servants of the state. One of the marks of totalitarianism, certainly of fascism, is that it regards the nation-state as the supreme entity of history, and values individuals only insofar as they serve the state's ends and sacrifice to achieve the state's greatness. Democracies, however, have tended to emphasize voluntarism, and have recognized voluntary service through non-state agencies, such as churches, synagogues, schools, neighborhood improvement associations, 4-H Clubs, Volunteer Fire Departments, unions, the Red Cross, the Urban League, and thousands of other such groups across the country, all of which contribute to the whole society as well as to their fellow-citizens. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are regularly engaged in voluntary service through thousands of not-for-profit agencies on a spare time, part-time, or full-time basis.

In a free society there is no list of

government-dictated services which citizens are "voluntarily" expected to perform. The roots of private voluntary service are not nourished by a desire to serve such abstract ideas as "paying a debt to society," or fostering government concepts of citizenship, but are inspired by compassion for individuals in need, by concerns for community health, or by a desire for the establishment of economic, racial, and other forms of social justice. The expression of their concern includes a wide range of activities, such as sheltering battered women or the homeless, assisting the elderly, providing with child day-care, or working in the rehabilitation of alcoholics or those with drug addiction.

The Real Issues

A free society must tolerate a wide variety of individual and group judgments as to their responsibility to each other and to society. When elected leaders try to determine our responsibilities to each other, or make *their* ideas of service the norm for citizenship, they go beyond what a free society should tolerate. Moreover, when government demands for civilian youth service at low rates of pay are an alternative to the provision of needed jobs at living wages, and when such demands are masked

by talk of citizenship, obligation, and patriotism, government is simply exploiting youth for the benefit of affluent adults.

Michael Kinsley, in the May 19, 1988, *Washington Post*, points to the irony of the Democratic Leadership Council's statement, "We favor financing the Citizens Corps by trimming existing spending . . . rather than raising taxes or adding to the deficit." Kinsley adds, "Do you get the joke? After pages of sermonizing about 'civil obligation' and 'equal sacrifice for the common good' and blah blah blah, the D.L.C. hastens to reassure that no sacrifice at all will be required from the typical citizen."

Kinsley then refers to the tax code, through which reasonable sacrifice can be demanded of all citizens on a reasonably equitable basis for the national good. He asserts, "If we grown-ups are afraid to use it [*i.e.*, the tax system] to pay our own bills and pursue important social goals, we've got a lot of nerve demanding more from the kids."

There are numerous other important questions involved in national service proposals. They include the following:

1. How large an armed force should the American people tolerate in peacetime, when

that force is used against small third-world countries such as Grenada, Lebanon, and the Dominican Republic, or for "exercises" in Honduras to intimidate Nicaragua? National Youth Service is aimed at keeping the present, oversized military establishment intact.

2. Should the Congress continue special encouragement, including tax concessions, for U.S. corporations to set up manufacturing and other businesses overseas that could be operated in the U.S.? What is the responsibility of government for the unemployment created at home by the flight of industry overseas?
3. If national service is adopted on a voluntary basis, what guarantee does government provide that volunteers in either the civilian corps or the military will not be drafted at the end of their "voluntary" service, or within a few years thereafter? If some of the civilian corps members volunteer as conscientious objectors, will their civilian service be accepted as alternative service, or must they undergo another two years of such service in the event of a draft?
4. If national service is intended to secure intelligent young people at low wages for the military by offering a future

inducement of college tuition or of a down-payment on a home, what is to prevent civilian industry or the military-industrial complex from offering enticements to rival the national service offering? Would this result in a reliance by the military and civilian corps on lower-income or unemployed volunteers? Wouldn't the national service program involve chiefly youth from low-income families, because they would be most in need of financial aid for college tuition and home-buying?

5. Will national service, with its enticement of a future education or housing, make it less necessary to improve military life and civilian working conditions for the youth who volunteer?
6. If the jobs available under a two-year national service program do not pay a living wage or provide permanent employment, what plans are there for providing long-term employment at a living wage for some 650,000 or more after they have served their two years? Will they be able to earn enough in our service economy to maintain payments on the houses for which the government provided a down-payment? Or, if they choose college, will there be jobs for them or their spouses with sufficient pay to house and feed a family? In other words,

can national service work in an economy which does not now provide adequate paying jobs for homeless families, or for Black and Hispanic youth? Is national service doomed to fail because there is no employment future after the two-year stint at less than minimum wage?

7. How long can the U.S. continue to exploit its youth and low-income adults by deferring economic reform? Such reform inevitably must raise the minimum wage, reduce military spending, encourage the development of civilian industry with the U.S. and reverse U.S. imperialism and dominance of the third world by letting impoverished peoples improve their standard of living.
8. What will the government do with youth who, in good faith, enlist in the armed forces and get an administrative or dishonorable discharge after one year? One out of three enlisted Marines, and about 25% of those in all branches of the armed forces, receive less-than-honorable discharges each year, as do about 33% of Latinos in the Navy. Will there be an allowance for one year of service, or must each case be litigated to prevent military injustice? What will happen to youth whose civilian service is unsatisfactory or semi-satisfactory? Will they be shunted into other types of

civilian service or discharged without their two-years' reward?

Conclusion

No discussion of National Service would be complete without objecting to the linkage of civilian service to military service and to the promotion of patriotism which its sponsors have as their primary motivation. But patriotism is love of country, not love of militarism or imperialism. Yet recent administrations, both Republican and Democratic, have identified aggression against other countries with patriotism and with defense. U.S. aggression (against Guatemala in the '50's, against the Dominican Republic and Vietnam in the 1960's, and against Nicaragua for decades) has been spuriously linked with defense and patriotism.

The government should be preparing the nation for peace, for the acceptance of arms reduction, and for international law and world order, instead of indoctrinating youth in nationalism, imperialism, and an alleged need for large standing armies, navies, air power, and poised missiles. Churches, synagogues, peace organizations, and other groups concerned with peace and justice must not remain silent about the negative implications of national service.

Ethical Issues of National Service

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I begin by setting what I shall try to do against a proposal made by the legislative assistants from two congressional offices, who spoke to the Consultation and presented policy proposals for dealing with problems created by the student loan program. Persons who graduate from college with the burden of such loans cannot afford to enter work in areas of crucial social need because such work is not remunerated sufficiently well to allow them the resources with which to pay off the loans. So, commendably, Senator Bumpers and others suggest a provision for deferring the loans for those who enter work that serves public needs. Were I a member of congress, I would certainly approve those proposals.

But as an ethicist I would also realize that a society that does not remunerate the meeting of public service on the same level as it rewards the pursuit of private gain is sick. Moreover, it has been repeatedly observed that no program involving the expenditure of additional funds has at present a chance of passage in Congress. The ethicist has to be very critical of such a public condition. There is public money for military build-up and private money for unprecedented extravagance, but little for the healing of economic hurt and social injustice.

That gives you a background for what I am about to do. We have heard several addresses and had a number of workshops which have examined many issues regarding possible systems of national service. We have been forced to realize that the term "national service" involves such a diverse body of ideas and proposals that it is difficult to know just what is being analyzed under the rubric. We have looked, among other things, at the nature of service as a concept, at the contrast between voluntary and mandatory schemes, and at the current state of congressional action. We have glanced over the constitutional issues, and been equally minimal in looking at the possible effects of any such programs on racial, economic, and gender groups. So now it's time to hear from an ethicist.

I

What can an ethicist say that has not, or should not, have already been said? Do not value questions enter into policy considerations all along the way? Does anyone seriously think the ethicists sit on some Archimedean perch from which they can declare that this or that proposal conforms or does not conform to some consensus definition of right and wrong, drawn from a belief in democracy, from natural law, from constitutional theory, or

from scriptural warrant? Matters of policy are generally helpful or detrimental, viable or cumbersome, productive or counterproductive, useful or not so useful. They are seldom *right* or *wrong* in the narrow moral sense. An ethicist sounds out of place trying to make pontifical judgments about the rightness or the wrongness of proposed programs of national service as though any pulpit—bully, bloody, or boisterous—can preempt the decision making process of a political community by enunciating absolutes.

But that is where the work of the ethicist begins. Ethicists, like prophets, examine the commitments of a people. Where are their loyalties? How are those loyalties—fundamental commitments and even ultimate loyalties—reflected in the arguments groups give for and against particular policies? These are the factors which measure fidelity and apostasy. The ways societies define fidelity and apostasy furnish the matrix out of which policies are pursued, and they give shape to the consequences that can be expected from the adoption of specific programs. We have already seen, in other papers in this volume, good illustrations of the extent to which economic considerations have the key role

in shaping what American society is going to do.

Ethicists will ask not merely *whether* the proposals to require or strongly sanction a term of service from every citizen would give a needed boost to an ideal sorely needed in our society, but *why* the society lacks the service ideal in the first place. Prophets call groups to self-examination. They even go so far as to suggest that those who think that they are defenders of certain values may be the enemies of those values, while those who seem to be little more than trouble makers often have the keenest sense of what true fidelity involves. Ethicists know that "habits of the heart"—to use Robert Bellah's phrase—give shape to policies even more than specific programs or policies create loyalties. Ethicists suspect that if the fundamental loyalties of a whole society have become misguided or misplaced, every subsequent action or program devised by that society will be more likely to exacerbate than to ameliorate its malaise.

That should warn you what to expect in this analysis. This presentation will involve an evaluative diagnosis of the present dominant values of American society and ask what that diagnosis indicates as to the way any program of national

service would be affected by the moral condition of our society. Instead of asking, as do many discussions of policy, what a national service program would do to improve or enhance the society, we will be asking what the *society* would do to give shape or form to a national service program (and in this presentation I have in mind a program of universal requirements, offering a choice between civilian and military forms of service, not more limited proposals for public financing of local and small voluntary programs). Any logistical scheme for instituting a program of service would take forms and have consequences determined by those particular "habits of the heart" found within the corporate psyche of the nation.

There isn't anyone who wouldn't realize that this would be the case regarding any national service requirement instituted in a totalitarian or communist regime. All of us would be suspicious that national service programs in such regimes would be bent to ends we would not approve. But we need to look very carefully at how a democratic society—and even more particularly *this* democratic society at this time in history—would bend a program of national

service to its ends, and whether or not those consequences would be reassuring.

We live in a society in which economic greed is increasingly coming to be considered legitimate. The service professions—teaching, the care of public health (not the private practice of medicine), ministry, law enforcement, librarianship, civil service, and the like—are economic step-children in a culture that gives its greatest monetary rewards to those who pursue private gain or to those who provide the litigious defense of whatever is necessary (even if unlawful) for the pursuit of that gain. The wonder is not that the ideal of service is suffering in such a society, but that it stays alive at all! Why eke out a marginal existence in order to serve others when the financial allures of yuppiedom are so attractive (or, at least seem so as long as the market is up)?

This penchant for private gain by any means is not an inherent and necessary consequence of a system of free enterprise, but it is a quality that we have allowed to intensify within it. Capitalism has not always been associated with the crass and callous narcissism that has become so evident within the last few years. The founders

of this country presupposed moral covenants that are no longer in place. Were they to have contemplated a system of service in the early years of the Republic, which incidentally they clearly did not do—Meese's and Bork's way of reading the constitution would rule out even a military draft law!—the meaning and significance of that service would have been different from anything that can now be instituted. For the founders, service was expected of each and every person throughout an entire lifetime of citizenship. They did not believe a free society could survive without that presumption of mutual responsibility. Thus to think about a "moral equivalent of war" in the time-and-Harvard setting of William James is not necessarily to have in mind the dynamics such a program would acquire in a society of Rambos and Ronalds. Whatever the causes of the contemporary infatuation with individualistic acquisitiveness, its allure, as well as the ideological legitimization of that allure, is clear. It sends signals to everyone who contemplates where and how to devote their life energies: If you want the material good things of life, even enough to eat, don't go into a service-related career! Our society offers only meager rewards for doing so.

If the foregoing describes a major strand in our cultural disposition, then certain consequences follow for thinking about instituting a program of national service. A national service program may do little to dissipate this set of attitudes, even if it is intended to counteract them. If all that it does is to take one age group, shunt it only into activities than can be done by the untrained, and later return individuals to whatever place in the opportunity-(or opportunity-thwarting) structure of the society from which they came, it will leave the major attitudes and commitments of the culture unaffected. While specific individuals might well reap some benefit from having a service-oriented experience at a decisive point in their lives, as many clearly do, that benefit will be affected (and quite possibly cancelled out) in many other cases by the dominant disrespect shown toward service by our culture.

As long as the making of money is equated with the "real world," as long as the service professions are viewed by large numbers of the American public as slightly naive and even pathetic (although admittedly dedicated), then requiring or even asking people to do a term of such work will only exacerbate the cultural

outlook that now plagues us. A great number might well do such service with reluctance and possible resentment, and, having paid their dues, would proceed with perhaps even more abandon to go on with the real business of accumulating private affluence. Service could even be given the added stigma of being a necessary evil as well as a losing enterprise. Unless ways can be found to reorder the dominant values and rewards schemes of our society, many of the ideals that would supposedly be advanced by a program of national service might actually be further endangered by it.

II

This brings us to a second complex of attitudes that are very much a part of our cultural stance at the present time—at least as demonstrated in the ideology of resurgent conservatism. We are in a period of considerable ideological dumping on, and hostility toward, the welfare functions of government. The very functions of government that would be at stake in a program of national service are now suspect in sufficiently wide circles as to threaten the prospects of funding any service program on the level required to make it successful. This distrust of the service role of

government doesn't show up as clearly when people are talking about the particular programs that help *them* as it does when the discussion turns to the programs that help *others*. It may even be interlaced with a neo-social Darwinism that tries to push marginal groups into less and less viable roles in society. It also provides an ideological foundation for widespread resistance to the creation of new programs, or resistance to the funding of programs on the level that is required to make them work well.

There has been a long standing willingness in our country to fund a military establishment, and to care for those who serve within it. This concern is legitimate and is not to be decried. We provide those who serve in the military—our “boys,” and now, our “girls”—with benefit programs and public appreciation. The willingness to resource the military adequately shows up, for instance, with the lavish per-student expenditure for education at the brass factories [the military academies] in comparison with the costs at civilian institutions of learning. The public appreciation traditionally given those who serve in the military shows up in other ways. It was greatly diminished in the Vietnam war, with devastating consequences for

morale. Granted that the military does not always get what it claims to need to carry out its mission adequately, it still does not have to prove its claim on appropriations in the same way that many public benefit programs have to do in the climate associated with the rhetoric of the present occupant of the White House. Military service is still hard and often lacking in amenities, but it has a presumptive claim on public support that would not automatically carry over to the funding of other service programs.

Suppose, for instance, that we were to create a program of public service having within it as many persons as the armed forces do. Would the country be likely to provide those called into (or volunteering for) such service with the same extensive, costly, and well-organized resources for implementing their work that we now have for the military establishment? Could we consider ourselves serious about such a program if we did not resource it as well as we resource the military? A program of service might end up not merely as an economic step child, but essentially as one who had been disinherited. For national service to be truly significant and promising, we would need a

public service/philanthropic complex as able to lobby successfully for the welfare of its program and clientele as the military-industrial complex lobbies can for its concerns. Yet who would welcome that? Who would be able and willing to give it financial support? A poorly-funded and poorly-staffed national service program—one which the public doesn't respect, which has to fight anew every year for its life, and which isn't given the backing to do its job well—would be a recipe for alienation and disaster.

It is suggested, however, that national service can be performed under private auspices. Service may be rendered by participating in private programs, and young people could be utilized in services sponsored by philanthropic and religious agencies that already have avenues for service; those avenues could be expanded. But can the private sector utilize services on a significantly increased scale? Even if the public treasury compensates the volunteers or assignees directly, thus avoiding (or fudging) the constitutional difficulties involved when the private agencies are religious, can voluntary agencies properly direct and supervise large additional groups of workers? From where would they

get the leadership to do so, particularly leadership able to work with less highly motivated and less skilled persons than can be obtained on a highly selective volunteer basis?

While these are issues of logistics and policy, they have moral implications. It would be morally wrong to lead people into situations that will be marked by overcrowding, poor resourcing, and consequent mediocrity. It would be psychologically devastating to lure or compel them into service situations where they would be treated with indifference or contempt.

III

Another aspect of our contemporary culture is very much on the minds of many, including those who do see a warrant for national service. There is a loss of wholesomeness in personal life styles. Drugs—the traffic in which is alleged to be one of the supports for military terrorism and perhaps even for covert operations—do have a grip on the lives of many people. The condoned use of alcohol in excess is probably an even greater national problem than the use of hard drugs. Proponents of service programs see them as means to provide an effective antidote to such difficulties. If drug addiction

and alcoholism were found only in those segments of the society deprived of other ways to respond to life affirmatively, that argument would be plausible. But drugs are found in the dorms of affluent prep schools as well as on city streets; alcoholism is prevalent in rural areas as well as urban ones.

This was not the case when the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] program took young men from cities and put them in supposedly more wholesome rural environments. It is less than realistic to believe that [the CCC] strategy would work now. It is naive to think that a service program could be created that would be an island of purity in a sea of cultural indulgence. To be sure, some individuals would find the conditions in service units more wholesome than those in their normal habitats—but for others the experience could be the other way around.

A fourth quality of our present common life is an increasing reliance on retributive clout as a posture for dealing with those who threaten us, whether from within or from without. Domestically we hear cries to build more jails, to apply the death penalty (which has already been reinstated) more widely, to maintain law and order by the use

of club and fire arms. Internationally, we are increasingly operating on the basis of strength rather than of integrity. We may not even care about integrity at all—since we seem to see no moral problems in covert activities and clandestine operations for which we will not even accept responsibility. “Reasons of state” are increasingly defined in terms of one-sided interest, and used to shunt moral factors to the side lines of policy making in foreign affairs. Military invasions of other countries become acceptable if they are quick and successful, unpopular only if they don’t work.

Many proponents of national service advance the service idea as a means of inculcating loyalty to the country. That might well take the form of legitimizing obedience rather than cultivating critical thinking. But is such inculcation of public loyalty our most crying national need? It is doubtful that any one of the major figures in the scandals of the past ten years—Watergate, Irangate, and the like—would have developed a different outlook on doing illegal activities for political purposes from having served a period of national service. If anything, they might have been trained even more fully to take orders rather than to

question them, to be loyal to superiors rather than to blow whistles.

To be sure, if lack of respect for authority is really the basic national problem, then some correction can come from programs that instill obedience. But if sycophantic allegiance to corrupt authority is the problem, then many forms of national service could intensify rather than alleviate the symptoms. Learning to accept orders uncritically can be a recipe for moral decadence. Healthy democratic society depends upon a pluralism of value commitments and experiences; that pluralism helps to insure a free market place of ideas, keeping any one focus of loyalty from enjoying a total dominance. Could national service train people to speak truth to power? Are its most vocal supporters, or those most likely to implement the program, concerned to have it do so?

IV

Still another issue begs for comment. We are increasingly involved as a nation in military operations which are decided upon unilaterally by the executive branch, and which are conducted in spite of major disagreements about their legitimacy among the people as a whole. World War I

and World War II were fought in times when there was an overwhelming public support for the causes in which the draftees would be used. That consensus has been shattered, and we have seen a subsequent increase in the number and variety of objections to military service.

One possible reason to institute a system of national service is to provide a choice between regular military service or civilian service of equal duration. That could well overcome the problems of conscience and resistance we have encountered on such a general scale since the Vietnam war. It would provide a neat way of allowing alternatives to military service without having to do the vexing task of judging sincerity of conscience. It would do much to allow us to dodge the problem of the "just war" objector—a problem which we have never dealt with as a nation despite the leadership offered by several major religious bodies indicating the importance of doing so.

There is a considerable appeal to such an arrangement, because it does skirt around thorny matters. But it may also cloak a danger. It could make it even easier for the executive branch to utilize the armed services in campaigns that do not enjoy the backing of the

great majority of the society. With such a scheme in place—hyped as a national service program rather than as conscription—a draft might not have to enjoy a widespread support of the public in order to be acceptable. The issues posed by public policy differences would be solved by easy alternatives rather than wrought out on the crucible of arriving at a public consensus. Instead of a citizen's army we would develop a cadre of quasi-mercenaries.

While such an arrangement might be convenient and comfortable for those opposed to war in general, and also to those opposed to the ways in which the United States uses power in the international arena in any particular instance, it might be counter to good public procedure to move in such a direction. It could provide a logistical or administrative solution to matters calling for public moral scrutiny. It could increase the tendency to treat individuals as pawns rather than to involve them as partners in national affairs. It presents somewhat less of an issue for those forms of Christianity that, for their own good reasons, think of discipleship as fidelity to the Gospel apart from the world than to those forms of Christianity that think of fidelity to the gospel as

requiring transformation of the world.

It may be that our moral situation as a society has become so post-Constantinian that there is no longer any possibility of transformation. If so, it might be best to take advantage of the most viable exemption system possible, and to be thankful that the government is willing to tolerate differences. Many religious traditions have accepted similar accommodations when faced with analogous circumstances. Very few, if any, of those accommodations, however, has ever made major contributions to the extension of moral discourse with democratic forms of government.

V

All of the foregoing sounds like an argument against the idea of a national service program. But it should be heard more as an

argument against thinking a national service program can do what the culture as a whole has been either unable or unwilling to do throughout every aspect of its life. This set of considerations is an argument against imagining that a system of national service is a cure for the shortcomings of the culture, particularly the kinds of shortcomings that would be counteracted by conformity and subservience to civic values unconcerned about social justice. My comments would not necessarily make an argument against national service in the best of cultural circumstance. If the culture were to seek to turn around every aspect of its life in ways consistent with some of the objectives that supposedly would be served by a system of national service, the whole situation would need a different diagnosis. A system of national service might have a place in such a total

commitment, provided the freedom of religious and voluntary associations were carefully preserved.

But we cannot commend service as a moral ideal by creating a scheme that is resented either because it is avowedly or covertly punitive; we cannot demonstrate the satisfactions that can flow from serving others if we set up programs in which service has to be performed without satisfactory resources to do it well; nor will we find a set of loyalties that can transform service into a positive agenda without looking beyond the needs of our own society to a world in which hunger and poverty cry out for amelioration, and in which oppression requires us to side with truth and justice—not only for our own citizens, but for all the peoples of the globe.

Proposed Draft & National Service Legislation

Legislation for national service was revived with a rush of public interest in the 100th Congress. More bills were filed than in the previous decade, but few moved far. No proposals were reported out though hearings were held in both the House and Senate. Many supporters held back further action until a new administration was in place, and conservative Democrats deferred to the proposal of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC). The hearings that Senator Sam Nunn had twice promised to hold in the Armed Services Committee turned into public forums under the auspices of the D.L.C.

Legislation pertaining to national service and its outcome as the Congress completed its work:

House of Representatives:

H.R. 18, Rep. Morris Udall, D-AZ, American Conservation Corps Act of 1987, 1/6/87: Work program for youth 16-25, modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the '30's. This bill narrowly passed the Senate in the 99th Congress, but was vetoed by President Reagan. \$75 million in federal funds would be matched by state allocations. Disadvantaged youth would be the focus. Referred to Interior and Insular Affairs and to Education and Labor. Hearings

held and committee staff indicated it would be incorporated into a bill embodying elements of the Panetta bill and the McCurdy bill. Substantially incorporated into the D.L.C. proposal.

H.R. 460, Rep. Leon Panetta, D-CA, Voluntary National Youth Service Act, 1/7/87: would provide matching grants to eligible states and units of general local government for the operation of youth service projects to meet basic unmet needs and help with youth unemployment. Would allow service in private nonprofit organizations whose principal purpose is social service. Bars positions that "involve any religious functions." Referred to Education and Labor. Hearings held and staff indicated it would be incorporated into a bill embodying elements of the Udall bill and the McCurdy bill. Substantially incorporated into the D.L.C. proposal.

H.R. 1468, Rep. Robert Torricelli, D-NJ, Commission on National Service Opportunities Act of 1987, 3/5/87: Research and policy, including compulsory programs and existing programs. Commission to be broadly representative, including military but not religious. Five members would be appointed by Speaker of House, five by majority leader of

Senate, eleven by President to include five youth, as well as congresspersons. Administration mandated to respond with proposals. Former Sen. Gary Hart, D-CO, introduced a similar bill into the Senate last Congress, and Democratic Leadership Council has favored its goals. Referred to Education and Labor. No action.

H.R. 1479, Rep. Dave McCurdy, D-OK, National Service Act, 3/9/87: "Voluntary" national service for age 17-26. Educational assistance provided for those who participate in program or the military replacing all educational grants and loans except DOD (& Coast Guard). Military service for two years, or civilian service for one year would entitle New GI Bill benefits, civilians at 60%. Pay in military at 50% otherwise applicable. Referred to Education and Labor, Armed Services, and Veteran Affairs. Hearings held and staff indicate its provisions will be incorporated into a bill incorporating the Udall and Panetta bills. Substantially incorporated into the D.L.C. proposal.

H.R. 2156/2157, Rep. Gerry Sikorski, D-MN, Companion bills to S. 759/760.

Senate:

S. 759, Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-

David W. Treber

National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO)

AR, Higher Education Amendments of 1987, 3/17/87: To publicize deferral and forgiveness of guaranteed and direct student loans for Peace Corps and Vista, and deferral for comparable service with non-profits. Referred to Labor and Human Resources.

S. 760, Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-AR, Higher Education Volunteer Services Amendments Act of 1987, 3/17/87: Adds progressive loan cancellation for voluntary service with 501(c) (3) non-profits, on the model of forgiveness of Peace Corps and VISTA loans. Referred to Labor and Human Resources.

S. 762, Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-RI, Voluntary National Service and Education Demonstration Program Act, 3/17/87: Ages 16 to 25 community or military service for two years. Stipends to civilians of \$600 per month. Post service benefits of full tuition plus \$250 per month for 18 months, not to exceed \$7600 per annum, for higher education or apprenticeships. Title II provides Peace Corps training for junior and above to serve in Peace Corps, includes tuition, room and board, etc. Pell's plan has been referred to as a "Peace Corps ROTC." The Pell Grant, college assistance for needy college and university students, is one of his

programs. Hearings held.

S. 1731, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH), Youth Employment Services Act of 1987, called the "YES Act," 9/30/87: Establishes a demonstration program for severely disadvantaged youth. Referred to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

When the 101st Congress convenes, we can expect some of the bills concerning National Service to be combined. The American Conservation Corps Act of 1987 and the Voluntary National Youth Service Act have been tied together, and will be introduced as one bill at some point soon into the new House sessions.

Representative Sikorski could introduce the same, or very similar bill in the next Congress. Senators Pell and Bumpers will probably reintroduce their bills as well.

In addition, Barbara Mikulski, Democratic Senator from Maryland, plans to introduce a National Service bill which would accommodate anyone fit for duty in a community volunteer network. People would hold their regular jobs, and also volunteer in their communities. The model appears to be National Guard service, but directed to

community service. A credit of \$3,000 per year would be used toward outstanding federally backed educational loans or home down payments.

Vice-President George Bush has announced a plan he would pursue, if elected President of the U.S., which would establish a new domestic program to help the poor and elderly of the urban areas. He announced on October 4, 1988, that he would request up to \$100,000 million in federal funds, matched one-to-one by private donations, for the creation of Youth Engaged in Service (YES) to America.

The most comprehensive plan, seen by many as a prelude to a return to the draft, is the Democratic Leadership Council's National Service plan. The congressional Democrats plan to introduce the proposal as a bill in the 101st Congress. Some of the ideas previously introduced, including McCurdy's National Service Act bill, are incorporated. Moderate and Conservative Democrats issued it as a policy paper in May, 1988, which would establish a voluntary program of national service. The paper was released by the Democratic Leadership Council, chaired by long-time draft advocate, Sen. Sam Nunn, D-GA. Nunn is also the chair of the Senate Armed

Services Committee. The DLC has announced a series of forums to be held in various cities on the National Service proposal while Congress is recessed.

The document, "Citizenship and National Service, a Blueprint for Civic Enterprise," urges Congress to adopt a plan in which the young could perform national service in exchange for vouchers, and the old could perform service for stipends. The benefits, modelled on the GI bill, were part of a proposal that extolled the virtues of civic duty and aimed at dealing with the social

problems of the nation.

Young participants would be eligible for vouchers at the end of their service. They could be used for higher education, job training, or for a down payment on a home. Eligibility for federally funded student loans would be conditioned on participation in the corps and a means test. Civilians would receive \$10,000 per year and "citizen soldiers" would receive \$12,000 per year in exchange for serving with lesser pay than career enlistees. Older volunteers would work flexible schedules and receive, instead of

vouchers, an hourly wage "intended to supplement their retirement income."

While the proposal wishes "to underscore that our national service plan is not designed to revive the military draft" it is designed to bolster "our military strength by encouraging more young men and women to volunteer for military duty and the reserves."

The proposal calculates the cost at 6 to 10 billion dollars, while earlier proposals, calculated on a compulsory basis, were projected at twice as much.

Roots of Service

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I

The thesis that I want to advance is a simple one: It is that service is rooted in religion. Service is religious in the sense that it expresses our bondedness with the universe (*religare*: to bind fast), and by extension with one another. Over time, service-oriented activities may become rationalized, institutionalized, and secularized. But the roots of service remain religious.

Now the problem with this statement in the context of a meeting on national service is that, in today's environment, discussions of national service must be conducted with only incidental reference to religion. Such discussions must honor the traditional "wall of separation" between church and state. Thus when representatives of religious institutions gather to debate the options of national service, their religious roots become liabilities. They must play the game according to the rules of a secular culture, or else drop out.

This dilemma carries over into the conduct of service activities. Programs of national service cannot be organized to "benefit" sectarian religious institutions. And the religious motivations of those who choose to serve are best kept in the recesses of personal conscience.

We need to challenge this anomaly. The need for a constitutional separation between the religious and the political spheres of life emerged from a long and turbulent history of religious imperialism. Today, however, we face a different kind of problem. We now live under secular imperialism. We have adapted ourselves for too long to a shallow and ultimately self-defeating definition of church-state separation, relegating religion to a strictly private sphere and erecting a public wall between religion and cultural life. I believe that despite the well-known dangers of attempting to transcend that wall of separation—dangers that could lead to the functional establishment of some religious perspectives over against others, or to the cultivation of a civil religion that sanctions some political perspectives over others—we are in fact now living with the dangers inherent in strict separation: the segregation of religious values and sensibilities from life in general; the gradual destruction of public life, without which democracy cannot continue to exist; and the elevation of the state to a level of absolute authority in its own sphere. Indeed, a strict wall of separation may contribute to the phenomenon of implicit official

sanctioning of those religious bodies that endorse the absolute authority of the state.

There has been some publicity recently about a study by Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney¹ on the evolution of contemporary Protestantism. One of their conclusions is that the liberal wing of the Protestant enterprise has succeeded over the past several decades in "graduating" people out of the church and into the world. Many of these graduates—or church drop outs—however, continue to apply the values of their religious heritage to everyday situations. Indeed, the comment was often heard in the 1960's, during the Civil Rights campaign, that while the Black church was highly visible and active in pressing for desegregation, the White church was involved more by implication than by corporate participation. But many of the white activists were *our kids*. They were out loving their neighbors, and we were proud.

Meanwhile, back in the white church pews, there was a "gathering storm" of official ecclesiastical reaction. Church "pillars" worried that the new generation was too caught up in the economic and political battles of the day, and stood therefore to lose its religious faith. And their

fears were well-founded. That fear and its apparent realization have resulted from the profound ambiguity plaguing the liberal church: it proclaims the world as God's arena, but it is prohibited from using the vocabulary of faith in discussing the realities of political and cultural life. But the 1960's did produce and shape several important paradigms of service in the American tradition: the Peace Corps and VISTA, and the tutoring and breakfast programs of the early SDS; all can be traced to concepts of service deeply rooted in the nation's religious heritage.

II

The early days of the American experiment faced less of a problem in reconciling religious roots with practical needs than we do today. Covenants, or binding agreements, were a central feature of community life. The nation was often described not only as a beacon of religious freedom but also as the subject of God's righteous judgment. Democracy had arisen out the Reformation insight that God's covenant relationship extended to all creation, and that every individual was capable of participating in that relationship. Democracy is therefore a polity of service. In covenant, God's will resides in the people—the

gathered people who prayerfully consider their mutual responsibilities. The doctrine of God's sovereignty over all of life radically limited the sovereignty of every other authority, whether ecclesiastical or political, and thereby encouraged an ethic of mutual service among equals.

Use of the word "service," however, was less explicit in the 18th century than it is today. Religion, on the other hand, was a more pervasive reality. The basic religious concepts of sin and salvation were applied to both individual and community. The communal dimension of salvation required mutual accountability among neighbors—an accountability that translated into actions that would, today, be called service. In early rural America, for example, communal accountability was essential for individual survival.

But as the Jeffersonian ideal of a community composed of independent landowners began to erode, more and more people found themselves working in towns and cities for larger and larger commercial enterprises. Cash, and the personal accumulation of cash, slowly replaced community as the nexus of social relationships. By the early 19th century, Protestant ethics began to turn away from a

focus on the sin and salvation of community life and toward a preoccupation with individual ethics and economic gain.

Along with this transformation, there developed two nineteenth-century prototypes of service. One emerged directly from eighteenth-century Puritan Protestantism. This Anglo-American evangelicalism had adapted the Reformation concepts of sin and salvation to a radically individualistic ethic. The result was to shift the ground of social ethics from theology to the province of natural law, thereby correlating American Protestantism with the American enlightenment. The nineteenth-century evangelical movement has been described as the silent partner of American democratic faith and the source of its moral energy.² And indeed it was. It generated an outpouring of missionary zeal that in turn spawned the Abolitionist movement prior to the Civil War, and supported the education of Blacks after Emancipation; it fueled the forces of universal suffrage and the movements for prohibition; it spurred the development of public education. It followed pioneers through successive frontiers, "civilizing" the wild-and-wooly West; it gave rise to such classic American institutions of services as the

YMCA, to City Mission societies, to boarding houses for newly arrived immigrants and working women, and to settlement houses for youth. Evangelical Protestantism organized and gave direction to a vast array of voluntary service organizations, while at the same time, through the proclamation of its religious message, it kept feeding the springs of human motivation.

The second prototype of service in the nineteenth-century emerged from a different source, but produced similar results. German evangelicalism had grown out of pietistic, socialistic, and anti-democratic urges on the European Continent, and it brought to this sprawling, free-for-all nation a sense of ordered community. Among these immigrants the classic American drive for individual success was deliberately exercised within the context of a consciously-designed community life, complete with institutionalized health care, education, and care for the elderly. The spirit of capitalism was impossible to quench, but it was tempered by a spirit of religious socialism, of belonging to the community as a faith commitment. Its theological roots were the concepts of *Diakoinia* and *Koinonia*—service and community. Moreover, it is

through this European tradition that service is most closely identified with a commitment to peace.

So it is that in the relatively brief history of this nation, we find at least two religious roots of community service—sometimes intertwined, each growing more rapidly or more slowly in different periods. One is the voluntary association of missionary-minded individuals whose hearts had been warmed by the fires of evangelicalism, and for whom the state was seen as a political framework for social service and salvation. The other is the planned community of a collective society, within which all citizens play a service role, and for whom the state was seen as exercising the order of God's sovereignty.

This simplified and brief historical excursion is important in underlining three major points. First, the religious dimensions of American culture have played, and continue to play, a profound role in forming social character in the United States. Second, the idea of service, even in its most individualistic expressions, has always been tied to the nature of community life. Third, the idea of service stands in an ambivalent relationship to the political system, sometimes openly hostile

to political goals, at other times neutral, and at still other times willingly cooperative with political aims. In any case, the particularities of religious presence and forms of service in the United States have had a strong impact on the formation of our culture, and remain deeply imbedded in the American consciousness. Any discussion of forms of service appropriate for life today ignores this history at its peril.

III

At this point I turn to two Biblical themes not unrelated to the roots of American service. I referred earlier to the Protestant Reformers' recovery of the Hebrew covenant tradition as seminal for the generation of democratic political theory. The concept of *covenant* sets the entire human enterprise into relationship with a sense of ultimate reality. It introduces mutual responsibility as a fundamental category of existence. But *covenant*, in the Biblical sense, is not a *natural* phenomenon: It is created—initiated in history by the One Who is Ultimate. *Covenant* is accepted, broken, and restored in the give-and-take of historical life. It is a product of competing wills, never static, always assuming a new form. *Covenant*

rejects inherited authoritarianism on the one hand and, on the other hand, stands in opposition to the shifting sands of pragmatic contractualism.

In his book *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, Michael Waltzer describes how the covenant tradition worked in Hebrew society. That society, he writes, was a

. . . loose, localized conflict-ridden set of arrangements that stood at some distance from the unified hierarchies of Egypt and Assyria. The Bible clearly suggests strong lay and popular religiosity with two basic elements: individualized piety, and a common, but fiercely disputed, covenantal creed. The result was a culture of prayer and argument set apart from ceremony and sacrifice.³

In covenant with the Ultimate, human authority is always subject to challenge. Covenant recognizes the role of voluntary choice and agreement. But not without prayer and argument. Our choices are always subject to challenge from the Holy One. It was the constant role of prophetic interpretation to recall Israel to its covenantal roots.

It is only within this covenantal context that we can fully understand the doctrine of vocation or call to service. Every call is a challenge. It forces us to examine what we are doing with our lives by offering an

alternative. A vocation, by definition, cannot be unselfconscious. Engaging in vocation is an act of dissent from the conventions of social stagnation. Vocation results from responding to the inevitable arguments that arise within the covenantal community.

Covenant and vocation are two basic principles of public theology. Max Stackhouse, in his recent book *Public Theology and Political Economy*, puts it this way:

Those who are in positions of authority cannot lord it over others, for they are fundamentally in the service of purposes beyond their own. In addition, they are to assist [others] in becoming equipped for, finding, and living out . . . vocation. Further, if society at this or that stage of development is so designed that we or our neighbors are structurally prevented from becoming what we or they are called to be, then *society* is in error, and must be changed.⁴

Covenant is basic to the roots of service. Covenant is the relationship through which we are challenged to respond to the One Who is Ultimate by service to one another, and through which response we in turn challenge the unregenerated character of our society by promoting institutions of service.

The second Biblical theme basic to a radical understanding of

service has had a rich history of expression in American Life. The "kingdom of God" or to put it in words that are at once more contemporary and more ancient—the dominion of God—was a rallying cry for the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social gospel, and has been a central motif for social activism through many generations. Whether expressed in terms of a warm and misty hope or in those of practical economic and political policies, the evocation of a world coming to completion pulls us toward history's goal.

The proclamation of God's dominion as drawing near is increasingly recognized as the heart of Jesus' ministry. Dominion refers both to the *rule* of God and also to the *place* in which that rule is exercised. In the words of New Testament scholar Burton Throckmorton,

Jesus did not understand the dominion of God to reveal God's power or to vindicate the righteous; rather, in the dominion of God salvation would come to the sick, the poor, the oppressed, and the unrighteous. The dominion of God encounters [us] and changes [our] perceptions of [ourselves] and the world. . . . It is where there is community. It is a new state of affairs, a fulfillment of the world. Therefore one "enters" it. . . . By various parables, Jesus creates the possibility of entering it, not as a state of existence, a *habitus*,

but as the possibility of allowing one's life to be determined by it.⁵

It is lamentable that in much contemporary preaching, the kingdom of God is often presented as a consumer commodity, something to be possessed by individual believers. But such preaching misses the point. The theme of God's dominion goes far back into Jewish antiquity, and was appropriated by Jesus from that history to mean *something by which we are possessed and through which community is realized*.

The orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide, in his book *The Sermon on the Mount*,⁶ suggests that Jesus' teaching of the kingdom should be seen not only as the articulation of religious truth but also as a strategy for immediate survival, an outline of how to live faithfully toward fulfillment while enduring the suffering imposed by Roman oppression. For example, if a soldier asks you to go a mile, practice the presence of God's dominion by going two miles. This advice is given not merely as a call to altruistic service. It is presented as a concrete way of actualizing God's presence, of establishing a new relationship that challenges the soldier's authority, puts master and servant

in a reversed situation, allows God's rule to dominate the situation, and ultimately generates the power to overcome the authority of Rome, the symbol of political and secular power.

From this perspective, the dominion of God becomes a foundation for service, placing servanthood in the position of generating power. Serving redistributes power, not simply from the *haves* to the *have nots*, but from the *haves* to the whole community, within which all are equal. Service is then the practice of ultimate reality under the conditions and constraints of contemporary reality.

IV

Those of us who represent religious institutions find ourselves in a paradoxical situation discussing the possibilities for national service. American culture today is a battleground, where the forces of religious exclusivism contend with the growing dominance of secular vacuity. Meanwhile, the liberal, main-line religious traditions, which historically combined social service with religious fervor, appear today to be quite content in seeking social ends that are largely defined in secular political and economic language. As a result, we are

virtually without verbal or conceptual resources with which to discuss the ethical and directional dimensions of service. It is only in such an atmosphere that service in the Peace Corps can be misconstrued as being analogous to military service.

The problem we face is how to express the theological roots of service in a secular age without falling into the trap of religious extremism. It is as if we were in exile, cut off from the religious roots that have nourished our culture. How can we sing the Lord's song in a secular land?

Living within the covenant and under the dominion of God means that we are called to challenge, undermine, and break open the oppression of secular rule in American life without aiding and abetting the armies of religious exclusivism. In some ways, we may already be doing so. Given the forces of faith that have shaped our culture, it is clear that as a people, Americans do not want to be a wholly secular nation. The neo-evangelical movement of the late twentieth-century duly attests to an inherent resistance to secularism. But this neo-evangelical movement, instead of being the silent partner of democratic faith, has become the quite vocal partner of late capitalist and nationalist ideology.

It lends religious legitimization to a culture built on economic greed, political quiescence, and authoritarian social relationships.

Meanwhile, the economy that gave birth to this culture is itself undergoing a profound transformation. Thoughtful economists on the left, like Robert Heilbroner, and on the right, like Peter Peterson, are called attention to the national political consequences inherent in international capitalism. Domestic economic decision-making, they agree, must come under increasing political control. Will that control be democratic or authoritarian? Will that control be exercised by established corporate interests, or through responsible government means?

These questions are central to any discussion of the future of national service. The pattern of national service in an authoritarian, corporately-dominated national state will turn out to be quite different from service in a constituted democracy, whose scope extends to the full political and economic participation of all people. Indeed, the pattern of voluntary service promoted by religious bodies today will play a role in whether this nation moves toward corporate nationalism or democratic internationalism.

The emergence of the latter will

require a return to understanding the religious roots of service as an explicit and widely-articulated reality. We need a liberal religious revival. We need to reintroduce the vocabulary of covenant and vocation—of compassion and the dominion of God—into everyday political discourse.

An example of what I mean is found in the following excerpts from "The Biblical Imperative," the founding document of the Queens (New York) Citizens Organization:

We believe that God rules in the created order and in redemptive history, that God's intention is one of justice and equity. We, therefore, do not believe that our faith requires us to withdraw from engagement in the world or to concentrate on our personal salvation while the created order goes to "hell." God calls us to be active for the life of this world and this city. . . . We believe that poor and middle-class families have valid and complementary self-interests and that alliances can be made between them on the basis of shared concerns as well as shared ideology. . . . While we share many of the concerns about pressures breaking up the family, [about] radical change in culture brought about for fun and profit, and [about] the shifts in acceptable public behavior, we do not believe there are simple legislative answers to these pressures. We do not believe that change is bad of itself.

Nor do we seek a religious empire or religious domination. But we do claim

vigorously the right to introduce our values into public dialogue.⁷

Another, more recent example, is found in the November-December, 1987 issue of the liberal Jewish Journal *Tikkun*. Editor Michael Learner here coins the term "Neo-Compassionism." Neo-compassionists emphasize

the psychological, emotional, ethical, and spiritual deficits of contemporary life. While a "Neo" doesn't deny the need for expanding social and economic benefits to the most oppressed ... (the older forms of compassion), s/he insists also on the priority of a new kind of compassion: a compassion for the ways that our society, as currently structured, fails to provide adequate opportunities for nonalienating work and a fulfilling personal life embedded within an ethically, spiritually, and emotionally fulfilling social order. . . . A Neo-Compassionist politics will affirm the healthy part of the complex of reasons that draws people into religion and will fight for a progressive politics that acknowledges the spiritual truths in the religious worldviews, even as it rejects sexism, national chauvinism, and the uncritical subordination of intellect to an irrationally constituted authority.⁸

V

I believe that we are on the brink of a new era. For us to focus on service simply as a way to meet the unrealized needs of society, or to provide for the personal needs of youth, will not carry us very

far into this new era. The question facing religious interests is not so much how to react to current proposals for *national service* as it is how to generate a zeal for *public vocation*, how to issue a call for enlarging and extending public life as an expression of historic covenantal reality and the emerging dominion of God.

Finally, I believe that religious organizations here gathered need not only to critique plans for national service from the roots of their heritage, but also, and more importantly, to create new models and new paradigms for service. Our society will not be saved by national service. But national service may be saved by people of faith, people committed to

serving one another as a religious obligation.

The religious vision, finally, is not national but ecumenical, encompassing the whole inhabited earth. Public life today, and the quality of service that it requires, is international, intergenerational, and interfaith. Yet, as we survey the vast and wonderful opportunities before us, we do so as small and vulnerable individual souls, who must daily ask ourselves the ancient question from the *Pirkei Avot*: "If I am not for myself who will be? If I live only for myself, who am I?"

NOTES

¹ROOF, Wade Clark and William J. McKINNEY, Jr.; *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future*.

New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

²NICHOLAS, James Hastings; *Democracy and the Churches*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951.

³WALTZER, Michael; *Interpretation and Social Criticism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

⁴STACKHOUSE, Max; *Public Theology and Political Economy*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987.

⁵THROCKMORTON, Burton H., Jr.;

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⁶LAPIDE, Pinchas; *The Sermon on the Mount: Utopia or Program for Action?* Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis, 1986.

⁷As quoted in CAMPBELL, David, "Church-State Separation and Competing Political Ideals: The Promise of Value-Based Community Organizing." Atlanta: Mercer University, pre-publication, MS, 1987.

⁸Editorial: "Neo-Compassionism," *Tikkun: A Bimonthly Jewish Critique of Politics, Culture and Society*. Nov./Dec., 1987.

Appendix I: A Statement on National Service

(adopted by one of three Interest Groups)

As participants at this Consultation on "National Service: Is It For Us?" in Washington, DC, November 2-4, 1988, we wish to thank the Commission on Voluntary Service and Action and the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors for their gracious co-sponsorship. We appreciate the opportunity we have had to hear and to dialogue with some of the principal proponents - both private and Congressional - of National Service concepts.

Having heard and deliberated upon the cases they have made in favor of various National Service concepts, our conclusion is that this body of concepts should be rejected as a whole.

"National Service" seems to us to be inescapably too narrow an ideology and too exclusive in establishing standardized Federal patterns of service. It ill suits an American people known for the richness and diversity of its voluntary service associations formed to address urgent needs. The characteristic voluntarism of the American people, discussed at length by Alexis DeToqueville in his classic *Democracy in America*, has at its best always

been wary of the regimenting, the indoctrinating, and the bureaucratizing tendencies of centralized governments.

* * *

We oppose any overall United States Government-sponsored National Service program, whether mandatory or voluntary, for the following reasons:

1. We reject the assumption that Americans are not already involved in service to their fellow human beings and to the society of which we are a part. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are regularly engaged in voluntary service through thousands of not-for-profit agencies on a spare time, a part time or full time basis. Among these are churches and other religious groups, many of whom have both youth and adults serving outside their own communities in the U.S. and overseas in health, social justice, peace and other ministries.

2. Such widespread voluntary service should not be coopted, supervised or otherwise integrated into a government program, which could by its very government involvement vitiate, modify or destroy private initiative, innovation, or action that seem counter to a particular administration's ideology or

nationalist or military oriented program.

3. The roots of private voluntary service are not nourished by a desire to serve abstract ideas such as paying a debt to society or fostering government concepts of citizenship but are inspired by compassion for individuals in need by concerns for community health, for the establishment of local economic, racial and other forms of social justice. These include a wide range of activities such as sheltering battered women, assistance to the elderly rehabilitation of alcoholics and child day care.

4. There is value in separation of church and state which prevents government funding of religious organizations that may not want to omit specifically religious activities from their service programs. There is also a value in religious and non-religious agencies' financing of their own projects rather than relying on government handouts which are never guaranteed but may be withdrawn at any time for economic or ideological reasons.

5. The Federal government may facilitate private voluntary service by such action as lower postal rates for non-profit agencies, by tax arrangements that permit all taxpayers to deduct contributions to such agencies, by passport and

visa arrangements that facilitate international exchange of volunteer or paid service personnel, including those whose peace or justice views may not conform to government ideology or practice.

6. The role of government is also that of protecting or safeguarding dissent on the assumption that varying forms of educational activity, nonviolent action for social change and social service work contribute to the progress and advancement of any society.

7. We also reject the assumption by some political leaders that government support of civilian service should be linked with military recruiting or conscription.

We do not, however, object to such government activity, sponsorship or funding as is

required for fostering large scale employment of people at a living wage or for job training and professional education; or for other programs involving scholarship or funding as is required for, provision of professional expertise for soil conservation and reforestation, or similar programs that involve the education of Americans or professional guidance to improve our economy and culture.

* * *

A "hands-off" role with respect to voluntary service associations by government best respects the wisdom, the diversity and the manifest compassionate instincts of the American people.

From such a respectful partnership between a people and its chosen government we are

confident a caring society is more likely to emerge than from national government service, and we commit ourselves to contributing to such a vision.

Note: The part (three paragraphs) preceding the first asterisks and the last two paragraphs following the second set of asterisks were drafted by Robert Hull. The middle part set off by asterisks was drafted by John M. Swomley. They can be consulted regarding any intent as to meaning.

This statement was developed as part of the working group process of the national consultation on "National Service: Is It For Us?" sponsored by the Commission on Voluntary Service and Action and by the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors. The consultation in the first week of November 1987 brought together proponents of national service, participants in service projects, religious service program leaders, and the principal groups of conscientious objectors who have done compulsory civilian service.

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