

Draft Registration Draws Churches' Fire

By Frank Maurovich

"We oppose draft registration as unnecessary and as a first step toward reactivation of the military draft in the United States.

"We oppose conscription because in peacetime it imposes more totalitarian controls over, and denies more civil liberties to, law-abiding citizens than any other institution in our form of government."



Special
Report

The above statements by the Friends Committee on Legislation, the Quaker lobby organization, made recently to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel, express the stand not only of the "peace Churches" but also of other Church groups opposed to current attempts in Congress to revive draft registration or the draft itself.

The Indiana Council of Churches, for example, at its May meeting reaffirmed its opposition to any kind of peacetime conscription.

Later, the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church asked President Carter and the Congress to "resist pressures to reactivate a selective service system."

Five Catholic prelates — Bishop Charles Buswell of Pueblo, Colo.; Bishop Maurice Dingman of Des Moines, Iowa; Bishop Carroll Dozier of Memphis, Tenn.; Bishop Walter Sullivan of Richmond, Va.; and Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbelton of Detroit — joined 36 other religious and academic leaders in opposing draft registration.

In their statement, issued through Fellowship of Reconciliation, an interdenominational peace group, the 41 leaders said that a peacetime draft was "in direct opposition to the hard-won respect for individual conscience and the American tradition of individual freedom."

While the U. S. Catholic Conference, the action agency of the bishops, has made no comment thus far, Catholic opponents to the draft point to the strong words of Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*: "Do not kill. Do not prepare men

Student Receives Scholarship

Christopher John Charleton, a student of international environmental law, has received a Fulbright-Hays Scholarship for study in West Germany and a fellowship for graduate work at the University of Toronto. The former Cardinal Mooney track star and football halfback (class of 1973) is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Charleton of Saddleback Trail. He was graduated this year from the University of Delaware.



C.J. CHARLETON

Fisher Grad Appointed Chief Exec at Strong

Gennaro J. Vasile, a native of Auburn and a 1967 graduate of St. John Fisher College, has been appointed executive director of Strong Memorial Hospital. He will report for duty Aug. 15, the University of Rochester announced last week.

At present, Vasile is a senior associate and director of hospital and health services management for the consulting firm of Booz, Allen and Hamilton International, Inc. in Bethesda, Md. From 1975 until 1978 he was

assistant provost at the Medical College of Virginia, in Richmond, where he received the Dean's 1978 Award for outstanding contributions to faculty and students.

Vasile took an MBA in hospital administration at Xavier University, Cincinnati, and a PhD at the University of Iowa. His professional experience includes three years as assistant administrator of St. Elizabeth Hospital in Utica. He and his wife and three children will live in Pittsford.



Demonstrators carrying signs and a dummy bomb gather on the steps of the Capitol protesting a congressional proposal calling for the renewal of a limited draft.

for destruction and extermination . . . Respect the dignity and liberty of all." The pontiff repeated those words when he visited Monte Cassino's military cemetery, just prior to his trip to Poland.

The United States has not had a draft since 1973, but church people, such as the Rev. Barry Lynn of the United Church of Christ's Office for the Church in Society, are concerned by "the alarming speed with which Congress is moving on the registration of every 18-year-old without any national debate."

Lynn also condemned what he called the "backdoor tactic" of attaching youth registration riders to defense authorization bills. In addition, however, there are six bills in House and Senate Armed Services Committees which would require the President to begin registration. Two of the proposals include registration of women.

The most active opposition lobbying on Capitol Hill is coming from the United Church of Christ, the Church of the Brethren, and the Catholic Peace Fellowship through a coalition, called Committee Against Registration and the Draft. The coalition includes the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Taxpayers Union. The Quakers and Mennonites have started their own campaigns.

Another concern expressed by church representatives is that the public, while generally opposed to a full-scale military draft, is willing to accept the concept of youth registration.

"Registration is the draft," said Edward Snyder, head of the Friends National Committee on Legislation. Wes Michaelson, the managing editor of *Sojourners*, the social activist evangelical magazine, agrees. "Arguments that the proposals cover only registration and not actual draft induction are nonsense — the only purpose of draft registration is military conscription," Michaelson says.

Lynn also argues that the legislation is unnecessary.

In his testimony before a House subcommittee, Lynn said, "Many Americans are frankly baffled about how a nation with 2.1 million active duty personnel, 800,000 persons in the selected reserves, between 50,000 to 100,000 in the delayed entry program . . . and a history of being able to recruit over 20,000 volunteers during such an unpopular war as Vietnam can be said to be insufficiently prepared for any real emergency."

Church people see the specter of militarism lurking behind attempts at compulsory service and increased personnel buildups of the armed forces. "The Church must make clear that draft registration would increase the nation's reliance on military action in response to global uncertainties," Michaelson says.

Describing opposition to draft legislation as a "positive opportunity to stop something before it happens," Michaelson said. "If the Church is to be bold in its witness for peacemaking in the world, it must stand against the conformity to society's patterns and structures for war."

In his testimony before the House subcommittee, Snyder said, "We oppose conscription because it is an integral part of the war system, whose ultimate intent is the destruction of life. This is deeply abhorrent to our religious values."

Such a pacifist stance is, of course, the traditional stand taken by the Quakers. But observers have noted that other Churches increasingly are speaking in similar vein. "No more War!" Pope John Paul cried out as he visited Auschwitz concentration camp. "Peace! Only peace! Only peace!"

K. B. Hoover, a representative of the Brethren in Christ Church to the Mennonite Central Council, puts the evangelical message in a historical context: "It is surely one of the lessons of history that those nations which have most relied upon military might have in the end lost most fearfully."



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