5-26-1969

Resist Newsletter, May 26, 1969

Resist

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter

Recommended Citation
https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter/11
DRAFT CARD TURN-INS: Two Critiques

At a May 1 Resistance rally in Philadelphia 185 draft cards were turned in for burning; at the University of Montana in Missoula 34 draft cards were turned in at a rally on April 21. In April 253 student leaders signed a statement pledging to refuse induction into the armed forces, and to go to jail if necessary, as long as the unjust and immoral Vietnam war continues.

In spite of these and other indications of continuing interest in draft resistance as a means of objecting to, and hopefully hindering, the United States' war on Vietnam, the value of draft resistance as an effective tactic is being questioned. Two particularly interesting and worthwhile criticisms are those of New University Conference national director Bob Ross at the Second National Resistance Conference in March and of the Boston Draft Resistance Group, founded to encourage draft resistance among college students but now devoting most of its energies to working class and military organizing with a multi-issue approach.

In his speech at the Resistance conference Bob Ross said that the Resistance and SDS had erred in their analysis of the draft as universally oppressive to young men and had overlooked factors making the draft a difficult issue around which to organize. The time between turning in a draft card (or refusing induction) and prosecution is long and indefinite. Prosecution comes individually; and support is hard to organize, for everyone seems to be busy doing more immediate things. Or the act was one of individual conscience, and the person so motivated often has no connection with a local Resistance group and is not involved in any sort of political activity. Furthermore, Ross asked, "How can you turn in a card and then walk to jail?" He argued that we should be hurting the system as much as possible and getting away with it. Going to jail may be one way of showing one's commitment but it doesn't guarantee lasting commitment nor is it the most effective way of educating and organizing those not yet committed. Most important, however, is the fact that concern with only one issue, and that for a limited amount of time, will not build the Movement. For the Movement to succeed, the people in it must develop a life-long involvement in the fight against all forms of oppression in our society. Bob Ross argued that resistance to the draft was not an issue around which such involvement could be built.

And Then There Were None

The Army will not be bringing any of the Fort Jackson 8 to trial. On May 20 the last two GI's being held for charges stemming from a peaceful "rap" session (or demonstration, as the army refers to it) on March 20 to discuss GI rights and the war issue were released from the stockade and will be dishonorably discharged.

Anti-war activities have been sprouting up at practically every military base around the country. However, organized anti-war activities are still generally at an early stage of development.

Since Feb. 4th the Fort Jackson brass has been dealing with a much stronger manifestation of developing GI consciousness. On that date a group of predominately black and Puerto Rican GI's formed GI's United Against the War in Vietnam. GI's United has been fighting vigorously for the constitutional rights of GIs to discuss the war and racism. Anti-war activity increased at a fast pace during the next two months. Army harassment increased at the same rate.

GI's United first circulated a petition asking for permission to hold open gatherings. When the petition was presented to the authorities with 200 signatures, the brass refused to accept it on the grounds it was "collective bargaining". On March 16 plans to file suit against the army were announced. The suit was filed on April 2 alleging violations of the First Amendment on behalf of 10 GIs. Of these ten, five were among the 8 charged with disrespect, breach of peace, disobeying an order, and holding an "illegal demonstration", as a result of a March 20th meeting called by GI's United. The suit is still pending.

The case was welcomed by some who wanted a test case to determine whether enlisted men do, indeed, have the same constitutional right as civilians to oppose by all lawful, orderly means the course chosen by their government.

Court-martial proceedings are only the most publicly visible method of suppressing GI anti-war opinion. The fates of the Jackson 8 fall into the following alternative suppressive categories.

Two received near-permanent assignment to KP duty (an 18 hour work shift) and daily "GI parties" (a thorough barracks clean-up, usually done once a week). Another GI can be found stripping and waxing the same barracks floor every day from 5AM to 5PM. Anti-war GI's are often summarily transferred to other posts, or shipped off to Vietnam prior to ordinary schedule. And several of the Fort Jackson activists will receive dishonorable discharges. (Pvt. Cole is appealing his discharge.)
DRAFT CARD TURN-INS  Cont'd from Page 1

BDRG begins their critique of the tactic of draft card turn-ins by noting that turn-ins were one of the most spectacular and dramatic features of protest in the anti-war movement. However, they now oppose further turn-ins because of their limited success and because of the discovery of several distinct drawbacks.

Many of the premises advanced in favor of the tactic of draft resistance they now see as based on false hopes: The number of men willing to turn in their cards is, and has been, too small to affect the Selective Service System, the military, or even the courts. While draft card turn-ins were seen as a means of breaking down the barriers between the middle and working classes, this has been shown not to be the case. Working class people often see turning in a draft card as draft dodging, rather than as a means of building a mass movement in America, and do not see non-cooperation as a real alternative to military service. Finally, a better understanding of the nature of the Vietnam war has led BDRG to believe that only by destroying the basic American institutions supporting the war can we effectively end it and prevent similar wars from occurring in the future.

Several distinct drawbacks to the tactic of turn-ins have become apparent: The personal freedom of the protester, and his organizing ability in the Movement, are lost during his imprisonment for an action of questionable value to the Movement as a whole. Subsequent actions on the part of some of those who turned in their draft cards show that they did not fully understand the consequences to themselves of their action. Others who turned in their cards saw that action as the ultimate commitment, and were lost to the Movement in that they did no further political work. And the anti-military focus of turn-ins gave the anti-war movement the source of this pressure, if they promised not to tell the defendants. This condition was unacceptable, and the source was not divulged.

The twelve currently on trial dismissed their lawyers shortly before the trial began. Both attorneys and clients felt there were no legal measures left to assure a fair trial in Milwaukee. The defendants also felt their own conduct of the case would have more impact and would give them greater leeway in presenting their defense. The trial judge, Charles Larson, first tried to appoint a court attorney for them but finally acquiesced to their insistence that they defend themselves. Their attorneys, William Kunstler, Mark Stickgold, and Percy Julian, will represent them at the federal trial, still scheduled to begin on June 9.

The remaining two members of the Fourteen, Michael Cullen and Gerald Gardner, will be tried separately at later dates. Gardner was to have gone on trial with the others but at the last minute asked for a postponement and a change of venue. Also to be tried later is John Hagadorn, who led reporters to the scene of the burning of the files on September 24 without telling them what was about to happen.

MEANWHILE, . . .

In Chicago on May 25 eighteen persons were arrested for burning records taken from the Chicago South Side Draft Board Complex (which covers 25 draft boards encompassing nearly 2/3 of the city's black population and large numbers of white workers). The fifteen were reporters from Milwaukee. The other fifteen released a statement explaining their action:

"The poor people of the earth are taught to hate and kill one another in order that the powerful can enjoy the freedom to increase their fortunes through exploitative foreign investments. At the same time, the expansion of war related industries diverts tax dollars away from the social programs so desperately needed here...

"Our action is negative but also creative - for there is implied in our loud 'No!' a quiet but hopeful 'Yes,' in our elimination of part of a death dealing and oppressive system the prelude to the creation of life and freedom."

Presidio Trial Recessed

The trial at Fort Ord, California of the last fourteen of the Presidio 27 has been recessed for as long as the president of the court-martial board is in the hospital.

NEW STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

At the May meeting Staughton Lynd was elected a member of the RESIST Steering Committee.
The Bureau of Social Science Research (Washington, D.C.) is currently conducting a pilot study of "campus unrest" for the American Council of Education. They are gathering detailed information concerning recent protests on 20 college campuses across the nation for a proposed three-year study on the subject. Each of the 20 studies consists of interviews questioning the respondent's relationship to protest, his and his parents' political beliefs, which teachers profoundly influenced his thinking, and whether he has ever tried marijuana, LSD, or "speed." The respondent will be given a psychological inventory test. Both the interview and the test require the respondent's name. In addition, the researchers (usually students) are requested to develop a narrative case study of the protest including sequences of events, issues and outcomes, names of people involved, their organizational affiliation and positions. This story is to be fully footnoted and accompanied by pictures and tape recordings of speeches where available.

What is the purpose of this study? It clearly doesn't investigate the nature and scope of the issues of protests but rather seeks to determine personality characteristics and belief systems of those who participate in them, the teachers who foster the beliefs that underlie protest (there are separate questionnaires for faculty and administrators) and the relationship between administrative tactics and the outcomes of protests. The suspicion arises that a purpose of this study is to refine a measuring instrument to help reduce the number of protests by selecting certain types of students and faculty. It could also be used for the determination of admissions policy and hiring procedures.

Related to the research of the American Council of Education is M.I.T.'s proposed Project CAM. Project CAM, originated by M.I.T. and the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), is a plan to bring computer time-sharing experts and behavioral scientists together to develop a 'behavior science data management system.' According to its sponsors, the resulting behavioral science-computer complex will 'become a model for many subsequent facilities, both in universities and in public agencies.' CAM will work with data ranging from files on cultural patterns of all the tribes and peoples of the world to 'characteristics of local conflicts and limited war crises.' Another suggested input is 'data on youth movements.'

The plan is to link the CAM computer with several similar computers at places like the Stanford Research Institute and RAND Corporation through the proposed ARPA Contractors Network. A terminal in the Pentagon will give the military 'crisis managers' a direct tie-in. It is hoped that behavior science will supply the military with analytical tools to understand their enemies and thereby to outwit them. The whole computer set-up and the ARPA computer network will enable the government, for the first time, to consult relevant survey data rapidly enough for use in policy decisions.

It is clear that the political and ethical implications of research of this type should be brought to the attention of those engaged in behavioral sciences. Efforts are being made to alert people not to cooperate with these studies. The questionnaires of the American Council of Education ask for incriminating information. There can be no guarantees that this information won't be used for intelligence purposes. Anyone who knows of a college where questionnaires are being circulated or has further information on related research should write to the RESIST office.

W.R.L. S.O.S.

On the night of May 9 the War Resisters League suddenly was cut off from all 10,000 of its members and friends across the country. This was accomplished by a group of unknown persons who broke into the office and stole ALL membership cards and stencils. In addition, they wrecked the premises, dumped all files, and smashed office equipment. Thus, the War Resisters League has to reconstruct its mailing list from scratch. It is therefore urgent that every person who was on the list write the League at its new headquarters, 339 Lafayette St., New York, New York 10012, giving their name and address (with zip code, please).

Many Thanks

In Newsletter #24 we reported the plight of David Rehfield, who lost his job as a teaching assistant at the University of Arizona because he was convicted of a felony (burning his draft card). David received several replies to our call for help, and now has a position with the Physical Review.

Funding Requests Granted

At its May meeting the RESIST Steering Committee made the following grants:

Greater Rochester High School Student Union, Rochester, New York: seed money
Peace Center, St. Louis, Mo.: for office expenses and GI organizing
Draft Counseling Center, Bloomington, Ind.: for office maintenance, literature, and publicity
Alabama Movement Press: seed money
Charlotte SSOC, Charlotte, North Carolina: for rent and toward a GI coffeehouse
ADC, Montreal, Canada: for office maintenance and food
Manchester College group, Ind.: for a Movement printing press
SDS National Office, Chicago, Ill.: for printing expenses
Young Lords Organization, Chicago, Ill.: for a printing press and office expenses
Springfield, Missouri: The newly formed RESIST group at Southwest Missouri State College has published the first two issues of its new paper The Double Standard. The paper will provide a much needed mechanism for the expression of opposition to military-industrial capitalism as symbolized by ROTC on the SMS campus and for the exposure of the 'double standard' to be seen in the many contradictions of word and action on the part of the administration.

Fort Dix, New Jersey: [LNS] Pfc. Terry Klug was sentenced to three years hard labor at Leavenworth after being found guilty on two counts of desertion and two lesser charges by a seven-man military court.

Klug, who went AWOL and did anti-organizing in Paris for RITA (Resisters Inside the Army), also was an organizer for the American Service-man's Union (ASU). He has been imprisoned in the Fort Dix stockade.

"If there wasn't any punishment for dissenting, the whole Army would be dissenting," Klug said after his sentence. He and his lawyers and the ASU have vowed to appeal the case to Washington.

Urbana, Illinois: [letter from Herb Semmel]

"On May 2, I led a vigil reading names of the war dead on a loudspeaker from the roof of the Illinois Union. (University of Illinois) We read for six hours, about 5000 names in all. We also distributed leaflets at the events the mothers attended with the theme--are you willing to sacrifice your son for a victory or 'honorable peace' in Vietnam? If you are not, why sacrifice someone else's son? On the whole, I think most mothers and fathers were moved, although the usual hostility was also encountered....I think the technique is effective if you can do it with a mike so people hear what you are doing. We also used a large sign to make clear the purpose. To personalize the dead, we read hometowns as well as the names. After each name, we said 'Killed in Vietnam.'"

Berkeley, Calif.: The Berkeley 3, Paul Glusman, Jack Bloom and Peter Camejo, come to trial May 26 under the same conspiracy law used against the Oakland 7. The charges against the three men stem from the Moses Hall sit-in of last Oct. where the demonstrators charged the Regents with racism and political interference in violation of academic freedom regarding the Eldridge Cleaver faculty-approved course.

The conspiracy law was intended originally to be used against top gambling outfits whose directors remain behind the scenes. Alameda County Attorney Coakley is attempting to use this law to bring felony charges against people who help organize an action where a misdemeanor is protected by the first amendment and turn all normal planning of protests (rallies, meetings, etc.) into potential felony conspiracies. (This release is from the Berkeley Defense Committee, 858 Emerson St., Berkeley, Calif.)

Nyack, New York: [LNS] A team of prominent religious and political people will travel to South Vietnam in May to focus attention on the 200,000 political prisoners there. According to an announcement from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, sponsor of the trip, the team's mission will be to further expose the U.S. role in the Thieu-Ky dictatorship.

Chicago, Illinois: On May 3, at a birthday party given for a friend, two unarmed members of the Young Lords Organization were shot by off-duty police officer, James Lamb. Manuel Ramos died as a result of a gunshot wound in the head and Raphael Rivera is recovering from a neck wound. Although James Lamb was not arrested, four of the Young Lords who had tried to help their brothers were. The four were first charged with aggravated battery and then with attempted murder. Bail was set at $3000 on each of the men.

Wentworth by the Sea, New Hampshire: On May 14, about 25 people gathered in a symbolic picket line at a convention of attorneys and judges from the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals. The group, predominantly Puerto Rican, were protesting the conviction of one of 96 indictments for draft resistance in Puerto Rico.

Chicago, Illinois: Five members of SDS, including National Secretary Mike Klonsky, were busted in an early morning raid on the National Office by police and firemen. The five were arrested on charges which grew out of a "visit" to the office by police, who were checking a phone tip reporting a murder and fire. They have been released on bail.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTACKED

On the afternoon of May 5 Dick Flacks, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Chicago and a member of the RESIST Steering Committee, was attacked and severely beaten in his office by an assailant not yet identified or found by the Chicago police.

He is now recovering from two skull fractures and a severely cut right wrist. For awhile after the attack he was paralyzed and had a total loss of memory. The paralysis has gone, and it is expected he will regain 60-80% of the use of his right hand. His memory has been returning slowly.

The assailant entered the office in the guise of a reporter from St. Louis; as such, he had called Flacks a day or two earlier and made an appointment for the Monday afternoon interview. The Chicago police noted that the telephone call might be useful in their investigation, since they have a complete record of all calls made to Flacks' office.

Though the police were at first unwilling to consider the possibility, it is highly likely the attack was politically motivated. The Right is quite active in Chicago, and the Minutemen attacked those occupying a building at the University of Chicago in February, 1969. Flacks had supported the seizure of the building and is a well-known member of the New Left in Chicago.