

D. R. M. NEWS

DRAFT RESISTANCE MOVEMENT
P.O. BOX 99, NORTHCOTE, VIC. 3070

PRESIDENT D. FILES
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DRAFT RESISTANCE - AMERICA

Here is a brief report of the Oakland section of Nation-wide demonstrations against the draft which took place from October 16 to 20, 1967.

It should be noted that young men were asked not to burn their draft cards, but to return them to their induction centres. The burning of a draft card destroys the evidence. The return of a draft card faces the Administration with a direct challenge from those who refuse to fight in Vietnam.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA.

October 16: On October 16, over a hundred sat in the doorways of the Oakland Induction Centre from 6.30 in the morning, aiming to close the Centre.

The following is an extract from a report by Kay Boyle, the American writer who was one of those taking part.

"...We sat in the doorways of the Oakland Induction Centre on the 16th, beginning at 6.30 a.m. We were in groups of twenty designated by white armbands as sit-ins. The monitors wore blue armbands. We did not chant - our presence was the argument. When the first inductees, coming singly started to walk over us, we would speak quietly to them, saying "You do not have to go". The first group in the second doorway was arrested about 7.30, after it became evident that no inductees could get through. By that time, three young men had said that they would not go to Vietnam, if information was given them as to where they could go for information as to alternatives i.e. to becoming conscientious objectors. When the decision of these three became known, the entire crowd cheered for ten minutes and over a thousand voices sang 'I ain't goin' to study war no more'.

By the time the first arrests were made (at 7.30, at the second door), the police inside the building had locked the doors and were standing in a line on the other side of the glass from us. As the twenty walked to the patrol wagon, the singing again filled the early morning air - 'We are not Afraid', 'We Shall Overcome'. As soon as the twenty were taken out, another twenty moved into their place before the door. We permitted only the U.S. mail to go in and come out. On the other side of the glass door, the induction authorities were motioning any inductees who approached to go away and not attempt to pass us. The spirit throughout was peaceable and good-natured, but there is a terrible moment of chilling fear when you see that double V of police, clubs in hand, wedging towards you. Joan Baez and her mother and sister held the middle door, with fifteen others, surrounded by T.V. cameras. She sang almost without a moment's break from 6.30 to around 9.00 when she and her group were taken off. Immediately 20 others marched in.

The team work was magnificently carried out. Across the street, those who could not, for various reasons, sit in, marched in a long unbroken line, carrying placards saying, 'Not your sons, not their sons', and 'Stop the murder in Vietnam'.

We were not arrested (in the doorway) until around 3 o'clock. It was clear that the inductees were being taken elsewhere, and the police informed us very courteously that inasmuch as we were interfering with the functioning of a public building - allowing no one to go in or out - they would have to ask us to get up and go. We responded quite as courteously that we intended to stay all night, until the Berkely Marchers arrived at 4.00 a.m. the next morning. So two police wagons arrived and the police closed in on us - quite peacefully - with no violence at all. Immediately the beautiful singing filled the Square (even with Joan Baez gone), and those of us still sitting in the doorway continued talking to the two or three undecided inductees who were squatting down beside us to get further information as to what they could do to fight the draft. The police sergeant directed the men to wait until we had finished our song before arresting us.

The Police asked each of us separately if we would leave, and as each of us separately said "No!" they then asked "Will you walk to the police wagon?" Three or four refused and were dragged, limp, by the police. The rest of us walked separately, under escort, to the patrol.

Several demonstrators lay down in front of the patrol wagons. They too, were arrested, of course. By this time we knew that about 150 were in the Oakland jail, or on their way to the county jail. And we knew that at least 6 inductees had refused induction.

Two had climbed out of a first floor window after talking at length with the sit-ins as to their rights.

We were all arraigned yesterday (the 17th) after a night in jail. Several of us were permitted to make statements in the court room to the bench - Roy Kepler was magnificent, saying "Your honour, we do not consider ourselves criminal prisoners, but political prisoners. We believe we have been arrested not for disturbing the peace but for disturbing the war".

I spoke as well, saying that I believed this demonstration had a unique character in the long line of demonstrations in our country against the war in Vietnam, inasmuch as it was a demonstration in which older people and professional people, such as myself, had not hesitated to put their freedom in equal jeopardy with that of the courageous young Americans who were refusing to serve in Vietnam..."

Extract from documents - World Conference on Vietnam, Stockholm.

DRAFT RESISTANCE - AUSTRALIA

The Draft Resistance Movement formed on Monday, February 5th, 1968, at a meeting attended by 25 people who were concerned with the lack of effective opposition to conscription and the war in Vietnam. At this meeting those in attendance were members of the Young Labor Association, University Labor Clubs, Young Socialist League and former members of Youth Campaign Against Conscription. It had been established that Y.C.A.C. had lapsed as an organization due to a number of factors, during the latter half of 1967. There was an obvious need and interest to form a new organization. Pro tem office-bearers were elected and the decision taken to (a) chain four people across the driveway of the Swan Street Army Barracks at the intake of conscripts on the morning of 7th Feb., (b) demonstrate against the Liberal Party's policy on Vietnam and conscription at Mr. Gorton's Higgins By-election campaign meeting, at the Caulfield Town Hall on Feb. 13th.

The aim of the first demonstration was to highlight in the public mind the process of conscription as it exists in our society today, the cause of this process (Liberal Party's Vietnam policy); to influence those being conscripted and their parents to challenge this process and/or inform them of their rights under the present Act.

We will support twenty year-olds who challenge conscription in the way they desire, and request parents, friends and employers to support their position. We are preparing a statement to be signed by at least 50 prominent people who can influence parents of today to act on behalf of their sons in this manner.

How successful a demonstration at an intake can be needs careful analysis; we invite your written submission on this one aspect of working against conscription.

Points involved in the second demonstration were to clearly demonstrate against and disturb the conscience of those people who are at present formulating the day to day policy of Australia's continuing involvement in Vietnam, i.e. Gorton, McMahon, Fraser, Chipp, Snedden, etc. Men who are negligent in terms of humanity in failing to use their influence as 'allies' of America, to force the Johnson Administration, by means of publicly embarrassing that Administration when an ally (Australia) withdraws its troops from Vietnam and publicly discredits the American position in Vietnam.

Congressman George E. Brown of California, speaking - Annual Conference of the British Labor Party, at Scarborough, October '67, said, "We can, in turn deprive those who press on in this war of the arguments they use to justify their course, reinforce their position and sway public opinion. One such argument, repeated again and again, is that our action has the support of our allies."

Our aim in the future is to disturb the course and conscience of the abovementioned people by demonstrations at the appropriate times, although it has been made quite clear by the Victorian Establishment that anyone moving from the conventional form of protest will be repressed.

"POLICE WANT WIDER POWERS"

"The Victorian Police Force wants to widen its powers of arrest to meet situations where summonses are inadequate to get people to court. The Secretary of the Police Association, Inspector W.D. Crowley, has called for all possible support for such a move which, he says, has been put to the Victorian Government by the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Arnold. In the Association's journal, he says the most practical solution would appear to be introduction into Victorian legislation of the powers of arrest available under the Commonwealth Crimes Act. Inspector Crowley says that in many cases uncertainty about powers of arrest can cause delays which often lead to dangerous situations. "This is particularly so in the case of demonstrators, rioters and obstructions where, if the offender is not removed quickly, mobs gather, giving police great difficulty in protecting life and property," he says..." The "Australian", March 9th, 1968.

Our policy for all our demonstrations is non-violent passive resistance. On Tuesday 15th Feb., at the Caulfield Town Hall, there was no attempt by the police, who were under the direct supervision of Mr. Arnold, to institute orderly crowd control. In our view, this possible legislation will be a direct denial of the right of assembly, aimed not only at those who are opposed to the war or conscription, but the men and women who will be controlled by the Essential Services Act.

Our attitude is, of course, that at this point of time in Australia's history, the right to demonstrate against the Vietnam war must be clearly extended, not restricted. The Vietnam war has as its parallel Hitler's aggression, and that macabre period of history cannot be allowed to be repeated.

The aims of our two silent demonstrations against Mr. Whitlam, on Feb. 14th and 21st, at his Higgins by-election campaign meetings, can be expressed with added significance by the statements of Congressman George E. Brown at Scarborough: "...But there are still those who seek to use private influence with the councils of American Government, rather than taking a strong, public stand. I say that influence is an illusion. The present councils of American Government are not listening to secret voices of moderation. They have not been listening for years..."

The D.R.M. has of course, its organisational weaknesses, as has any over-worked voluntary organisation. These problems can be overcome by your positive support. We welcome this not in the interests of the organisation, but the issues before us all.

This organisation has been inspired by the activities of Americans (those who are our real allies), hence the name 'Draft Resistance Movement'. This is valuable in the sense of working in conjunction with people internationally, and not being isolationist, but it reflects the paucity of the opposition to conscription and the war in Vietnam within Australia. Do we have an equivalent to Dr. Benjamin Spock.

FIRST GENERAL MEETING - SECRETARY'S REPORT

The first general meeting of the Draft Resistance Movement was held at the Waterside Workers' Federation building on Wednesday 28th February. About 60 people were present.

Pro-tem President Desmond Files began the meeting by summarising the background of the D.R.M. Following his report office bearers were elected for the next twelve months:

President: Desmond Files, Vice-President: Susan Edmonds,
Secretary/Treasurer: Peter d'Abbs, Assistant Sec/Treas: Margaret Files,
Finance/Membership Officer: Adrian Desailly.

Finance Committee: Adrian Desailly, Earl Ingleby, David Nadel,
Gary Marks, Dave Clark.

A planning committee was also elected "to seek out and receive (for protests) suggestions from all interested members of the D.R.M." and "to conduct a seminar on techniques of demonstrating within a period of six weeks of the general meeting". The following were elected: Michael Hyde, Carl Armstrong, Michael Hamel-Green.

Address all correspondence to the relevant person, C/- P.O. Box 99, Northcote, 3070.

It was agreed at the meeting that the D.R.M. should hold a general meeting at least every three months.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING - FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT.

The members, who were elected at the General Meeting, were all present at the first Finance Committee meeting, Monday, 4th February.

With an organisation such as the D.R.M., there is an obvious need, if we are to function efficiently, to keep finances at a reasonable level. With this in mind, the Finance Committee was elected at the General Meeting. The primary objectives of the committee will be to investigate means of raising money, and to make recommendations to the Executive. To be made valid, all resolutions by the Finance Committee have to be approved by the Executive.

A number of proposals were put forward at the first Finance meeting, all of which need the approval of the Executive, number three being subject to further investigation by the committee.

THE RESOLUTIONS WHICH WERE CARRIED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) To seek invitations for representatives of the D.R.M. to speak at various meetings, factory gate, lunch hour, public and private, with the intention of both publicising the D.R.M. and raising funds, etc.
- 2) To put out an appeal for members and interested supporters to volunteer for participation in a pledge system. (See form this newsletter.)
- 3) To organise a series of films to be shown to paying audiences. Further investigation needs to be given to this resolution as concerns the rental of films, projectors, etc.

If you can assist in any or all of the above-mentioned and/or suggestions as to other forms of fund-raising, contact A. Desailly, C/- P.O. Box 99, Northcote, 3070, 'phone 489 1932.

A P P E A L

The D.R.M. will be launching a public appeal to aid those arrested at the Gorton Demonstration of 13th February. We are aiming for \$1,000.

Of the fourteen arrested, only two cases have as yet been heard. One demonstrator was put on a twelve months' good behaviour bond, while the other has been fined \$290. He is lodging an appeal. Expecting similar sentences for others, we are asking for as much money as possible to be either given directly for fines, or loaned as bail money for appeals. Should you be able to hold a function (parties, meetings, etc.) for this appeal, we will gladly supply speakers.

If you are willing and able to help in any way, please contact Adrian Desailly, Finance and Membership Officer, C/- P.O. Box 99, Northcote, 3070, 'phone 489 1932.

APPLICATION FOR PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

The functions of this new committee will be to investigate all avenues of presenting to the general public, the most reliable accounts possible of the D.R.M.'s activities and policies. The choice of members on this Committee will be decided on aptitude and experience. Any member wishing to join this committee is asked to send his/her name, address and qualifications to Peter d'Abbs, Secretary, P.O. Box 99, Northcote, 3070.

INFORMATION SHEET

Members and interested people are asked to fill in the forms below.
If you are not already a member of D.R.M., see membership form below.

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Name.....
Address.....
..... Post Code..... 'Phone.....
Can you type?..... Have you a typewriter?.....
Have the use of a car?.....
Can you bring other people to demonstrations?.....
If so, how many..... Have you spare time?..... when -
Morning..... Afternoon..... Evening.....
Can you recruit new members?..... Can you make posters?.....
Can you supply material for posters?..... Can you raise funds?.....
Can you offer us any other services (details).....
.....
Do you need our services?.....
Conscientious Objection..... Non-registration.....
Financial assistance..... Legal Aid.....
Please return completed form to The Secretary, D.R.M., P.O. Box 99,
Northcote, 3070.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
..... Post Code..... 'Phone.....
Membership/mailling list - \$1. 00

Dear Member/Supporter,

With the desire to keep the D.R.M.'s finances at a constant level, from week to week, we ask you to volunteer for participation in a Pledge System. The amount, no matter how large or small, may be paid on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis. Mail crossed cheques and postal orders payable to the Draft Resistance Movement, C/- Finance Officer, D.R.M., P.O. Box 99, Northcote, 3070. Receipts will be issued immediately.

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
..... Post Code..... 'Phone.....
PLEDGE \$..... WEEKLY..... FORTNIGHTLY.....
MONTHLY.....

Yours sincerely,

A. Desailly,
Finance & Membership Officer.