

Reluctant Heroes

Registration and the Draft. Edited by Martin Anderson (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution).

The Military Draft. Edited by Martin Anderson (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution).

A mob attacks your home, but your neighbor won't volunteer to help repel it. Do you have the right to force him to help? This is the dilemma of conscription. The problem does not change if the mob is regimented or wears uniforms, or if you and your neighbor have a long history of cooperation. Even if the two of you have confederated, what obligations he owes are owed to *you*, not the legal abstraction of a state. It is hard to see the basis of that obligation. The liberal theory of the state presumes against coercion, especially of those who are themselves coercing nobody. It recognizes your neighbor's moral duty to aid you, and his own interest in resisting the mob before it turns on him, but none of this justifies your threatening him if he refuses to make common cause with you. Indeed, with the exception of the Civil War draft and its attendant provisions for hiring substitutes and purchasing commutation, voluntarism was the military manpower policy of the United States until 1940. The exigencies of World War II, the Cold War, and Vietnam kept the draft in place until the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) replaced it in 1973 at the behest of Richard Nixon. Ronald Reagan has "reaffirmed his commitment" (as politicians like to say) to the AVF, and a return to the draft is unlikely in the near future.

The Military Draft and Registration and the Draft, both edited by Martin Anderson—one of the architects of the AVF—present the cases for and against conscription and examine the performance of the AVF. The former volume assembles forty-one readings on the historical, philosophical, legal, and economic dimensions of the draft; the latter contains the proceedings of a Hoover Institution conference on the AVF held in late 1979. Both books include extensive discussions of national service schemes for drafting all young men (and women, of course, this being the age of feminism) for nonmilitary tasks the government thinks need doing.

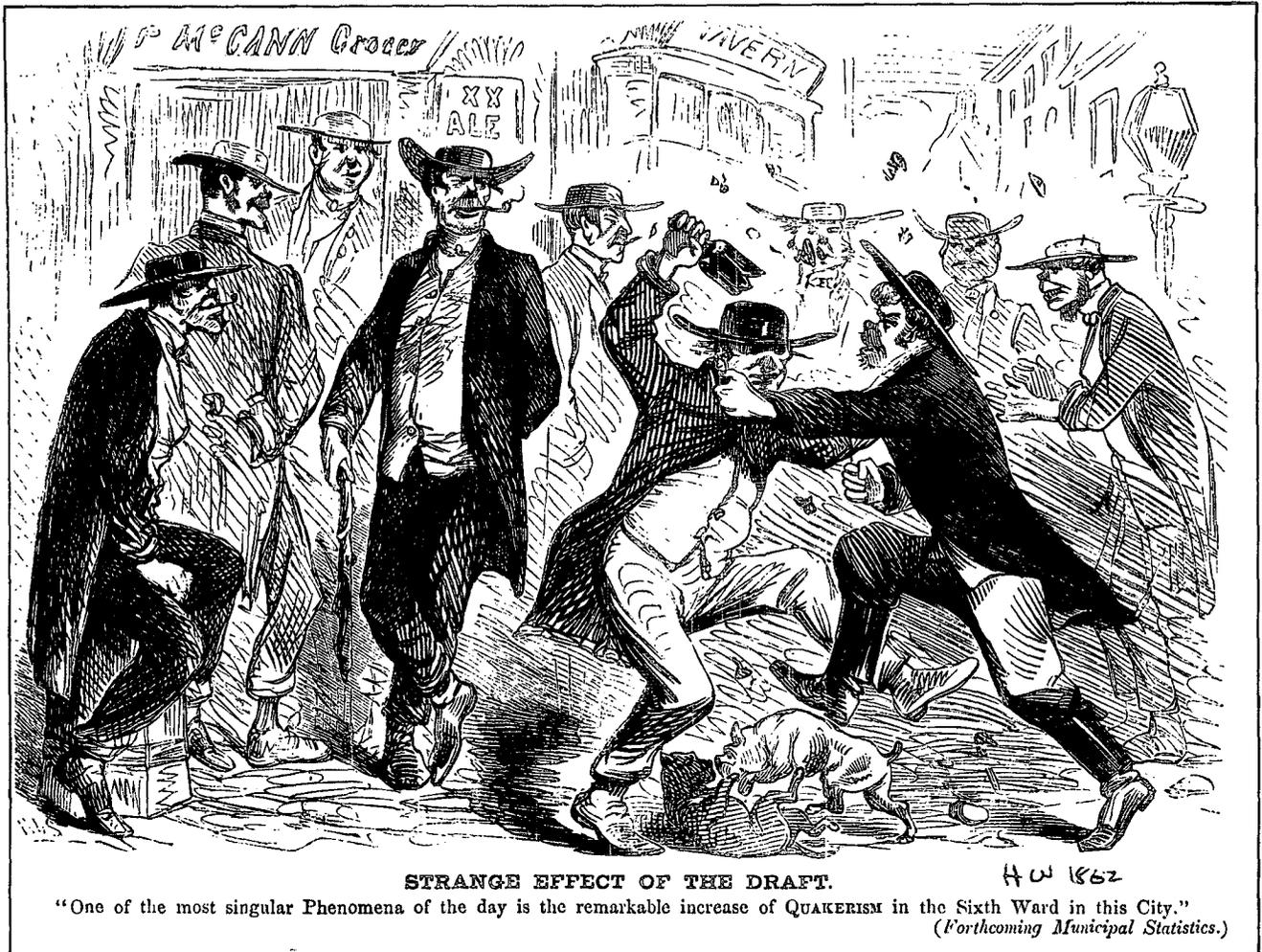
It is somewhat misleading to represent *The Military Draft* as a debate between covers, since the editor's very apparent antipathy to conscription has created a rather one-sided book. Its four philosophers would be uniformly antidraft did not Hugo Bedau approve the conscription of Cubans, who "have [a] moral obligation to provide the armed forces needed to defend their socialist society against a counterrevolutionary invasion by impe-

rialistic neighbors to the north." All the economists find the hidden costs of conscription—chiefly the "tax" paid by conscripts forced to serve at lower wages than they would have commanded had the government been forced to bid for their services—comparable to the overt extra costs in higher pay and more ample benefits of a voluntary system. A selection from Chief Justice Edward White's World War I decision upholding the draft is bracketed by a demurrer from Civil War Chief Justice Roger Taney and a seventy-page antidraft analysis of *The Federalist* and allied documents by Leon Friedman. The final two sections oppose seven proconscription polemics to seven against, but the pro position is defended weakly and foolishly. Among the advantages cited, the draft can intimidate dissent (Louis Hershey) and open the door to conscription for all war work (Congressman James Wadsworth, speaking in 1943). With advocacy like this, the draft needs no opposition. The constitutionality of the draft is well defended in War Secretary Monroe's 1814 call for a draft of 4 percent of the "free male population," but Mr. Anderson cannot resist informing the reader in a footnote that a later selection contains "an eloquent argument against this plan."

But Can They Fight?

It is almost as misleading to call *Registration and the Draft* an evaluation of the AVF. The conferees present abundant statistics about enlistment, retention, the color and mental levels of recruits, and the cost and "equity" of the AVF, random conscription, and conscription with exemptions. Almost totally absent, despite some provoking questions from the floor, is any discussion of whether the AVF can fight. Pete McCloskey thinks it cannot, but his criticisms are entangled with his own particularly ill-thought-out national service plan (he makes no provision for 18-year-old mothers). Economists like Martin Binkin tend to dismiss the issue of whether the AVF works, when taken beyond procurement numbers, as ill-defined. In fact, the mission of the military is quite clear: to be visibly able to destroy any enemy's combat capability. The Army remains the most populous branch of the military and exists so that its fighting man can, under extremely adverse conditions, hold the enemy in his sights and pull the trigger. Those "push-button wars of the future," in which the only combatants are computers, have stayed where they are set—in the future.

The statistics themselves, however, reveal an AVF far less combat-effective than its nearest counterpart, the last peacetime conscript armed services of 1964. Against 2.65 million in 1964, our active forces now number fewer than 2.1 million. Recruitment has matched De-



As this 1862 cartoon shows, the nation has had trouble with the draft before.

fense Department authorization because authorizations have inched downward. (The Marines admit to reducing their ranks to preserve quality.) The Individual Ready Reserve fell from 800,000 to 400,000 in the same period, and by any count our overall reserves are at least 600,000 under strength. First-term attrition is trending up, statistical blips aside. Ironically and ominously, a 1966 pro-draft Defense Department estimated that an unemployment rate of 4 percent would sustain an active force of 2 million men; even correcting for the greater representation of women in current unemployment figures, a rate twice that has turned out to be barely sufficient. Whatever the precise statistical relation, it is bizarre to base manpower policy so blatantly on hard times.

The mental caliber and educational attainment of recruits—the best predictor of combat effectiveness—is falling. College students, who once volunteered in hopes of escaping the less favorable terms of draft induction, now avoid the Army altogether. Although more than 80 percent of the male population complete high school, more than 40 percent of the male Army recruits with no prior service (NPS) have not. Training manuals are now written in comic book form. More than a third of the NPS Army males are black, and the proportion in combat

units is higher. These blacks may not literally be mercenaries—they are serving their own country, after all—but one must question the reliability of troops raised by the general culture to believe in a hostile and "racist" America. We have the best armed forces money can buy, and it shows.

Both volumes scant the AVF's principal novelty: the feminization of the military. Women now form 10 percent of the armed forces, a figure that was slated to rise to 12 percent by 1985; the Reagan Pentagon, however, "paused." In 1979, the year of the Hoover conference, 13.2 percent of the Army's enlistees were female. For the first time in world history, a nation has fielded an Army composed significantly of women. The Soviet military, less interested in raising consciousnesses than winning battles, counts only 10,000 women among its 4.8 million souls. Only one selection in *The Military Draft* discusses this sea change—M. C. Devilbiss warns that women will remain second-class citizens without "the right" to serve in combat—but the Hoover conferees are lost in fantasy. Richard Hunter and Gary Nelson seriously broach a "representative" Army 51 percent female but primly note that "the DOD does not propose such a goal." Here is Charles Moskos, who at least recognizes that military

service is not just one more job, on “the major dilemma” that “precludes the utilization of women in the combat arms for the foreseeable future”:

To allow women the choice of whether or not to volunteer for the combat arms would lead men to ask for the same prerogative. . . . If regulations were changed so that women could be compelled to serve in the combat arms, as is presently the case for men . . . the end result would almost certainly be a sharp drop in the number of women who would volunteer to join the Army in the first place.

That’s *it*? That is the *only* reason for excluding women from combat? Well, these commentators and then—Air Force Undersecretary Antonia Chayes parrot feminist dogma about “stereotypes” and the lack of female “role models,” and they reflexively group women with blacks in every discussion. They seem innocent of the mountains of physiological and anthropological evidence of the male’s greater aggressiveness, and they fail to recognize the insult implicit in telling young men that mortal combat, the supreme test of manhood, is for girls. The conclusion is inescapable: These people believe that women are short men.

In any case, their reflections on women in the military have been dated by *Women in the Army*, a report brought out by the Army in November 1982. Struggling to remain “gender-free” but regretfully concluding that women are weaker than men, the Army closed twenty-three occupational specialties to women and ended unisex combat training. The usual reluctance of the military to admit mistakes, especially so soon after making them and especially mistakes instigated by the ideology of its civilian commanders, suggests that the “integration” of women has been nothing short of disastrous. One can only guess what the Soviets have surmised about our seriousness from this ongoing tragicomedy (the Navy has women on its ships by order of Federal Judge John Sirica). Women do have a role in the military—the traditional one of freeing men to fight—but pushing them into nontraditional jobs hurts morale, and it is insane to train them for combat and set gender quotas for the service academies when women are biologically unsuited to lead fighting men in war.

A Right to Conscript

The failure of the AVF is in practice a compelling argument for a return to the draft, but this is to beg the fundamental question of compulsion. Strikingly, most opponents of the draft accept it in “national emergencies” without explaining their seeming inconsistency. Libertarian Milton Friedman, for example, tolerates *universal* military service, although one would have thought that if forcing men to arms is wrong, forcing all men to arms merely compounds the wrong. Similarly, if the draft is unconstitutional—if “the power to raise an army” does not include the power to draft—these words must retain an identical meaning in peace or war. Either the Founding Fathers gave Congress the right to conscript at its discretion, or they did not. Working the American Civil Liberties Union’s end of the political spectrum, lawyer

David Landau says that the draft “subverts the very principles on which our nation was founded,” but he allows it, by an ad hoc shift, in time of war. The right and the left, each for its own reasons, both maintain that volunteers outperform conscripts; but if so, a war for survival is surely the last occasion for a draft. There are, finally, a number of writers from previous generations who bitterly opposed federal conscription but embraced conscription into local militia. There may be practical differences, but any difference in principle is obscure.

We are, in short, watching opposition to the draft collide with the commonsense axiom that survival justifies normally forbidden steps. I cannot normally knock down a bystander to catch the last bus, but I can if I am taking my son to the hospital. The asymmetry created by the threat of catastrophe runs deep: Common sense permits measures necessary to avert great loss that it forbids

“If you think I’m violating your rights,” says Selective Service, “wait until the Soviet occupation force sends us all to the Kolyma gold fields.”

in pursuit of great gain. I cannot knock down the innocent bystander even if catching the bus means closing a million-dollar deal.

Now, this “right of necessity” is not based on the relative obviousness of threats, since even an uncertain calamity can justify unusual steps. I may knock down the bystander even if my son just might need medical attention, but I cannot knock him down even if I am sure of closing the deal on the bus. Rather, as a first approximation, necessity creates “right” because people cannot be blamed for what they can’t help, and they can’t help protecting themselves and their families. However, defending the draft as a reflex—I can’t help making you help me fight off the mob—ignores its obvious deliberateness and promises to excuse any wrongdoing deemed necessary by the wrongdoer. Moreover, a man who blamelessly violates someone else’s rights while protecting himself has still done something wrong, but defenders of the draft see it as morally right. They typically describe military service as a debt owed by a citizen to his fellow citizens for the benefits he has received from his community. Robert Nozick mocks “unwritten contracts not worth the paper they are not written on” and notes that people who insist on bestowing favors do not thereby acquire a right to reciprocity, but the notion of tacit consent to a social contract is not so easily scotched. If it is universally understood that a benefactor expects reciprocity, it does seem that accepting his benefits creates a presumption of acquiescence in the expectation, and that failure to repudiate this presumption amounts to acquiescence itself. The young man who does not intend to serve his country while enjoying its bounty is lying. Moreover, the argument runs, the man who wants

his society to continue but reserves the right not to fight for it is treating himself as inherently exceptional. He is relying on others *not* to reserve and act on that right, for if everyone did as he intends to do, his society would perish. The slacker who counts on others to save his society for him has violated Kant's categorical imperative or, in older language, the golden rule.

These subtleties, though clearly in the background of the conscription debate, are too uncertain to prove their case. A 15-year-old boy can hardly be said to acquiesce in an interpretation of his actions that he himself is too unsophisticated to comprehend, and just where is he to go if he does not like the terms of social contract? In the end, both the draft and what is sound in the "right of necessity" are justified on utilitarian grounds. If liberty is valuable, all steps must be taken to protect the system that makes liberty possible. "If you think *I'm* violating

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your rights," says Selective Service to the reluctant recruit, "wait until the Soviet occupation force decides to send us all to the Kolyma gold fields." The liberal presumption against coercion, like any moral principle, becomes fanaticism if held with absolute disregard of consequences. It is wrong to push ninety-nine people around for the sake of a hundred, but the good outweighs the bad in forcibly exposing young men to danger if that is what it takes to defend America. Absent mathematical rules for balancing principles against consequences, one must rely on judgment. This is why the Founding Fathers, who may have disliked conscription and expected it never to be called for, nonetheless conferred on Congress "the power to raise an army" in the broadest language. Paradoxically, perhaps, compelling its citizens to fight for a society affirms its value; it is not uninspiring to hear that one's society is so precious that everything else is secondary to its survival. If you really think that Western civilization with its system of liberty is man's supreme achievement, you will countenance extreme steps to save it. Critics of the draft ask why if the government can conscript for defense, it cannot conscript for the postal service. The answer is the manifestly greater importance of defense. Protecting rights and liberties is what governments are *for*; delivering the mail is optional. If Western civilization came to depend on delivery of a sack of mail that nobody felt like carrying, conscription of mailmen would be permitted. It is that simple.

As there are more than 8 million 18- to 21-year-old men at any one time, taking only one in four would fill even an ambitious manpower program. Curiously, this is said to be unfair to the one who is called. Mark Pauly and Thomas Willett admit that a lottery draft is equitable *ex*

ante but deplore the inequity of its *ex post* results. This is surely straining things; that somebody wins a bingo game and somebody loses does not make such random distribution schemes "unfair." The real drawback of a draft lottery is its tendency to pick the engineer and spare the philosophy graduate student. This is why a draft with exemptions is superior—assuming that the government could shake off the contemporary ethos that nobody is better or worse, more or less valuable, than anyone else, and could articulate reasonable exemptions. In "Why We Need a Draft," published in the April 1982 *Commentary*, Eliot Cohen suggests drafting only for the reserves, in the expectation that the core of volunteers for the active forces will be expanded by quasi-volunteers who prefer to avoid the draft. Whatever system is chosen—so long as exemptions do not get out of hand, as they did in the 1960s—fairness is not a significant issue.

The draft, then, really rests on two issues of fact: whether a conscripted Army fights as well as a volunteer one, and whether the present world situation is an emergency. As for the first, and forgetting arguments about the zeal of volunteers, it is not in dispute that conscripts can fight. Our mixed forces did splendidly in World War II and did not turn America into a police state.

So those who oppose the draft, at bottom, simply refuse to believe that we are in danger. They would have been right two centuries ago, when a national emergency meant foreign troops at the border or a foreign fleet entering the harbor. There was sufficient friction—Clausewitz's "gap between conception and execution in war"—for combatants to prepare. But things have changed. The Civil War, extending developments prefigured in the Crimea, introduced not only the machine gun but also electronic signaling and the rapid deployment of troops by rail. For the first time, the outcome of war was influenced by the industrial base of the home territories. The age of Luddendorf's "total war" had arrived. Time and space contracted, as they have been contracting ever since. Tranquil though its harbors are, the United States is gravely threatened. Sheer manpower, of course, cannot deflect an SS-18. More to the point, however, Antonov-22's can ferry Soviet troops to the Middle East oil fields from Afghanistan; Soviet submarines and fighter-bombers can disrupt vital shipping; though unlikely to attack, Warsaw Pact forces poised against Western Europe will, if unopposed, compel Europe to break its ties to America. Where are our borders in such a world? As the doctrine of mutually assured destruction fades, the need for a large and flexible array of forces will again become apparent.

Freedom's Hollow Ring

The army is not a toy for Strangelovean generals in the Pentagon, although the very popularity of this image bespeaks deep problems with national morale. The country has passed beyond cynicism to complete confusion as to what it is about. Politicians who like to say it is about "freedom" must hear the hollow ring, and young men black and white—future recruits—must sense the hypocrisy. Freedom to be productive and independent is everywhere under attack. The last twenty years have witnessed

absolute protection extended to abortion, topless dancing, and neo-Nazi marches in Jewish neighborhoods. At the same time freedom of association has fallen to "equal opportunity," and freedom of speech has yielded before the government's attack on "sexual harassment." It is illegal to read a prayer from the *Congressional Record* in public schools. The universities are now fiefdoms of the courts, and quotas have made a joke of individual ability. At times, all that seems to separate us from the Soviets is disagreement about how best to manage a command economy.

The AVF might have worked had it begun at a moment of high morale, with enough volunteers to make the draft superfluous. This was not how it happened. President Nixon created the AVF largely to placate (and thereby indirectly confirm) antiwar opinion, at the time scarcely distinguishable from hatred of America in general. The AVF's nihilistic origin has been reflected and amplified by its recruitment campaign. Most of its ads promise gobs of money, and for a while they touted psychological self-development, as if the Army were a vast encounter group. One need not be Spengler to worry about that TV spot in which a blast of acid rock accompanies the carrier landing of an F-14. Just think, joining the Navy is almost as cool as going to a rock concert.

Love of the idea of a country, another name for patriotism, cannot be created at will. Yet it is only necessary to recall the crude but authentic recruiting posters for past wars to appreciate what clarity has been lost—not irrevocably, let us hope.

Nash-Kelvinator ran a magazine advertisement in 1944 that showed a grim pilot, about to take on Zeros at twelve o'clock, imagining a staccato message to his wife. The copy reads, in part,

I want to tell you what I'm fighting for . . . it's you and our little house and the job I had before . . . and the chance I had, the fighting chance, to go ahead on my own. That's what all of us want out here . . . to win this war . . . to get home . . . To go back to living our lives in a land, and a world, where every man is free to grow as great as he's a mind to be . . . where every man has an *unlimited* opportunity to be useful to himself and to his fellow men . . . Tell 'em we'll be back . . . nothing can stop us . . . And tell 'em no matter what they say . . . no matter what they do . . . to stay *free* . . . to keep America a land of *individual freedom!* That's what we're fighting for . . . That's what we're willing to die for . . . That's the America we want when we come home.

In these days of quotas and entitlements and ceaseless litigation, it is difficult for a young man to read those words without a patronizing smile, and I cannot conceive a politician bringing himself to utter them. Yet not many years ago, someone composed those words and expected others to believe them. We had better figure out what happened if we expect any army, conscript or volunteer, to remember what it is fighting for.

Michael Levin

MICHAEL LEVIN is a professor of philosophy at the City College of New York.

Alien

Andropov: New Challenge to the West, by Arnold Beichman and Mikhail S. Bernstam (New York: Stein and Day Publishers).

The Russian Version of the Second World War, edited by Graham Lyons (New York: Facts on File Publications).

It was inevitable that much of the Western media, together with the remnants of the Western foreign policy establishments, would attempt to portray a new boss in the Eastern bloc both as a force for stability and as a Communist with a human face. Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, who ascended to the general secretaryship of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) on November 15, 1982, and subsequently became president of the U.S.S.R., was simply the beneficiary of a Western need. Whoever had won the tussle to succeed Brezhnev would have been accorded the same lenient treatment.

Pleasant characteristics—a certain liberality, a measure of tolerance, a lack of fanaticism, and the like—would have been attributed to party leaders like Viktor Grishin, Vladimir Dolgikh, Mikhail Gorbachev, or Mr. Andropov's most serious rival for the post, Konstantin Chernenko. Even Mr. Andropov's predecessors at the head of the Soviet security apparatus—the odious Genrikh Yagoda and the repugnant Lavrenti Beria—had they been born later and succeeded to the top (rather than being executed), would have lived to see the gentler side of their natures paraded before Western eyes.

A world both hungering for stability and fearing war quite naturally wants to believe the best of the man placed in authority over the globe's most powerful military machine. And the trivial and often gullible media give people what they want. Also, there is present in the aftermath of any Kremlin succession, when public attention is focused directly though fleetingly upon the rulers of the Soviet regime, a generalized tendency to contain the popular anti-Communist sentiment in the West that might take hold if the record of the new leader were properly scrutinized.

Behind the Mask

Consequently, the KGB disinformation network hardly had to work overtime on Yuri Andropov's image. An impression of a man of Western tastes who liked American jazz—and for a separate generation the tango as well—emerged quite smoothly. The man of intellect and wide sympathies was easy to sell and package.

There was, quite naturally, something of a minor reaction to all of this among highbrow conservative circles within the West, but the initial image flickers on, and some seven months after the event a correspondent for the *New York Times* can refer to Mr. Andropov, without a shred of evidence or the use of named sources, as "said by his associates to be more cosmopolitan than his predecessors."

In this environment it is refreshing to be able to turn to