

So important does our Executive Committee feel the rapid trend TOWARD TOTALITARIANISM in our country to be that our entire space this month is devoted to that single theme. All the articles are contributed "letters to the editor". In addition SPC members will receive soon two leaflets: one an editorial on the Austin-Wadsworth Manpower Bill, the other on Conscription of Women. If you don't get these, ask for them.

Dear Editor:

According to the United States News of Dec. 11, 1942, in one year of war President Roosevelt has issued some 890 Executive Orders. In the same period the executive agencies have written a shelf of directories, orders and rules which would fill more than 100 volumes. In the two years of the Congress just adjourned, Congress has enacted 776 public laws, exclusive of private pension bills.

The presidential average during the last year is 2.4 Executive Orders a day. The law passing average of 96 Senators and 435 Representatives of Congress during this time was 1.09 a day. So two laws come from the White House to each one enacted by Congress and 20 times as many rules for the citizens to obey come from government agencies as from Congress.

/s/ RAYMOND WILSON, Friends War Problems Committee, Washington

Dear Editor:

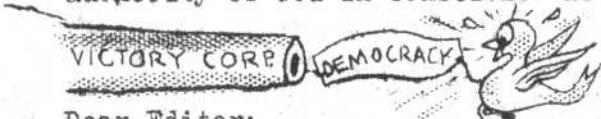
We used to get all worked up over the bombing of civilians but that was before the United Nations took the initiative in bombing cities. We used to condemn the practice of shutting up innocent people in camps surrounded by barbed wire, but that was before the term, relocation center, became part of the American vocabulary. Recently there has been much breast beating about the evil of the Nazi model of training youth for war -- "education for death".

How awful, we said, to get hold of children before they knew better and mold them into believing in the supremacy of the state and into believing the greatest aim in life is dying for that state. Well, we won't have to condemn much longer because the Victory Corps is coming to American high schools.

Each student will be asked to sign a pledge and carry out a program to prepare himself for future service in the armed forces, in war production and to perform any community war services within the limits of his ability and experience. The program is avowedly voluntary, but with pressure from 100% American groups what it is today, how many schools or individuals will dare stand against it? The Selective Service Law offers an alternative in CPS camps for those opposed to military service because of religious training and belief. High school students who may have such beliefs are to be provided with no such alternative.

How shall we reconcile all this with our teaching and belief in the authority of God in conscience as supreme?

/s/ BENJAMIN LE ROY CANDEE, JR., Syracuse.



Dear Editor:

As citizens interested both in democracy and in education we are gravely distressed by the establishment of the Victory Corps in our high schools; obviously this is a plan for the militarization of public education in America.

One of the heritages of our democracy has been, and we hope will continue to be, a free educational system--not only free in the economic sense to all boys and girls but free also in the sense we commonly call "academic freedom".

The nation's colleges and universities are now generally conceded to be under the direction and control of the war department. The Victory Corps is a long step toward establishing the same relationship in regard to our public schools. Although membership is "voluntary," social pressure will be a tremendous force to make it compulsory just as pressure from the administration makes the buying of stamps almost compulsory. Both of these forces will vary with the administrative personnel of the school but few schools or individuals will be able to stand out against them.

The Victory Corps is designed to create in America the same child psychology that has been created by similar plans in Germany and Italy. Should we mold youth into believing in the supremacy of the state and into believing the greatest aim in life is dying for that state? Should we now create in America a generation of youth educated wholly or in part on military principles? To do so would be complete abandonment of the ideals and purposes of the "founding fathers" who carefully made the military subordinate to the civilian ends of government.

The accompanying article published by the New Jersey State Board of Education suggests another technique for presenting current conditions and problems to public school youth.

The educational policy of our schools has always been to present principles-- to discuss and study policies; we maintain that it is the democratic privilege of our youth to use these teachings in making their own judgments and directing their own lives.

We urge all who are charged with responsibility for school administration and the creation of public opinion that they take every possible precaution to safeguard the freedom of instruction that the youth of America may become men and women of independent mind and free bodies worthy of the liberty with which God has endowed them.

/s/ MILDRED C. WHITNEY, Clerk-- M. LESLEY WEST, Chairman Committee on Education, Syracuse Preparative Meeting, Religious Society of Friends.



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Dear Editor:

It has occurred to me that few people realize fully what is taking place in the country under the guise of the War Manpower Commission. In this connection I should like to call your attention to an article in The Reader's Digest, February, 1943, under the name of Harry Hopkins. A condensation from The American Magazine, it is titled "You Will Be Mobilized". Coming as it does from a source so close to our national government, the importance of this document scarcely can be overestimated.

Here is set forth the blueprint for the coming American variety of totalitarianism. It portrays the government as using American citizens more or less as chessmen in its total war game, picking them out of their present environment and setting them down where they may serve the purposes of the government more effectively. "No one knows how the mobilization of workers will actually operate", writes Mr. Hopkins, "but probably at first able-bodied persons in non-essential work will be given a wide range of choice as to what they will do and where they will work. If they don't move voluntarily, their manpower organization will direct them to specific jobs."

That is simply the way totalitarianism begins. A polite request is issued, but there is no real alternative. Most American people are accepting this regimentation unquestioningly on the assumption that it is simply for the duration of the war. I do not ascribe sinister motives to the government, but I am frankly skeptical about the cessation of this regimentation following the war. Social problems on a scale hitherto unknown will confront the nation and the world, and the totalitarian organization now in the process of being perfected may be continued indefinitely under the guise of "an emergency". I am convinced that the American people will respond to the national crisis affirmatively; only let the alternative to regimentation be real and at least the semblance of democracy maintained.

Hope that this may be done now and after the war is not forthcoming from Washington. Our only hope is in a resurgence of faith in democracy among the American people. There is some ground for hope in the people making up the local War Manpower Commissions. Most of them are true Americans who do not want totalitarianism any more than you and I. However, they must be supported in that position by the people if government of, by, and for the people is not to perish from its last remaining stronghold.

Or must we bow supinely to the logic of what we have said repeatedly in the past; namely, that we can not fight totalitarianism militarily without ourselves becoming the thing we fight?

/s/ HARRY B. TAYLOR, Syracuse.

WE SUGGEST

1. That you take the enclosed leaflet to your school principal or P.T.A. meeting for discussion.
2. That you write the President and Manpower Commission Director Paul McNutt of your concern.
3. If after reading the editorial reprint you agree with its point of view, write Senator Robert R. Reynolds, Military Affairs Committee, in opposition to the Austin-Wadsworth Bill. Hearings are now going on!