

THE FORUM



The Ancient Way

*"Accept, O God," said Abraham,
"My son instead of ram or lamb.
At Thy command I've brought my knife
To sacrifice young Isaac's life."
God smiled. "'Tis well, good Abraham!
But this time I will take the ram."*

*In many a kindlier era since,
This tale has made boys' fathers wince. . . .
Yet when the God of War feels gory,
Even today, do fathers falter?
No — like old Abraham in the story
They lay their sons upon the altar.*

Clarence Day

II—Of What Use Is a Defenseless America?

by RALPH C. BISHOP

Secretary, Civilian Military Education Fund

MR. JOHNSON's opening statement that required courses in military training are directed to the end of war is historically inaccurate. Such courses have been given in our land-grant colleges since 1862, and no authority has yet charged that they have had any bearing on the promotion or instigation of war. Whether voluntary or required, they are directed toward bringing about a speedy and favorable termination of war if it should come upon us. The duty of national defense still remains a constitutional one which citizens must perform. The general state of world affairs today gives no sound grounds for believing that a level of civilization has been reached which would permit us in safety to follow China's pacifistic example or to subscribe to the Soviet "peace" program — which certain antimilitary-training societies advocate — unless we are willing to maintain a regular army of 940,000 men, with compulsory military training for all students in all schools and colleges, as is the case today in Russia.

And, if the R.O.T.C.'s intellectual foundations are completely shattered, as Mr. Johnson would have the reader believe, how is one to account for the academic recognition granted the Military Department by 122 institutions of senior grade? How can this statement be reconciled, for instance, with the *status quo* at Princeton or Harvard, which permit student selection of military training with full academic credit?

In the first of his 6 principal charges Mr. Johnson demolishes to his own satisfaction the theory "that the requirements of 'adequate national defense' are peculiarly well served by school and college military training." He argues that the training consists largely of the manual of arms, which leads us honestly to question his factual knowledge of the subject. Suffice it to say that, even in the basic course, where most of the so-called drill is given, the schedule comprises 9 separate subjects totaling 96 hours per year, of which only 40 hours are devoted to actual field exercises and the tactical handling of troops. Such close-order formations

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as are given are necessary for insuring discipline and control.

Space does not permit a digression into the future usefulness of cavalry or infantry other than to observe that, with full appreciation of the role of aviation, the enemy's armed forces on the ground must still be defeated in order to win. The weapons, tactics, and organization of the cavalry and infantry have undergone considerable change since the World War. Instructors fresh from the army schools keep the R.O.T.C. abreast of these changes. The R.O.T.C. units are equipped, too, with modern automatic rifles, machine guns, etc.

Lest the reader gain the impression, which Mr. Johnson aims to convey, that the 2,042 horses assigned the R.O.T.C. are fine, sleek cavalry mounts, let it be recorded that most of them are of ripe old age, graduates of the army, and that 1,428 are assigned to the 19 field-artillery units. There are but 11 cavalry units among the 228 R.O.T.C. units, 6 of these being at the essentially military schools and colleges. There are no cavalry units at Ohio State University, Princeton, Leland Stanford, or Oregon State, as inferred by Mr. Johnson.

The real proof of the pudding lies in the 78,137 R.O.T.C. graduates, who today practically constitute the Officers' Reserve Corps. Combined with the great number of basic-course graduates, all of potential value as noncommissioned officers, we have a reservoir of partially trained man power that meets an essential requirement of a genuine citizen army. "Myth and fiction!" cries Mr. Johnson, but the concentrated and sustained attack on the R.O.T.C. by pacifistic and communistic groups belie his words. Incidentally, the U. S. Marine Corps, hardly composed of "sentimental and unrealistic militarists," is offering 100 permanent commissions this summer to selected R.O.T.C. graduates of the current class.

II

IT IS ARGUED that the R.O.T.C. does not offer good physical training. A Columbia professor is quoted to the effect that military drill is not only worthless but often positively harmful.

No one denies that the R.O.T.C.'s objective is other than military education. However, there are certain educational by-products

incident to the course, among which, according to those who have taken it, is physical improvement. There is no conflict between the military and physical departments because of this recognition — no attempt to supplant the one by the other. Yet, since the point is so vigorously raised, let us quote President Kent of New Mexico State College, who says:

I know those who are opposed to military training insist that physical education will do the same thing. I was trained in a normal school and took a great deal of physical education. I know it will not do the same thing for the student. There is not the exactness, the accuracy, the careful timing, the variety of work, the necessity for co-ordination, etc., in the ordinary class in physical education.

The development of proper posture (which in turn breeds confidence and self-respect) is a physical by-product. Said the late Dr. Henry Suzzello, then Chairman of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching:

I don't believe I ever stood up straight in my life until I took military training. It was military training and athletic training which first developed my sense of the importance of human co-ordination and co-operation, of getting big things done by team play. These are only a few of the great character lessons which may be garnered from the Military Department. I speak somewhat passionately because I know from personal experience what 2 years of elementary military training and 2 years beyond that can do for you.

Mr. Johnson would have the reader believe that the 3-hour-per-week required course is so intense from a disciplinary standpoint that when removed it often results in "irresponsible rowdyism." This statement will indeed bring smiles from college students whose chief criticism is that R.O.T.C. discipline is not sufficiently strict. However, the discipline is strong enough to develop courtesy, teamwork, respect for organization and authority, a recognition of the duties of citizenship.

Of one of these qualities, George D. Strayer of Columbia University, Director of the 1932 Survey of the Schools of Chicago, says in his report:

Training in courtesy must have a vehicle through which it works. This is the great advantage of the military organization. There are rules, there are procedures, there is an organization, and the whole is genuine. The school without a military unit has no available machinery by means of which the hopes of the principal for fine personal qualities in his pupils can be effectively realized.

In these days, when discipline is largely

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neglected in the home and from the elementary grades up in the schools, R.O.T.C. training exerts a stabilizing influence on young men at a time when it is most productive of good. Moreover, it brings rich and poor together on an equal basis, molds college spirit, and enhances the disciplinary tone of institutions. A row of college professors is brought forth — all well-known opponents of the R.O.T.C. — to brand these claims as “unwarranted ballyhooing,” but facts speak for themselves.

III

MR. JOHNSON is quite indignant over student opposition to campus radicals, to which he asserts R.O.T.C. students have lent themselves. At one of the 3 institutions named, a group of self-called antimilitarists mobbed their own college president; another hurled insults at the American uniform. At Minnesota this spring, Student Pepinsky, local agent of the National Students' League, aided by his Comrades Gottlieb, Lehtin, Loevinger, and Rarig, succeeded in creating a turmoil so antagonistic to the orderly processes of the University that loyal American students might well have been excused for taking forcible measures, which, to their credit, they did not do.

The plain truth is that the leadership of the group opposing the R.O.T.C. has been taken out of the hands of the simon-pure pacifists and is now controlled and directed from communist headquarters in Union Square, New York City. Class war and the overthrow of the existing form of American government are the acknowledged objectives. The abolition of the R.O.T.C. is but a necessary step in that direction. Well-organized and financed, these organizations send their agents from college to college stirring up trouble and preaching sedition.

Mr. Johnson fears that the germ of “Fascist militarism” has infected educational authorities, resulting in the suspension of certain students refusing the military course on grounds of religious conviction, whereas, in fact, the authorities have been most liberal in their exemption of genuine religious objectors, but not on constitutional grounds.

In the University of Maryland case, which Mr. Johnson's organization promoted and to which he alludes, a public letter was inserted in the *Baltimore Sun*, advising Maryland students

who wished to be exempted to write its office for advice on the best procedure to use. Ennis Coale, a prospective student, saw this letter, and correspondence ensued. Upon matriculation, he demanded an unqualified exemption or refusal, accompanied in the latter case by suspension, in order that litigation might ensue.

The Court of Appeals of Maryland, in unanimously deciding against Coale, said:

The question arises: was not he much less influenced by conscientious religious scruples than by a disposition to join the society mentioned, to defeat the government in an attempt to be ready for war, if forced upon the country, by providing military training in some or all of the federally aided educational institutions? The Court, we think, would be going very far, should it encourage this or like societies or persons with similar views, in their interference with the constituted authorities in the management and control of colleges and universities when acting upon authority duly and lawfully conferred upon them.

Mr. Johnson's concluding opinion, that “the most damning indictment” of the R.O.T.C. “is that the weight of its influence is thrown on the wrong side of the struggle against war,” is neither logical nor convincing. The statement presupposes that the training develops militaristic tendencies, an implication which 93.6 per cent of 9,636 R.O.T.C. graduates denied in a recent U. S. Office of Education survey. Upon inquiry, the R.O.T.C. student will be found to be ardently opposed to war and in favor of any practical plan for promoting world peace. He has a good selfish reason, if no other, for he knows he will be the first to go. He thinks in terms of security, and has yet to be convinced that peace pacts or our disarmament alone will provide it. He knows that the United States today ranks 19th among the military powers in the size of its organized military force (active and reserve).

The whole question boils down to whether this is the opportune time for discarding one of our inexpensive and effective safeguards. Would the abolition of the R.O.T.C. from a handful of colleges have any practical peace value? Would it not render us that much less prepared against nations which may prove to be other than peaceful? Will Mars make a speedy retreat into the limbo by reason of a defenseless America? The spectacle of China does not point to that conclusion.

Mr. Johnson has his own solution. He would subsidize college professors to the extent of the

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R.O.T.C. appropriation (\$3,314,346 — not the \$10,000,000 which he so glibly assumes) to propagandize for peace. The professors would give courses prepared by such “leaders” as John Haynes Holmes and Kirby Page. Is the former not the same gentleman who on May 18, 1935, surrounded by red banners in Union Square, extolled the glories of a convict’s stripe over a soldier’s uniform, in time of war?

Did not the crowd about him chant at his request, what he called a litany?

If war comes, I will not be conscripted.
If war comes, I will do nothing to support it.
If war comes, I will do everything to oppose it.
So help me God!

No, Mr. Johnson, the American people will not follow John Haynes Holmes or subsidize the professors.

Quiet Banners

A Short Story

by HAROLD GOLDMAN

THE NAVE OF THE little church of Notre Dame in Avignon was depressingly dark to David, entering into the cool, dry gloom from the iridescent brightness of the street. He should have been used to this by now. Always that same sense of climatic change, the feeling of a difference in latitude between the spilling sunshine of outdoors and the translucent dark of the Romanesque interiors.

He took out his notebook, knowing what he was to sketch even before he had seen it. That bit of vaulting at the entrance to the choir. He knew it by heart, had studied it years ago from soulless, arid plates at college. He would have to wait until his eyes could pierce this enveloping obscurity. He walked slowly down the aisle and stood under the lantern.

It was curious, this sense of having seen it all before. It was like something revisited, and yet he never became wholly used to the actual verification of what he knew to exist. He seemed to be checking up on the measured drawings like a detective authenticating a bit of evidence.

Yes, they were right. It was all there. Measured drawings can do no wrong. They anatomize beauty until all but beauty remains.

He had been through six months of this now.

He had worked hard, constantly and intensely. This was what he had been promising himself for the past five years: to see the things he knew, to record the forms he loved, to sense the magic of the third dimension. His response to the sublimity of medieval architecture was as automatic, as uncontrollable as the gradual accommodation of his pupils to the ever-lifting gloom of the interior. Now he could see quite clearly. He took out his pencil and turned to a blank page.

There was a slight sound near him. He started. He thought he had been alone. With definite distaste, he looked toward the figure of a girl he had not noticed before.

She was coming from a chapel at the right of the nave that contained a Madonna by Pradier. He knew it was there. He knew the church and all it contained. He would look at it later. Mechanically, he classified her: tourist — she had been in the only chapel of interest to sightseers and besides she was carrying a guidebook; American or English — he saw the words *Baedeker’s Southern France*; nuisance — because he could work better when he was alone.

She passed him and sat on a bench near the opposite chapel and facing him. She was resting and seemed unaware of David and his note-