

The Draft and Conscientious Objection

Garfield High School students discuss their beliefs in light of a petition put before the Seattle School Board by a group called the Mothers and Fathers Against the Draft, which would allow equal time in school for draft-objection information. At present, only military personnel speak with students.

Anthony Ware, 17, Senior — "I have participated mostly with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in marches in this area. The draft leaves out the upper middle class and gets mostly the poor guys. And under some circumstances, they have not been able to get jobs. If the students in the central area went into VISTA for two years instead of the Army, it would help the racial situation. S. N. C. C. is helping everybody, black and white. It is informing them of alternatives so they don't have to go to jail. The marches last week proved that there are more people against the war every year. It also proved the government is scared without the attacks of policemen on the marchers."



Paul Spickard, 17, Senior — "It is important that every man consider what his obligations are. On the basis of my religious beliefs, I feel that I cannot participate. War is basically an outmoded method of settling conflicts. It is important that we meet with the other side, and this country hasn't tried to do this. My father participated in World War II, but he respects my beliefs. I suppose one would think from my statements that I was a Quaker, but I attend a Baptist church. I have two choices. I can get classified as I-O, or when they call me, refuse to be inducted. And that really scares me, because it's my whole life down the tube. But I am not about to give in. I don't feel I have the right to kill someone."



Elmer Dixon, 17, Senior — "I don't think a person should have to fight in a war he believes isn't right. There are enough problems in this country and we need people here to stay and work them out. I would work through S. N. C. C. to help ease the situation. I think the United States has too much influence on other countries. The differences should be ironed out between the two opposing countries, and the United Nations. During World War II, we were fighting for something. Then, I would have been willing to fight. The war protesters have showed that they are going to stand up for what they believe and start speaking out."



John Fleagle, 17, Senior — "Conscientious-objection material should be made available in the schools, because they are learning institutions. If young men are forced into service, there is a breakdown in the present draft system. The ideals on which this country is founded are personal responsibility and freedom. The draft directly takes away any choice. I will refuse to be inducted, then I will go through the courts. My parents agree with my decision and will back me. The publicity given last week to the draft-resistance marchers deterred from their main effort. Reports of so-called violence made people who are against war protesters more violent against them. And people who are sympathetic to their cause would become more sympathetic."

