

To every thing there is a season—in youth, celebrate life

March 21, 1969

Local Board No. 12
8 Bank Street, Peekskill, N.Y.

Dear Sirs:
I have decided to refuse to register for the draft. I hope that you will not take this personally, since this action is in no way meant to condemn you. I merely hope that it will help you reconsider some very important questions.

My eighteenth birthday was March 17 and I am required to register by March 22. Today is the first full day of spring. I am going to celebrate life this spring, and refuse to sign your death warrant.

I believe that the draft is unconstitutional. What right does the government have to force men to fight against their will? George Washington didn't need a draft; and Daniel Webster, speaking against compulsory military service on May 9, 1814, said, "The question is nothing less than whether the most essential rights of personal liberty shall be surrendered, and despotism embraced in its worst forms... Is this, Sir, consistent with the character of a free government? Is this civil liberty? Is this the real character of our constitu-

tion? No, Sir, indeed it is not."
I firmly believe that any draft system which does not take everyone, is by its very nature discriminatory, and therefore unconstitutional and undemocratic. It is very hard for a person of limited or no religious belief to get a C.O. classification. Freedom of religion is a constitutional right. Men who don't have the money or the intelligence to get into college are drafted first. Is this fair? What right do you have to say that any one group is more valuable than another, and therefore has more right to live? You have no right to play God.

I am conscientiously opposed to serving in any war as I know it today and am a conscientious objector to the present Selective Service System and any conceivable draft system which would be undemocratic. The very system created to protect our freedom is destroying it from within, without any help from the outside. Because of our fear, our freedom is being restricted in order to defend our freedom. I believe this to be unnecessary.

What are we afraid of? The communists? This is a form of paranoia which is quite prevalent in

this country. If we had the courage to admit that the other side might be partly right, there would be more peace in the world. We must try to understand our neighbors, not fight with them unnecessarily.

If war were the solution to our problems, we would have reached utopia long ago. We must be willing to solve international disputes rationally, and not yield to mass hysteria.

A Chinese proverb says, "When a might fights, it shows him up as a fool who has lost the argument." We are making fools of ourselves in Vietnam. The world looks down on us for childish behavior. Ten thousand American men have died since the Paris talks started, and many more Vietnamese. We don't seem to realize that they will never give up their struggle against us, until the last American has left their soil.

I am against our military presence in Vietnam, and the draft as it exists today, partly because of religious belief. My father is a minister of the United Church of Christ. I have been brought up as a Protestant and still believe in God. Based on this belief in a basic sense of morality and decency, it would be a crime against my conscience for me to register.

I believe that God comes before country, and that when a man-made law brings them into conflict, God must take precedence.

Although, I imagine that I could get a C.O. if I applied for one. I believe that would be unfair to someone in the ghetto who might want a C.O. but couldn't get one because he wouldn't have the training to write a good defense or perhaps would not be well enough informed to know about this option.

It would also be going along with a basically evil system. It is the system which forces men to kill against their will in Vietnam. It is the system which discriminates against the black, the poor, and anyone who dares to speak against the establishment. Without this system, it would be much harder to obtain men to kill in war and for the generals to play their present game.

Finally, I am willing to talk with you about anything I have said or anything which would help you better understand my position, but I refuse to sign.

Sincerely yours
Mark Elliott



"How do you like Nixon's 'Game Plan' for Vietnam?"

Vietnam: now is the time to get out

The Daily Nebraskan devotes this edition to the Vietnam war as part of an effort to increase awareness and concern, whether pro or con, about the war — the most vital and important issue of our day.

As far as the Daily Nebraskan is concerned, we would like to see the United States get out of Vietnam now.

Through the years, many reasons have been given for the U.S. being in Vietnam: we are fighting communism; we are helping to develop Southeast Asia; we are searching for a lasting and honorable peace for the world; we are supporting the goals and aspirations of the 40,000 countrymen who have died there. Most of the reasons for being in Vietnam, while possibly valid at one time, are untrue today.

Many people realize today that by supporting the dictatorship in Vietnam, we have sacrificed much of our own independent tradition. The war is a disaster and mistake and has been classified so by a host of national leaders, congressmen, editors, college presidents, faculty, students, ministers and business leaders.

Perhaps what is most odd is that in a so-called democratic society where the majority rules, the wishes of the majority — the will of the people — are not law. In a Gallup Poll taken in late September, 58 per cent of those interviewed said that the U.S. made a mistake in sending troops to fight in Vietnam. In another Gallup Poll last week, 57 per cent favored passage of Sen. Charles E. Goodell's proposal to withdraw all American troops from Vietnam by the end of 1970. If these percentages are representative, why are we still there?

Probably one of the most emotional arguments for staying in Vietnam is to think of what the 40,000 men who have died there would want us to do — to think of their goals and aspirations. The death of these Americans, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who have died, is the most tragic part of the war.

But in a larger sense it is for the living to stop the war before another 40,000 — or even another one — is killed. The deaths of these men is the U.S.'s real defeat and tragedy. Their deaths best epitomize the atrocities and horrors of the war.

simple statement

My friend, who once was a teacher in Asia writes in a letter: Here between the hills and the Hudson autumn comes in a rage of gold. I walk in a shower of midas leaves, and the smell of frost and I find myself being happy. The great God I remember. Over there in a land I love the beautiful people are being murdered, the courteous brown people who move with the grace of deer, and speak softly. And I live here, in the land of the murderer.

—Evelyn Thorne



"Why, the emperor doesn't have any new Vietnam plan at all!"



And now, with NOTHING UP my sleeve, I pull another one out.

"The chocolate in the children's eyes will never understand when you're white boots marching in the yellow land"

from a song by
Phil Ochs

Sen. Edmund Muskie Where restraint ends and censorship begins

No one can tell with certainty what may come out of the student initiated October 15 Moratorium in protest against our continued involvement in Vietnam. To date it has escalated discussion of the issue, triggered more overt criticism of the Nixon Administration's actions with respect to Vietnam and has stimulated a defensive reaction by the Administration.

Senator Scott, newly elected Senate Minority Leader, has suggested a 60 day moratorium on criticism of the Administration on Vietnam. The President has said he would not be affected by the October 15 Moratorium.

Some political reporters have observed that in the process of trying to put down the student protest proposals, in the reaction to Senator Goodell's bill for removal of United States forces from Vietnam, and in the uncertain moves on troop withdrawals President Nixon has succeeded in making the Vietnam war "his war." At the very least he has raised doubts as to whether or not he is committed to a negotiated settlement as against a military solution in Vietnam.

President Johnson in his March 31, 1968 speech, made clear his own commitment to a negotiated settlement. President Nixon, in his campaign speeches and in the period preceding and following his inauguration, implied that he wanted a negotiated settlement and said he had a "plan" to end the war.

Now the President is facing rising public concern with the war and rising public uneasiness as to whether or not the Nixon administration has a plan for ending the war, what its dimensions are, and what its objectives are. As long as there are public doubts, questions will be raised.

There should be no moratorium on public discussion of the Vietnam War and our national policies with respect to it. No one who is sensitive to the nature of the Presidency and the difficulty of negotiating with the Hanoi government and the National Liberation Front can avoid exercising restraint so as not to tie the President's hands. But restraint is not the same as silence or censorship.

We ought to be examining in detail the various proposals for ending the war. I think the Goodell proposal is deserving of consideration. I think we ought to be exploring the possibilities suggested by the Clifford proposal for a withdrawal of all combat troops by the end of 1970. I would hope that my own repeated suggestion of a stand-still ceasefire would be included among these proposals for ending the war.

We ought to be encouraging constructive discussions of ways and means of ending the war in Vietnam in connection with the October 15 Moratorium, not stifling such discussion, if we mean to encourage respect for democracy in our own country as well as overseas.