

this is too stark a statement: detachment, ambivalence, and problematic orientation are not all-pervasive in the modern world. Still, these are major threads of cultural patterns that exert a strong influence over large segments of modern societies.

One consequence of this modern perspective is a sense of "constraint" in responding to the world. The small-town American who is "afraid we are not going to do anything about" the hostages is expressing a recognition that "spontaneous" or "natural" reactions are no longer appropriate. The traditional "patriotic" response is only possible when there is certainty that one's own society is incapable of doing evil. The other side of this coin is, at minimum, the beginning of a recognition of the legitimacy of the others' interests. These perceptions become the ground for the definition of "negotiations" as a "reasonable" response to problems.

But if the Iranian revolution is a revolt against modernity, it is equally true that Iran cannot escape modernity. It is built into the revolution itself, and it produces discordancies and strains that will influence the subsequent course of the revolution. Some sources of these discordant elements are not hard to find. The economy of an oil-producing nation caught up in a complex international market—"a world system"—requires some reliance on Western-educated technicians whose perspective cannot be fully congruent with those of clerical revolutionaries. This tension is appropriately symbolized by the first president of the Islamic Republic of Iran: a Sorbonne-educated economist whose father was an ayatollah. (There is an echo here of European Jewish history: the tendency, after emancipation, for the sons of rabbinic families to turn to secular professions.)

The militant students, like their Western counterparts, experience a weakening of ties to their families and communities of origin without at the same time assuming the responsibilities and constraints of adult occupational and familial roles. They float, so to speak, relatively unattached to existing social structures but still vulnerable to the strains of the clash between tradition and modernity. Embracing "religious duty" dissolves the looming ambiguities; and, without firm social anchors, there are no countervailing forces to the seemingly clear-cut directives of "religious duty." The Iranian students may not be very much different from the American students of the '60s who labeled as "hypocrisy" actions that recognized the complexity and problematic nature of the world.

As this is written in the spring of 1980, the Americans are still hostages and the tensions among the leading Iranian actors in this scene of the Iranian drama remain unresolved. By the time this is read the hostages may have been freed and these particular tensions resolved. But the latter can only be a temporary resolution, for the incongruities of the Iranian revolution suggest that it is a revolution made by individuals and groups who are in conflict not only with one another but also with themselves. □

Jerry Watts

The Draft and the Poor

We have received the following comment from a reader, a graduate student in political science at Yale University. We will be glad to print other opinions, briefly stated, on this subject—EDS.

Where did the belief originate that the existence of a draft makes us more willing to engage in warfare? The draft did not cause us to enter the Vietnam conflict. And though it facilitated our continued involvement in that unjust war, the presence of white, middle-class Americans in the army undoubtedly catalyzed the antiwar movement at home. Huge segments of American society were politicized as never before. Then, as now, it was unrealistic to try to circumvent a war by denying the government the means of waging war, in this case depriving it of the necessary manpower.

Now there is a prevailing attitude among liberal and left-wing intellectuals that anything that aids in the demilitarization of society should be encouraged. Thus they consider President Carter's recent, successful attempt to initiate a predraft registration involving youth from all sectors of American life as a dangerous attempt to fuel our country's militarism. And so, naturally, they resist it.

It is also feared that a return to the draft will mark a return to an interventionist foreign policy—as if the volunteer army had inhibited our actions abroad. Such thinking is fallacious. Carter's

nonintervention in Angola, Nicaragua, and Cuba rested upon ideals stronger than simple fear of our own military ineptitude. If Vietnam indeed is to be our model, then we see that the infusion of middle-class youth into the military is an efficacious check on an expansionist foreign policy.

Most all Americans, irrespective of their political philosophies, benefit from the existence of a strong United States military. We support an army capable of strong defense in a world not yet known for its benevolence; the United States is not the only nation capable of aggressive action. Most socialists would, I think, admit that part of our long-range vision for change in America relies on the willingness of some to defend it, even unchanged.

At the same time, there is some validity to the claim that the present army is militarily unsound. Almost six out of every ten persons in the volunteer army are categorized by the army as 3B, marginal in their mental capacity. During the Vietnam War, only one soldier out of ten fell into this category. Whereas the Vietnam-era army read on the 11th-grade level, today's typical volunteer reads on a 5th-grade level. While over 83 percent of American youth now graduate from high school, only 42 percent of the volunteer army has a high-school diploma.

TO WHOM are the people of the liberal/left speaking when they argue that registration and the draft would militarize American society? What they really mean is that a return to the draft would militarize middle-class American society. *The lower classes are already militarized.* The volunteer army is a symbol of the coercive nature of the capitalist marketplace, being the repository of thousands of young men who are dissatisfied with employment opportunities and the future. Invariably, they are poor and nonwhite.

Although it may be said that the present volunteer army provides jobs for a segment of society that would probably otherwise be unemployed, do we really want to legitimate military service as a cure for unemployment? A military filled with black youth fleeing an unemployment rate of 40 percent in the ghettos would only create an army of mercenaries. To oppose the draft is to support a status quo that fills the military with youth who only marginally share in the benefits of our society and who possess the least power to affect the direction of our foreign policy.

Besides being the beneficiary of American social injustice, the volunteer army is a flagrantly unequal way of distributing the burden of national security.

Those who argue that the new antidraft movement is but the initial step in a movement to eliminate military service altogether for the rich and poor alike are kidding themselves in order to hide their often selfish motivations. Today's protests are really directed against the new threat of non-poor America. They do nothing to remedy widespread inequities.

Why have these demonstrators waited until now to speak out against a military that has always been with us? Students oppose the draft registration proposal primarily because they cannot imagine themselves doing something as mundane as driving a jeep. Certainly, they cannot imagine themselves killing anyone. Yet, it has not bothered them greatly that other Americans are driving tanks and jeeps and are being trained to kill.

Then there are those who recognize the importance of a strong military but feel that the personal costs for them to enter the service are too high. "Let someone else serve," they say, alluding to that class of Americans whose "careers" won't be interrupted.

WHAT OF THE BRINKMANSHIP nature of calling for draft registration at a time of international tensions? By now it is obvious that Carter was more eager to change his "weaking" image on the domestic front than to engage in international combat. Interestingly, the same liberal/left intellectuals who had often insisted on reading Carter's domestic pronouncements as more symbolic than substantive were now willing to take him at his word on this highly politicized issue.

Liberals are incapable of empathizing with poor people in order to see how this issue looks to them; that is a missing part of their political education, and that's what makes them liberals. I have less understanding for those social democrats who have suspended their socialism, their commitment to equality for blacks and poor whites, in order to pursue a bourgeois antimilitarism.

There is no reason to think that the government is advocating draft registration in the name of equality. But for whatever reasons they choose to reinstate the draft, it will have the unintended consequence of laying the groundwork for the establishment of a political coalition that could transcend class barriers. An armed force composed of draftees would provide the basis for a multiclass, multiethnic civilian constituency intent upon keeping an eye on expansionist foreign-policy initiatives. It would be a coalition of people intent on keeping their sons, daughters, husbands, wives, and friends alive.

Unless the antidraft registration movement incorporates a platform to better the lives of lower-class Americans, it will remain a self-interested bourgeois movement. If so, whenever we hear, "register to vote—don't vote to register," let us realize that what they're saying is, "if, as a nation, we can afford to risk losing lives, why not risk the lives of those who produce nothing?" □

Henry Pachter

After Afghanistan —Round Three

Here is another piece continuing the informal discussion among Dissent editors on foreign-policy issues after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Different views appeared in the previous two issues; there may be others in the next one. — Eds.

The election of Reagan and Bush would have many regrettable consequences, but none more dangerous than the prospect that the necessary debate on foreign policy will be conducted in terms of old "cold-war" alignments instead of a search for new alternatives. Bush's previous identification with the CIA and Reagan's predilection for strong gestures and large defense budgets will obfuscate the issues, mislead the public as well as foreign observers, and induce the opposition to persist in obsolete attitudes that simply negate the official rhetoric while reflecting the concepts on which that rhetoric is based.

Except for slight shifts of emphasis, I do not expect notable changes in U.S. foreign policy. If Reagan chooses a secretary of state with any professional experience, he will astonish the world by his moderation and realism. For, after all, the arm of U.S. power is much shorter than most Americans like to think, and the policy choices are fewer than electoral rhetoric would have us believe. Even Archie Bunker may not think that by voting for Reagan he can advance by a single day the release of the hostages in Teheran or the withdrawal of the Russians from Kabul. "Deep in his heart" he knows that the recent reverses of U.S.

foreign policy were not caused by Jimmy Carter's faint-heartedness or Zbig's lack of subtlety, but by a fundamental change in the rules of the diplomatic game that has made all "cold-war" attitudes, whether pro or con, equally irrelevant. The U.S. lost its position of leadership not because poor Jimmy Carter failed to impress the imperious Helmut Schmidt, but now 35 years after the last war Europe finally feels strong enough to do without U.S. tutelage and to conduct a foreign policy of its own. Nor has our ascendancy over the Third World weakened because we did or did not build certain weapons; the truth is that for a decade now developing countries have been slipping away from U.S. political domination because, unable and unwilling to maintain our former role of world policeman, we no longer offer client governments much they cannot get elsewhere without loss of dignity.

The problem is not whether the U.S. is strong or weak, nor is it whether the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. is the stronger. The problem is: whatever power the U.S. can deploy is becoming less and less adequate to deal with the *specific* areas of trouble. The difference is not between near and far situations (we could not prevent Grenada from going the Castro way any more than Cambodia), nor is it between areas where we have "interests" and others (we are as powerless in Teheran as in Kabul). Nor is the difference between measures that are reasonable, commensurate with the problems and acceptable to our allies, and measures that are ill conceived, unacceptable, and indicative of cold-war attitudes. Even on the innocuous measures acceptable to as dedicated a cold-war critic as Michael Harrington (*Dissent*, Spring 1980), our allies no longer follow the U.S. lead: the Olympic boycott was a flop, and instead of supporting our limitation on high-technology exports, our friends not only offer their wares to the Soviet union, they even open new credit lines to finance that export.

Why does the enormous power of the U.S.—economic, military, and political—have so little effect? We have witnessed, in the last decade or so, a most ominous phenomenon of de-coupling. Our economic power no longer translates into political power; our military power no longer translates into economic power; our political power, where it still exists, no longer translates into military power. The Shah of Iran, supposedly then our political creature, was the leader of the price-raising OPEC insurgency, and our hold on the Iranian military was unable to save his regime. Lyndon Johnson still was able to save Balaguer in Santo Domingo and get away with it; Reagan may cut off funds to