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## National Service: A Forty-Three-Year Crusade

Donald J. Eberly

*National Service Secretariat*

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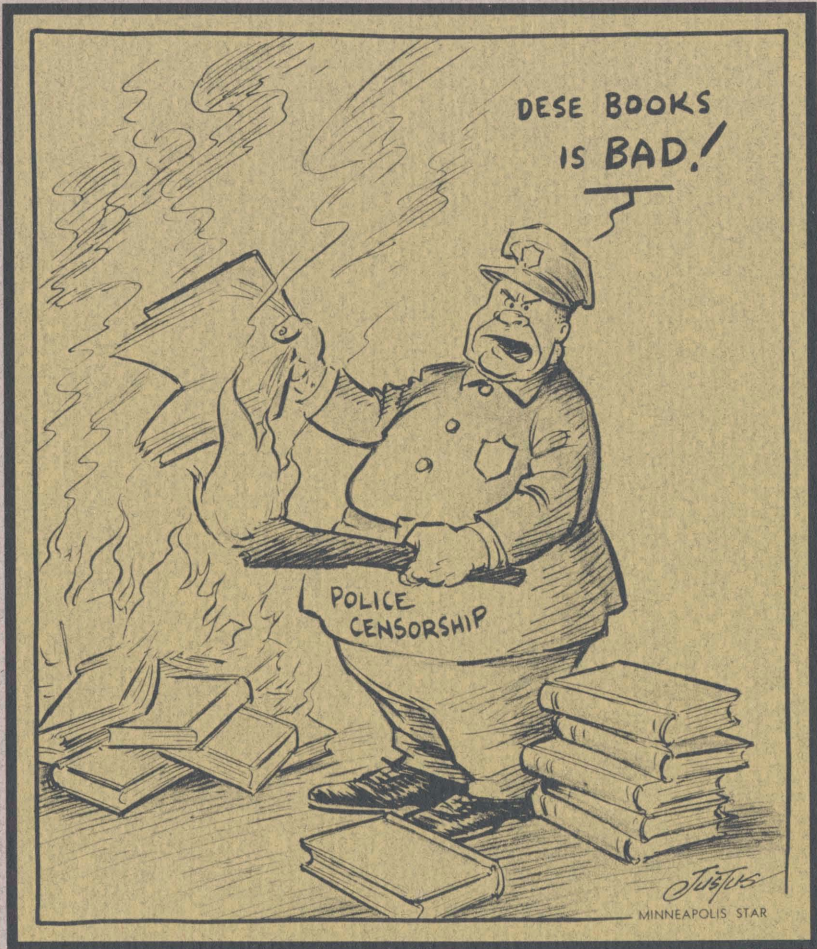
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*This issue is dedicated with gratitude and affection  
to Gwen G. Robinson*

# National Service: A Forty-Three-Year Crusade

BY DONALD J. EBERLY

*National Service is the cause to which Donald Eberly has dedicated his life: all of his professional positions have been related directly or indirectly to that cause. In the 1950s he taught in Nigeria and Turkey; in the 1960s he was a foreign student adviser at Harvard University, an undersecretary of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education, and a consultant on service learning. As a government employee in the 1970s, he worked in the ACTION Office of Planning and Policy Development, and, in the 1980s, with the alternative service section of the Selective Service system. He founded the National Service Secretariat<sup>1</sup> in 1966 and has continued to be its executive director.*

DURING THE Truman administration in 1950, I thought I had a novel public policy idea: in times of conscription, but not of full mobilization for war, young men should be able to choose between military service and nonmilitary service. They might plant trees and fight forest fires, work in such areas as literacy and public health, or teach in less developed countries. Nonmilitary service would not be limited to those conscientiously opposed to war but would be open as well to young men from all walks of life, including those who might not pass the physical and mental tests of the armed forces.

For more than forty years I have promoted the concept of national service. The record of how the concept fared during successive presidential administrations is contained in a sixty-linear-foot

1. The National Service Secretariat was designed to conduct research on and to promote the concept of national service by publishing a monthly newsletter, among other activities. In addition to Mr. Eberly, the organization has always had several trustees. Although the word secretariat was often used in other countries to refer to an administrative office, the word was little known in the United States until 1973 when a horse by that name won the Kentucky Derby.

collection of papers and audiovisual materials that recently arrived at the Syracuse University Library. It is called the National Service Secretariat Collection.

The idea of national service was not foreign to my upbringing. My parents had studied in Boston—my mother graduated from Radcliffe College with a major in ethics, and my father had studied at Harvard while pursuing a higher degree at the Boston University School of Theology. I am sure that they were familiar with the text of William James's 1906 speech "The Moral Equivalent of War", in which James recommended, as an alternative to the military draft, channeling the energies of youth toward socially constructive purposes. Although my father never discussed alternatives to military service with me, he was anti-war and, as a preacher of the social gospel, was committed to constructive social change.

In 1946 I entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a physics major. Just after I graduated in June 1950, the Korean War broke out, and before long I received a postcard from the local draft board ordering me to take a physical exam. After thinking a great deal about my responsibility to serve the nation, I wrote to President Truman suggesting that I might be of more use to the country teaching in a poor country than going into the military. A letter came back from Selective Service saying that that was not an option.

So closed the door to my personal proposal. But the letter I received, cast in terms of public policy, prompted me to think about my situation within a larger context. I made a bargain with myself: if I survived as a soldier, I would serve overseas in a civilian capacity. Then I would compare the contribution I had made in the two forms of service. If I found the idea of civilian service valid, I would commit myself to implementing it on a larger scale.

After fourteen weeks of basic training at Fort Dix, I spent the balance of my two-year hitch in the laboratory, first in the Signal Corps laboratories near Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and later at the White Sands Proving Grounds in New Mexico. I learned that I was more interested in people than in things. I had always had a curiosity about other peoples, from occasional visits by foreign visitors and American missionaries to my father's parsonage, and from my boyhood days as a stamp collector.

I decided to search for a job in Africa or some such place. In 1953 I arrived in Nigeria, where I was greeted by Tai Solarin, principal of Molusi College in Ijebu-Igbo. He had advertised in a British paper for a science teacher. A short-lived group in New York City known as the International Development Placement Association got wind of it, a friend told me about IDPA, and the deed was done.

Sooner than I expected, I was able to compare the values of military and civilian service. This is from an account of my first month in Nigeria:

I was surprised to learn that 15 students were in the hospital with bilharzia. Tai informed me that this was not unusual; 15 was about average. He said they got bilharzia by drinking water from a snail-infested stream.

“Why not boil it like you do?” I asked.

“Totally impractical”, he replied. It would have taken enormous quantities of their only fuel, wood, to boil that much water.

A day or two later Tai took me on a tour of the 300-acre compound. I noticed some water oozing out of a hillside and asked if that wouldn’t be safer to drink.

“Not enough of it. It’s just a trickle”, he said.

I asked for a bucket and stopwatch. Tai indulged me and sent one of the students off to fetch them.

It was just a trickle, taking several minutes to fill a bucket, but a simple calculation showed there would be over 600 gallons per day, more than enough drinking water for 300 students.

In short order we took samples of the water to Ibadan for testing, it was approved for drinking purposes, and the workmen built a cement block cistern big enough to hold a day’s supply of water.

All was in place by the end of October, the students called it Eberly’s Spring, and that was the end of bilharzia at Molusi College.<sup>2</sup>

2. Donald J. Eberly, *National Service: A Promise to Keep* (Rochester, N.Y.: John Alden Books, 1988), 20, 21.



Fig. 1. Louise and Don Eberly (front row, center) in 1954 with members of the Historical Research Society, Molusi College, Ibadan, Nigeria.

The years at Molusi College, despite bouts with malaria, no running water, and no electricity, were in many ways the best of my life. I married, traveled around the world, tested my beliefs about what was possible and what was not, and began to draft a national service proposal.

Much of this writing was done at sea, en route from Nigeria to

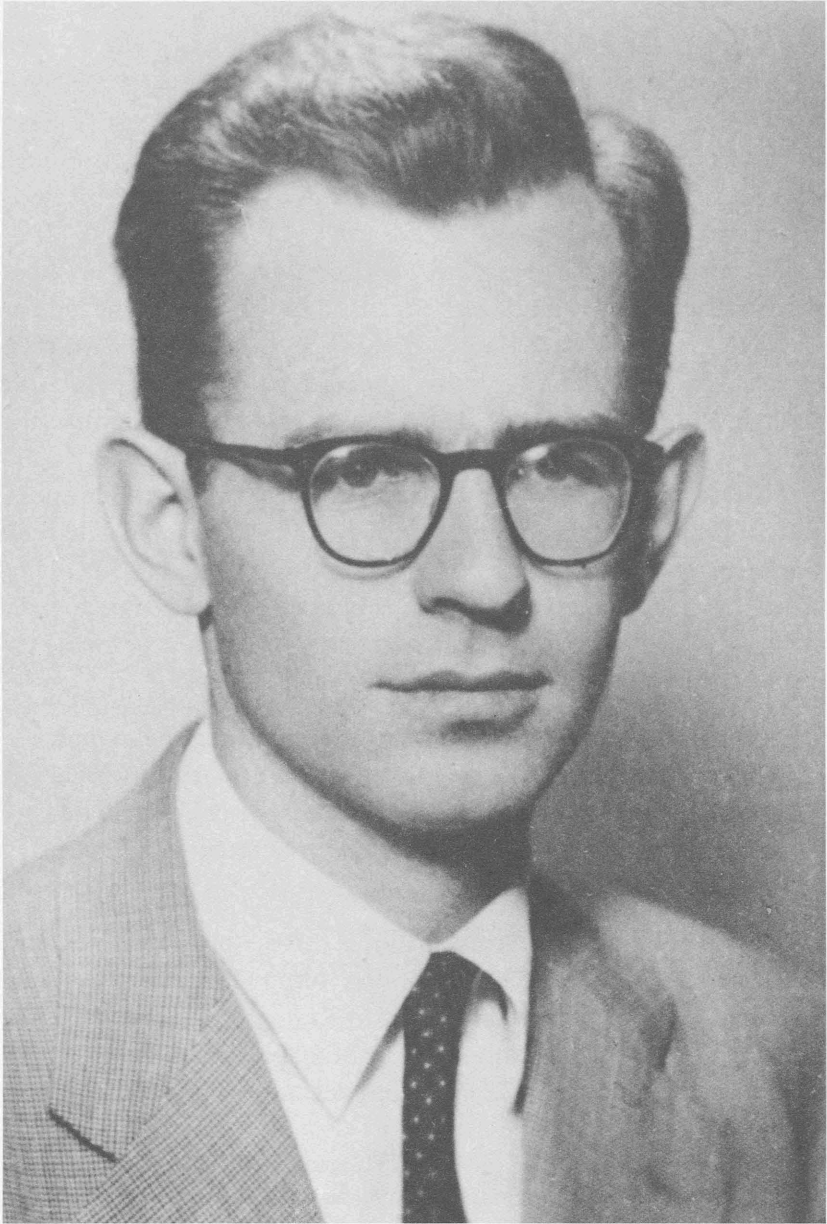


Fig. 2. Donald J. Eberly in 1958.



England, from there to the United States, and from there to Istanbul, where I taught at Robert College from 1957 to 1959. I called the proposal “National Service for Peace”.<sup>3</sup> My major concerns were issues of war and peace. I wrote that “we have not reached the point of no return in our armaments program; that it is indeed possible to transfer our investment in manpower from the machinery of war to that of peace”.<sup>4</sup>

The proposal drew on my experiences in the Army and in Nigeria. I knew there would be opposition from those who viewed national service as a way to dodge the draft, so I tried to head off their criticism by suggesting that a young man who opted for peacetime civilian service might face greater danger and discomfort than the person who opted for military service.

Among the forms of domestic service suggested in the proposal were working with the Red Cross, helping farmers in peak harvest seasons, teaching in schools, and helping in institutions for delinquents and the mentally disabled. Although service needs have changed over time, my concluding paragraph seems as germane today as it was thirty-five years ago:

Just as the youth of America owe a period of service to their country, so does America owe them an opportunity to at least explore those areas in which success or failure will determine the kind of America the youth of today will inherit in the coming years.<sup>5</sup>

In 1958 and 1959, I sent my national service proposal to dozens of senators and congressmen, including John F. Kennedy. The only receptive replies came from Senator Kenneth Keating of New York and Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota.

Senator Keating referred my proposal to the State Department.

3. Eberly, “National Service for Peace” (Unpublished paper), 1958. See the National Service Secretariat Collection, Syracuse University Library (hereafter cited as “Secretariat Collection”). Parts of the paper have been published on various occasions, the first as a letter to the editor, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 April 1959.

4. Eberly, “National Service for Peace”, 8, 9.

5. *Ibid.*, 9.

The reply that came from Assistant Secretary of State William B. Macomber was discouraging. He claimed that there was no need for such an initiative and, if it were carried out, the austere living standards I had proposed for national service participants would “imperil their health and ruin their effectiveness as public servants”.<sup>6</sup>

I was pleased when Humphrey took up my idea. I carried on a lively correspondence<sup>7</sup> with him and his aide, Peter Grothe. The Peace Corps bill introduced by Humphrey in June 1960 incorporated, from “National Service for Peace”, the provision that, for purposes of fulfilling one’s military obligation, three years in civilian service would be considered the equivalent of two years in military service.

Humphrey and I were surprised and disappointed when Kennedy, after his election as President, dropped the idea of making Peace Corps service a draft alternative. I learned that the MIT political scientist Max Millikan, whom Kennedy had asked to study the Peace Corps idea, had advised him against connecting it with the draft. Millikan feared that the Peace Corps would be doomed altogether if Nixon’s characterization of it during the presidential campaign as “a haven for draft dodgers” were to take hold.

I thought it vital to make the Peace Corps a draft alternative, because it would mean that the country considered nonmilitary service to be on a par with military service. Indeed, it was this feature of the proposed Peace Corps that had elicited such a positive response, especially from students, during Kennedy’s campaign. The following is excerpted from an editorial, entitled “Peace Corps—Wishful Thinking”, that appeared five days after Kennedy’s inauguration:

The draft exempt provision is undoubtedly the point in the program which brought the most initial response. Yet it would be foolish to assume that a college graduate would

6. William B. Macomber to Senator Kenneth Keating, 11 December 1959, Secretariat Collection.

7. See correspondence with Senator Humphrey and related Peace Corps material in the Secretariat Collection.

want to spend two years in a peace corps and then be subject to a possible draft for another two years. Not exempting participants from selective service seemingly excludes the very persons this type of program is attempting to attract.<sup>8</sup>

This was the first of my disappointments with the way each succeeding president dealt with the idea of national service. But such disappointments made me increasingly determined to see the idea through, because I saw that presidential candidates recognized the potential of it—even though their compromises greatly weakened it. Perhaps by persevering I could help to implement a good and workable program.

Kennedy's decision about the Peace Corps contributed to widespread unhappiness with the draft in the middle and late 1960s. Some Peace Corps volunteers were drafted out of their overseas assignments and sent to Vietnam; others were told by their draft boards that they had completed their service and would not be drafted; still others were permitted to complete their two-year Peace Corps hitch and then were drafted.

In 1965 President Johnson declared an International Cooperation Year and invited proposals to be considered at a conference. I submitted my national service proposal and was invited to the conference. About two dozen people, including one Congressman, expressed enthusiasm for my ideas. With these people and several others I convened the First National Service Conference, held at the Princeton Club in New York City.

At that meeting we agreed on the following points:

- that national service should provide additional manpower to volunteer groups,
- that it should develop gradually,
- that it should be decentralized,
- that it should not be a program of direct political action, and

8. Editorial, *Michigan State News*, 25 January 1961.

- that it should not be intended as a draft-dodging mechanism.

The conference was covered on the front page of the *New York Times*, and soon many people were talking about national service.

I had reason to believe that Johnson would support the idea. As early as 1941, at the behest of President Roosevelt, Johnson had introduced a bill that would have created a permanent Civilian Youth Administration from a merger of two temporary agencies, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration. The bill came to a standstill when Pearl Harbor was bombed.

In July 1966, President Lyndon Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service and gave it two missions: to study reforms for the Selective Service and to examine the idea of national service. He proclaimed, “[N]o man has truly lived who [has] only served himself. . . . For while America has not ceased to be the land of opportunity to succeed, it has also become the land of opportunity to serve.”<sup>9</sup> Johnson assigned Burke Marshall to head the Commission. Because of my role in the First National Service Conference, Marshall asked me to develop a plan for national service so that the Commission would have something specific to consider.<sup>10</sup>

Commission members reacted favorably to the national service plan I presented to them in November,<sup>11</sup> and I thought we were on the way. But not long after that I received cautionary signals from

9. “President Calls for Manpower Service Program”, *National Service Newsletter*, October 1966. Also see related papers under “National Advisory Commission on Selective Service” in the Secretariat Collection.

10. To support my research on this plan, several foundations offered me grants. My employer at the time, Education and World Affairs, agreed to receive the grants, to give me leave, and to permit me to work out of my office temporarily. I agreed not to identify EWA with national service and therefore adopted the name *National Service Secretariat* as the organization under which my activities were carried out.

11. The text of the plan is included in Donald J. Eberly, ed., *National Service: A Report of a Conference* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1968), 513–46. For further information, see related papers under “National Advisory Commission on Selective Service” in the Secretariat Collection.

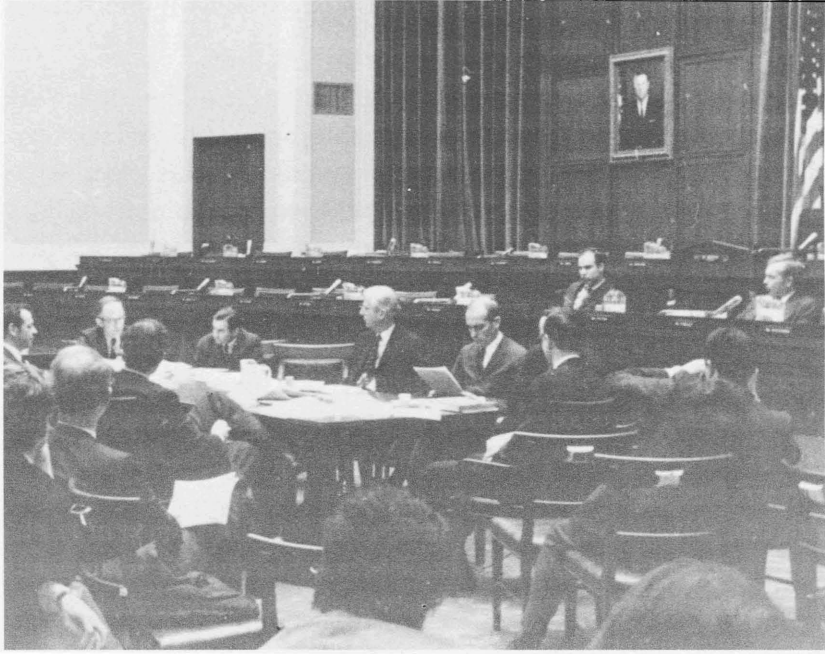


Fig. 3. Donald Eberly in 1970 discussing national service in the House of Representatives. From left to right at the table are: Congressman Don Fraser, Donald Eberly, and Congressmen James Symington and Jonathan Bingham.

White House officials. Soon word was out that Johnson had decided to escalate the Vietnam War, downgrade the War on Poverty, and put off serious consideration of national service.

The national service rhetoric of President Nixon was as promising as that of his predecessor:

There needs to be something more than the mere absence of war. Young people need something positive to respond to—some high enterprise in which they can test themselves and fulfill themselves. . . . I believe that government has a responsibility to ensure that the idealism and willingness to contribute of our dedicated young people be put to constructive use.<sup>12</sup>

12. President's Commission on Campus Unrest, "The Scranton Report", *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 5, no. 2 (5 October 1970), 24.

As a follow-up to that statement, in 1971 Nixon created a federal volunteer agency called ACTION, an agency intended to embrace the Peace Corps, VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and other volunteer service programs. At about the same time, he established the All-Volunteer Force and gave it \$3 billion a year to encourage young people to volunteer for military service. Although there continued to be talk of national service, the Nixon aide responsible for eliminating conscription and moving toward the All-Volunteer Force, Martin Anderson, moved quickly to squelch all national service efforts.

But Anderson overlooked Nixon's appointee to head ACTION, Joseph Blatchford. A Republican of liberal stripe, Blatchford had read "The Moral Equivalent of War" in college and had been enthusiastic about the idea of national service ever since. Blatchford hired me to work on the project in 1971, and the next year he submitted a multibillion dollar national service budget to the Office of Management and Budget, which rejected it flatly. Blatchford was told he would not be given any money for the idea, but, even if he managed to obtain funds on his own, he was not to refer to the initiative as "national service". Blatchford took \$1.5 million out of the VISTA budget, which he controlled, and used it to establish a national-service pilot project in Seattle under the innocuous name *Program for Local Service* (PLS).

PLS enrolled 372 participants between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five for a year of full-time service. During its first year of existence, the program generated a wealth of data for the future development of national service.<sup>13</sup> The evaluators found that a national service open to all young people would attract a representative sample of the youth population, with a slightly disproportionate share of racial minorities and persons who were unemployed and looking for work. It was also found that, through their PLS experience, participants acquired an increased awareness of the needs of others and advanced up a career ladder at twice the rate of the cross-section of young people who had been used to norm the test.

13. See documents under "ACTION: Program for Local Service" in the Secretariat Collection.

Unemployment fell dramatically as participants found jobs after their service, often with or through the organizations to which they had been assigned.

President Ford's brush with national service came with the issue of amnesty for men who had dodged the draft during the war in Vietnam, typically by going to Canada. Ford offered them amnesty on condition that they perform civilian service. Immediately after this I sent him a telegram offering to provide information about running a successful program. Ford did not respond to my telegram. Furthermore, he failed to note what our recent experience with alternative service had confirmed: that without financial support from the government, the program would collapse.

During the Vietnam War, thousands of young men had been granted conscientious objector status by their draft boards and ordered to perform alternative service. It was a difficult order to follow because many COs could not find positions with public service organizations that gave them a stipend or wage sufficient to enable them to serve. In 1971 Ronald Reagan, as governor of California, had eased the stress in the system by creating the California Ecology Corps as a state agency, giving its members room and board and a little spending money. Ford, however, refused to give government financial support to men in the conditional amnesty program, and the morass continued until President Jimmy Carter issued an unconditional amnesty shortly after taking office in 1977.

The end of the draft in 1973 meant less talk of national service as an alternative to the military and more emphasis on its relationship to other areas. The big issue in 1976 was youth unemployment, and the first question put to candidates Ford and Carter in their first debate was what they would do about it. Carter replied that he would bring back the Civilian Conservation Corps. With his election, everyone knew there would be a major youth initiative, and dozens of congressmen submitted various forms of youth employment legislation.

At the request of the Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, I had coordinated in April 1976 a national service conference at Hyde Park with Congressman Andrew Young of Georgia as the keynote

speaker.<sup>14</sup> I worked closely with him on his Youth Initiatives Act of 1977<sup>15</sup> and was optimistic that it would get special attention from Carter, because Young had been a valued adviser during the campaign (he had also helped get Carter out of his “ethnic purity” embarrassment).<sup>16</sup> As it turned out, Carter named Young as United Nations ambassador; Young resigned from Congress, and he was too occupied with international concerns to push his Youth Initiatives Act.

Carter moved slowly to put his stamp on youth employment legislation. Congress threatened to take the initiative if Carter failed to come up with a plan by early March. Eventually Carter did keep his promise from the campaign: in August 1977 he signed the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act, which included the (short-lived) Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), a modern-day version of the CCC.

The draft issue returned toward the end of the Carter years when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and Carter asked for authority to register young men and women for military service. While that proposal was being debated, I visited Syracuse University to participate in a mock hearing, conducted by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, on the pros and cons of the draft and national service. Carter’s newly appointed head of Selective Service, Bernard Rostker, also testified at the hearing.

When Rostker and I talked later in the day, he said that, although he did not especially like my ideas on national service, he needed someone of my experience to modernize the alternative service program for conscientious objectors, a program that long-time head of Selective Service Lewis B. Hershey had run out of his hip pocket. The invitation appealed to me because I expected the draft

14. See documents under “Eleanor Roosevelt Institute” in the Secretariat Collection.

15. See files marked “Legislation” in the Secretariat Collection for further information about this and other national service bills.

16. In a campaign speech, Carter referred to “ethnic purity”, which was evidently a code word to some people for segregated housing. Young, a black congressman from Georgia, said Carter was not a segregationist, and the episode was forgotten in a few days.



to follow soon after registration was restored, and I believed that significant numbers of young men would declare themselves to be COs.

A large-scale program of alternative service for COs could become an avenue to national service in the United States just as it has in Germany. Their program started in the late 1950s when a handful of young men had to prove their CO beliefs before a tribunal, but it has grown into a de facto national service program in which young men choose between twelve months of military service and fifteen months of arduous civilian service.<sup>17</sup> By 1993 some 130,000 young men were meeting their service obligation in this way.

In the United States, registration for the draft—for men only—was in fact restored, and I worked on alternative service for the next four years.<sup>18</sup> Although registration for the draft has continued, no one has since been drafted.

National service was not an issue during the 1980 campaign. Candidate Reagan used two newspaper columns to make clear his distaste for national service. Soon after taking office, he closed down the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), a move that prompted Congressmen John Seiberling, Morris Udall, and others to propose an American Conservation Corps (ACC). The measure, having worked its way through various committees, passed both the House and the Senate in 1984. Although Republicans working for the measure thought they had assurances from the White House that Reagan would sign it, he vetoed it a few days before the 1984 election because it was “based on the discredited approach to youth unemployment that relies on artificial public sector employment”.<sup>19</sup>

17. See Jurgen Kuhlmann, “West Germany: The Right Not to Bear Arms”, in Donald Eberly and Michael Sherraden, *The Moral Equivalent of War? A Study of Non-Military Service in Nine Nations* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 127–50.

18. See papers under “Alternative Service and COs” in the Secretariat Collection.

19. “American Conservation Corps Bill Vetoed by President Reagan; Rep. Panetta Introduces New Kind of National Service Bill”, *National Service Newsletter*, December 1984.

Congressman Leon Panetta was a strong supporter of national service. Several years earlier he had flown me to his district in California where he conducted an all-day seminar on the subject. We talked about what kind of a national service bill might get Reagan's signature and came up with a decentralized approach that would give fifty-fifty matching grants to states and cities that ran youth service programs. There would be certain federal criteria, such as the provision of health insurance for participants and the prohibition of discrimination, but the guidelines within which the program would operate were fairly broad. Hearings were held, and the bill got some attention; but after the veto of the American Conservation Corps bill, there was not enough optimism to carry it all the way through the legislative process. Nevertheless, the Panetta bill,<sup>20</sup> together with the ACC, formed the foundation for the National and Community Service Act that was to pass in 1990 and the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.

Reagan's adamant opposition to national service was one of the reasons the Secretariat organized the Coalition for National Service in 1986. There was still talk in Washington of national service. An opposition tactic was to allege that national service advocates could not agree on what they wanted. I knew that there were differences among advocates, but I also knew we had more ideas in common. Through a coalition we could support state and local service initiatives, encourage discussion, and endorse an official statement of principles for national service.

I had already formulated such a statement,<sup>21</sup> which I sent to twelve leading national service proponents. I felt we could proceed with a coalition if six of them endorsed the statement and agreed to join. Ten of them did, among them Derek Bok, president of Harvard University; Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Council for the Advancement of Teaching; John W. Gardner, former secretary of Health, Education and Welfare; Donald Kennedy,

20. Called "Voluntary National Youth Service" (HR 6422 of 1984). See files marked "Panetta" and materials under "Legislation" in the Secretariat Collection.

21. See Eberly, *National Service: A Promise to Keep*, 116. For further information, see papers under "Coalition for National Service" in the Secretariat Collection.

president of Stanford University; and Donna Shalala, president of Hunter College. We went full steam ahead.

The Coalition for National Service grew to about 150 individuals and organizations within the year and did indeed influence the course of the national service debate, most notably during the 1988 election campaign. Gene Sperling of the Michael Dukakis camp had called early in the year for information about national service, and we had several long talks about it over the phone. In the spring, Dukakis tepidly embraced the idea of national service for youth by recommending several modest programs, especially in the field of education.

In July the Secretariat convened a conference of Coalition members at the Wingspread Conference Center in Wisconsin to chart a strategy for the coming decade.<sup>22</sup> Both presidential candidates declined our invitations to speak, but among those who came was former Congressman Paul N. McCloskey. Like Panetta, McCloskey had been a long-time supporter of national service and in 1979 had introduced a national service bill based on the set of recommendations I had made to the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service.<sup>23</sup> During the Wingspread meetings, McCloskey made numerous calls to George Bush campaign officials, urging them to take up national service in a big way.

Discussions continued in both camps, with Professor Charles Moskos, an expert in military sociology and a Secretariat trustee, working on Dukakis; and McCloskey and then Peace Corps Director Loret Ruppe working on Bush. Just before the Bush-Dukakis debate in late September, Sperling called to say that Dukakis would make a major statement on national service two days after the debate. I was surprised when nothing happened. Sperling explained that Dukakis, because he felt he had won the debate, had not wanted to risk slippage with a major new proposal. A few days after that Bush said that he would establish Youth Engaged in Service to America, “a national service foundation which

22. See Coalition for National Service, *National Service: An Action Agenda for the 1990s* (Washington, D.C.: National Service Secretariat, 1988), and papers under “Wingspread Conferences” in the Secretariat Collection.

23. See footnote 12.

I will begin when I am President”.<sup>24</sup> Dukakis, who was slipping in the polls, could not then afford to speak out in support of national service and thus appear to rubber-stamp a proposal first made by his opponent.

The biggest boost to the National and Community Service Act of 1990 came from Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He proposed that a period of national service be made a condition for receiving grants and loans for higher education. It was not a new proposal; Moskos of the Democratic Leadership Council, and Congressman Dave McCurdy had recommended it years before. But Nunn’s endorsement made the headlines and got it moving. Most of the higher education associations responded by saying that they supported national service on the one hand, but opposed the direct link between service and education on the other. There was such a storm of protest that Nunn withdrew his proposal in mid-April on the grounds that he did not want to hinder the advance of national service legislation.

Like other presidents before him, Bush showed that his national service rhetoric was stronger than his commitment. Although he had declared that America would support programs with stipends, such as the California Conservation Corps, he made clear his opposition to stipends for full-time nonmilitary service when he signed the 1990 act, which allocated \$75 million a year for full-time youth service programs and part-time service-learning programs.

As head of the Democratic Leadership Council, Governor Bill Clinton had supported the Nunn plan, but as presidential candidate he tried a different approach to the same idea. Here is the national service section from his standard campaign speech, which he gave under the heading of the “New Covenant”:

The New Covenant means new challenges for every young person. I want to establish a system of voluntary national service for all Americans. In a Clinton administration, we’ll put forth a domestic GI Bill that will say to the middle class as well as low-income people: We want you to

24. “Dukakis and Bush Declare Stands on National Youth Service”, *National Service Newsletter*, October 1988.

go to college, we'll pay for it, it will be the best money we ever spent, but you've got to give something back to your country in return. As President, I'll set up a trust fund out of which any American can borrow money for a college education, so long as they pay it back either as a small percentage of their income over time or with a couple of years of national service as teachers, police officers, child care workers—doing work our country desperately needs.<sup>25</sup>

Clinton tried to match his rhetoric with deeds, asking for \$7.4 billion over four years to get his reverse GI Bill form of national service under way. It pleased me and many others in the field when Clinton decided to expand his program to include persons who had not been to college and who could earn the GI Bill from a year or two of national service. By the time the White House and Congress finished compromising, the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was signed by Clinton in September 1993 and was given an authorization of \$1.5 billion over three years. Time will tell if this is enough of a push to establish national service as a permanent institution.

The interplay between presidents and advocates of national service seems likely to continue. The 1991 Wingspread Conference<sup>26</sup> convened by the Secretariat set forth a rationale and a plan for national service to become established early in the twenty-first century. We suggested that national service deserves a place alongside existing institutions such as education and work. Although in the Clinton plan the number of national service openings is very limited and they are expected to rise only to about 50,000, my guess is that a disproportionate share of future presidents and public servants will come from the pool of those with national service experience. If that happens, I expect that national service will become a permanent institution within fifty years.

25. Quoted from a photocopy of a 1991 campaign handout contained in "Clinton File" in the Secretariat Collection.

26. Donald J. Eberly, *National Youth Service: A Democratic Institution for the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: National Service Secretariat, 1991). Also see papers under "1991 Wingspread Conference".

## NATIONAL SERVICE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

In recent years I have examined several national service programs overseas. Although the programs have varied origins and objectives, they share the idea of young people performing full-time service for about one year. Most overseas programs include a range of activities similar to that of the United States, with education, public health, and elder care being among the most prevalent.

Germany's national service program grew out of an effort to establish an equitable alternative to military service for conscientious objectors. Young men are no longer required—as they were in the 1950s—to prove the sincerity of their beliefs as conscientious objectors; they merely sign a form indicating their preference for spending fifteen months in civilian service instead of twelve months in military service. As civilian national service activities have become more visible in Germany, growing from about 1000 participants in 1960 to about 130,000 in 1993, they have also become more popular with the general public.<sup>27</sup>

Several nations that have achieved independence since the end of World War II emphasize the nation-building value of national service. For example, Nigeria and Botswana wanted their future leaders to experience life in a different part of the country from where they grew up. Nigeria requires its university graduates to perform a year of national service, whereas Botswana requires a year of national service from those about to enter a university.

Costa Rica's University Community Service has students teaming up with professors to apply their formal education to real-life problems, usually in poor areas of the country.

The documents in the National Service Secretariat Collection reflect studies and travels associated with the international dimension of national service. Two publications have also resulted from these activities: *The Moral Equivalent of War? A Study of Non-Military Service in Nine Nations*, by Donald Eberly and Michael Sherraden (see footnote 17); and *National Youth Service: A Global Perspective*, edited by Donald J. Eberly (Washington, D.C.: National Service Secretariat, 1992).

27. Kuhlmann, "Right Not to Bear Arms", 143-46.