

# How Do People Stand on Military Training? Editors Report on Their Communities

By AL JEDLIKA  
WNU News Analyst.

FIFTY-SEVEN per cent of country newspaper editors polled in a nationwide survey by Western Newspaper Union favor compulsory peacetime military training, with 57.7 per cent of these approving of President Truman's proposal for one year of service for 18- to 20-year-old male youths. Thirty-seven per cent opposed compulsory training and 6 per cent remained undecided.

In the editors' report on prevailing sentiment for compulsory training in their communities, however, 44.8 per cent of the people stood against it, with 42.8 per cent approving and 12.4 per cent evenly divided.

With every section of the country heard from, southern editors showed the greatest support for compulsory training, with 66.6 per cent for it. Following were the North with 59.7 per cent; the East with 57.6 per cent and the West with 50 per cent.

Southern editors approving compulsory training also showed the strongest preference for Mr. Truman's service program, 77.7 per cent being for it, while 58 per cent in the West favored it, 56.7 per cent in the North and 40 per cent in the East.

With 56 per cent of the people reported backing compulsory training, southern communities also were far out in front for the proposal, with the West following with 41.9 per cent and then the North with 40.9 per cent, and the East with 37 per cent.

Timely in view of pending congressional action on the President's measure for one year of military service for physically, morally and mentally fit 18- to 20-year-old youths of the nation, the WNU poll served to reflect grassroots sentiment on the all-important proposal. It seemed to justify congressional caution arising from strong, popular aversion to compulsory training, while also reflecting advanced acceptance by professional thinking.

Because editors were asked to gauge public opinion in their communities instead of actually polling it, however, some discrepancy might exist in their judgment of the sentiments prevailing in their localities. Since the country newspaper editor, of all persons, perhaps is the closest to the people about him, on the other hand, his observations may be considered fairly accurate.

Though the editors appeared out of step, rural community sentiment ran in line with the recent positions of the three great farm organizations on postwar service: The Farm Bureau favoring a broad program of physical fitness in schools and land grant colleges; the Grange proposing similar preparation and army pay sufficient to induce volunteers, and the Farmers Union advocating some form of combined civilian training modeled after the National Youth Administration.

The WNU poll contrasted markedly with other nationwide tabulations embracing the large urban and country districts. The final editors' count of 57 per cent for compulsory training differed from the reported over-all figure of 71 per cent for professional people in other surveys, while the community count of 44.8 per cent against contrasted with other findings of 35 per cent against.

## North

In supporting both military conscription and President Truman's legislation with some modification Linwood C. Rodgers of the Luminary of Lockwood, Mo., wrote:

"The people of this community do not favor such legislation. They have many of their boys back home and want to keep them. The war is over and they do not want to anticipate another one.

"In my own personal opinion, the United States should adopt compulsory peacetime training. We served in the army and saw inadequately trained men thrown into combat, and that isn't good. We believe it is pretty well agreed that another war is inevitable and we can't stave it off by not training our men to be in readiness; in fact, that will only invite it sooner.

"I'd say that six months would be enough for the 18- to 20-year-olds to spend in training, for the basics will be all the trainee will receive in most cases anyway. In cases of extreme hardships . . . boys should be excused."

Agreeing with both proposals,

Bryant B. Voris of the Republican of Waterloo, Ill., said:

"Certainly there can be no harm in military training in America. The brass hats, of course, must be kept under control and must not possess the attitude 'the king can do no wrong.' . . ."

"I do not believe that compulsory training was the cause of war in other countries where it was in effect. It was more the propaganda of 'Gott mit uns' and 'Deutschland uber alles' . . . which will not accompany our military training if it is American training.

"If we do have war, I would rather know our son had a year's training to back him up rather than the hurried training some of our boys had in this war without being ripe for it. . . ."

Favoring a modified form of postwar service, Dan W. Johnson of The Times of Ivanhoe, Minn., declared:

"The United States needs some

pared cost us many extra lives . . . It is not going to hurt any healthy boy to learn the manual of arms. . . ."

Backing compulsory training, Carl Portman of the Record-Register of Coalgate, Okla., declared:

"We would leave to the army, navy and air corps officials the type and extent of military training. But we would emphasize the importance of physical culture and discipline in any training program which America might adopt, with particular stress on the building of strong bodies and clean minds for our young men."

Basing most of his opposition to compulsory service on moral grounds, O. D. Parks of The Graphic of Nashville, N. C., said:

"I do not think boys 18 to 20 years of age should be thrown into the environment of peacetime army life, especially with the liquor and beer situation what it is.

"I am all for a large standing army and for military training for

for poor physical condition, it would seem to indicate that the necessity is for a better standard of national health, which goes back to childhood and infancy. . . ."

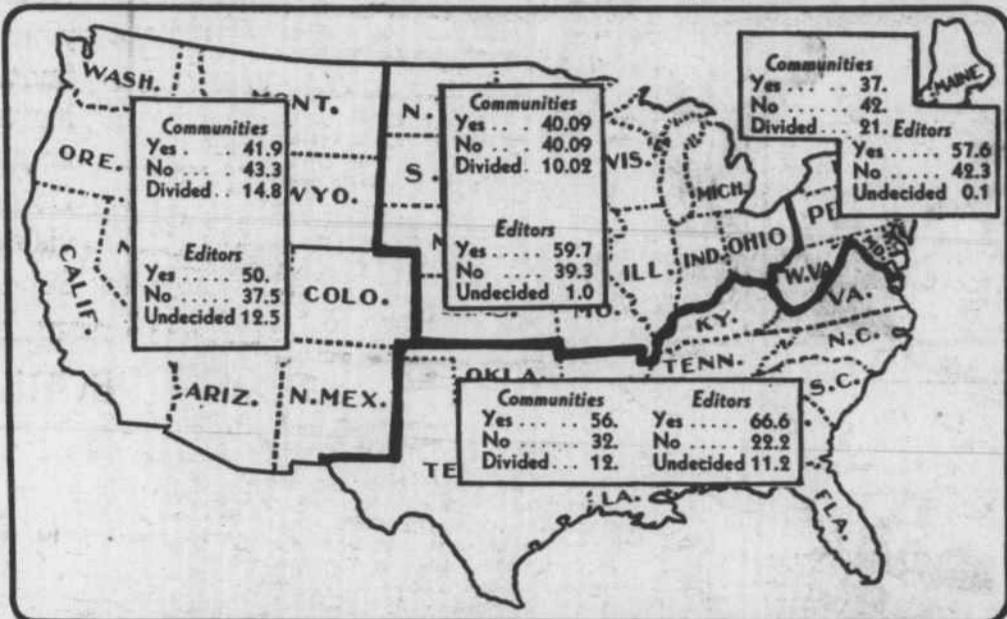
"Would approve a regular standing army of greater size and a powerful navy by making voluntary enlistments as attractive as possible.

"Compulsory training would subject too many young men to bureaucratic rule and tend to develop a military dictatorship. . . ."

## West

In supporting both compulsory military training and President Truman's plan, D. W. Robertson of the Searchlight of Culbertson, Mont., said:

"It is my opinion that a man cannot learn the fundamentals of modern warfare in less than one year.



## East

Advocating modified military training, Russell A. Wheelock of The Shopper of St. Johnsbury, Vt., wrote:

"By all means we should be armed, ready and willing to fight when our way of life is threatened. Therefore, military education in our schools and colleges—yes!

"If we are smart enough to cherish and control the atomic bomb, no country will war with us. Navies, armies, air forces are outmoded, and a waste of taxpayers' money. Money placed on armies would be spent to better advantage educating future scientists to cope with the enemy's weapons. A strict control of Japan and Germany will prevent wars. A strong international policy by America will back up world peace."

Supporting a modified program, C. D. Eldredge of the Courier of Winchendon, Mass., said:

"For young men about to continue their education after completing high school, I feel that a year spent in continuous military training would be a decided mistake. . . . Let the young man who is accepted for college combine his education with the military, and in that way not interrupt his program. It would not necessarily have to be an ROTC but something along the National Guard lines.

"In case of a young man who had no qualifications for college or inclination to continue his education, a 'hitch' in the National Guard would do the trick—with little chance of the youth of the nation becoming too military minded. . . ."

Believing the compulsory training to be counter to principles of freedom guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, M. E. Sunderland of The Record of Waterbury, Vt., declared:

"A public health program would be more to the point. With so many men rejected by selective service

our youth. I think this training should be intensive but should be combined with the boy's schooling . . . where he is under some measure of moral guidance."

Suggesting that military training be made part of the educational curricula rather than a compulsory military program, Katie B. Beauchamp of The Magnet of Taylorsville, Ky., advised:

"Make it competitive and boys will not have to be compelled to take it. It could be given somewhat as basketball and football—more athletic than military—and would reach more boys and those who need it most."

Urging a modified program, Edgar R. Simpson of the News of St. George, Utah, wrote:

"It is my observation that many people think of peacetime military training as a program of physical education and disciplinary training, which they favor. Most do not, however, seem anxious to see boys of 18 taken away from their homes, and opinions of returning servicemen point up some plan whereby boys could have the advantages of discipline, physical training and education along some lines that would benefit them in peacetime activities as well as for wartime preparation, as on a college campus or something of the sort in their home state or area."

Stating that while he didn't think it would worry the President, T. D. Caverly of the Valerian of Valer, Mont., disagreed with Mr. Truman's training legislation. Said he:

"We believe it would be a mighty good thing for every boy and girl in the country to put in a year under strict supervision as to hours and habits, to be trained in calisthenics and be under the direction of the best doctors during that time so the doctors could observe any physical trouble and correct it. But we believe this should not be done at the exact age of 18."

Declaring that the government should adopt a policy of encouraging science to develop the most modern materiel combat means, W. L. Rader of the Courier of Polson, Mont., thought: ". . . it is useless to draft a man for a year for just ordinary military training. This would mean nothing the way war would be carried on in the future and would just be an enormous expense.

"It seems to me what should be done is to have a few roving ambassadors that really keep an eye on what is going on in other countries. And when they come back and make a report—like Lindbergh did to England and the U. S.—we should do something about it. . . ."

Opposing all forms of military training, J. H. Cramer of the Journal of Blaine, Wash., said:

"A few young officers in the service seem to believe that one year of compulsory service should be required of all young men.

"But to me, this is only another move toward socialism or nazism. An army composed of all young men with trained officers naturally does not want to be trained unless they have a chance to fight."

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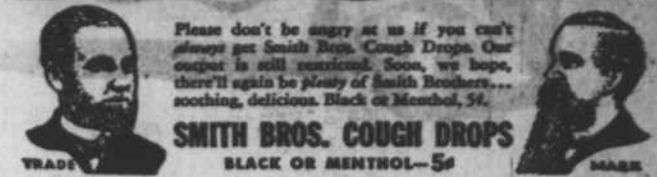
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### THESE FELLOWS ARE AGAINST IT, AND THEY GIVE THE REASONS WHY

Paul Metzgar publisher of the Forum of Eldon, Iowa, commented:

"It is my opinion that the military could and should be made attractive enough . . . to draw on the right kind of men seeking a career. In this way a sufficient armed force of trained intelligent men could be maintained at all times . . . and a sizable reserve could be retained by liberalizing benefits for men in that status.

In bucking compulsory training, L. M. Audritsh of The Echo of Green Springs, Ohio, wrote:

"The more we think of it, the more we are convinced that the universal peacetime military training program is a dud. . . . Any move to build armies is bound to turn into a contest among nations to see which can build the greatest, most powerful army. This one point alone can just about upset any 'national defense' angle put up by the militarists of the world."

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