

Advice To A Draftee

By County Leo Tolstoy (1899)



LBJ: "Not In"

A shocked nation listened to their radios and watched their televisions Sunday night as President Lyndon B. Johnson dramatically, and not without emotion, stated that he would not be a candidate for reelection of the White House.

Apparently, the average American was not the only one shocked, for even the leaders of the Democratic Party were quick to admit their own complete surprise. It seems that only Vice-president Hubert H. Humphrey and a very few close friends of the President were informed of what he was about to do.

How will Johnson's bowing out effect the presidential election is only speculation now. Should the President back a "Humphrey for President" move, then, indeed, the present Vice-president would be a formidable opponent to other Democrats such as McCarthy or Kennedy at the Democratic convention, where he could very easily obtain the party's backing; and would be an even more formidable opponent to the winner of the Republican convention, who will very likely be former Vice-president Richard M. Nixon.

Johnson's reply to newsmen following his Sunday night message seems to indicate a hands-off policy towards the upcoming election, yet it is hardly acceptable to believe that with all the power the President wields in his party, that he would not endorse the man he feels most apt to be friendly towards the presently established policies.

Nevertheless, the President's withdrawal from the race opens the door a little wider to let in a possible Kennedy or McCarthy ballot. Should the President not back Humphrey, or should Humphrey decline to run for the chief executive's office, then that door would be nearly flung open.

Kennedy and McCarthy are both hard-working candidates, and are extremely popular with the youth of America, especially college students, and both are in favor of greatly deescalating the Vietnam war. At present, however, it would be very difficult for anyone to guess the mightier of the two, especially in the South where McCarthy, until very recently, was virtually an unknown and Kennedy, while being known, was virtually ignored because of his apparent backing of civil rights legislation and school integration while serving under his brother, the late President John Kennedy.

At any rate, the upcoming party conventions and the 1968 Presidential race seem very exciting and extremely interesting. If only our student body could become interested and active in the elections and campaigning. Who knows, maybe the enthusiasm could spread into our own campus politics, and someday the candidates might face opposition in their bid for student offices, and that would give our students a choice—but, then, we're just dreaming!

Congratulations!

Our congratulations go to the Wilson Daily Times on the paper's recent shift to offset equipment.

Very few people in the area realize the magnitude of such a shift in operation—through money, man power, time and effort. But the change will allow the Daily Times to continue to progress and grow as Wilson advances.

Congratulations to a very meaningful and vital segment of the Wilson community—The Wilson Daily Times, who are again following their motto: "Not Just A Newspaper, But a Community Institution."

The following letter was written by Leo Tolstoy in 1899 to a young candidate for conscription.

Count Tolstoy's letter was addressed to a Hessian, Ernst Schramm, who evidently wrote a second time in an effort to evade Tolstoy's argument that he refuse conscription.

The letter is Tolstoy's response to Schramm's second letter, and apparently it seems to have ended correspondence between the two.

The document has recently been added to the rare manuscript collection at Harvard's Library by means of a gift from the "Atlantic Monthly."

The magazine recently printed the letter, translated by Rodney Dennis, with the following note:

"In reading Tolstoy's words against killing, one should bear in mind that both parties understood that the Hessian army in 1899 was a peacetime army but that the penalty for evading conscription was death. Tolstoy addressed the letter to Schramm in Darmstadt, and the Hessian post office forwarded it to Aschafenburg in Bavaria, leaving us to infer that Schramm decided not to join up but to change countries instead."

In my last letter I answered your question as well as I could. It is not only Christians but all just people who must refuse to become soldiers — that is, to be ready on another's command (for this is what a soldier's duty actually consists of) to kill all those one is ordered to kill. The question as you state it — which is more useful, to become a good teacher or to suffer for rejecting conscription? — is falsely stated. The question is falsely stated because it is wrong for us to determine our actions according to their results, to view actions merely as useful or destructive. In the choice of our actions we can be led by their advantages or disadvantages only when the actions themselves are not opposed to the demands of morality.

We can stay home, go abroad, or concern ourselves with farming or science according to what we find useful to ourselves or others: for neither in domestic life, foreign travel, farming, nor moral. But under no circumstance can we inflict violence on people, torture or kill them because we think such acts could be of use to us or to others. We cannot and may not do such things, especially because we can never be sure of the results of our actions. Often actions which seem the most advantageous of all turn out in fact to be destructive; and the reverse is also true.

The question should not be stated: which is more useful, to be a good teacher or to go to jail for refusing conscription? but rather: what should a man do who has been called upon for military service — that is, called upon to kill or to prepare himself to kill?

And to this question, for a person who understands the true meaning of military service and who wants to be moral, there is only one clear and incontrovertible answer: such a person must refuse to take part in military service no matter what consequences this refusal may have. It may seem to us that this refusal could be futile or even harmful, and that it would be a far more useful thing, after serving one's time, to become a good village teacher. But in the same way, Christ could have judged it more useful for himself to be a good carpenter and submit to all the principles of the Pharisees than to die in obscurity as he did, repudiated and forgotten by everyone.

Moral acts are distinguished from all other acts by the fact that they operate independently of any predictable advantage to

ourselves or to others. No matter how dangerous the situation may be of a man who finds himself in the power of robbers who demand that he take part in plundering, murder, and rape, a moral person cannot take part. Is not military service the same thing? Is one not required to agree to the deaths of all those one is commended to kill?

But how can one refuse to do what everyone does, what everyone finds unavoidable and necessary? Or, must one do what no one does and what everyone considers unnecessary or even stupid and bad? No matter how strange it sounds, this strange argument is the main one offered against those moral acts which in our times face you and every other person called up for military service. But this argument is even more incorrect than the one which would make a moral action dependent upon considerations of advantage.

If I, finding myself in a crowd of running people, run with the crowd without knowing where, it is obvious that I have given myself up to mass hysteria; but if by chance I should push my way to the front or be gifted with sharper sight than the others, or receive information that this crowd was racing to attack human beings and toward its own corruption, would I really not stop and tell the people what might rescue them? Would I go on running and do these things which I knew to be bad and corrupt? This is the situation of every individual called up for military service, if he knows what military service means.

I can well understand that you, a young man full of life, loving and loved by your mother, friends, perhaps a young woman, think with a natural terror about what awaits you if you refuse conscription; and perhaps you will not feel strong enough to bear the consequences of refusal, and knowing your weakness, will submit and become a soldier. I understand completely, and I do not for a moment allow myself to blame you, knowing very well that in your place I might perhaps do the same thing. Only do not say that you did it because it was useful or because everyone does it. If you did it, know that you did wrong.

In every person's life there are moments in which he can know himself, tell himself who he is, whether he is a man who values his human dignity above his life or a weak creature who does not know his dignity and is concerned merely with being useful (chiefly to himself). This is the situation of a man who goes out to defend his honor in a duel or a soldier who goes into battle (although here the concepts of life are wrong). It is the situation of a doctor or a priest called to someone sick with plague, of a man in a burning house or a sinking ship who must decide whether to let the weaker go first or shove them aside and save himself. It is the situation of a man in porfery who accepts or rejects a bribe. And in our times, it is the situation of a man called to military service. For a man who knows its significance, the call to the army is perhaps the

only opportunity for him to have as a morally free creature and fulfill the highest requirement of his life — or else merely to keep his advantage in sight like an animal and thus remain slavishly submissive and servile until humanity becomes degraded and stupid.

For these reasons I answered your question whether one has to refuse to do military service with a categorical "yes" — if you understand the meaning of military service (and if you do not understand it then, you do now) and if you want to behave as a moral person living in our times must.

Please excuse me if these words are harsh. The subject is so important that one cannot be careful enough in expressing oneself so as to avoid false interpretation.

Whitehurst

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of Western Electric Co. at Burlington.

In August, 1962, he was named assistant principal of a Burlington junior high school, a position he held for two years. Whitehurst then served as assistant principal of a Burlington high school. After one year, he was named principal of the junior high school where he began his teaching career.

Whitehurst said one of his immediate interests in Wilson schools concerns building maintenance and the updating of some of the plants and equipment.

"In an effort to categorize the most pressing curriculum needs, I feel there is need for a careful review of all instructional materials thereby ensuring adequate and up-to-date supplementary books and aids in the areas that now need strengthening," Whitehurst continued.

Further, I am interested in the establishment of a special education program on the senior high school level. The present program for the educable mentally retarded is terminal at the junior high school level. It would be a great value to extend this program to the high school level, eventually leading into a vocational program.

"The Wilson City School Program could be greatly enhanced by inaugurating a formal program for the academically talented beginning in the elementary grades and according to guidelines established by the State Department in instruction. I am interested in seeing that Wilson city students receive the same federal assistance for such programs as many other N. C. schools are receiving.

"I am very much aware of the problems facing N. C. schools today, and I would like the opportunity to serve this community as we face these problems and strive for continuing progress and the best education possible for our children."

National

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6 p.m. in the new cafeteria will leave Wilson Sunday morning.

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