

ACLU Blasts Draft as Punishment

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The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan (ACLU) has condemned the announced intent of Colonel Arthur A. Holmes, state Selective Service Director, to use the Selective Service Act "as a device to punish dissent".

Colonel Holmes was reported earlier as calling for "the immediate induction" of Vietnam war protesters who had violated Selective Service regulations or had caused any interruption of procedures.

Rolland O'Hare, Chairman of ACLU of Michigan, commented:

"Until now, no one in any position of responsibility in the government has suggested that the Selective Service Act may be used as a device to punish dissent. If young men who disagree with the government's policy in Vietnam may be singled out for discriminatory application of the Act today, who can say how the threat may be used to dragoon youth into conformity tomorrow?"

"The selective service system which places awesome power in the hands of government administrators must, as a matter of law, treat all who come within its scope fairly and uniformly on the basis of reasonable classifications equally applied. The moment it is allowed to deviate from those limitations, we have placed the lives and liberties of a sizable portion of the population of the United States at the unfettered whim of what this or that draft board or functionary considers the national interest to require.

"If any person in the course of his protest on the subject of Vietnam or any other matter of public concern transgresses the law, he may obviously properly be made to answer in a court of law for his act and, if found guilty, be punished in accordance with the law. The Selective Service Act itself has provisions carrying criminal penalties which, however, are to be enforced by a court, not a single administrative officer."

fifth Estate

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