

Draft Resistance Pushes On

Dave Wheeler

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Each in its own way, the Draft Resistance Committee and the Highland Park Police Department both celebrated Anti-Draft Week, a week of intensive protest against the Vietnam war and the Selective Service System.

The new Detroit draft resistance movement attempted to communicate to the public through any means possible the discontent and resentment of young men being drafted to die in somebody else's war in Vietnam.

On Saturday, August 19, approximately 50 people picketed the Wayne County draft boards at Cadillac Towers located in downtown Detroit. The cops, the people waiting at the bus station and all passersby loved the show. The effort was favorably received by bystanders and those who were offered leaflets, many of whom said they had relatives or friends in the same position.

Smaller picket lines held downtown the previous week during business hours had reported a very unsympathetic reaction from the blue-suit-and-tie set.

The focus of the week's activities, however, was directed at the Highland Park Community, where the Draft Resistance Committee is setting out to organize a locally based draft resistance group. The week opened on the night of Saturday, August 12 at an open house of the headquarters for the organizing project, located at 12820 Hamilton in Highland Park.

The police were there. The first Highland Park patrol car to see the signs on the windows announcing the new office, drove right up on the sidewalk in front of the entrance to get a closer look. Of course, the participants in the opening were well-protected all night both by the cops and a civilian vigilante patrol driving city automobiles.

At one point, it took four carloads of riot helmeted police to reinforce a sergeant's reminder to let no one loiter on city property. Later, a group of about five, including an attorney, were told to move inside because of a city ordinance prohibiting more than 12 people on a corner. When the attorney protested, the cop coolly replied, "60 seconds." So everyone went inside. What can you say to a cop who operates free of any civilian control from either inside or outside the city government?

Leaflettings were held in Highland Park during the Anti-Draft Week to let the people of the area know about the existence of the anti—draft office and counseling service. Scheduled "Anti-Draft Boards" to tell the truth about the draft and a satirical new theatre production were delayed until the city council issues permits.

On Thursday of that week, the cops made the scene again. They entered in full riot gear to throw two committee members out of the office because there was no permit for occupancy. There had been a prior arrangement made with the Engineer's office in City Hall, but the cops either didn't know or didn't care about that. They threatened the two with jail if they didn't leave immediately—although even when a court decides there is a violation only a fine is involved.

The question of permits was cleared up at a private session of the Highland Park City Council. Delegates from the Draft Resistance Committee met with the council members and graciously answered all their questions about political views and affiliations, their intentions, and their views on purposeful corruption of youth to receive the permit.

The office is open, and Anti-Draft Week started the group on its way. There is no question about the definite need for information and organization to protect men from being shanghaied by their local draft board. But the question of police and city opposition to the draft group is still an open one. However, that is exactly what the whole thing is all about.

The anti-draft group meets at its office every Tuesday night at 8 p.m. All are welcome.

Draft counseling continues every Sunday night from 8-10 p.m. at Central Methodist Church, Woodward at Adams.

fifth Estate

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