Editorial
1984

It seems the Administration has come up with a Commons "policy" which, on the surface, is just too good for us to refuse. We are to be offered points we can use as cash, a refund on unused parts of meal plans, longer hours in the dining halls, a professional review of Dining Service, and a sparkling new computer system to keep track of our diets for us.

Let's look below the surface, though.

Anyone who subscribes to a Commons plan and doesn't use all the points turns in a refund at the end of the year. Everyone, that is, except the unfortunate residents of McCormick, MacGregor, Baker, and Next House, who must pay for a minimum number of points each term — minimums are here equivalent to a mere 12 or 13 meals a week for next year's freshmen. As for the East Campus residents, their scrip requirement is fully as oppressive as the requirements of residents of Commons houses. Touting it as a concession to student wishes is a sham.

The new Commons policy is set to begin, appropriately on Valentine's Day, concomitant with the Class of 1984. The Administration seems to be kidding himself. That in- crease on points means the Administration has come up with a Commons plan and doesn't use all of it receives a refund at the end of the year. Everyone, that is, except residents of Commons houses. The original report of the Dining Committee first proposed mandatory commons as a way of supporting Commons in some houses and cooking in others. Burton, New House, Baker, Random and Senior House were to be houses where residents predominantly cooked.

If Friday's announcement, these dorms are "scrapped as well as those where "cooking by many of the residents would be antici- pated." Many. Not even most. The possibility of opening a new dining hall to handle the overflow of these "cooks" sub- scribing to Commons is even considered. In fact, while three pages with tables explain the labyrinthine details of the new Commons structure, the process of supporting cooking appears as wishful mirages.

Clearly, then, residents of the "cooking" houses will receive the full benefits of the plan with none of the conscription. Current students will likewise relish the newfound freedom of computer points. Only the Class of '84 members choosing to live in Commons houses must bear the brunt of the program which everyone else will adore. Everyone, that is, except residents of Senior House and East Campus, whose hopes for badly needed kitchens have been dashed by the Institute's blatant push for un- overall commons.

Two noble goals emerged in the Dining Committee's Report. One was to equate value paid with value received. The other was to support both cooking and Commons lifestyles equally, albeit in different dormitories. With the victims of commoned room and board will certainly need to go further out of their way to get what they pay for than anybody else, since they certainly won't get any of it back. And, evidently, the concept of supporting student cooking has not been embraced by the administration.

Anyone who does not feel the administration is moving toward campus-wide Commons is kidding himself. That includes the Chancellor. If he seriously desires to support two concepts, he must be more convincing about it. He had also better devise a plan which shares the benefits and the constraints far more equally.

The administration is moving cautiously toward campus-wide Commons is to be put up with an uncompromising workaround. And that looks to be the least of my troubles, as far as the draft is concerned. I know, I know. Carter has only proposed draft registration, not actual conscription. It's hard to believe, however, that having a bunch of college students fill out forms is going to be enough to rescue our ailing volunteer army or scare the Russians into non- aggression. If national fervor is enough to push registration through Congress, there's no reason to believe that a full draft couldn't follow if no progress is made on the issues that aroused the hawks in the first place.

Then, when I first heard about the possibility of reviving draft registration, my immediate reaction was one of anger and refusal. There was no way I was going to sign my own death warrant to prove to the Romans that Jimmy Carter is serious (serious about getting re-elected, that is). Then I thought about the whole situations, however, the more un- certain I became about what I will do if actually confronted with an ultimatum to register or suffer the currently quite strict penalties.

In fact, I think one of the more political things that Congress could do about registration would be to wait and let people straighten out their thoughts on the matter. According to one published news report, it would currently take the US twenty-one weeks to organize for a full scale war. With registration, this time would be shortened by only two weeks. What's the hurry?

Congress and the administration could use the time to get their act together, too. Americans need to know exactly why we are reviv- ing registration and who will be affected in order to make rational decisions and establish their opin- ions. The Soviets also will be impressed only by definite, forceful decisions. As it now stands, the politicians are still mucking about, deciding exactly who needs to be registered to best impress the Soviets.

Although the State of the Union address gave no specifics, the media generally reported that 18-26 year olds would be affected if registration; no attempt was made by the administration to correct this impression. Now, it seems the administration seems to be the least of the issues that aroused the hawks in the first place.

The other major question the government has yet to resolve is whether women should be registered for possible conscrip- tion into non-combat roles. I'm not real keen on getting shot at, but if they're making my brother risk his life, I feel somewhat obligated to try and help him survive, if only by serving in a non- combat role. On the other hand, it

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Grease is not my color. I look horrible in khaki. Maybe that's why I never seriously considered joining the military. President Carter has his way, however. I may some day have to put up with an uncompromising workaround. And that looks to be the least of my troubles, as far as the draft is concerned. I know, I know. Carter has only proposed draft registration, not actual conscription. It's hard to believe, however, that having a bunch of college students fill out forms is going to be enough to rescue our ailing volunteer army or scare the Russians into non-aggression. If national fervor is enough to push registration through Congress, there's no reason to believe that a full draft couldn't follow if no progress is made on the issues that aroused the hawks in the first place.

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