

would not come from the armed forces, which might encounter more bitter opposition, but rather as a part of a wider program of national mobilization, civilian as well as military. The first step would apparently be a mere registration of women, as a guide to planners concerning available skills, age groups, mobility, and other factors in the allotment of manpower. Such a proposal had been recognized by World War II planners as the least controversial of several alternatives, and later had been tentatively endorsed by President Harry S. Truman. At a news conference in 1950, Mr. Truman told reporters that, in the event of an emergency, it was his belief that the government should require national registration of women for defense and industry.²⁸

Should the emergency continue, British precedent indicated that the next step would not be the extension of military selective service to women, but rather their forcible direction into industry, farm work, and other vital civilian occupations. Since women who volunteered for military service were of course exempt from such a labor draft, the armed forces would possibly be assured a supply of female recruits as considerable as that which the British had received under like circumstances. This phase of mobilization offered a possible advantage to the armed services in that they would be able to pick and choose, taking only women of intelligence and needed skill. On the other hand, the Army prospects had to be considered in the light of the fact that, under such a voluntary system, British women had flocked in needed numbers to the WRNS and WRAF but not to the ATS, which required more personnel and had a reputation for menial work.

The final stage of such a mobilization,

as reached by the British in World War II, was the actual drafting of women into the armed forces. The Army's earlier draft plans, made on two occasions in World War II, indicated that exemptions for women would be more lenient than those for men, with the less mobile women, and those with children and home responsibilities, going instead into local industry. These plans had indicated no intent by the Army to take any women whatever from essential industry, agriculture, government, or their husbands and children. As long as fewer women than men continued to be required by the armed forces, it would obviously be to their advantage, as well as to the nation's, to use only highly selected, mobile women without dependents. It was of course uncertain whether the Army would be able to convince the highest manpower agencies that it should not be obliged to take women in the lowest AGCT grades, since they could not replace men one-for-one on unskilled heavy work or be sent into front-line combat units.

In some respects, the advantages of a draft over the voluntary enlistment system would be considerable. Without a draft, the armed forces could not expect, by wartime precedent, to plan on a women's corps of any great size. Greater expansion plans founded on voluntary recruiting had not only failed in World War II, but had involved the Corps in expensive miscalculations in clothing, housing, officer strength, and other allotments. The competitive expense of recruiting had also become so high that it appeared unthinkable for the armed forces and industry to enter another such contest against each other, with each spending tremendous sums on recruiting and advertising, and at times

²⁸ *Washington Times-Herald*, May 5, 1950.