NOW THAT MILITARY VICTORY in Europe is in sight, our thoughts are turning toward the postwar period and what we can do to assure peace for ourselves and our children.

There are many advocates of militarism or preparedness as the only antidote to war.

The *New York Times* reported a speech, July 13, 1944, by Major General Lewis B. Hershey, national director of Selective Service, before 1400 members and guests of the Commerce and Industry Association in New York in which General Hershey stated: "Never again must we lose peace because our citizenry is not prepared to provide national security. If we are to have a democracy with equal opportunities and equal responsibilities for all, we cannot afford to have four or five millions of our citizens who are unable to bear their share of the load of security because of mental and physical disability. If we are to have a democracy, some service must be required of each of our citizens and required early."

This sentiment is shared by many Americans who are pushing legislation for compulsory military training after the war.

**Do We Confess Defeat?**

In my opinion, this campaign for militarizing our youth in the postwar period is a confession of defeat of the high purposes for which this war is being fought and is the basis for preparing World War III. This program is the enemy of the kind of world for which our men and women are offering up their lives in combat all over the earth's surface. If we adopt this program of postwar militarism, it will inevitably defeat the democratic purposes for which the United Nations are fighting, which are, collective security, disarmament, and world cooperation.

Universal military conscription after the war in this country would inevitably result in a competitive armament race leading to another war. Thus, if we take this step now, we are confessing in advance our inability to stop human slaughter.

The hope of the world rests in our ability to so organize the world that men will be able to maintain peace and international order. We failed after World War I and it seems that we might have learned our lesson.
From a purely military standpoint, it may well be that the experiences of this war will indicate that new weapons are more powerful than masses of reserve troops. It must be recognized by all thinking men that one year’s military training in early youth would not mean much several years later in the light of advances in military science.

But the people who are in favor of militarizing our youth after the war are not content to wait and see what sort of international organization develops and what the nations of the world are prepared to do toward disarmament and world cooperation. They know that under the pressure of wartime conditions they have their greatest chance of success. In their distrust of our ability to organize the world for peace, they fall back on the old policy of isolationism, national preparedness, and dependence on our own armed might.

A Job for Schools and Society

Advocates of compulsory military training after the war do not advance their proposals for what they really are. They make it appear a sort of panacea that will bring trade education, abolish useless illiteracy, train for democratic citizenship, eliminate physical deficiencies, and reduce crime and unemployment.

These desirable ends, however, can be better achieved by reform of our social and industrial system and by creating greater opportunities for education, physical development, and proper training for citizenship in our school system long before boys reach 17 years of age. If these things are good for boys, they are also good for girls and even the advocates of this program are not seeking the same thing for girls.

All of the things which proponents of this dangerous program argue would be accomplished could be done much better without turning our youth over to the military. Physical fitness cannot be developed in one year’s training. Experience of selective service in this war indicates that our deplorable rejection rate springs from causes originating long before a youth reaches the age when this program could be of any substantial assistance.

For example, out of the first million draftees, 400,000 were rejected because of eye and teeth deficiencies. In the state of Georgia, out of the first 400,000 registrants, 40,000 signed an “X.” These people could not be made fit for military service in one year. A solution to this problem is to make school attendance really compulsory up to a certain age, and to provide clinics for free physical examinations and attention to disorders such as defective teeth or eyes. Body-building programs and genuine training in democratic citizenship should be a function of our schools.

The obedience and discipline so dear to militarists is definitely inferior to an educational system which stresses self-discipline and voluntary cooperation. The military mind, which is authoritarian and anti-democratic is not the best one to guide the thinking of our youth. It is pertinent, for example, to point out that for some time the United States Army circulated a manual, in which democracy was defined as mobocracy.

Competition or Cooperation?

To advocate during this period a regression to the old continental system of conscriptive military service, so abhorred by the democracies and so cherished by the dictatorships, is to abandon our hopes for a cooperative world which we are now trying to create.
We are now actually engaged in an international program for freedom of communication by radio and the press, for stabilization of currency, for the control of cartels and monopolies, for the distribution of food to hungry people, and for a vast exchange of goods and services through lend-lease.

Should we adopt a hopeless attitude and confess that this cooperation now going on during the war will not be equaled by a determined effort for joint control and reduction of military establishments of the world after the war?

Should we lead the way in starting another round of national military competition which makes another war inevitable?

Can we expect other nations of the world to disarm and to go without masses of trained troops if we adopt universal military training?

Shall we adopt as a substitute for international cooperation in maintaining the peace the maintenance of a greater national army?

We should have learned by now that wars will never end until the nations of the world have learned to pool their common interests in maintaining peace, order, trade, and freedom.

Have we discarded as an impossible dream the vast plan and hope for mankind embodied in the Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter, and the declarations of every democratic leader throughout the world? If we have, we are betraying the hopes and aspirations of millions everywhere. We are saying in advance that the sacrifice of youth will have been in vain.

We should turn our backs on this defeatist and despair propaganda for militarism after the war and turn our thoughts toward the possibilities of international cooperation, for we can see struggling for birth in the midst of this greatest catastrophe in history, a moral order based on peace and freedom.

From Junior Colleges

THE MAJORITY of junior college leaders questioned in a recent poll favor a year’s military training for all young men, but they qualify their stand by voting by an even larger majority for postponement of any such legislation until after the war. Results of the survey, to which replies were received from thirty-seven states, have been made public by Walter C. Eells, executive secretary of the American Association of Junior Colleges.

Other significant viewpoints brought out by the seven-point questionnaire are that only 33 per cent of the persons questioned approve of some form of universal national service for both boys and girls, that 60 per cent of those questioned favor allowing the individual to choose his period for training within a certain age range, and that 66 per cent think it would be a good idea to use summers for military training.