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YOUTHS HELPING DEFEND ELLSBERG

20 Study Pentagon Papers as Assistants to Lawyers

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LOS ANGELES, Dec. 18— It reminds one of those hastily put together offices of the McCarthy and McGovern campaigns. But here the young workers in blue jeans are not soliciting votes; they are studying the Pentagon papers.

There are about 20 such

workers, and some are officially called defense consultants, which means that they, along with the defense lawyers, have been given Federal court approval to read certain documents that the United States has classified as top secret.

Run-Down Building

The youths are part of the defense team of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony J. Russo Jr., who are accused of 15 counts of espionage, theft and conspiracy in the Pentagon papers case.

The youths work out of a suite on the sixth floor of an old, rather run-down office building at 125 West 4th Street.

Most of them have come from

other parts of the country, and most are paid about \$60 for their six-and seven-day work week, although some, with outside incomes, do not take even that amount because money is short.

It has been estimated that the Ellsberg-Russo defense cost about \$80,000 a month, with most of it coming from contributions.

One of the workers is Paul Ryder, 21 years old, of Rocky Hill, N.J., who went to Princeton for four years but has not yet graduated. He was an anti-war activist on campus and came to Los Angeles in June to work on the case "because I really hate the war."

Mr. Ryder is an official con-

sultant, and one of his jobs is to familiarize himself with the contents of the Pentagon papers so that when witnesses in court start talking about various pages and sections he will be able "to find out what is the source of the reference, where the facts in the reference come from and if they were made public before the papers became public."

Case for Defense

A large part of the defense in the case will be based on the contention that the information contained in the Pentagon papers was in the public domain long before Dr. Ellsberg became involved in the process of making them public.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1972

It was in the public domain, the defense contends, in the form of newspaper and magazine articles, in memoirs of high Government officials and in the public statements of these officials.

"I know the papers pretty well by now, and my opinion of him [Dr. Ellsberg] and what he did hasn't changed. I really respect him," Mr. Ryder said.

Another worker, who is not a consultant, is Ruth Maranar, 21, of Chicago, who left Reed College in Portland, Ore., to come here in May.

"I get paid a certain amount of my expenses, but I have an outside income, so I don't take a weekly salary," she says.

Her current job is to go

through the transcripts of the last jury selection process in July in the case and help prepare the defense attorneys for the next jury selection, which is expected to start Jan. 3.

She also makes fund-raising speeches at high schools and at cocktail parties.

Standing amid the ordered litter of the office suite, where the youthful workers were poring over thick Xerox volumes, Leonard B. Boudin, one of Dr. Ellsberg's lawyers, said:

"I give them [the workers] high marks. Finding the things we need would take more work than we can do without them. These kids have done an elaborate job reading the literature of the war."

Tomorrow Federal District Court Judge William Matthew Bryne Jr. is expected to rule on a number of defense motions in the case, including one challenging the jury selection process, one involving wiretapping by the Government and one asking for a change in venue.