

NEWS FROM THE



National
Resistance
Committee

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

contact:: Alex Reyes 202-547-2771
(NRC/Washington)

Will Doherty 617-354-7885
Edward Hasbrouck 617-235-8660
(Mass Open Resistance;
NRC/Boston)

Our call on the President to end draft registration is an expression of our hopes, not of our expectations. We cannot and we will not rely on Ronald Reagan to end registration or to call off the attempts to enforce it.

Registration has been stopped by a sweeping national campaign of grassroots protest and civil disobedience, and by the illegal direct action of a million nonregistrants. Selective enforcement of registration will be stopped by a similarly sweeping campaign of resistance at the site of the first prosecution of a nonregistrant and at other federal district courts throughout the country.

An arrest of one will be considered an arrest of all. A national mobilization of the resistance will be triggered by the announcement of an indictment anywhere in the U.S.A. Simultaneous local actions--to coincide with each court appearance of a nonregistrant--are already planned for 28 of the 90 federal courthouses. The campaign will continue and grow as prosecutions move forward, and we expect it to involve thousands of nonregistrants and supporters by the time the first resister is brought to trial.

The call for this action was put forward by the National Resistance Committee and by Mass Open Resistance, a Boston-area draft resistance collective which has done the networking of the NRC. Endorsers of the call include several dozen local and national organizations and such individuals as Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) and Ron Kovic. The call has also been endorsed by veterans of imprisonment for draft resistance during World War II and the Vietnam War, and by nonregistrants from Boston to Berkeley, West Virginia to Iowa.

Selective Service and the Department of Justice are moving systematically to prosecute nonregistrants and reinstate the draft. The first group of about 100 resisters has been selected for prosecution. Their cases have been referred to U.S. Attorneys, they have been given "final" warnings to register or be indicted, and at least five have been contacted by FBI investigators.

Statement of Purpose

1. To resist current U.S. preparations for conscription and war by encouraging those of draft age to refuse registration.
2. To sponsor and promote non-violent demonstrations and civil disobedience to oppose draft registration.
3. To build a grass-roots movement by collecting pledges of non-registration, distributing literature, holding public actions, forming support groups and working with existing organizations to resist registration.

(MORE)

Indictments are the next step, and could occur at any time. Unless Reagan orders an immediate halt to enforcement, some nonregistrants will be indicted by January.

Any such prosecutions will, of course, be mere tokenism. It is simply absurd to think that the federal judicial or penal systems can or will be multiplied twenty-fold. Only a tiny group of resisters can or will ever be prosecuted or imprisoned. The only motive for the current prosecution of a handful of nonregistrants is to intimidate others and to retaliate against organizers blamed by the government for the mass rejection of registration.

When prosecutions begin, some nonregistrants not yet threatened with prosecution will turn themselves in, demanding that the government prosecute all of us or none of us. The nature of other solidarity actions will depend on the wishes of the resister being prosecuted. Actions being considered include vigils, pickets, marches, rallies, and non-violent attempts to obstruct, impede, disrupt, and subvert the functioning of Selective Service and the Department of Justice. (Contact the local organizers--see enclosed list--for more details of plans for particular courthouses.)

Registration and the draft are a threat, a serious threat to all of us. Selective enforcement is a threat to equal protection of the law to one million nonregistrants. The draft is a threat of involuntary servitude to three million registrants. The militarism they serve is a threat to survival to four billion wimmin and men.

We shall not ignore this threat to our brothers, our sisters, and our selves. We will protest; we will demonstrate; we will act. We will continue to resist, and we will take our resistance to the government. We will take our resistance to the people. We will take our resistance to the streets.

(END)