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We Won't Go: Personal Accounts of War Objectors

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WE WON'T GO: PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF WAR OBJECTORS

Compiled by ALICE LYND

GENE KEYES: AN ARREST OF ONE IS AN ARREST OF ALL

The pact which Gene Keys and two friends carried out in the early 1960s was a forerunner of the acts of solidarity envisioned by the Resistance in 1967.

Charlotte Keyes, Gene's mother, wrote an article for McCall's magazine, October 1966, entitled "Suppose They Gave a War and No One Came." Reprinted and widely distributed, this article describes in fuller detail the human story behind her son's early actions.

The account presented here was written for this book prior to the massive return of draft cards planned by the Resistance for October 16, 1967.

How much do you oppose the draft? What are you going to do about it?

There are already enough of us against the draft, in principle, to rock the Selective Service System. But so far the catch is that too many of us have been afraid of prison. So we've dodged the issue, or postponed it, or clung to a II-S, or let some other influence pressure us out of resisting the draft.

Once you've decided to go to prison instead of collaborating with the draft law, what can you do to have something to show for all that time you'll be locked up? This is what I began asking myself by January 1962. I didn't want to sit around and let the law take me in its own good time. I didn't want to be just another negligible statistic when there were only a few guys each year who got busted for draft resistance. How could Selective Service be challenged, at times and places of my own choosing, as dramatically as possible?

I was always a Quaker-type pacifist. In October 1959 I had registered for the draft, intending to do alternate service.... With the magic word "Quaker" I'd have no trouble getting a I-O and getting it over with.

But filling out that form made me think harder about the nuclear facts of life. I started getting on mailing lists and talking to people already giving their lives to peace work: Bob Pickus, A.J. Muste, Bob Swann, and Brad Lyttle, among others. By February 1961, I decided that the most important thing in the world that anyone could do was to stop whatever else he was doing and start to work full time in nonviolent action against the war machine.

That month I dropped out of Harvard, midway through my second year, and went to New London, Connecticut, where the New England Committee for Nonviolent Action had set up a permanent base of operations focusing on the Polaris missile system. I got busy manning the mimeograph, hitting the peace-march trail, and going limp in front of Polaris submarines.

I began to meet more people who already saw that the Selective Service System, like any other arm of the war machine, should be resisted completely instead of used for personal advantage. That system had one purpose and one purpose only: the army. Registering had been a mistake, and I realized this most clearly when I began to read the text of the law itself and some of the literature the system put out to describe itself. "The first step in the procurement of military manpower is registration," General Hershey had written. Well, I had taken one step too many.

And what about alternate service under the draft? That's just the trouble: "under the draft." The Military Selective Service Act is not a social service act. All the hospital work a conscientious objector could do in two years would not make up for a single day of napalm and pellet bombs. A law which gives a special privilege to a few COs makes everyone else pull the trigger and helps ease resistance to the draft itself.

Back in those days the draft age was twenty-three, and since I was just twenty, I had a little time to decide how to resist. Eventually I carried out two public challenges to the draft, one on my own and one as part of a group.

First, I used my draft card to light a candle at midnight, Christmas Eve, 1963, in front of the local board office in Champaign, Illinois.

Then in May 1964, Barry Bassin, Russ Goddard, and I entered a pact saying that "an arrest of one is an arrest of all." When Russ was convicted for draft resistance in St. Louis in July 1964, the other two of us stood up in court and got ourselves six-month sentences for contempt, on top of our own draft sentences which were still to come.

As it turned out, both of these events got unusual publicity; but they would have happened anyway, with or without the fanfare. Neither the candle scene nor the pact developed overnight. In the rest of this narrative I'll try to sketch in a little of the process they were a part of.

I

Better to Light One Draft Card than Curse the Darkness

In the summer of 1962, I mapped out a campaign for my own case of draft resistance, to culminate with civil disobedience against the draft law by the fall or winter of 1963. But if I was going to urge abolition of the draft and the armed forces, I thought I should first spend some more time studying how we can defend ourselves without them. I was at

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Pendle Hill, a Quaker study center, from September 1962 to June 1963, reading more about pacifism and nonviolent defense and draft resistance.

In my countdown, I thought I should at least go through the formality of trying to get the draft law repealed before I had to disobey it, so I read a prepared statement to a subcommittee of two senators when the law was absent-mindedly renewed in March 1963. I mentioned that I would have to resist the law if it were not taken off the books.... I also suggested that free men should not be forced to carry draft cards, and that free men should volunteer to defend their country. I said that we must never surrender in the cause of defending liberty, but that we must seek to maintain that defense by any means consistent with nonviolence, morality, and honor... They ignored any threat and passed the law anyway.

From Pendle Hill I went to work at the New York office of the Committee for Nonviolent Action in June 1963. By now, Local Board No. 10 had sent me the first of three Current Information Questionnaires. Each time I sent back a letter saying I wouldn't fill it out. Then on October 3, I canceled my application for CO status. Back came a I-A on November 12. I wrote back a letter saying I wouldn't accept it and asked for a hearing in December, when I would be visiting my family in Champaign anyway.

December was my deadline for action because Christmas would be a logical time to mount a radical antiwar demonstration. For several weeks beforehand I had been wondering how best to act. Should I burn my card? Give it back personally? Tear it and tape the halves on the door? Block a train to the induction center?

Way back in the March 1960 *Student Peace Union Bulletin*, Karl Meyer had written that "To cry out the truth in the streets of our time is a vocation to truth, to poverty and to prison.... Beyond this it is an ultimate prayer to God to save the people." When the inspiration came in late November I decided the demonstration itself could be a prayer for peace, since a prayer is an earnest or humble request. What's more, it being Christmas, I could light my draft card with a candle—or better yet, light a candle with my draft card. At midnight Christmas Eve. And try for a twenty-four-hour fast and vigil in front of the local board. No: twelve hours would be more realistic. Without fasting.

A slogan for the vigil sign emerged in the same spirit: *To Light This Candle With A Draft Card—A Prayer For Peace On Earth*. Some artist friends lettered a Christmas-card-like sign well in advance.

The December 19 hearing at the local board wasn't really necessary, but it was to make my draft resistance as personal as possible, not just a file folder for them to forward to the Justice Department. I could even give them back one of my draft cards in person and still have one left to burn.

The secretary was young and polite. The several anonymous board members looked glum, except for the chairman who smiled sadly. The clerk of the Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting gave me a character reference. Then it was my turn.

Face to face confrontation is one of my weak points. My statement was simply a recital of what I had done to defy the draft law. I had wanted to ask them point-blank to resign rather than participate in a bad system, yet could barely muster the nerve to say it. I must have managed to indicate that I was asking for *no* classification, or, that if they didn't resign, they'd have to classify me I-A Delinquent. I also gave them copies of my Senate testimony (which they were as likely to read as *Pravda*). I concluded by laying my registration card on the table, and announced my candle ceremony of five days hence.

The chairman asked for questions, but the others just exchanged blank stares. Someone asked where I was employed. I told them. He exhaled and threw up his hands. The chairman said that I knew the consequences of my action. I mumbled back that I did.

I sent a letter to the editors of the two local papers, explaining my stand ahead of time.

The night before the vigil, I tested a piece of cardboard to make sure it would burn on a cold windy night; it didn't burn very well. A little candle wax smeared on it improved its flammability.

My girlfriend was visiting the family over the Christmas holiday and she kept the vigil with me much of the time. Other friends and acquaintances dropped by during the vigil to walk or chat. Late in the evening my parents brought me a grilled cheese sandwich and french fries.

Midnight drew near. By now a throng of two or three dozen had assembled, family and friends as well as reporters and curiosity-seekers. I had a bayberry candle in a silver candlestick ready and a pocket lighter and a pair of tongs to hold the waxed draft card. Suddenly, floodlights went on for movie and TV cameras, and flashbulbs went off. The card flickered and took flame. Jane held the candle. We left it alight for a few minutes; then we blew it out and went home.

By "coincidence," on the day of the vigil the local board issued an order for me to report for the pre-induction physical. But I was getting ready to return to New York to earn some money—and finish work on the pact.

II

In the summer of 1961, some Antioch and Oberlin students tried to talk up a draft-card-return by 500 or 1,000 demonstrators, but the idea quietly expired when there were only a dozen or so who were even vaguely interested. I didn't see much more interest in 1963 either, so I thought mainly in terms of a one-man collision with Selective Service. I had several friends who would resist the draft sooner or later, but they had other plans for now and prosecution depended on the whims of different local boards. Group action seemed like wishful thinking; mass action a dream.

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In November 1963, a month before I actually burned my draft card, Russ Goddard came to New York for a meeting of the Committee for Nonviolent Action. He was a friend I'd met the year before at the New England CNVA training program (he and his wife, Joan, had stayed to become staff members). He had personally given back his draft card to a local board in suburban St. Louis the previous March. Meanwhile, another peace-march friend of ours, Dennis Weeks, had just published a letter in *The Peacemaker* refusing induction. Since the arrest of any of us was only a matter of time, Russ suggested he might want to picket his local board in sympathy if Dennis or I were arrested before he was.

Now here was a possibility for joint action against the draft! How about an agreement among the three of us to demonstrate in solidarity for whoever is the first to be arrested? Or an arrest-me-too demonstration? Or, go to jail in solidarity with whoever got the longest sentence? We could even sign a pact in advance.

I jotted down some ideas and discussed them with Russ, who was enthusiastic. We contacted Dennis, but he was more non-committal. Then Barry Bassin, who was a full-time volunteer at CNVA, heard us talking about it and expressed interest.

Dennis eventually decided not to join and the pact was the product of Russ, Barry, and myself. As early as December 8, we were already in provisional agreement that two of us would jail-in for whoever was the first to be "snarfed up," but it was not until April 9, 1964, that we put our initials on the actual text of the pact, and it was June 10 by the time we formally signed a printed copy of it—with only a week to spare.

I believe our painstaking preparation was well worth it. To perform a federal felony on one another's behalf was not something to do in a lighthearted moment.

After discussion, the focus of the pact came to be "immediate prosecution of all" rather than equal sentences. We would be demanding release for all rather than arrest, but we couldn't count on release.

We sought advice from Arlo Tatum of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, among others. He reminded us not to get so tightly bound that there would be an emotional setback or loss of friendship if any of us had to ease out of the pact at some point. He and A.J. Muste agreed to sign as witnesses.

My proposed text was long and legalistic. Russ boiled it down to half a page and we all jiggled it a little more till each of us approved it word for word. We also exchanged memos and working papers. For example, Barry researched a three-page paper on contempt of court—one of the hazards we hoped to avoid. I did a memo, trying to relate the pact to the mainstream of the peace movement because the draft was almost a forgotten issue compared to Cuba, the test-ban, and the advisors in Vietnam. Russ did much of the work of designing the layout and typography for the pact.

Next we spent quite a while writing and designing a six-page brochure to explain the pact. It too was a perfect collaboration among the three of us.

These were parts of our statement:

Why try to get into jail? Can't you do more good outside, even if some of your friends are arrested?

We don't want to go to jail any more than most military strategists want a thermonuclear war. Like them, we are dealing with a reality—in our case, that the government can send whom it chooses, when it pleases, to prison, for refusing to kill. To challenge this power, enough people must say “us too” when necessary—and follow through—so that jail can no longer be used as a deterrent to the exercise of freedom.

If we try to avoid arrest, or are content to let our friends be arrested instead of ourselves, we hand over to the government the key to deter everyone by jailing a few.

It would be quite a vision if we could foresee many pacts like this—whether written or not. Hundreds—or even tens of people—who declare at the critical moment: “You've arrested him; now arrest us. Either let him go, or do your duty to all of us.” While the three of us are not that mass strategy, a jail-in by even one person looks toward such a concept.

That's the vision. Far from reality today perhaps. But meanwhile, friends of ours, and people who believe the same things we do about war and killing, are being arrested and imprisoned. We have watched helplessly one time too many.

No longer.

We knew time was growing short. On January 1, 1964, Barry had written his draft board declaring independence from them as a New Year's resolution. On January 30, I had ignored my physical. On February 28, Russ had received an induction notice for March 19, and sent the board a letter stating he wouldn't even sign an escape-clause form showing that he was a married father. On April 10, Barry got a I-A notice, scrawled “refused” on it, sent it back. April 29 brought me a five-count delinquency notice from the local board—theoretically good for twenty-five years in prison if someone wanted to throw the book at me. Then on May 15, I got my induction notice for May 26.

On May 26, I addressed telegrams to General Hershey, President Johnson, Attorney General Kennedy, and Local Board No. 10. The message was: “THERE IS NO MORAL VALIDITY TO ANY PART OF ANY LAW WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO TRAIN PEOPLE TO KILL ONE ANOTHER. I HEREBY REJECT THE ORDER TO REPORT FOR INDUCTION.”

Arlo Tatum had told us to estimate about ten weeks between an order to report for induction and the arrest. So Russ would be entering the danger zone late in May. Sure enough, it was just then that the FBI requested a voluntary interview with Russ at its New York headquarters. There would probably be no arrest yet, but we couldn't be sure. We put

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on our suits and slipped handcuffs into our pockets. Barry and I lounged in the waiting room reading FBI handouts while Russ answered questions. No action, and it was quite a relief because that week we were not quite prepared for the major demonstration.

A few days later, the Goddards left for St. Louis, intending to get Joan's arrangements made for prison widowhood and to interpret Russ' action to friends, relatives, officials, and the mass media. They arrived on June 17. The next day Russ was arrested.

Now came the crunch. On Saturday morning, June 20, Joan and Julie met Barry and me at the St. Louis airport. Russ was at the St. Louis City Jail and his arraignment was scheduled for that Monday, June 22.

Barry and I set off to explore midtown St. Louis. Should we sit in at the DA's office? At the FBI office in the brand-new Federal Building? Stand up in court? What about East St. Louis, Illinois, across the river, where I would otherwise be prosecuted? We were already worn out from the strain of having events get ahead of us; and the heat was at its St. Louis summer worst. We plodded from one place to the next, wondering if our presence could possibly be worth it.

Monday arrived. Russ had been indicted for refusing to report for induction. How did he plead? Guilty.

Then Judge Roy W. Harper began a soft-spoken little monologue about wanting Russ to be sure he knew what would happen. If Russ had been denied alternate service by the draft board, Harper would arrange for Russ to do two years of hospital work if he wanted to. But otherwise, the judge said, he always handed down five-year sentences for the draft. It would be such a black mark against Joan and Julie, the judge said, if Russ went to prison, so he would release Russ for two weeks to think it over, and let him change his mind if he wished; but if not—

Five years!

The stiffest sentence in recent years for a draft resister. Ostensibly, the judge wanted actual days in prison to be nearly as many as if Russ were a draftee, and parole could be obtained when a sentence was one-third completed—twenty months of a five-year sentence. But parole was problematic and time off for good behavior might still leave Russ forty months in prison, as well as under restriction the remaining twenty.

Just after the court session, two polite FBI agents recognized us. "Are you Barry Basin and Gene Keyes?" We voluntarily gave them all the information, chapter and verse, incriminating ourselves about our several and repeated violations of the draft law, and gave them copies of the pact brochure.

How best to use the next two weeks? We spent a good bit of time in strategy discussion on how to provoke the arrest. We had decided we would stay in St. Louis rather than carry the action to Washington or to our own separate districts. The stiff five-year sentence would underscore our solidarity if we sought to face the same judge in the same area as Russ. We would try, at first, to avoid getting deflected into disorderly conduct or contempt of court by not sitting down in the courtroom itself, for example.

We decided to focus the demonstration on Judge Harper himself, who had passed the five-year sentence, rather than any other federal official. A judge has the power to reduce a sentence within sixty days; if we sat in his office for at least that long we would probably get some kind of reaction. That would make the aim of our demonstration as clear-cut as possible, even if the judge dodged the issue and convicted us on something other than our flagrant draft violations. We would be focusing on his power to release Russ, and a sixty-day fast and vigil at his office would be a very quiet but unavoidable moral confrontation.

Over the July 4 weekend we split up for farewell home visits; the others went to visit Joan's family in Columbia, Missouri, and I went to see my family in Champaign, Illinois. (A separate essay needs to be written about pressure from families, wives, girlfriends. Karl Meyer speaks of "trial by parents" as "the most horrendous ordeal a young radical can face." For the most part, I had great moral support from my parents, and, for the most part, Barry and Russ didn't.)

On July 5, we reassembled at a motel in St. Louis. There to greet us also was Paul Salstrom, just released from the federal pen at Springfield, Missouri, after two years there for draft resistance.

I will now lean on Paul Salstrom's account of the court session on Monday, July 6, from a report he wrote shortly afterward.

When the case was announced, about 10:30 A.M., Russ stood and stepped forward—followed by Julie, who had scrambled off her seat and tottered along, ten feet behind. But Julie hadn't enough nerve to follow her father through the swinging gate. She ran back to her mother's arms and gave way to tears.

After the case had been presented and Russ had again, as on June 22, pled guilty, he spoke for ten to fifteen minutes about the beliefs which had brought him to where he stood. His five main points were: 1) his opposition to the whole system of military defense, and to Selective Service as a part of that system; 2) that though it might be legitimate to argue that one could work more effectively for peace and disarmament if he is free instead of in prison, his purpose is broader than merely to work for good causes—that "all our fine plans for a better world are as nothing if they are not based upon the individual's personal responsibility and determination to stand up for what he believes in; jail must not deter us from principled action"; 3) that the possible injustice to one's wife and child when one must go to prison "is relatively small compared with the great injustice against women and children everywhere, which modern militarism constitutes;" 4) that the job of resisting conscription by going to jail should not be left to young and single men alone, just as in wartime there are married men among those who, believing in military defense, risk their lives in battle; and 5) that true freedom is based not on military defense but on willingness to act even in the face of severe penalties; therefore he would not back down from his stand against the Selective Service System.

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Judge Harper then spoke for ten to fifteen minutes. He asked Russ if he thought he might change his position if given another two weeks to think it over, to which Russ answered No. The judge then made a series of comments centering around the theme that "if everyone were to believe as you do those who have sacrificed their lives in the past to defend the country would, I believe, have died in vain," that "I love children and so am mainly concerned about the black mark your conviction and sentence will leave on your daughter, who is helpless to do anything about it," and that "I am grateful to live in a country where you can hold the beliefs you do."

And then pronounced a sentence of five years.

Barry and I stood up. In crisis situations I can hardly speak or think well on my feet. I was going to make a forceful and ringing announcement of solidarity, but it got lost somewhere in a cotton-throated mumble. According to the newspaper, what I said was, "We have violated the draft law also and deserve the same penalty. Goddard should not be sentenced alone." I wanted to say it better but that would have to do. Salstrom continues:

... the judge said, "Just a minute, are you the fellows who sent me those letters?"

Barry then said, "Yes, we're not going to let Russ accept the penalty for draft refusal without doing all we can to secure his release, or else equal treatment"—to which the judge replied, "The only power I could have over you would be the power of contempt citation."

Gene said, "We are prepared to wait indefinitely in your chambers for our cases to be brought to a conclusion."

Judge Harper threatened again to hold us in contempt immediately, so we left the courtroom and proceeded down the corridor to the anteroom of the chambers. There was a leather couch in front of a low partition, just beyond which was the secretary at her desk. We sat down on the couch and glanced at the clock. It was perhaps 11:20 or so. Our companions waited nearby.

Around noon, Judge Harper returned. He looked disapprovingly at us through his half-moon glasses, once again argued that he had no jurisdiction over us, and warned that we couldn't stay after he and the secretary left for lunch. He went into his office.

At 12:30, Harper came out of his office in civilian clothes. He looked a little flustered and could not seem to decide whether we should be arrested or just thrown out.

... the judge walked down the hallway and summoned the marshals. With them at his side, he addressed Barry and Gene. "If you don't leave right now I'll have you arrested for contempt—OK, take them and throw them on the front steps, and if they

come back in the building, arrest them." When he saw that they would not walk voluntarily he said they'd be arrested right away. Gene and Barry then stated flatly that they would not leave voluntarily, and the judge said, "These fellows will carry you out. We don't want to have to hurt you." And to the marshals, "Just pick them up and throw them out on the front steps."

If you have ever tried to carry a mattress somewhere, I suppose you can imagine the difficulty and frustration of carrying inert pacifists. They twisted and maneuvered us out into the hall, got us to the elevator, then off at the main floor and finally, to the outside steps. Barry had been hustled along by an arm lock. "Walk or I'll twist if off," the marshal had said. We were left on the front steps.

... caught an elevator down with eight or ten newsmen and we found the two fellows picking themselves up outside the front door. After a brief interview they reentered and talked themselves past a confrontation with the marshals in the lobby. Back upstairs, the judge's office was found to be locked, and more interviews followed.

The wait that time lasted from 12:40 to 2 P.M. Then the judge returned and stated that unless the friends of the two sit-inners left the building within fifteen minutes, all would be arrested.... Joanne Collier felt it a matter of principle that she stay, which she did—throughout Judge Harper's subsequent series of threats to cite her for contempt, along with Barry and Gene.

Joanne wrote in *Liberation* magazine, August 1964:

[Judge Harper] is intellectual and courteous. He doesn't want to sentence "the boys" but he has to. He quickly takes an opportunity to get off the subjects of conscription and mass murder, to discuss civil rights and the courts. When he shows me out, his voice and mood change suddenly: "If you get in the way out there, don't think it's going to bother me to have you arrested. You're married and have a family, but that's not going to make any difference. I won't lose a minute's sleep over it."

Joanne was afraid that with nobody to watch, the marshals would twist us worse. As they did. This time we were hauled to the courtroom. I think two or three of them had my arm in a half-nelson and were carrying me, like a suitcase, by the belt. I was looking at the floor most of the time while trying all at once to relax, not to howl, and to minimize whatever torsion my shoulders were feeling. Barry and I were dumped in front of Judge Harper. In Paul Salstrom's account:

... the judge... launched into a narrative of the day's events as seen from his point of view. Gene and Barry made comments whenever they felt themselves misrepresented... The judge said

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the two should consider themselves still free to walk out the front door in spite of all they had done.

"Not without Russ," said Barry, who always says just the right thing.

"The same for me," said Gene.

Judge Harper commented that order must be maintained, and pronounced sentences of six months.

The pact was a success!

Now we were all in the St. Louis City Jail, but in different cell blocks. The first time he was there Russ had not been bothered by the other prisoners, but when he reappeared with all the publicity about our action, some of them beat him up patriotically. I was left in a cell with a big guy who tried to rape me but who was content just to bash me around for a while instead. Luckily, Russ and I were transferred to another cell block with Barry, where there was no further trouble. City and county jails are rougher than federal prison.

That was to be our last time together for then next several years. One by one we were sent to different prisons: Barry to Chillicothe, Ohio; Russ to Springfield, Missouri, and I to El Reno, Oklahoma.

III

But Barry and I were not through with the struggle yet. On December 5, 1964, the two of us were to be released with a month off for good time, but Barry was delayed three days because he started to grow a mustache. He was given a draft card on the way out, which he left crumpled in an ashtray. I had already been indicted three months earlier—for refusing to report for induction.

A marshal was waiting at the discharge room with handcuffs and chains. There was a lot of confusion and red tape at an Oklahoma City federal court that day before I was finally transferred back to Illinois. Meanwhile, my parents had arranged a property bond for me, so I got a Christmas furlough at home, which lasted three months, till all the legal formalities had run their course. There were joyful reunions with my family and with Joan Goddard, who showed me all the letters and articles and reports that had come in the wake of our demonstration. We phoned Barry, who was in New York, and compared prison experiences. Barry and I agreed we had already carried out the pact as it had been written. We had forced simultaneous arrest and prosecution and, having made that witness, we could now let the law take its course in regard to our induction refusal, rather than risk again a diversionary charge such as contempt or disorderly conduct. If we had only been jailed a few days at first, we probably would have repeated the demonstration.

My arraignment was on January 5, 1965, at East St. Louis, Illinois. I entered a plea of *nolo contendere* (no contest). But Judge William Juergens rejected the plea, so I let it be "guilty," and he ordered

a pre-sentence investigation. I was not interested in stalling the court with a "not guilty" plea in this case.

Now a difficulty arose: suppose I was offered probation? I had learned from Joan that Russ had given in to strong pressure from her and a lawyer friend of theirs, and had agreed to let them file a memorandum asking Judge Harper to reduce the sentence to probation. (The motion had been denied, which was just as well, I thought, because the language of the brief tended to apologize for Russ' stand.) Moreover, my own girlfriend had never been happy about the pact, which seemed to claim most of my attention. Worst of all was the subtle accusation that I just *wanted* to go to prison, enjoyed suffering, liked to be a self-made martyr, and all that. I wavered.

But when the parole officer interviewed me he was dumbfounded to learn that I wouldn't accept probation if Russ couldn't get it, and Russ wasn't about to get it.

The sentencing came nearly a month later, on February 2, and was a five-minute formality: three years. Barry was sentenced on November 18, 1965, to two years. Russ and I were paroled on March 24, 1966. Barry did not want parole restrictions and was released on June 9, 1967. Altogether, I had done eighteen months; Russ, twenty-one; Barry, twenty-three. But Barry had no strings attached to him; parole would ground me till February 1968 and Russ till July 1969.

Was the pact worth it? Obviously, being part of such a joint effort made prison that much more tolerable. Even so, the three of us by ourselves would have taken the same position against the draft. Did we need a pact besides?

I believe the most important thing about our pact was that we were translating a principle into action—not only draft resistance itself, but effective solidarity with a person who is prosecuted for acting in accord with conscience. I believe that any time anyone is arrested for any such cause, there should immediately be five or ten or a hundred or more who will say, "Set him free or take us too" and proceed to enter prison to show they are not merely talking or signing their names.

Resisting the draft should be everyone's business, not just that of young men. This kind of solidarity can involve *anyone* against the draft, of any age, including anyone exempted for any reason, including women.

And not just against the draft, but in any place where some human grit can be thrown in the war machine.

What about you?

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JAYNE SWITZER

Jayne Switzer, whose first child was born while her husband was in prison for noncooperation, felt that what sustained them was that "we did it together."

Bob and I knew from the beginning of our relationship that separation was imminent. Bob was under indictment for two violations of the Selective Service System when we decided to marry and then, to conceive a child.

We met in Albany, Georgia, early in 1964, when we were both participants on a peace walk, and again in Chicago, when each of us returned home for the summer. Together we picketed, leafleted, and on July 31, stood and burned Bob's draft card on the federal courthouse steps. Draft card burning was relatively unheard of at the time and our act provoked more curiosity than hostility from the crowd that gathered.

The decision to direct our efforts toward protesting the Selective Service System was difficult for both of us. I had planned to spend the summer working with the civil rights movement in Americus, Georgia, and Bob had planned to work in Selma, Alabama. We both felt, though, that radicals had to devote more attention to the draft, particularly with the escalating war in Vietnam.

In the weeks that followed, we decided to marry, despite the obvious difficulties we faced. We felt that together we could accept the consequences of our actions, and we realized that prison would be a threat throughout our lives if we continued to work for the movement. And so, on September 20, 1964, we became joined in a simple ceremony among friends.

For the next six weeks we endured trial continuances and the fear of momentary imprisonment. At night we held hands tightly, expecting each day to be our last. We decided that, despite the selfishness of having a child, we wanted to have as much as we would to hold us together during our separation. Shortly before Bob's trial began in mid-November, we learned that I was pregnant and then, during his trial, I began to miscarry. While I was home resting, I received the news that he had been found guilty of two violations of the Selective Service Act: refusal to carry a draft card and refusal to be inducted into the military. He was denied bond and dragged from the courtroom by a handcuff.

The two weeks that followed were the most difficult we faced. I sublet our apartment, moved in with my family, who were sympathetic with Bob's position, and found a secretarial job. The greatest difficulty was not being able to communicate with Bob in any way. Visiting was not permitted for two weeks, and Bob had refused to sign censorship papers, so we couldn't write.

The full impact of prison struck me on our first visit at Cook County Jail. I had to wait on a long narrow row of steps leading to the main door until I was admitted with two other visitors. Inside the huge door I waited, gave my name, identification, and relationship with the prisoner, underwent frisking, and was relieved of shoes, purse, and chewing gum. At this point I was admitted to another long hall where I waited until I was led into a small cell and locked in with three other visitors. Inside the cell were four small glass windows with grating beneath them to talk through. After a brief wait, Bob appeared in front of the window, pale and thin from his two-week fast. To talk, we had to bend down and shout through the grating, which meant that we couldn't talk and look at each other at the same time. I shouted to him that I hadn't lost our baby and that he was going to be a father. Happily he rushed forward and kissed me, five inches on the other side of the glass window.

On November 20, Bob was brought before Judge Julius Hoffman for sentencing. The courtroom was packed with sympathizers on one side and the army and veterans on the other. Several Episcopal clergymen came as character witnesses for Bob and attempted to point out to the judge the moral law that compelled Bob to act as he had. Judge Hoffman refused to hear their arguments and allowed only Bob to speak. Bob read a prepared statement in which he explained his actions; it was sincere and had an obvious emotional impact on the spectators. The court was silent when he finished and we all waited tensely until the judge pronounced sentence—two three-year terms, to run concurrently. I cried with relief after hearing the sentence, because it was shorter than we had expected, and because at last we knew how long our separation would be. Bob and I were permitted to visit briefly on the opposite sides of the courthouse bars; then he was returned to the country jail.

Three days before Christmas I received notice from the federal authorities that Bob had been transferred to Sandstone, Minnesota. I was relieved to have him out of the county jail and happy he had not been sent to Chillicothe, a prison known for its violence, where several other noncooperators with the draft were imprisoned.

On Christmas day, Bob's family and I drove through blinding snow to Sandstone, fifty miles south of the Canadian border. The temperature was 40° below zero as we approached the desolate town, consisting of two rundown hotels, three restaurants, and a small chain of stores, standing on opposite sides of the railroad station.

As we reached the pale yellow brick institution, encircled by the houses of the prison personnel, I was surprised to find that it looked like a rural elementary school. Inside we waited in a comfortable waiting room and were admitted together to see Bob. In a few minutes he was sitting next to me and, for the first time since his imprisonment, we could touch. The unexpected joy of his nearness made me cry our entire visit.

For then next seventeen months, Bob and I were able to write often, sometimes two or three letters a day. We were able to visit

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frequently, as the visiting privileges were flexible and generous. The first several months, we visited once every four weeks. I would arrive early in the morning by train and stay at the prison from 9 A.M. until 4 P.M. Saturday and Sunday. Saturday night I would stay at the hotel in Sandstone and suffer the stares of the townspeople and the mercenary attitude of the woman who ran the hotel. I was annoyed by the nine-dollar charge for a room with no bath and, seemingly, no heat. The restaurant closed before visiting hours at the prison were over, so after not eating on our first visit, I brought fruit with me. The woman who ran the hotel provided shuttle service to the prison, which cost \$2.50. When the weather was not too unbearable, I would plod through the snow the four miles to the prison. In April, when I was seven months pregnant, I walked to the prison and arrived slightly blue from the cold. A secretary drove me home.

During our visits, the rules allowed us to embrace on arrival and departure, and to hold hands. For fifty cents I was able to buy a box lunch and we would eat together. I was also permitted to buy cigarettes and Coke in the waiting room and bring them to Bob.

Occasionally, on our visits, Bob's parole officer would come to try to convince me to have Bob join the Army as a means of release. On our first encounter he said, "I know Bob is probably a better Christian than I am, but we do have to obey the law." I asked him whose law he considered more important, the law of God or man, and he left the room.

We had adjusted to the routine of daily letter-writing and monthly visits when our daughter, Karen, arrived prematurely, early in May. Having been promised a call to Bob after the baby's birth, I eagerly called the prison. The officials refused to let me speak with Bob, even after I explained that the baby was having difficulty breathing and was in danger of death. "If she dies, call back," the guard told me, and hung up.

During the first anxious days following Karen's arrival, my only comfort was a tradition Bob and I began early in our separation. At exactly 10 P.M., we would stop whatever we were doing and think of each other. At least I knew that he was with us in spirit.

Following Karen's birth, our visits became less frequent. The little money I had saved was spent quickly on her incubator care, and it was weeks before she was able to make the long trip to Sandstone. For the first time, I had to rely on the peace organization for financial assistance. I was relieved to find that Peacemakers, a Cincinnati-based organization, could send me the \$65 a month I requested. The cost of traveling, however, was approximately \$125 per visit, so until Bob's release, we saw each other about once every three or four months.

When Karen was two months old, my family moved to Pennsylvania and I began living with my brother and three graduate students in Madison, Wisconsin. Aside from the letters to Joan Goddard, Michele Nysolla, and Darlene Hoffman, women with husbands in prison, I had little social contacts.

In November 1965, Bob went before the parole board; we both counted the days until their reply. We were crying when we learned that he had been denied. Karen and I flew to Minnesota to be with Bob shortly after receiving the news. We arrived at the prison an hour before closing time. After a tense visit, we learned we would not be permitted to see each other again for two days, as the visiting hours had been changed without notice. Angry and depressed, I returned to Madison.

In the months between Bob's parole denial and his final release I felt the first bitterness toward the officers at Sandstone. Instead of engaging them in friendly conversation as I had previously done, I was cold and withdrawn. All feelings of anger vanished when we received news of Bob's release date.

I was visiting my family in Pittsburgh, trying to accept the fact that Bob might be away another year, when I saw the air mail letter from Sandstone. After reading the first line, telling me of his impending release, I called Bob's parents in Chicago and together we laughed, cried, and made hurried plans for the future.

On May 18, 1966, Bob came home. Walking off the plane, he picked Karen up and the three of us began life as a family.

Friends ask us if we would do the same thing again, and our answer is "yes." Prison was painful and yet it was beautiful in many ways. Through prison we learned that we could still say "no" to an injustice, and that only by saying "no" could we be free. The iron bars of prison were temporary, and now we have free minds. When our children ask us what we did to stop the killing, we can answer them.

DAVID TAUBE

David Taube emigrated to Canada to avoid the draft in the United States.

I protested the war, but did nothing to avoid the draft until it was too late to act in the U.S. I honestly felt that I could rationalize a noncombatant position in the service, and since I didn't base my objection to the Vietnamese war on a belief in a supreme being, I did not bother to apply for CO status.

I enlisted in the Army Reserve on a three-month delayed enlistment in Des Moines, Iowa, on November 10, 1966. My army recruiter indicated that I could have my choice, in writing, of schooling or a substitute suitable to me should my first choice be full. I went to Des Moines to enlist and signed a paper saying that I would go on active duty for twenty-four months. I later found out that in order to get my choice of schooling, I would have to reenlist for thirty-six months, and that if I merely went for twenty-four, I might have to kill people. The fact that I would have to reenlist had not been explained to me prior to enlistment. Then, the army was not able to give me my first choice of schooling or either of two alternates. This developed over the next two months and

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I decided I would not go at all. I even investigated the possibility of stopping my income tax payments and applied for admission to Canada....

I was to report to the service on March 9, and I entered Canada on March 6.... I received orders and travel vouchers to report to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. When I didn't show (I told them I wouldn't) the FBI harassed my family and a RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] man was sent to talk with me. He asked if I was going to stay in Canada and after I said "yes" we had a nice talk about the YMCA camp I was working for at the time.... I am definitely a deserter... but legal authorities tell me that now I am landed... I am in no danger of extradition. The Army even wrote my mother to tell her I should come back "because I was losing all pay and other benefits."

I had briefly studied German resistance to Hitler and came to the conclusion that the present U.S. regime should be resisted in much the same way. I was too chicken and was going to go peacefully to jail instead.... I concluded that if I were to kill innocent Vietnamese, I could not live with myself. Since living with myself is important to me (who else can I live with?), I was about to go to jail. Although this wouldn't be as good as active rebellion for the antiwar cause, it would have at least made the U.S. feed and clothe me for five years.... Canada seemed to be nicer than a jail, however, so I chose to opt out of the struggle. This makes me feel guilty at times.

I sometimes think I should have stayed and fought, but could see no way to really do anything meaningful anyway. I would condone violent as well as nonviolent attempts to overthrow the present U.S. regime because it is unconstitutional (Art. I, Sec. 8). Thomas Jefferson said, "God forbid that we should ever go twenty years without such a rebellion (Whiskey). The tree of liberty must constantly be watered with the blood of patriots." ... I don't frankly know that I am doing anything meaningful here to fight the U.S. Nearly all the natives I meet are also against the war, so I am not convincing anyone new about anything. Canada has permitted me to stay out of jail and live with myself. In the U.S., I would have had to choose between the two. If this is a jail, it sure is a big, beautiful one.