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HISTORY OF THE WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE



The White House part of the simultaneous Moscow-Washington anti-nuclear demonstration, organized by WRL on September 4, 1978. Photo by Mike Moran.

Traditional pacifism—emphasis on individual resistance to militarism, violence and war—dates back to ancient times. But it is only within the past sixty years, an era during which War Resisters League emerged as a leading organization, that pacifists started searching for ways to treat the complex political, social, economic, and psychological causes of war. Radical pacifism, is more than an effort to create a just and peaceful society through nonviolent methods, it seeks structural social change.

Members of the War Resisters League believe that conflict between belligerent nations is but one manifestation of violence. Economic exploitation, sexism, racism, political repression, cultural alienation and decay, colonialism, and imperialism produce tensions equally warlike in effect, though the violence is perpetrated more subtly.

The recent developments in feminist thinking has brought to light a better understanding of the connections between militarism and sexism. It is not surprising that in a society which equates masculinity with domination, wars should develop. In addition, the spirit and style of feminism offers a striking alternative to the military psychology of America which stresses competition and aggressive (even violent) behavior.

Even where there seems to be "peace," the quiet deaths from starvation, poverty and disease that strike down peasants in Latin America, sharecroppers in Mississippi, unemployed miners in Appalachia, and the babies in Harlem are as real and deadly as the battlefield deaths from bullets and bombs.

The War Resisters League is defined solely by its members. It offers no dogmatic suppositions and solutions for the past or future, other than a basic dedication to nonviolence. It views pacifism as radical, experimental, and necessary. It accepts as its main task inventing processes of change that are organic to the needs and ingenuity of growing numbers of people. It sees itself in an innovative rather than power-seeking role, as a catalyst for a majority movement and not as an elite out to impose its doctrine on the disinterested masses.

The Beginnings

The roots of the War Resisters League go back to 1915 when Jessie Wallace Hughan in cooperation with Tracy D. Mygatt and John Haynes Holmes founded the Anti-Enlistment League, which sought

to enroll war resisters to oppose American participation in World War I.

After the War and with the end of conscription, the only existing peace groups were those that saw peace coming through the League of Nations, the Soviet Union, or as a result of individual "soul saving." Based on the belief that wars would not end until substantial numbers of people made clear in advance their unconditional refusal to engage in the next war, efforts were made to form an organization which would enroll war resisters of differing political and religious beliefs, in particular, socialists and anarchists who did not feel comfortable in a religious organization.

In 1921, European conscientious objectors, with the same concern, formed Paco (Esperanto for "Peace"). Soon after the name was changed to *War Resisters' International*. In 1922 a similar organization was formed within the Fellowship of Reconciliation by Jessie Wallace Hughan called the Committee for Enrollment Against War, and it adopted the WRI pledge. In 1923, Hughan and the Enrollment Committee, along with representatives of the Women's Peace Society and the Women's Peace Union, established the *War Resisters League* as an independent organization. Dr. Hughan saw the WRL as more than an organization of men and women who opposed war and its causes. She and



Jessie Wallace Hughan at a late thirties WRL Annual Conference.

the other founders wanted to offer support to war opponents who had no religious or other organizational ties.

In the early years, Hughan and her sister, Evelyn West Hughan, furnished the greater part of the League's modest budget (only \$500 the first year). Abraham Kaufman, as the first Executive Secretary, helped to establish the League as a widely respected national organization.

As popular opposition to war grew during the thirties, so did League enrollments, from 1000 in 1928 to 13,000 (of whom 800 were regular contributors) in 1938. The League initiated annual No More War Parades in New York from 1931 to 1934, the first numbering 300 marchers and the last 15,000. WRL, under the direction of Tracy Mygatt and Frances Witherspoon, held annual Armistice Day eve dedication services, which featured public declarations by young men renouncing war. At a Conference on Militant Pacifism, organized by WRL in 1931, Hughan urged radical pacifists to continue their efforts: "This is the time for us to work fast, not when war comes."

League members contributed to a growing body of theory and knowledge concerned with resisting wars and with finding constructive, dynamic alternatives to war. The growth and work of the Gandhian movement in India added new insights on nonviolence and its social organization which Western pacifists welcomed.

Pacifists took the lead in warning against the rise of fascism and also worked to do what they could to rescue its victims. Indeed, the first public demonstration against German anti-semitism was held in 1933 under the leadership of Rabbi Stephen Wise and the Rev. John Haynes Holmes, long a WRL activist. The League also opposed Roosevelt's immigration policies, which kept America's doors locked to any possible refugees from Nazi Germany.

When the 1940 Conscription Act was put into effect the focus of the League shifted from enrolling men and women against war to offering moral and legal support to conscientious objectors.

World War II

With the onset of war, liberal peace groups collapsed, but the War Resisters League and the Fellowship of Reconciliation continued to grow. From 1939 to 1946, the League with the help of New York Friends and FOR people put out a lively 8-page newsprint monthly called *The Conscientious Objector*, which became the voice of pacifists during World War II.

The attitude of the Government and the general public toward pacifists during the War was distinctly tolerant, compared to the mob violence, raids on peace organizations, and the very selective recognition of conscience during the first World War.



WRL street corner forum in New York City in 1941. Photo by Harry Patton/Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Contributors to the League grew to 1800 by 1948 and the annual budget climbed to \$20,000.

The WRL gave its strongest support to those COs, whether in civilian camps or in prison, who opposed not only the war but all regimentation which went with it. Such support at this point was crucial, for other pacifist groups in greater or lesser degree accepted the forced labor system embodied in Selective Service provisions for "alternative service" in the camps. The League was unable to cooperate with the Peace Churches in supporting the camps in a program which many members felt was assisting the government to administer conscription, and in 1943 finally withdrew even from a consultative relationship, an action later to be followed by other groups. At the same time it strove to keep in touch with COs in the various camps.

In prison and in the Civilian Public Service camps, the COs began to experiment with non-violent tactics against racial segregation and other injustices of the system. Some went on fasts and work strikes and individually and collectively non-cooperated with the authorities. These actions created a community of militant pacifists, who, when the war ended, would serve as the focus of a newborn nonviolent movement.

During the war, the League continuously urged the Allies to negotiate with the Germans for the release of all concentration camp prisoners, even at the cost of settling for something less than their stated goal of "unconditional surrender." When it became known that two million Jews had already been killed, the League urged the State Department to declare a ceasefire. Hughan argued that German military defeats would only invite further

reprisals on the Jewish scapegoats and that an Allied "victory will not save them, for [the] dead . . . cannot be liberated." Her prophecy turned out tragically to be true.

Post World War II

The War produced three major changes in radical pacifist thinking. First, the war against Hitler was very difficult to resist so that our commitment to peaceful change was forced to become that more rational and political. Second, the bomb on Hiroshima declared an unprecedented urgency: in the past whole tribes and nations could be obliterated, but life went on. Now, for the first time in the human experience, all life could be destroyed. And third, Gandhi emerged as a world figure with a rational and politically acceptable approach to conflict. In the past, pacifists could always fall back on the individual conscience; now we said, and had to say, not only that we could be right, but that the accepted way of engaging in conflict was definitely, suicidally, wrong.

Groups like the WRL were radicalized as a result of the influx of hundreds of militant war resisters who had been imprisoned during the War. Many of them had been radicalized by the Depression and had been active in the labor struggles and in the anti-fascist movement. The WRL was the obvious place for the more militant COs to go because it had given the most support to the absolutist position during the war. Eventually, the militants had a majority on the Executive Committee and League policy came more and more under the control of these resisters who viewed pacifism and non-violence as the most radical and effective way of creating meaningful change.

The League organized a number of street demonstrations, often using theatrical props, to protest nuclear bomb tests, to urge a general amnesty for all COs, and to oppose the proposed universal conscription. In February of 1947, more than 400 men burned their draft cards or sent them to the White House, the first demonstration of its kind.

However, the country had been severely militarized by the war experience and victory was too fresh to make pacifism attractive. The rise of Cold War ideology and its accompanying fears limited the League's growth. Achievements were few, a notable exception being the founding of the *Pacifica Foundation* in 1949 by League members, which

led to the creation of listener-sponsored FM radio. In 1948 the League, along with other peace groups, set up the *Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors* to handle CO inquiries and problems.

Civil Rights

The only area where activism seemed possible was in civil rights. WRL members took part and were jailed in "The Journey of Reconciliation," the first freedom ride in the South, in 1947, to test a Supreme Court prohibition on segregation in interstate travel.

A member of the WRL national staff was assigned as early as 1956 to work closely with Martin Luther King, Jr. In addition, staff time was put into the March on Washington in 1963 and the Poor People's campaign of 1968. In 1960, WRL members joined with CORE, SNCC, and SCLC to take part in the freedom rides, sit-ins, voter registration drives, and every other aspect of the struggle, North and South.

Nuclear Testing

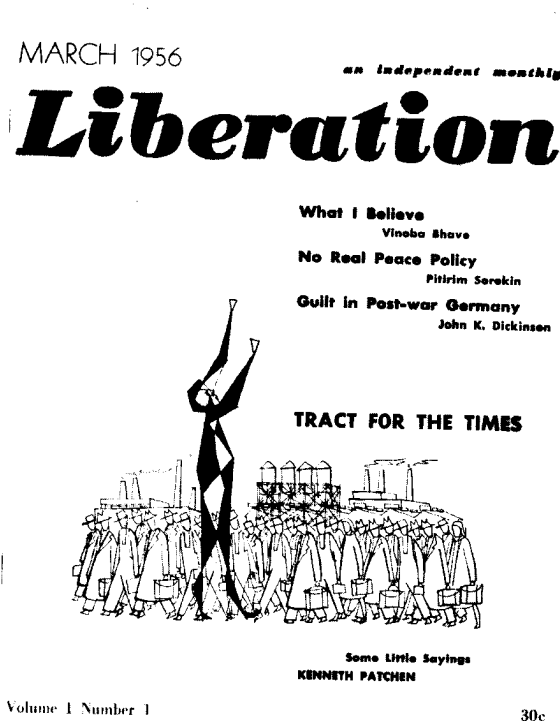
During the fifties, the main issue that concerned pacifists was nuclear testing. The danger from nuclear fall-out and the insanity of thinking civil defense drills could provide a "defense" outraged large numbers of people. In June 1955, the League co-sponsored civil disobedience during a nationwide civil defense alert and 28 participants were arrested for refusing to take shelter in New York's City Hall Park. Civil disobedience against the civil defense program and compulsory air raid drills became an annual event. By 1960 a thousand



The first civil disobedience against the nationwide Civil Defense drill, New York City, June 15, 1955.

participants gathered in the park, half of them refusing to seek shelter when the air raid sirens sounded. The next year the number was doubled, as were the arrests, and that was the last time New Yorkers were ever legally required to take shelter during a defense drill.

In 1956 *Liberation* Magazine was started as a project of WRL. Though it had an independent editorial policy, the issues it dealt with—nuclear testing and disarmament, civil rights, socialism, anarchism,



The first issue of Liberation Magazine. March 1956.

and nonviolent direct action—closely paralleled the League's own program. *Liberation* helped create the ideological framework for a resurgent American radicalism that would mark the 1960s.

League members were instrumental in the formation of the Committee for Nonviolent Action, a group which organized nonviolent direct action campaigns. Beginning in 1958, it staged a series of spectacular civil disobedience actions against nuclear weapons that marked CNVA as the cutting edge of a growing movement. Some of the actions were: the sailing of the ketch *Golden Rule* into the Pacific bomb test zone (1958); Omaha Action in which pacifists nonviolently trespassed upon a nuclear missile base (1959); Polaris Action, an on-

going project in New London, CT, to protest—often by nonviolently disrupting official launchings—missile-carrying submarines (1960); the San Francisco to Moscow Walk for Peace which saw the message of unilateral disarmament carried within the Soviet Union for the first time (1960-61); and the sailings of Everyman I and II into the nuclear testing zone, and Everyman III to the Soviet Union to demand cessation of nuclear testing (1962).

CNVA made nonviolence and civil disobedience household words. After 1960 and the first student sit-ins, nonviolence became an acceptable concept as well as a workable method; it contributed to the first major breakthrough in the black movement since the abolition of slavery. In 1968, national CNVA merged with WRL.

In the early sixties the League aided in setting up the Student Peace Union and Acts for Peace.

Indochina

Vietnam began to intrude upon the public consciousness in 1963. During the summer, WRL protested the anti-Buddhist terrorism of the US-supported Diem regime. In November 1964, the



WRL staff member David McReynolds speaking at the New York City rally as part of the nationwide demonstrations against the Vietnam war, December 19, 1964. Photo by Robert Joyce/National Guardian.

League publicized its position on the war: "We are for negotiation. We are for neutralization. But first of all, and most of all, we are for the immediate withdrawal of all US military forces and military aid. Not all peace groups have taken this position, but it is safe to predict that they will be forced by events to follow WRL's lead in this regard."

The League co-sponsored the first nationwide demonstration against the war in December 1964, and throughout the war years helped organize local and nationwide civil disobedience campaigns and mobilizations against the war. But the major thrust of the League's program was local organizing and trying to open avenues of protest for the anti-war movement at the grass roots. Between 1964 and 1973, the League's membership rose from 3000 to 15,000.* The new members brought with them new attitudes and new lifestyles. And the World War II resisters, who were so far ahead of their time, took heart as history began to catch up to them.

Especially influential in the new style of pacifism was the NY Workshop in Nonviolence (a joint WRL-CNVA project) and its publication *WIN*,

WIN
A publication of the New York
Workshop In Nonviolence



Volume 2, Number 1, January 15, 1966

20 cent

The first issue of WIN. January 15, 1966.

**These figures represent only the "active" membership.
From 1923 through the forties, membership was divided*

which originated in New York in 1965. WIN championed the new lifestyles and attempted to synthesize the most constructive elements of the counter-culture with the political insights of radical pacifism. Since 1967, it has been a WRL project (but independently structured) and has become the most widely read bi-weekly publication in the peace movement.

The League also promoted draft resistance, co-sponsoring the first anti-Vietnam War draft card burnings. While counseling conscientious objectors,



A. J. Muste presiding over draft card burning including WRL staff members David McReynolds and Marc Edelman, November 6, 1965. Photo by Neil Haworth.

WRL emphasized absolute resistance to the draft. It gave special support—moral, organizational, and financial—to the organized resistance movement. Starting in 1967, noncooperation with Selective Service led thousands of young men to return their draft cards to the Government at the risk of felony indictments.

The League also began to organize action campaigns on its own. The nonviolence aspects of Stop the Draft Week, which took place in New York and the San Francisco Bay Area in late 1967, were WRL actions and hundreds of people were arrested for nonviolently blocking induction centers. And in

into two categories: those who had "enrolled" and that portion of the enrolled who were "active" (i.e. regular contributors). Beginning in the fifties, the League kept track of and sent mailings only to those who were active.



Blockade of New York City's Whitehall Street Induction Center, December 5, 1967, at which 264 were arrested in this WRL-organized action. Photo by Dan Hemenway.

May 1971, the League was the only national peace organization to fully endorse the week-long May Day demonstrations, assigning a staff member to work full time with the May Day Tribe and to produce the tactical manual.

Because of these activities and others, in May 1969 the WRL office was broken into, files were strewn on the floor, and the addressograph was smashed. The only thing stolen was the mailing list. Though the perpetrators were never caught or identified, subsequent information has made it all



The WRL office, May 10, 1969. Photo by Maury Englander.

but certain that the Federal Bureau of Investigation was responsible. The FBI has maintained an active file on the League since 1939, has had informers at WRL meetings, placed taps on League phones, opened some mail, and has admitted breaking into other New York City-based anti-war offices in 1969.

A.J. Muste once pointed out that "the two decisive powers of the government with respect to war are the power to conscript and the power to tax." The paying of taxes amounts to tacit support of war. So, in 1966, to supplement resistance to the draft, the League and the Peacemakers began to promote resistance to the Federal excise tax on telephone service. WRL made tax resistance a major part of its program to the extent that a new staff member was added to deal with the mushrooming interest in nonpayment of not only the telephone tax but the income tax as well. In 1969, War Tax Resistance was formed to take over and expand the program the League developed, encouraging local chapters to spring up around the country. At the height of resistance to the Indochina War, it was estimated there were 200,000 telephone tax resisters and perhaps 20,000 income tax resisters. Tax resistance continues to be relevant and an imperative as long as so much of taxes go to the military.

In 1972 the League sponsored a nationwide boycott against ITT, a major war industry with popular consumer products (e.g. "Wonder Bread"). WRL initiated a simulated bombing and blockade of ITT in Manhattan, which attracted 4000 people. Three years later it was learned that



About 4000 people demonstrate in a WRL-initiated demonstration to protest ITT's involvement in Indochina war, May 10, 1972. Photo by John Goodwin.

ITT received FBI files on WRL before the demonstration and five other times in the past.

WRL developed Campaign Freedom, a program in which participants would "adopt" a South Vietnamese political prisoner and lobby (by extensive letter writing) on the prisoner's behalf. In 1973 WRL was one of the dozen or so founding organizations of the United Campaign which developed a program to continue opposing the Indochina War. And, finally, WRL helped organize the May 1975 "Celebration" of the war's end in New York's Sheep Meadow, Central Park—the site of the first major draft-card burning in 1967.

Amnesty for American draft and military resisters, and other political prisoners was another of the League's projects. WRL worked closely with the National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty to foster a climate in which amnesty could become a reality. Like other WRL programs, the amnesty project contained a range of activities, extending from lobbying, letter-writing, and vigiling to demonstrating with street theater and civil disobedience.

Disarmament and the Anti-Nuclear Movement

The ending of the Indochina War brought to a close a decade of WRL program and activity which was heavily dominated by Vietnam. Priority then shifted to disarmament and related issues.

In 1975 the League initiated the Continental Walk for Disarmament and Social Justice. A member of the national staff was released to work full time for over a year on the Walk, which began in San Francisco January 1976 and ended 3800 miles later in Washington, D.C., that October. The project, involving over 10,000 people, was comprised of 20 routes which fed into three main routes that entered Washington. The decentralist nature of



The Continental Walk heading towards the Pentagon, October 18, 1976. Photo by Larry Johnson.

the project was reflected in the network of organizers around the country who set up demonstrations linking their community issues with the national and international issues of the Walk.

As the first major disarmament project since before the beginning of the Vietnam War, the Walk sought not only to raise the need to refocus on disarmament, but to establish the inseparable link with economic and other social justice issues, strengthen local organizing, and lessen the isolation felt by many organizers around the country.

Following the Walk, League members played a

key role in the creation of a coalition which would continue to push for the elimination of nuclear weapons. In the Spring of 1977 the Mobilization for Survival (MfS) was formed with four goals: zero nuclear weapons, ban nuclear power, meet human needs, and stop the arms race.

WRL contributed staff time to the first major project of the Mobilization, the May 27, 1978 rally of 15,000 at the United Nations at the beginning of the UN Special Session on Disarmament. On June 12, 400 people were arrested as part of the WRL-initiated Sit-in for Survival which tried to blockade the US Mission to the UN.



WRL staff member Grace Hedemann being loaded on stretcher June 12, 1978, outside U.S. Mission. Photo by Paul Hestetos/New York Times.

In an effort to dramatize the disarmament and anti-nuclear issues, the League organized simultaneous civil disobedience actions in Moscow's Red Square and on the White House front lawn. The September 1978 actions resulted in world-wide publicity. The seven Red Square demonstrators were detained only briefly. However, the eleven arrested at the White House were convicted after a week-long trial and given a \$100 fine and a 6-month suspended sentence.

As the MfS was being organized, the anti-nuclear movement was undergoing a rebirth and dramatic growth. This time around there was a new element:

opposition was aimed primarily at nuclear power plants and the associated radiation hazards. The resurgence was in large part due to the dramatic April 30, 1977, civil disobedience organized by the Clamshell Alliance at the Seabrook, NH, nuclear power plant. Many WRL staff and members were among the 1415 arrested and jailed for two weeks



"New York City 339" affinity group (composed of WRL, WIN, and Catholic Worker folks) just before the 1977 occupation. Photo by Ed Hedemann.

in armories. The publicity of the occupation stimulated the formation of anti-nuclear "alliances" all over the country. Their formation in conjunction with the March 1979 accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant near Harrisburg, PA, created an effective movement which has put the nuclear industry on the defensive.

WRL national staff and members contributed significant time to the training, organizing, participation, and development of materials for many of the anti-nuclear occupations around the country (such as the 1978 Seabrook rally, the 1979 Shoreham occupation with 660 arrests, the blockade of the New York Stock Exchange where 1000 were arrested, and the 1980 Pentagon blockade with 600 arrests). In these efforts the League emphasis was on making clear the inseparable connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons. One of the most successful pieces of anti-nuclear materials created by WRL was the "Nuclear America" map, displaying and listing the more than 500 nuclear facilities in the United States. WRL members also aided in the training in nonviolence which inevitably preceded the occupations. Not since the civil rights movement has so much emphasis been placed on nonviolence.

Local Organizing

Since the late sixties, the League has seen a need to encourage formation of WRL local groups. The locals have the distinct advantage of bringing the pacifist message and League program to people around the country more effectively than mailings from the national office. League members can join together to study the application of nonviolence to all issues, and to actively demonstrate against war and its causes.

To aid local organizers, the national office has created the *WRL Organizer's Manual*, a number of action packets, the *WRL Organizer's Bulletin*, among other materials. In addition, WRL has held annual 2-week training programs for organizers, since 1972. The League makes available literature, films, and slide shows at a discount for local groups.

The network of some 15 local groups including 2 regional offices helps remove feelings of isolation among pacifists in many areas of the country. Such a network can also be called on from time to time to react in unison to a given crisis situation.

International

Less well known, but of real importance, is the League's international program which, through the War Resisters' International, maintains contact with sections in 18 countries and pacifists in 80 countries throughout the world. WRL is directly represented on the Council of WRI and helps coordinate non-violent work across national boundaries. Each year the League sends an American organizer to work with the WRI staff. In addition, the WRL is a member of the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace.

The League has had a special influence in the nonviolent revolutionary movement in Africa, and in 1953 raised funds to send a representative to what is now Ghana to explore nonviolent possibilities there. WRL was also involved in the establishment of the World Peace Brigade in 1961 and created a training center for nonviolence in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

In 1951, four League members participated in a bicycle trip across Europe calling on soldiers of all countries to lay down their weapons. Then in 1961 League members and staff participated in the CNVA San Francisco to Moscow Walk for Peace. And in 1968 the League sent two members to participate in a WRI-sponsored protest in the



Bill Sutherland, Ralph DiGia, David Dellinger, and Art Emery in Vienna during their attempt to bicycle from Paris to Moscow for disarmament, October 15, 1951.

Warsaw Pact capitals against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. In 1973 WRI sent delegates to Moscow for an international peace conference, who met with Soviet dissenters, were arrested in the GUM department store for handing out a Russian-language statement in support of dissent, and read a statement at the conference—a statement drafted by WRL staff and signed by leading anti-war Americans—defending the universal right of free expression. Finally in 1978, the WRL organized the simultaneous Moscow-Washington disarmament action, mentioned above.

Periodically, the League sends representatives to international conferences such as the 1949 World Pacifist Congress in India, and more recently, the 1974 Anti-Militarism Congress in Brussels and the 1976 International Women's Gathering in France, and the WRI Triennial Conferences held all over the world. In addition, WRL sent a contingent of 5 to participate in the 1977 Japanese anti-nuclear weapons march, which was followed by conferences in Hiroshima.

From time to time, the League has staged small actions at foreign consulates or airline offices opposing a nuclear test or in solidarity with dissenters.

Today and Tomorrow

With the return of draft registration for all male youth in 1980 (40 years after the first peacetime draft), the War Resisters League has shifted its energies into developing draft resistance materials, organizing demonstrations to disrupt the registration process, and speaking on the draft. In opposing the draft, the League makes clear its

opposition to the economic conscription of the All "Volunteer" Army, as well.

The League is participating in the 1980 Survival Summer project of the Mobilization for Survival: an effort to do community grass roots educational work on the nuclear, arms, and economic issues which threaten human existence. In addition, the WRL regional offices and local groups have developed their own programs. For example, WRL/West has initiated a project to convert the nuclear weapons lab facilities at the University of California at Berkeley. WRL Southeast has been involved in organizing and coalition work against the Klu Klux Klan in North Carolina. Both regional offices maintain strong feminism and nonviolence programs.

The educational component of the War Resisters League is manifested in several ways. Since 1945, the League has published *WRL News* on a bimonthly basis. WRL maintains a literature program of about 200 titles. The publication of the *WRL Peace Calendar* (annual sales of 20,000), with a different theme each year, is a major event and an important fund raiser. The League publishes other materials such as brochures, booklets, analyses of current events, political posters, WRL T-shirts, buttons, and organizing packets. Each year a national conference or several regional conferences are held. Annual



Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of the War Resisters League, August 1973. Photo by Grace Hedemann.

dinners are put together in New York and San Francisco. The national office (and sometimes the regional offices) offers a yearly 2-week training program for organizers. Among other educational/fund raising events, the WRL has organized a street fair in Greenwich Village with the Washington Square Church each fall since 1976.

The following task forces were set up to develop ideas and program for the League: disarmament/peace conversion, feminism, racism, classism, prisons, and nuclear power. Among the programs which have come out of these task forces was the 1974 Coalition on the Economic Crisis, the Prison Newsletter, a feminism and nonviolence packet, and the emphasis on and production of materials for counter-recruitment.

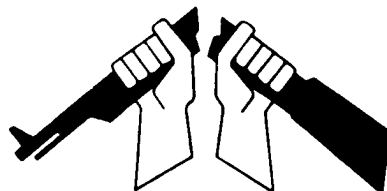
In the past sixty years, but especially since World War II, pacifist and nonviolence tactics have emerged as a central force in the American radical movement. But the nonviolent idea is still in its early stage and pacifists still have much to learn about its potential. As long as the threat of war remains—and violent eruptions occur throughout the world—the League will continue to work for the abolition of war, using the direct action and education techniques that were effective in the past.

Committed not only to war resistance, but also to the nonviolent removal of all causes of war, the League's outlook is particularly appropriate to the nation's—and the world's—needs of today: radical exploration and courageous change, disciplined by a rigorous commitment to nonviolence. To feel outrage and anger—only—is not enough; by themselves they frequently lead to actions which prove little more than one's frustration and inability to cope with political realities. What is needed, in addition to indignation, is our sharpest understanding and our deepest insights. These qualities are particularly exercised by the commitment to nonviolence.

This leads us to deal with processes and institutions rather than with human "enemies." This leads us to a vision of a global community in which there is action without hatred, revolution without guns, justice without prisons.

The War Resisters League is continuing its work to make the nonviolent way of life a political and social reality.

June 1980





The WRL contingent at the April 26, 1980, anti-nuclear rally in Washington, D.C. Photo by Karl Bissinger.



Nineteen members of the New York City WRL arrested for blocking the Armed Forces Day parade, May 12, 1979. Photo by Grace Hedemann.

War Resisters League
339 Lafayette Street
New York, N.Y. 10012
212-228-0450

The War Resisters League affirms that war is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive nonviolently for the removal of all causes of war.

Statement of Purpose

signed _____

- I support this statement and wish to enroll as a member of the War Resisters League
- Please send information on organizing for WRL.
- Enclosed is \$_____ for the work of the League.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Regional Offices:

WRL/West
85 Carl Street
San Francisco, CA
94117
415-731-1220

WRL/Southeast
604 West Chapel Hill St.
Durham, NC 27701
27701
919-682-6374

NATIONAL COMMITTEE†

Scott Abbott	Inuka Mwanguzi
Nanci Bower	Liz Rigali
Dorie Bunting	Vic Schumacher
Ann Davidon	Joanne Sheehan
Ruth Dear	Bobby Slovak
Clark Field	Tim Sperry
Larry Gara	Dorie Wilsnack
Diane Hampton	Beverly Woodward
Peter Klotz-Chamberlain	

†The NC is composed of these members elected at large, as well as the EC, and one representative from each WRL local group.

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Ralph DiGia	David McReynolds
Merriel Fish	Susan Pines
Ed Hedemann	Igal Roodenko

6/80 20M



The WRL National Committee, March 9, 1980. Photo by Karl Bissinger.

HOW TO OVERTHROW

the government

(and other un-American activities)

by the

C.I.A.

Want to learn how to overthrow the government? Need lessons in kidnapping and murder? The CIA can help round out your education. We've culled some of the juicier quotes from the CIA's recent "dirty tricks" manual designed to aid the contras in overthrowing the government of Nicaragua.

The contras are a military force dominated by former Nicaraguan National Guardsmen, the secret police of the Somoza dictatorship which was finally deposed by the present government in 1979. The Somoza government, which represented 14 families who owned most of the land in Nicaragua, was infamous for its brutal domestic policies -- which were supported by the U.S. government. The new Nicaraguan government includes social democrats, Catholics, labor and farmworker organizations, and yes, some Marxists.

We in the War Resisters League do not believe there is any justification for American dirty tricks, economic boycotts, or invasion threats. Seventy percent of the American people have already said they don't want war in Central America. Yet Congress has ignored our desires and funded a secret, undeclared war against the Nicaraguan people. The Congress has now approved "humanitarian" aid to the contra army -- aid which simply frees up other funds to buy guns and bullets.

The quotes below are taken from the CIA manual Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare. Copies of the complete manual are available in Spanish and English from the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

"Kidnap all officials or agents of the Sandinista government and replace them in 'public places' with military or civilian persons of trust to our movement."

"It is possible to neutralize carefully selected and planned targets, such as court judges, municipal judges, police and State Security officials, CDS chiefs, etc. For psychological purposes it is necessary to take extreme precautions, and it is absolutely necessary to gather together the population affected, so that they will be present, take part in the act, and formulate accusations against the oppressor."

"If, for example, it should be necessary for one of the advanced posts to have to fire on a citizen... explain that if that citizen had managed to escape, he would have alerted the enemy that is near the town or city, and they would carry out acts of reprisal such as rapes, pillage, destruction, captures, etc., in this way terrorizing the inhabitants of the place for having given attention and hospitalities to the guerrillas of the town."

"Set up ambushes, in order to delay the reinforcements in all the possible entry routes."

"Cut all outside lines of communication: cables, radio, messengers."

"If possible, professional criminals will be hired to carry out specific selective jobs."

"[Using] local and national history, make it clear that the Sandinista regime is 'foreignizing,' 'repressive,' and 'imperialistic,' and that even though there are some Nicaraguans within the government, point out that they are 'puppets' of the power of the Soviets and Cubans, i.e., of foreign power."

"When the enemy is equal in the number of its forces, there should be an immediate retreat, and then the enemy should be ambushed or eliminated by means of sharpshooters."

"Specific tasks will be assigned to others, in order to create a 'martyr' for the cause, taking the demonstrators to a confrontation with the authorities, in order to bring about uprisings or shootings which will cause the death of one or more persons, who would become the martyrs, a situation that should be made use of immediately against the regime, in order to create greater conflicts."

"A guerrilla armed force always involves implicit terror because the population, without saying it aloud, feels terror that the weapons may be used against them. However, if the terror does not become explicit, positive results can be expected"

In a revolution, the individual lives under a constant threat of physical damage. If the government police cannot put an end to the guerrilla activities, the population will lose confidence in the government, which has the inherent mission of guaranteeing the safety of citizens. However, the guerrillas should be careful not to become an explicit terror, because this would result in a loss of popular support."

"Shock troops. These men should be equipped with weapons (knives, razors, chains, clubs, bludgeons) and should march slightly behind the innocent and gullible participant. They should carry their weapons hidden. They will enter into action only as 'reinforcements,' if the guerrilla agitators are attacked by the police. They will enter the scene quickly, violently and by surprise, in order to distract the authorities, in this way making possible the withdrawal or rapid escape of the inside commando."

"The comandantes will remember that this type of operation such as the Fifth Column which was used in the first part of the Second World War, and that through infiltration and subversion tactics allowed the Germans to penetrate the target countries before the invasions. They managed to enter Poland, Belgium, Holland and France in a month and Norway in a week. The effectiveness of this tactic has been clearly demonstrated in several wars and can be used effectively by the Freedom Commandos."

The activities enumerated above, endorsed and recommended by the CIA are in direct violation of the following laws:

1. **US Statutory Law.** The Boland Amendment of 1984 specifically forbids the use of U.S. funds "for the purpose of overthrowing the Nicaraguan Government."
2. **US Constitution.** Article VI, Section 2 states that we are bound by all treaties that our Congress ratifies. Further, these treaties have the force of law and are to be respected and followed as absolutely as any law that Congress enacts.
3. **International Law.** Congress has ratified more than ten treaties and conventions which prohibit CIA terrorist activities described above. For example, the Organization of American States Charter prohibits in Art. 18 and 19 intervention in the internal affairs of another American national by any "coercive" military, political or economic means; the Convention on Terrorism prohibits the use of terrorist tactics by any nation.

This leaflet was prepared and distributed by the War Resisters League affinity group