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FCI Danbury
(By proxy)

To: Participants in Rally

I do not know if you have been allowed to come here today, nor - unless you are very numerous, very noisy, and very nearby - am I likely to know if you are here now. But I am thinking of you today, and I am gladdened by the thought of your presence, just as I am gladdened by the presence here of Russell Ford and Gary Sachs, though I am presently unable to communicate with either.

I hope you will not ask that I be given special treatment as a political prisoner, or that I be freed unless all here are freed. The special treatment - much more comfortable and much more isolated - which I am receiving was neither my choice nor my desire, but was imposed by prison administrators who feared what would happen to them if they allowed anything to happen to me, to Russell, or to any other prisoner with as much support and interest on the outside as us. But the status of "prisoner" in an inherently political one, and I hope you will ask, as I do, that all prisons be abolished, all prisoners freed.

I hope that your gathering today will be a celebration. That prison administrators fear us and fear nonviolence is sad, is silly, and is a sign of our success. I - you - we are a threat to the government. I have refused to register. You have the right to refuse to register. We have prevented reinstatement of the draft. This is a victory easy to lose sight of, in our fear and (perhaps) imprisonment, but it is a victory nonetheless, to be savored and to be celebrated.

Your right to refuse to register is not a legal right; it is not guaranteed by law. Law is might, not right, and it guarantees legal wrongs. Your right to refuse to register is your illegal right, your de facto right. We guarantee this right to each other by our numbers, by our solidarity, by our speaking out. We have the right to refuse to register. We can exercise this right, and we can assure each other that the government cannot punish any of us for the exercise of this right without our consent.

Exercise your right. Do not be frightened by what has happened to us. We are here for speaking and not for nonregistration. What has happened to us is not a threat to any of you.

Yours in peace,

Edward John Hasbrouck