Reflections of Leonard Stark on CPS and the Draft

The war was over but congress was considering whether to continue the draft. I was so against the draft that I spent most of my time off visiting the pastors of the Evangelical and Reformed Church informing them about the draft and urging them to have their congregations contact their congressmen…

A number of us said that if the draft was extended we would walk out of CPS. The government was very slow in discharging us from CPS, even when most of the drafted soldiers were discharged. In mid-May, 1946, Congress extended the draft, so a group of us sent our draft cards to General Hershey telling him where they could contact us, but that we would have nothing more to do with the draft numbers. Numbers of us did it, and said we would have nothing more to do with a draft. We just left. Ten or fifteen years ago, before the hospital closed, it was learned that a patient had gone into the building where we lived and destroyed papers, including our records.

After two years there, on May 15, 1946, I left Byberry with my few possessions and spent the night with my cousins west of Philadelphia. That night I felt as free and unafraid as I have ever felt. I had lived up to my convictions.

Excerpted with permission from Men of Peace: World War II Conscientious Objectors, Editor, Mary Hopkins, Publisher, Producciones de la Hamaca, 2010, p. 128.