

Jane Fonda Wins Bout With IRS

By Jack Anderson

Petite but pugnacious Jane Fonda has won her share of scratching matches with the armed forces, the FBI and other bastions of government.

The latest to feel her claws is the Internal Revenue Service, which at first revoked and then hastily reinstated a tax exemption for her favorite antiwar charity.

The sheepish tax authorities secretly reversed themselves, we have learned, to avoid having to tell Jane how she and her friends were tailed, tapped and spied upon.

The government has developed a strange paranoia about little Miss Fonda, whose political ideas are unpopular in the ruling circles. Given the "plumber" mentality of government, the appropriate agencies began keeping her under surveillance.

Not that she tried to hide her activities. On the contrary, the angry actress did her utmost to keep in the spotlight. But intrepid FBI agents carefully taped her remarks on coast-to-coast television shows and then stamped the transcripts "Top Secret. No Foreign Dissemination. No Dissemination Abroad. Controlled Dissemination. For Background Use Only."

FBI agents also sat in the audience while she staged her antiwar performances. Her FBI file is stuffed with criti-

ques of the same performance by several different sets of FBI agents.

They also grabbed her private bank accounts, without the legal formality of obtaining a subpoena. Upon her arrival home from abroad once, she was detained on phony charges long enough for customs agents to confiscate and photocopy her private papers.

To promote her militant views, she joined other antiwar activists in sponsoring the tax-exempt United States Servicemen's Fund, which depended heavily on donors who give only to tax-exempt organizations. The fund put up money to defend dissident GIs, to open pacifist coffee houses and to finance underground military newspapers.

This outraged the IRS, which served written notice upon the fund that its tax exemption was in jeopardy because it supported GIs "who oppose the Vietnam war and the use of conscription," not to mention "GI newspapers (which) cultivate dissent in the military."

The IRS forthwith began an investigation not only of Jane Fonda but of other show people who had entertained GIs at coffee houses and had staged benefits for the fund. Among those who suddenly found themselves in tax trouble were Dick Gregory and Elliot Gould.

Burglars reportedly acting under the aegis of a law-en-

forcement agency also ransacked the fund's files. The stolen documents were accepted by the House Committee on Internal Security, which printed names of the fund's contributors.

Once this dubious groundwork had been laid, IRS Commissioner Johnnie Walters revoked the fund's tax exemption. Under federal court rules, the fund demanded all records "reflecting wire or electronic surveillance" by the FBI, IRS or other government agencies against Jane Fonda, Dr. Benjamin Spock, retired Brig. Gen. H. R. Hester and other pacifist sponsors.

The fund also insisted upon access to the "impounded" files of ex-White House aides H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, Charles W. Colson, former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans. The purpose was to show that the government had been hounding Fonda and Co. and that the IRS action, therefore, was purely political.

Faces with the possible exposure of more White House horrors, the administration passed down the word quietly to kill the case. Accordingly, the servicemen's fund got a short private note a few days ago from IRS official George Alberts.

If the Fonda group would drop their case with its embar-

rassing demands for data on eavesdropping and skullduggery, offered the official, the IRS would restore the fund's tax exemption.

Footnote: The IRS claims the servicemen's fund case was handled strictly "under established procedures." The fund's defense, meanwhile, is being handled by a former IRS chief counsel, Mitch Rogovin, backed by the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Oil Talk—The oil industry is worried about its tarnished image . . . Amoco, deciding to throw reinforcements behind Johnny Cash, trained about 35 executives last month for appearances before newsmen . . . Oil industry sources have told us 14 gas-guzzling corporate jets, which whisked executives to the American Petroleum Institute's annual meeting in Houston last November, were quietly removed from the airport there. The executives, many of whom have foresworn the use of their private jets during the fuel crisis, apparently feared the jets would be spotted . . . API has published a small cookbook called "for the energy-conscious chef." But with recipes for crawfish etouffee, court-bouillon Louisiana and other expensive delicacies, it's not likely to help many energy-conscious chefs outside the oil farts themselves.

1974, United Feature Syndicate