

Building FORA

And the Surrender of Ed Sowders

Tod and I immediately responded to the set-back in Paris with a flurry of activity to ride the short lived media interest stimulated by the banning, and forestall attempts by our principal critics to, in the self-aggrandizing rhetoric of Dee Charles Knight, “dispose of Safe Return.” That we were not overly dismayed by such threats is apparent in the letter Tod dispatched at the beginning of March to our west coast contact, Linda Alband. Writing that he assumed “[Sailor] John has filled you in on all the gory details,” Tod chose to stress instead the “positive aspects” of having a “shake-out.” With considerable understatement, he writes “there’s no point in pretending any longer... that AMEX and its (few) allies are in solidarity with our practice...” Far from taking a serious hit, Tod wrote, the opposite was true. “We’re getting good support here, politically and financially....”

As for the outlook of the campaign overall, we had cause for some optimism, or so I wrote one \$300 donor, suggesting that “the harsh treatment given the amnesty question by Mr. Nixon cannot help but generate support for our cause.” Safe Return, and the resistance community it promoted, were clearly seen by our left-of-center constituency as the victims of the government’s dastardly repression, and this had caused a spike in contributions, some of which were needed to cover travel agent penalties to redeem tickets for the aborted U.S. delegation to Paris. But that was water over the dam. “We’re moving ahead,” Tod wrote Linda.

Following Lot’s wisdom, not his wife’s, we seldom looked back. Tod did attempt to repair his relationship with Gerry Condon, however. He had quickly gotten off a letter to

Gerry's partner, Sandy Rutherford, "opening up a question that I know has irritated both you and Gerry." Several weeks earlier while in Toronto, Tod had asked Dee Knight if the money for airfare to Paris could be safely sent to Gerry, since some unsubstantiated allegation still lingered in his mind about rumors of fiscal mismanagement while Gerry was in Sweden. Tod had asked Knight to "keep my question in confidence. Unfortunately," Tod relayed to Rutherford, "he saw fit to do otherwise."

Knowing Tod it was clear to me that his expression of continued warm feelings toward both Sandy and Gerry in what must have been a difficult letter to write, demonstrates both sincerity and regret. Nevertheless, this attempt to heal the breach, with Tod urging that they needn't "let my indiscretion drive unnecessary barriers between us," proved a wasted effort. Given Gerry's personal inclination toward vanguard-style politics, and his concrete involvement with the exile scene in Canada, his natural alliance was with AMEX and not Safe Return. And then, of course, that "slanderous and hurtful" comment about Condon in Jim Reston's book, which Gerry finally learned of now that *The Amnesty of John David Herndon* was in print, sealed the matter.¹ [tk: Gerry's recent ltr.]

The interruption of inter-group communications lasted barely two weeks before an outline of the "shake-out" Tod predicted began to sharpen. It was clear as we entered this new phase that neither Tod nor I was much troubled over future relations, not just with AMEX, but the other amnesty activists as well. We'd happily work with almost any of them again as we contemplated new ways to dramatize the issue, keep it before the public, beard the Pentagon and the White House where we could. There would be no renewed attempt at coalition building.

UP From Exile, we assumed, would remain our principal point of contact with the expatriate community, while George Carrano, now free to end his exile if he so chose, hovered in

the wings as a possible addition to the Safe Return staff in New York. And yet, even the trusted channel from Sweden had gone quiet in the weeks since Paris, despite Tod and I having written George and Lew Simon almost immediately to reaffirm our presumed affinity. When a note from UP finally arrived mid-month, apologizing “for the long delay in getting a report off to you,” it was terse, somewhat business like, but not unfriendly in its political intentions.

In the wake of the failed exile conference, Simon and Carrano had themselves become of more intense interest to the international media, thus further legitimizing UP as the public face of American exiles in Sweden where the policy of subsidized sanctuary for deserters was about to undergo a major shift. The two UP leaders, breathing the air of organizational success, now approached Tod and me on a more equal footing. They wrote of how they “planned to remain in close contact” with the group in Britain, and that “even Fritz Efav turned out much better than we thought,” an observation of scant interest to us. George would “definitely be going over for the [ACLU’s] Washington conference.” As for the Susan George letter, they’d handled it as dismissively as we had, “with a short note thanking her for the work she did on behalf of the conference, and clarifying her misconceptions.”

UP also reported a boost in ready funds, including a much delayed \$600 from Clergy and Laity Concerned. CALC, as it was known, was a creature of the very liberal National Council of Churches, created to attract the high minded church-going gentry with pacifist leanings to its “moderate forms of protest that avoided the stigma of radical antiwar organizations.”² As a group oriented toward supporting objection to service in the Vietnam War, CALC had committed itself to providing a modest yearly stipend for the exile’s social and political work in Sweden. But the disbursements were irregular, and depended on whether or not the resisters’ political behavior in a given period met with CALC’s approval. Often it did not.

But CALC now served as a co-convenor of the ACLU's upcoming amnesty conference, which, its organizers believed, would require wide scale resister participation for its legitimacy. Thus CALC reopened the spigot to Sweden, and even promised an additional \$600 "in the near future." Tod and I knew, and had clashed with, CALC director Dick Fernandez in an earlier coalition in the preliminary organizing stages of the Winter Soldier War Crimes Investigation two years before. And we would clash with one CALC principal or another in the amnesty campaign - in particular Gold Star mother Louise Ransom - when on several occasions they demanded that we leave the organizing of resister family members to them.

The abbreviated report from UP exhibited ambivalence toward Safe Return. But as long as our successes remained ascendant, and in the absence of any deep grievances toward Tod or me, as was the case with AMEX, Lew and George had apparently decided to maintain the status quo. This was expressed indirectly in the letter's final line: "The situation with AMEX became very clear in Paris, and in this matter we are 100% behind Safe Return."

In this matter...

Around that same time we received an illuminating letter from Sailor John McGarrity on VVAW's reaction to the Paris melodrama. "From the tone of voice and pointed questions" of one staffer he spoke with in the group's Chicago, now national, office, "it was obvious that AMEX's slime had gotten to him." What VVAW's eventual orientation would be to the amnesty issue, Sailor could not say, but they had set up tentative meetings with both AMEX and the CAMP News GI project "to discuss the banning and their feelings toward redoing the conference," an option, as I have emphasized, in which Safe Return had zero investment.

It was a Saturday, March 17th as I sat alone in the office and responded briefly to Sailor John, mailing off the packet of Safe Return and FORA materials he requested. I used most of the

page to vent my pique about a Movement “strategy session” scheduled that same afternoon “to consider on-going activities now that *the war is over* (emphasis original).

One of the issues to be discussed is amnesty; the principal (almost miswrote principled) speaker will be D.C. Knight. Since Tod (and Pam) are away on vacation... and Tommy [Michaud - apparently still on the scene in New York] with his family in Connecticut, that leaves me alone in the office. I’m not about to go down to NYU Law School and get involved in a dueling match with Mr. Amnesty. Especially where there is nothing at stake. Let *them* all meet to death. They’re good at that.

Clearly my grapes were still on the sour side where Knight was concerned, and my aversion toward the guy so strong that I couldn’t stand the sight of him. The meeting itself certainly had legitimate, perhaps even urgent, purposes. Combating the >post-war’ myth was a universal concern among Movement activists, and each group or constellation of co-thinkers had its own ideas about how to address it, such was the collective anxiety that the Vietnamese struggle for reunification was stalled, if not set back, by the Peace Accords. I certainly doubted seriously if the groups at this particular meeting would ever find a creative way to bring the amnesty issue to the public or the press. Yet, undeniably, the official peace between the invader and the invaded in Vietnam had immediate repercussions for Americans in exile. As Sailor John added in a pencil-scratched afterthought at the bottom of his letter,

George and Lew send word that 2 GIs attempting to S-R [by which he meant >self-retire,’ not >safe return’] the first week of March, were turned back at Malmo. One was sent directly back to Germany, and the whereabouts of the other was unknown. Sweden has made it clear they are aware of the large

numbers of S-R vets [deserters] stranded by recent Canadian policy change, want no influx. Situation unclear.

In fact, the situation was abundantly clear. The two governments, Canada and Sweden, with overwhelming popular support in both countries, had for a decade offered refuge to American military resisters because they opposed the U.S. involvement in the war, not because they supported the broader agenda of the G.I. resistance. The politicized discontent within the military would not be fully extinguished until the last of the disgruntled wartime resisters, now denied the option of exile, was replaced over many months following Nixon's order of January 27, 1973 to abolish the draft and transition to an all-volunteer force. Ending conscription was the first lesson learned after the disaster of Vietnam by the American foreign and military policy establishments. In removing the principal thorn from the heels of the draft aged youth, no longer requiring their service in the armed forces, and relying thereafter on a much reduced force of economically induced recruits, the grit of popular resistance was removed from the machinery of war.

By the middle of March, media interest in the banning had completely waned. The Watergate break-in was by then already a major distraction for media and public alike. Still, what continued to stir on-going interest in amnesty, and keep it even marginally in the news, was the immoderate hostility Richard Nixon expressed around the topic during the media's extended coverage in early 1973, from February 12 to April 1, the time it took to repatriate the almost 600 American POWs from their prisons in Hanoi and other parts of South East Asia.

Since late 1969 the Nixon Administration had placed government-sponsored family members of our imprisoned combatants up-front in a massive PR campaign to camouflage the principal war aim of the United States by politicizing the discussion of prisoner exchange in

peace negotiations with the North Vietnamese. As was much commented in contemporary reporting at the time, it appeared to many Americans that we were fighting in Vietnam, not for the purpose of preserving the independence of our South Vietnam client state, but to secure the return of our prisoners.

Despite the unpopularity of the war, and the general consensus that, minimally, the U.S. had been misguided in its pursuit, Nixon was successful in whipping up public opposition to amnesty by contrasting the heroic sacrifices of the POWs to what he consistently characterized as the cowardice of those who had shirked their duty and fled to Canada.” Members of the media never tired of goading the easily provokable and unstable demagogue, and now with Watergate despite his recent landslide reelection, the suddenly vulnerable politician in the White House. Reporters continued to pressure Nixon publically, inquiring if, in the interest of reconciling the war-divided nation after the Peace Accords, the return of one set of victims didn't require the repatriation of the other?

A defiant president took the challenge head-on at a March 2nd press conference, daring amnesty's supporters to seek a vote in Congress, since it is that institution and not the Executive Branch which has the power to declare a universal pardon. Nixon blustered, although quite accurately that, even a bill offering the most humiliating terms requiring that each resister plead for clemency and perform punitive service, would be defeated hands down. In a postwar atmosphere, Operation Freedom, the adroitly choreographed return of the POWs, was the final episode of the Vietnam War that commanded the attention of an exhausted public, temporarily cheered by the mass spectacle of the prisoners being reunited with their families. Thus, the public mood was to apply the spirit of forgetfulness, not to the war resisters, but to itself.³

At Safe Return we readily acknowledged, and widely expressed in our internal documents, that the prospects for amnesty had never seemed less encouraging. Yet, it was in all the hoopla surrounding the returning POWs that we located our best hopes for continuing that struggle. We would take our lead from the POW campaign. In the article calling for the creation of Families of Resisters for Amnesty (FORA) that appeared in the pre- Paris conference edition of AMEX magazine, we had argued,

Let us consider the work of the POW/ MIA (pro-war) groups that have been so active for the past two years. While they have enjoyed the important advantage of a friendly government providing an imprimatur of legitimacy and logistical support (free plane travel, Ross Perot's \$\$\$, etc.) the organization's greatest asset has been the credibility that the wives and children of the POWs have enjoyed. The deep personal connection to the captive pilots invests their words with enormous emotional and political impact. Even those totally opposed to the bombing the... [POW's] were engaged in when captured cannot ignore the sincerity and credibility that comes through. Certainly families of resisters would be able to reach some of the same Americans by virtue of their equal sincerity.

This plan had been on our agenda for several months, and we now directed all our energies to its implementation. Shifting from the goal of mobilizing resisters themselves, we would now organize their family members to speak out, and demand amnesty on their behalf. FORA was to be the centerpiece for much of what we would accomplish throughout the remainder of 1973.

Since Paris, we were advancing rapidly on several fronts: we established FORA's "Washington Office," a loose structure for resister family members to visit their congressional representatives, and staffed by Gene Williams, a former brig mate of Tom Michaud's at Camp

Lejeune; we assembled a working collective that, along with Tod and I, included a rotating cast of several others, and crisscrossed the country to recruit FORA members and present them to their local media; we organized and funded an *ad hoc* hearing on Capitol Hill chaired by Congresswoman Bela Abzug where family members of resisters, not activists or experts, provided the testimony; and finally, we carried out the public surrender of Eddie Sowders, a Vietnam veteran deserter who'd been living underground in Detroit, where he operated cautiously as the local contact for VVAW, and who would become one of Safe Return's closest collaborators. This was our spring line-up, and it would only carry us into late May.

Unlike John Herndon and Tommy Michaud, Eddie Sowders had more fully politicized his experiences in Vietnam, and was already a steadfast antiwar activist before we met him. Eddie was a self-starter, a thoughtful guy, college material under more favorable circumstances, but largely an autodidact through his own reading. He grew up in a white inner city ghetto of migrants from the hills of Appalachia who'd followed industrial jobs north to the cities of the Great Lakes region, like Detroit. From the looks of the Sowders' home, which I visited once, located in the shadow of the old Tiger Stadium, Ed's dad, a disabled World War Two veteran, didn't have one of those decent paying factory jobs. What he had was an alcohol problem, a tough wife named Lora, and the eight children she had borne him. Ed was the oldest. At eighteen he gave up on school and enlisted in the Army. He'd unsuccessfully resisted being tracked into vocational training, where he dreamed of "schools of law, medicine," as he would write in an Op Ed column that ran in *The New York Times* under the pseudonym Lewis Parker.⁴ I don't recall who wrote this piece, how much was Tod and, how much Eddie himself. The writing is fluid enough. But it's poorly organized, and hard to follow. The narrative jumps back and forth between a victim's pleading for relief, and a polemic about the war. The clearest lines

toward the end do integrate these two themes, when Eddie states that, Amy situation, and that of tens of thousands like me, becomes ever more intolerable. We are not criminals to be locked up by the same military and civilian leaders who conceived and directed the genocidal Vietnam War. I reject their assertions that they can judge me.” But, however this Op Ed came to be composed, it could have been a lot better. It’s not even that reliable as biography.

I had already known directly from Eddie that he’d been in Vietnam during the war’s early years, in >66 as a medic, which makes sense. You just had to look around his old neighborhood to see where his nurturing social conscience had come from, not to mention his role as second parent to seven younger siblings. Eddie reacted to Vietnam the way I did, the way so many of us did. It horrified him, and he rejected it. And now he fought against it. In the Op Ed he wrote about a scheme he’d dreamed up for bringing the antiwar message back to the GIs still in Nam. So, as implausibly as it sounds, Eddie re-enlisted in the Army and volunteered for a second tour with a vague plan of creating an antiwar GI news service. He may have expected a return to hospital duty, like his first tour, a more favorable environment for his political enterprise. The Army assigned him to Thailand instead. Back in Detroit on leave, four days from departure, and by now completely disaffected, Eddie took off the uniform and deserted to Canada. After months of direct involvement with the antiwar movement in Toronto, unable to adapt to exile life, he slipped back into Detroit. 1973 began the third year of Eddie Sowders’ underground existence.

There was another item in the *Times* of this period, an editorial which placed the paper cautiously and conditionally in the pro-amnesty column.⁵ Apparently New York’s Republican Junior Senator, James Buckley, whose light was as dull as his brother William’s shined brightly, had made an off-the-cuff public comment at a POW photo-op about “amnesty being morally

objectionable and historically unprecedented.” He was, the *Times* opined, “wrong on both counts,” and the editorial writer went on to enumerate the many instances of amnesties granted in U.S. history, beginning with Washington’s full pardon for the Whiskey rebels. Predictably, the *Times* drew a sharp distinction” between those who resisted the draft and “those who deserted from the armed forces,” on the grounds that the former “helped convince the nation it was wrong to pursue the war.”

The true nature and significance of the G.I. resistance was lost on most of the pontificators who staffed the daily news media, those guardians of middle brow conventional wisdom operating under editorial discipline who clearly feared the face of the untutored mob, among whom, without deeper investigation, they numbered the despised deserters. It is strange therefore to see that the one rare and truly intelligent response outside Movement circles to the plight of the deserters-as-resisters was articulated by a Washington attorney named Richard P. Alder with ties to the military establishment who reviewed Jim Reston’s book mid-March in the *Sunday New York Times*.⁶

The review is long, well over 1,500 words, and Alder uses a few of them to disparage the quality of the author’s effort. “Reston,” he writes, “has come up short of the last word on the exiled resisters,” and because the Army on a legal technicality avoided John’s trial - with its promised Nuremberg defense - Reston’s “tale suddenly loses its momentum and goes slack.” It is “obviously a very timely book,” but alas “a poignant illustration of the risks assumed by the literary activist who has had little time to capture his subject and, knowing its current value, rushes an unfinished work into print.” The one positive Alder finds is that the book “commends itself by being nearly the first giving a sympathetic reader a close and moving glimpse of the deserter’s predicament.”

Was Squire Alder, whose ID line credits him as a scholar of public law, and publisher of the *Military Law Reporter*, “a sympathetic reader?” Indeed he was. Once he’s put Reston’s “literary activism” in its place, Alder follows with a highly intelligent, well-written commentary on the merits of the deserters’ claim to the status of resistance, which is not without sympathy, but is mostly noteworthy for the facts and perceptions that only a establishment military insider could bring to the subject.

Alder begins his argument with the matter-of-fact observation that “Herndon... is a fair approximation of the Army’s own statistical profile of the average deserter - a high school dropout, roughly 22 years old, who serves for 20 months before breaking free.” From that point, “the endless manipulations and minor treacheries suffered by unsuccessful soldiers like Herndon... [left him] a blunted victim of the war, whose only hope lies in repatriation.” And, yet, Alder confirms, Herndon is also something more than a “blunted victim.”

We see through Herndon’s account, how deep abhorrence for war can develop from a hatred, one by one, of its component parts, and why this objection is bound to be expressed in terms less abstract than we usually expect in listening for the sounds of conscience.

Moreover, because the “Vietnam mobilization never [drew] deeply on manpower reserves, and, until the 1970s, generally exempt[ed] those with education or occupational deferments,” Alder bluntly labels “the war effort... more than usually class-biased.” I do not recall taking in either the sympathy or subtlety of Alder’s review at the time it appeared - we all no doubt reacted only to his pan of Reston’s book. I am certain I did not hear the echo of Safe Return’s

most sacred belief, and which Alder clearly implied, that the fundamental element separating military from draft resisters was class, not conscience.

To assess the true consequences of this “class biased” distinction around “conscience,” Alder goes on to examine the differential in scale between the two categories of resisters. “432,000 desertions recorded by the Pentagon during the 1962-72 period,” he argues, “takes on meaning when compared to the fewer than 10,000 convicted of draft related offenses in the same period.” Alder sees this meaning clearly in the “spectacular level of desertion (79,027) in 1971 alone... [which] testifies amply that during this period the military was ravaged by something more serious than a rash of common criminality.” Such epidemic levels of desertion could not logically be separated from the wide scale antiwar feelings among the soldiers themselves. And yet, as Alder wearily predicts, “the editorialists of *The New York Times* favorable to amnesty... will continue to pass over the deserter, and on to the draft refuser, whose more articulate position they understand and respect.”

To his peers among military professionals who might consider that amnesty for deserters would undermine “resilience” in the post-Vietnam armed forces, Alder offers the comforting, if underappreciated, historical fact that “early leniency” granted through “enlightened” amnesties in the United States of the 18th and 19th centuries did not “evoke domestic recrimination and compromise the discipline of future armies.”

Neither logic nor precedent will likely bring an “early” resolution to the amnesty question, Alder correctly observes, because Nixon’s vehemence “leaves the country without affirmative leadership on the most important remaining issue of the war.” Vietnam divides the nation still, and Alder at his most subtle reflects that we cannot soon “hope to forget offenses of

conscience when, as a nation, we have not yet understood and accepted fully the reasons why conscience rebelled.”

There is no doubt that Jim Reston - prince of the trade, dad an icon at the *Times*, elder brother a star reporter in LA - was upset by this face-losing review. In re-reading the book after many decades - with no claim of objectivity - I judge it a decent piece of work, and of broader application to the exile experience than Mr. Alder credits; not to mention a great resource for this, my own account of those times. I suspect Tod and I were somewhat mollified by Alder’s two references to *Safe Return*, in neutral to favorable language, knowing that our donors would be impressed and our detractors discomforted. But the book did not sell well. And I would venture that the bad notice in the *Times*, despite the immeasurable usefulness of Alder’s perspective to our side of the amnesty debate among the paper’s cosmopolitan readership, was largely responsible for its poor showing.⁷

A much more favorable appraisal appeared a week later in the nation’s less influential Sunday literary review, the *Washington Post’s Book World*.⁸ With fulsome praise reviewer Thomas J. Cottle, an MIT academic, anoints *The Amnesty of John David Herndon* as “compelling, thoughtful, compassionate... an important landmark of the amnesty question.” And while Cottle does not engage the subject deeply like Alder, he does award well-deserved kudos to Reston for his activist advocacy, and stubborn adherence to “his case against the American government for its position on war crimes and its role in the war.” Reston would continue to hustle his book well into the summer, placing excerpts in a number of small market dailies, and lecturing wherever he or *Safe Return* could contract a gig. At *Safe Return* the book, henceforth, would serve as premium for donors who contributed above a certain level.

Mindful of the rise in chauvinism stirred by the celebration of the POW's return, but, in a state of heightened political engagement nonetheless, I wrote George Carrano that we may be entering "an almost tangible period of reaction, but, personally I feel an upsurge of confidence, and an outpouring of energy." I observed that "the media at this moment sees the mere mention of amnesty as a taboo." The reactive tide during the POWs' return had been strong enough, I remarked, to cause CBS to cancel a televised performance of David Rabe's *Sticks and Bones*, the play Joseph Papp of the New York Public Theater, when looking back, called the best thing he'd ever produced. I think I found that censorship of Rabe, at the peak of his career, genuinely shocking and completely unexpected. "All Power to the POWs," was my airy wisecrack to Carrano.

I did confide to George, who I was writing directly for the first time since Paris - my letter crossing in the mails with UP's report to Safe Return - about being "really fatigued for almost three weeks on my return to the states... physically and psychologically depressed." If this was not mere posturing, however deflated I felt by the failure in Paris, I'm sure my inner conflicts were well defended, and that I had hardly taken to my bed or reduced my work load. Now, fully revived, I could admit to being shaken up to the one guy who had shared that traumatic moment when we were handed the order banning the conference. I also updated George on our most immediate plans for ad hoc hearings in D.C., chaired by Congresswoman Abzug around the testimony of FORA members. I stressed that we hoped to "make the hearings real, as well as exciting." When I joined the word "exciting" to Safe Return our closest comrades like George Carrano knew exactly what I was talking about, a hint at another dramatic surrender.

In closing this letter I refer - without details - to an incident or incidents that transpired between George and me in Paris. “On a personal level,” I wrote, “I have yet to sort out the conflicts between you and me during that week.” I then dismissed the “differences as superficial, essentially stylistic,” and urged again that George “continue to give serious consideration to returning as soon as possible... to help wage the amnesty struggle here... We need people with whom we share a sense of long-range solidarity.” I signed off with “Amy warmest regards,” apparently as yet of a mind that the basis, not just for collaboration, but friendship, still existed despite what I imagine, but only vaguely remember, had been disagreements expressed too rigidly between two self-regarding and headstrong young men.

While re-reading this letter, I did manage to dislodge one anecdotal memory of those under-documented days with George Carrano in Paris. The moment occurred in the dining room of La Coupole, the famous café in Montparnasse with romantic associations to the Parisian writing life. I ordered steak tartar, a dish popular in my family of German Americans, and which I could once produce at table as a waiter in Clyde’s, a popular watering hole in Washington’s Georgetown neighborhood. Carrano ordered the same. When the raw meat was placed before him, he appeared shocked and sent it back to be cooked. His histrionic gesture struck me as comedic, but preconceived. I didn’t buy it then, and I have since concluded that George was in rebellion against his own refinement, not intellectual, but cultural, needing to always come across as a product of some mean street from one of New York’s provincial boroughs. I had long thought it was Brooklyn, but in fact it was the Bronx. George certainly affected an acetic manner in contrast to Tod’s and my more sensual metropolitanism.

The tin ear of institutional conscience turned toward on-going criticism of the war suggested an intentional act of obliteration. The State was ready to move on; the Movement wasn't. But the lull in the media's interest in amnesty was short lived, pegged, as it was, to the fading euphoria surrounding the return of the POWs. And where antiwar forces remained fully mobilized, interest in amnesty expanded rapidly. More and more antiwar groups and local peace committees seemed to grasp daily the issue's significance for repackaging our ongoing opposition to Vietnam, and for making use of this new channel through which the media would still entertain that message.

And the source to which many Movement entities turned for information was located at 156 Fifth Avenue in New York City. From the many inquires in the Safe Return files of March 1973 I jotted down a random sampling, to include the Peace and Freedom Association of Tucson, the Middlesex New Jersey Peace Center, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom [WILPF] headquarters in Philadelphia, the Unconditional Amnesty League of Potsdam, NY and the Committee of Concern of Bethlehem, PA.

We always sought to dispatch requests for information promptly, enclosing whatever brochures or press clips communicated our campaign focus of the moment, or which gave an account of our most recent public success. There was little attempt to establish contact with most of these groups, whose names and addresses were transferred to labels for future mailings. Safe Return's primary orientation, as I think Tod and I both understood more confidently than ever, was to promote amnesty on a national scale through the mass media, not to attempt to coordinate grassroots efforts where activists may or may not have found it productive to apply our tactics and materials to local conditions. Ours was a unique role in the amnesty division of

labor, and one which, as I have much commented already, served to both motivate and delight us.

Tod was now back in the office, and we spent the last week of March drafting a serious response to a position paper being circulated by Camp News, which argued that the call for amnesty be replaced with a demand for repatriation. We obviously disagreed. That position was already a dead letter anyway. The reason we gave this one-sided debate so much attention, I suppose, had mostly to do with our respect for the document's authors, and the recognition, as we had often validated, of the unique responsibilities and pressures faced by organizers offering day to day counseling to a steady flow of disgruntled active duty GIs. These grassroots GI projects, whatever their political orientation - revolutionary or pacifistic - dealt with cases that were negotiated individually within existing frames of the military's administrative and judicial practices. Or, as one book at that time characterized this single sided game, "Military Justice is to Justice, as Military Music is to Music." Thus it was logical that projects like CAMP politicized the process of resister repatriation from the vantage point of the individual GI. They had failed to theorize a universal solution, and it was on this point that we elaborated over a seven page rebuttal, here only briefly summarized.

We pointed out that the term *amnesty*, while initially distasteful to many exiles and antiwar activists, including ourselves - as was the term *deserter* for which we coined the alternative *self-retired veteran* - was by now well-established among these same activists, who clearly understood, not only the campaign's political value, but that a familiar term easily understood by the public made the most sense. We provided an anecdote - how factual I cannot confirm - about the time we had wasted at our earliest Safe Return press events trying to unscramble our coded language so the media would understand what we were talking about.

Besides, we argued, amnesty was not an expression of abnegation. It was a tool for political self-defense. The example we cited was that amnesty was always the Labor Movement's up-front demand in any settlement to protect strike leadership from retaliation by the bosses. Furthermore, and this was clearly a dig at our former allies in the exile community, we reminded CAMP that "the true center of gravity of resistance to the war and militarism... takes place in the military, right here at home. The majority of resisters reside underground, in U.S. military brigades and stockades - or in the community with bad discharges."

This argument was not only condescending, considering CAMP's presence in those very trenches, but disingenuous. The exile experience was the symbolic face of the amnesty movement. But the intention here, however artless, was to stake out a polemical position based on Safe Return's immediate priority of mobilizing a domestic support base for resisters around FORA. Moreover we emphasized that "CAMP itself suggests in its position another reason... for using the term amnesty over the term repatriation... [that] at some point, >the issue should be brought before the lawmakers.""

In other words, Congress, which had no power to move - or repatriate - bodies, but could declare a blanket amnesty. This whole exercise had a scholastic quality to it, but it represented a side both Tod and I shared, as consumers, and at times, authors of political analysis. The care we took with this document, its confident tone and detail, suggests it was to be distributed to all the parties who had received CAMP's white paper, virtually all of whom, whatever they thought of Safe Return, had by this date become accommodated to the term '>amnesty' to describe the movement which engaged us all.

With April fast approaching, the timing was right to relaunch FORA on the media peg of a projected lobbying effort that would facilitate congressional visitations for any resister family

members willing to visit the Capital, and urge support for unconditional amnesty. By then, as promised, Bela Abzug with a handful of her progressive colleagues had, introduced an amnesty bill that went to molder in the Judiciary Committee. Our task, nonetheless, was to keep up the pressure, so we announced our FORA press launch for Wednesday, April 4th in Washington, D.C.

I very likely headed down to D.C. soon thereafter, bunked in the apartment of old CCI buddy Jeremy Rifkin, who was then deeply involved with the People's Bicentennial project, and spent a couple of days prior to the press conference prepping the media. Judging from the fact that I'm the only Safe Return representative quoted in the resulting press accounts, it appears that Tod stayed behind, and I was staging this event solo. I'm sure I met the challenge with some trepidation since, whatever other talents I shared with Tod, performing as the group's public voice was never my forte. I was a system's guy, at my best behind the scenes, planning and plotting. I could provide leadership in small groups, but I always appeared as my most authentic self, and was most at ease with the press, and with people generally for that matter, in conversations with one or two others, the more intense and wide ranging the better. Evidence of that predilection on my part appears in the backgrounder published a day before the press conference written by Richard Dudman, Washington bureau chief of *The St. Louis Post Dispatch*.⁹

Along with George Vescey of *The New York Times*, Bill Greider of *The Washington Post*, and David Deitch of the *Boston Globe*,¹⁰ Dick Dudman of the *Post-Dispatch* was a favorite in my exclusive circle of Mensch Reporters of the media mainstream. Dudman was a pro from the heartland with a straight arrow look Norman Rockwell would have crossed a busy street to paint. He obviously had a progressive streak, and was not turned off by the activist idealism of my

generation. It was clear that Dudman had his own reasons for opposing a war he had witnessed intimately on assignment in Indochina. But I sensed that his sympathy for the veterans' antiwar stance was enhanced by the fact that he had been captured and confined for forty terrifying days by the Khmer Rouge, the result of an unintended border crossing from Vietnam into Cambodia.¹¹

Dudman was among the journalists we had mailed copies of Reston's book. By return, he wrote saying he had picked up the book one morning, and "couldn't get [his] nose out of it." So I didn't have to knock down his door in D.C. to push the FORA story. Dudman's article on FORA covered three full columns in his paper, and is based entirely on his interview with me. He gave me free reign, and faithfully reported long snippets of my windy rhetoric as I outlined the "uphill campaign" for unconditional amnesty. "We have an image problem," I admitted. Still I vainly argued that, "the act of desertion, a legitimate act of resistance, expresses continuity with the best in America's philosophical and political tradition. The people have a right to resist tyrannical laws, to judge the government, and act on those judgments."

Fortunately, the attention Safe Return hoped to bring to the amnesty issue did not depend on what I had to say, but on our ability to bring the authentic voices of the constituencies we represented to the fore at each event we produced and staged for media consumption. This FORA press conference in D.C. would be no exception. Gene Williams only stuck around Safe Return for several months, mostly during a period I was away and so I never really got to know him. But Gene would be introduced in D.C. as FORA's lobbying coordinator, a role that proved untenable because it was beyond his abilities, and, in any case, we could not support him. Among the assembled press and TV reporters the projected lobby campaign made no converts. But the two FORA moms apparently did. They were Kay Israel of New Jersey with two sons needing amnesty, Arthur a deserter and Sam a draft resister, and Ursula Diliberto from

Massapequa, Long Island, whose son, Kim - a recipient of the Silver Star - had been killed in Vietnam at the age of 20.

A Gold Star mom from Long Island willing to publically support amnesty for military deserters was draw enough to garner four minutes on CBS News that evening, and repeat stories on all the D.C. TV stations for their 6 and 11 o'clock shows. Overall the media splash was impressive, and later prompted a back-handed compliment from Bella Abzug who told us, "we need more of the same, and plenty of it." There was also a serious article in the *Daily News*, the only New York paper that covered us that day. To have New York's blue collar tabloid, at that time the largest circulation daily in the U.S., run a straight forward account of Diliberto's statement and report her affiliation to FORA, was, from our point of view, political and ideological pay dirt. What had apparently underlay Mrs. Diliberto point of view, based on instinct if not a precise formulation, was that the deserters and the fallen soldiers like her son were from the same kinds of backgrounds; average working Americans who bore the war's heaviest burden.

The headline in the *News* article the next morning read, "Mother Pleads for Deserters: Though Son Died, She Asks Amnesty." In a "trembling" voice, the *News* reported, Ursula Diliberto said that if they had it to do over again, she and her husband Dominic - a World War II vet, thrice wounded and a POW to boot - would have "advised Kim to flee." Having their other sons exempted from service by Kim's death was no consolation. With the story of the torture of U.S. prisoners in Hanoi dominating the news in recent days, Diliberto said she had anguished over her participation in the press conference. But it wasn't the resisters who were responsible for the torture, she said. "Why take it out on them?" The clear implication was that the young men, like Kim, like the resisters, also weren't responsible for the war. She added that the

deserters, in taking their stand, were just as “patriotic as her son.” Toward the article’s end came a gratifying comment about how, “The war protestors’ group [FORA] is also stealing a successful idea from pro-PW groups... It will peddle bracelets with the name of young men who fled the service.”¹²

Yes, we would peddle bracelets, and conjure as many other theatrical gestures as our energies, resources and imaginations could sustain. We produced a new FORA brochure inked red on card stock, simple but attractive, listing Tod’s East Village apartment as the group’s mail drop. Tod’s frat brother at Michigan State, and our fellow East Village denizen, Jack Larson, by now a good friend of mine as well, created most of our art with a look that was New York hip, always cool, never flashy. Plans were also in the works for a Safe Return Amnesty Newsletter. Tod and I would provide the bulk of the copy for this, as with all the other public SR documents like fund raising letters and press releases, but the files for this period also contain a trove of correspondence written by our suddenly expanded staff of brother activists. And we were hatching a mailing campaign called ‘Tell it to Washington,’ to remind members of Congress through pre-printed FORA postcards, or forms clipped from free ads in magazines like *Ramparts* or the *Progressive*, that the amnesty issue was not going away.

Defense of amnesty for military resisters had by now leapt its Movement bounds to the pages of left-liberal journals of opinion like the *Nation*, which, in rapid succession, ran several articles related to the topics of amnesty and Vietnam-era desertion. The most relevant to our branch of the cause was written by a staff member of CCCO, Bob Musil, a former Army captain who had won an honorable discharge as a conscientious objector.¹³ As I have mentioned, we viewed CCCO through an ambiguous lens. We found their ‘politics of conscience’ elitist, but respected their day to day involvement, in the manner of CAMP News, with GIs in trouble and looking for

any support they could get. Unfortunately, the criteria for gaining a discharge from the armed forces as a CO, CCCO's core mission, were impossibly rigid. An educated officer like Bob Musil might surmount that obstacle, but the average enlisted guy very likely could not, especially since he might have - in our eyes and CCCO's as well - legitimately opposed Vietnam, but not war under all circumstances.

But Musil's long piece was intelligent, and anything but narrow and moralistic. He did not have the Safe Return flare for polemic. Rather, he argued dryly, demonstrating from the military's own official reports, that the high levels of desertion in that era could only be fully understood in the context of opposition to the war. Deserters were not, in the knee jerk comment of the normally thoughtful liberal senator from Michigan, Phil Hart, "the guys who ran off with the company cash." Nor were the vast majority the "malingers, opportunists, criminals and cowards" the Pentagon painted them to be. Citing 1971, when desertion rates were at their highest, Musil noted that 44 out of 100 GIs that year "walked away from their units for... a couple of weeks to years. What were they trying to get away from," the author wonders with a dash of condescending irony?

For activists at groups like CCCO and Safe Return, given our long involvement with the G.I. Movement, the answer to that question was obvious. Antiwar sentiment was definitely at the heart of resistance in uniform. Certainly, by 1971, no low ranking soldier wanted to be the last GI to die in an unpopular war that was already lost. Moreover, I doubt if there was a major U.S. military installation at home or abroad, outside the war zone, where an underground and antiwar GI newspaper wasn't being distributed, and where radicalized soldiers or sailors weren't agitating openly against military authority.¹⁴ In Vietnam itself, too many among the last of the

U.S. troops took to heroin to escape the war, or, in other cases - some celebrated - overtly or covertly refused to seek contact with the enemy, who were happy to return the favor.

Radical activists were considerably more alert than the average citizen, not just to antiwar sentiment among GIs, but also to the widespread abuses of authority and discipline that stamped the behavior of the military's professional cadre during those years - and that's what many deserters "were trying to get away from." The old guard in the Pentagon viewed the citizen soldiers as the problem, and ignored these institutionally embedded abusive practices, many of which were racial in character. The most outdated of those old practices based on arbitrary command authority and racial prejudice - [today it's women and gays in the military who bear the brunt of discrimination and sexual harassment] - have gone the way of KP and guard duty in the volunteer force that has replaced the draft. But those were not the circumstances at the time being written about here. And yet, despite the fact that the Vietnam era GI resistance represented a citizen-rebellion of historical proportions, its very existence, not to mention the significance of its impact on military policy, has been all but totally overlooked by historians and researchers of that epoch. Only in the military's own schools, from the academies to the war colleges, are these lessons remembered and understood.¹⁵

For the next few months, and well into the summer, the Safe Return team would include Sailor John McGarrity and Ed Sowders - still underground - now based at least temporarily in New York City. Each of us carved out a regional territory as a platform from which the work of FORA could be showcased and projected. Sailor would travel south, and Ed to the Middle West, while Tod went to the Pacific Northwest. By June - feeling very much the exile myself - I would leave to spend the summer in Cambridge, Mass with Ann, and from there work the Boston area. Well before I returned, Gene Williams was gone, and Tommy Michaud too had departed, to join

his brother in California on a construction job. Both had chosen, wisely and with little fanfare, to go on with the lives that were available to them, rather than prolong fabricated identities as political activists. For a while we would hear the occasional word from or about Tommy, and then, the void. The biggest change in our dramatis personae, however, saw George Carrano enter Safe Return's New York stage that spring.

In early April, replying to me, George had written, "I doubt that I can give your fine letter the answer it deserves, but I want to thank you most sincerely for... what you say about our relationship in Paris." I am certain I felt great relief in this gesture of reconciliation on George's part, for I would not have wanted to be responsible for a break in the important alliance with our Swedish comrades. Stewing in his own post-Paris blues, and clearly at an impasse, George complained in his letter of the "diminution of one's intellectual powers" in the "petty squabbles" of exile life, and of having "gone slightly to seed." Buttressed by strong support from his close friend, Lew Simon, George announced he was now "about 80% toward taking yours and Sailor's advice on returning home to stay."

What momentarily delayed his decision was a lingering uncertainty about what role he might usefully play at Safe Return. "Frankly, I lack the ability to make a contribution to paper," which I know from his articulate letters was false modesty, "and I'm a rotten public speaker," which was probably true. He seemed to resolve these doubts sooner than we all expected, and, by April 19th, as a letter under his signature attests, he was already working from our office in New York. Carrano did not participate in the Safe Return road show, but stayed mostly around the city, and for a brief time was our liaison to the circle of organizational rivals who were finally consolidating into a viable coalition.

Before his departure from Sweden, George had cosigned with Lew Simon UP's latest *official* report. It began with the by-now familiar apology for their tardy response to whatever we had last written them. No trace remained of the tentative or obsequious that often crept into their prose from earlier days. Gone too was the veiled anger of their post-Paris note, and the tone now was one of strong - and full - partnership with Safe Return. Clearly, Stockholm was a rocking place for the exile community in those weeks, and we were offered translations, "if you can use them," of all the recent press reports touching their status and future there. UP was even contemplating a challenge, in the Safe Return mode, to the Swedish government's ruling to close the country's borders to American deserters still seeking a European haven. I was skeptical after reading that the test case might involve Jose Claudio, who'd finally made his way to Sweden under the radar after being expelled from France. I was impressed by Jose, and always felt he would be an authentic voice for deserters in a public campaign, but I came to see how the last thing he wanted was to occupy the limelight and call attention to himself. The plan never came to anything that I'm aware of.

UP's letter took up CAMP's provocative white paper on amnesty, and George and Lew had agreed to sign our critique in a joint reply, adding that Safe Return must have had "good reason for not taking them to task on the whole thing," since "there is nothing in the CAMP piece to recommend it." Despite our political differences with CAMP, Tod, in particular, had friendly ties with several of the group's principals as I have explained elsewhere; but the folks at UP were not connected to this layer of Movement politics at home. On the opinion that CAMP's analysis was wrong, however, UP and SR were in complete agreement. UP expressed the common ground with some subtlety.

Unfortunately, the powers that be don't share CAMP's lack of perception, for even without having to prove how radical we are via circus antics or revolutionary phraseology they have come up with a clearer understanding of what's at issue. Here, for example, is the way the *New Republic* sees our amnesty demand:

“The political groups that claim to speak for the war resisters, like Safe Return... are in their way just as inflexible as the President.”

We were guilty as charged. But it was precisely in its adherence to an irreducible demand for universal, unconditional amnesty that our campaign derived its political credibility among resisters and antiwar critics. Waffling on this demand was the source of our ongoing distrust toward liberal rivals like Henry Schwarzschild of the ACLU Amnesty Project, and now Richard Kilmer, Director of the Emergency Ministry Concerning the War of the National Council of Churches. Kilmer's higher office within the NCC bureaucracy had apparently subsumed the earlier point position on the issue occupied by its subsidiary project, CALC. And now Kilmer under his own letterhead emerged as the co-convener of Henry's long projected conference, finally confirmed for Washington, D.C. over the weekend of May 4-5. To further justify our distrust of the liberals' agenda, we could now point to the self-indicting language on the pre-registration form circulated by Henry and his colleagues to describe the orientation of their undertaking:

The National Conference on Amnesty will not be committed to any particular amnesty proposal. It will be a forum where all those who favor any form of amnesty for Vietnam War objectors may present their views.

For us this wording was tantamount to a sell-out. That the terms of an eventual amnesty might, *a priori*, consider conditions, moreover conditions that we knew would inevitably redound to the disadvantage of military resisters, was not a viable tactical position for any New Left radical operating in the inflamed political atmosphere of those times. The collective Gestalt of the activist antiwar movement had by no means modified its vision, however delusional, of revolutionary change. Groups like Safe Return might work – for the sake of appearances - with governmental bodies and institutions in order to mobilize public support for our program, but we continued to judge the United States government as a criminal entity, perpetrator of aggressive war and of crimes against humanity in Vietnam. We were not required by necessity in those years to move our politics incrementally within the system, since our New Left forces remained energized and powerful, and capable of effective independent action outside the institutional spaces.

This was not the vantage point of those operating in the orbit of the ACLU and the NCC, who, their opposition to the war notwithstanding, saw themselves as stakeholders in the system, and did not experience the severe alienation that permeated the Left, most intensely within the alternative political culture of the younger activists. A letter housed in the Safe Return files that Mary McCarthy had written Tod Ensign to explain her unwillingness to address our Paris exile conference contains the most direct expression at hand from the liberal side of this generational gap touching virtually every realm of radical politics, including amnesty. Among what she termed her “impolite criticisms,” McCarthy characterized Safe Return’s practice as “ultra-

leftist,” and our analysis of U.S. history “with particular reference to amnesty,” as “Marxist,” thus ignoring through the haze of her virulent anti-communism those instances we provided her where broad and non-punitive amnesties had been granted in our country’s past.

She dismissed our attack on Harry Truman’s post-World War II board which only pardoned 10% of the war resisters who came before it. McCarthy took the position that, since “Truman has just died, [and] a lot of ordinary people felt warmly toward him,” we should ignore his amnesty record and “emphasize the positive.” To McCarthy that meant presenting amnesty as “a humanitarian issue.^A And not to worry, because she could comfortably foresee that, “despite Nixon’s statement, amnesty will eventually be granted if the issue isn’t surrounded by too much angry rhetoric.” This from a literary critic who wrote with the equivalent of a verbal stiletto. McCarthy expressed confidence, moreover, that, by and by, the officials designated with the shaping of our historical record would “quietly close the books on the deserters abroad, who as long as they remain there constitute a scandal.”

At that point in her argument, the wheels fell off. McCarthy revealed just how out-of-touch she was with the details and nuances of this discussion by her insensitive, off-the-cuff remark that deserters returning to the Army would face only “light penalties... the contemporary equivalent of peeling potatoes.” The McCarthy polemic then abruptly closes with her reaffirmed defense of the rival team by acknowledging that we can’t “just sit back and wait for this to happen... action and continuing discussion are necessary, and precisely along the ACLU/NCC lines.” Clearly, McCarthy didn’t have a clue about how pressure on the instruments of State could be built by conscious organizing from the base up, a process that has led often to structural societal reforms, if much less seldom to changes in the prevailing arrangements of power. History’s plodding forward march.

It is true, of course, that Henry Schwarzschild could never have publically endorsed a line as muddled and patronizing as that contrived by Mary McCarthy. But the agenda and list of speakers for the National Conference on Amnesty demonstrated that he was in essential agreement with her on wresting the conversation from the hands of the radical activists like Tod and me. As his principal speakers, Henry had lined up a roster of well-known progressive professionals with credible antiwar credentials, among them Yale psychiatrist Dr. Robert Jay Lifton and the former Attorney General, Ramsey Clark.

Thus his conference would be a formal meeting of panels and committees, experts speaking to experts, addressed to an audience of peaceniks that included, no doubt, a fair sized delegation of resisters. A dull affair which Tod and I had offered to spice up with the public surrender of Eddie Sowers, a proposal which Henry summarily rejected. I described in a letter to Jim Reston what Henry was really after. "We met with Henry Schwarzschild, Dee Knight and CALC [Louise Ransom], and seems the only thing everyone was interested in is being FORA." It must have been particularly galling to these worthies that we were attracting support from such New York luminaries as the poet Muriel Rukeyser, whose exiled son had refused the draft. Muriel was recruited to FORA following a pleasant conversation over a chilled glass of Chablis in her Greenwich Village studio, a virtual greenhouse of indoor plants, in the Westbeth artist co-op overlooking the Hudson River.

Henry's competitive attitude toward Safe Return was hardly news. But he had by now also turned away from the resister and exile activists. As representatives of the constituency whose welfare was the target of his D.C. confab's business, the resister leadership was given no independent standing at the conference, no programed slot on the agenda to speak for themselves and articulate their own demands for amnesty. Lew Simon had sent us a copy of the letter he'd

written Henry in which he reminded the director of the ACLU's Amnesty Project of the article he had written for AMEX magazine "about a year ago" in which Henry promised that "close relations with the resistance and exile communities are an essential aspect of the project's work. Yet here in Sweden, we have received virtually no communication from you... nor any attempt on your part exhibiting... close relations."

Here, of course, Lew was trying to play Henry with a bit of guilt tripping slightly more subtle than Dee Knight and Jack Colhoun had applied when Mau Mauing the same man for funds months before. Lew's main purpose was to urge that Henry formally invite George Carrano to the ACLU conference as UP's representative, and pay his way from Sweden. Since George arrived in New York within a fortnight of the date on Lew's letter, I suspect that Safe Return, and not the ACLU Project on Amnesty, picked up at least some of the tab on George's airfare. As for the conference itself, I was definitely in D.C., but spent little time in attendance, hanging out instead with Jeremy Rifkin and his crew at the Peoples Bicentennial offices. George Carrano no doubt provided the juiciest gossip about the conference goings-on, dripping with his particular brand of contempt that both Tod and I would have relished; but no such account is recorded.

From then on the trajectory of the ACLU Project on Amnesty was increasingly off our radar. I believe Henry Schwarzschild truly favored a total amnesty for draft and military resisters alike, but he had no troops. He lacked a grassroots base, and simply had no field of action to pursue his goals outside an institutional framework provided by his employer. In the end, he would have to lie down with the lions, help find the quiet accommodation Mary McCarthy day dreamed about, and just ignore the causes of the resistance. On this question militant radicals were indeed inflexible. Such an ahistorical vision of reconciliation was

repugnant to us. For New Left radicals, amnesty could never be a path to make peace with the system, only a means to resist it.

Our priorities at that moment were directed toward Safe Return's major spring event scheduled some weeks after the ACLU conference, a day of ad hoc hearings on amnesty before a congressional panel chaired by Congresswoman Bela Abzug. With us offering to gather the witnesses and fund their travel to Washington, and to organize an event likely to appeal to the media, a timely letter from Bela approving the proposal and setting the date soon arrived. Such letters of sponsorship - and we always asked for them under similar circumstances - were incorporated into our fund raising efforts to enhance the legitimacy of the action we were asking our donors to support. In New York's left-liberal circles, a letter under Bela Abzug's signature in those years carried considerable weight.

On the heels of Bela's letter came an official request from Aryeh Neier, the ACLU's National Director, asking us to permit a witness at our hearings from his organization, presumably his colleague Henry Schwarzschild. Neier may have thought we owed him. Two months earlier, he'd issued an official statement from the ACLU's headquarters, which at the time still occupied a full floor in the same building as Safe Return before their move to Washington. The ACLU had "sharply attacked" the State Department for its role in the banning of the Paris conference. From our point of view, and unfairly in retrospect, the ACLU was just trying to horn in on the publicity. I'm not sure why it fell to me to answer this letter. Certainly, Tod Ensign, in his alter ego as Attorney at Law would have taken special pleasure in responding to Neier. Tod must have been away. In any case, I wrote informing Neier that our hearings were intended to "provide a voice for families of resisters," and therefore "we cannot honor your request." Then, giving the knife a gleeful twist, I added, "we would think that your National

Conference on Amnesty this past weekend would have provided the American people with information as to the ACLU's amnesty stand." The dig in the subtext being something like, >I don't remember seeing anything about that in the papers."

The ACLU conference did accomplish one thing that I can pin point without reference to a specific document. Many who'd attended joined forces later that same May to create NCUUA, the National Coalition for Universal, Unconditional Amnesty. This was a serious undertaking by a very diverse set of pro-amnesty groups who wanted NCUUA to become the national coordinating body for a grassroots amnesty movement that was indeed growing at a phenomenal rate. All those groups and individuals all over the country who'd been writing Safe Return for months requesting information, which we gladly provided without any desire to help coordinate their local actions. This was not a task that suited us, but NCUUA had other ambitions as well. There was a strong current among them that wished, as expeditiously as possible, to undermine Safe Return's predominance and push us to the margins of the issue. It's no wonder, to me at least, that with the arrival of NCUUA, Tod and I felt more resentful and beleaguered, and less inclined to cooperate than ever.

And while it's getting ahead of my story, I can demonstrate that eight months further on one impartial observer could still write that Safe Return was "the most active and important pro-amnesty organization... the most successful in attracting media attention and promoting local organizing." Those words appeared in a cover story that, albeit in a dramatic context of their own, a young reporter named Judith Miller - long before her fame, then infamy - had written for the *Progressive*, whose chief editor Irwin Knoll had recently hired her as the magazine's Washington correspondent.¹⁶

Miller had formed this conclusion from much evidence and many sources, a long wrap-up article on amnesty in the New York *Daily News*, for example, headed, “What now for the men who balked?” The *News* reporter led his story with a reference to President Nixon’s “firm” opposition to amnesty, and immediately in the second paragraph, mentions Safe Return, quoting me, “a Vietnam War veteran turned antiwar activist,” as the intractable advocate of the opposing view. He then suggests that, “Somewhere in between these two positions lie the sentiments of the majority of the American People,” which was probably true. But what would have also likely gotten the attention of many readers, not least a cold-eyed observer like Judith Miller, was that Don Singleton, a respected investigative reporter at the *News*, had cast Safe Return in his article to balance the views of the President of the United States.¹⁷

In her piece for the *Progressive*, Miller also dished some movement gossip, noting that we had been denied membership in NCUUA because “some members... view Safe Return’s tactics and politics as too radical, and fear that the intensely independent group will not cooperate with the committee actions. On the other hand,” Miller goes on, “Safe Return, has its doubts about [NCUUA’s] prospects, and resents the duplication of many of its projects, “including by that time the formation of a family group to rival FORA. And yet NCUUA has “had considerable difficulty in getting off the ground,” Miller observed dryly. “The committee’s principal activity so far has been to fly its members from Canada and all sections of the United States to its monthly committee meetings... marked by bitter personal disputes and endless ideological debates over the wording of petitions and statements.”

For the moment, I’ll rest this case. We’ll hear more from Judy Miller when the occasion for her article takes its place in the narrative ahead. Tod and I had long known that NCUUA was in the works. And while we always registered the conflicts raging in our political milieu with

strong emotions, I doubt we took much conscious notice of NCUUA's official founding in mid-May beyond a few dismissive maledictions, since we were so deeply involved in lining up the roster of family witnesses for the Abzug hearings.

Letters went out under all names in the Safe Return's office for the purpose of courting FORA members, and firming them up for D.C. And we traveled, Tod to Portland, where *The Oregon Journal* reported on a new FORA chapter and its plans to spearhead a regional drive for based in the Capitalamnesty from that city. Aided in the work by our friend Linda Alband who was living in Portland, Tod presented two resister families at a press conference. Bonnie Doran, who would appear at the hearings, was the wife of a resister who'd already done time for draft refusal. An amnesty would restore his civil rights. The second family member was a man with a grandson who'd deserted the Army for Canada. Clearly he missed him, and said that amnesty would allow the grandson "to come home to visit." The draft resister's wife was only 25 with two small children; they had financial problems. She said she yearned for the county "to start pulling together." This was not the essential message that FORA, the personification of its creators, embraced. But it played well with the mass media's running theme of post-war reconciliation.¹⁸

With preparations for the hearings well advanced, the press release went out listing eleven witnesses, and promising "over twenty other resister family members" in attendance and available for interviews, thus offering a potential local or regional angle for many national reporters based in the Capital. Throughout the afternoon we would schedule meetings for all FORA members "with their respective Representatives and Senators to urge their support for... Ms. Abzug's HR-236, that would grant universal amnesty and restore full right of citizenship to their sons and brothers unconditionally." All witnesses, we asserted by way of boast and

disclaimer, were supplied by FORA, all of whom were then named, with brief descriptions, to include the status of their resister relatives, and the category of resistance to which he belonged.

The copy made it look like a routine session of talking heads on Capitol Hill, followed by a humdrum rite of congressional visitations for a few constituents from out of town. For us, it was, in fact, another in a string of successful appropriations of a tired political genre to put our spin on a controversial, but topical, campaign. The Safe Return showmanship - as it always would - shined through our claims of “authenticity.” We were brash by design, and unselfconscious about it, although outwardly we conducted ourselves professionally. Our particular talents lay in casting amateurs - that is real people - for the principal roles in our dramatized actions. To be sure there was always a speaking part for a Stage Manager to deliver the political overview. But it was the succession of plain-talking middle-Americans in the hearing room that Thursday morning on the 24th of May, telling how their lives had been upturned by acts of resistance to authority and war that they themselves had come to support, who really got our messages across.

The most complete source I have for details on these hearings, in addition to the press release and the subsequent newspaper accounts, is from a report in the inaugural edition of our newsletter, *Amnesty Report: A Joint Publication of the Safe Return Amnesty Committee and FORA*, although it would not appear until mid-summer, some months after the hearings. The report documents much. But it was the energy in that room, not the facts, which I remember best.

We would report in our newsletter that the day kicked off “in a large Congressional hearing room overflowing with spectators, newspapermen and network TV and films crews.” I can imagine Tod and I and the others in our crew, game faces on and working the room, each

with a discrete task. Our witnesses, many of them nervous about being in the public spotlight, certainly needed a lot of tending and care. The ever formidable Bela Abzug from beneath one of the wide-brimmed hats for which she was known, had probably button-holed Tod or me, barking last minute directives in a patented Belaesque one-way communication.

The swarm of reporters and cameras would have pleased Bela, an almost sure sign that the event would get the publicity we were all hoping for. There was a din of voices in the room, a lot of shuffling about in anticipation as we waited for the other five Members of Congress to trickle in so we could begin. The usual suspects showed, all of whom were responsive to left-leaning constituencies, and who'd worked with us around the war crimes issue; and, of course, they were there to scratch the back of a fellow Member who could be called upon later to scratch there's.¹⁹ Also joining the panel, probably because we had thought to invite him, was the former Senator from Alaska, Ernest Greuning, who had cast one of only two votes in the U.S. Senate against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964, and was therefore a minor hero to the antiwar movement.

First at the witness table were Kay and Ben Israel of Atlantic City, New Jersey with one son, Sam, a draft resister exiled in Canada, and another, Arthur, a Navy deserter who'd been to Vietnam, and went to Canada, but "couldn't make it there," his dad told the panel. Arthur returned to the Navy and received a bad discharge. As for Sam, the family was still being harassed regularly by the FBI, who, Kay said, "would ring my bell, walk in and demand to know where Sam was. They sat outside our house in cars as if we were some kind of criminals. They told the neighbors... our house was under surveillance." But Kay had not buckled. She told the Feds, "I'm not ashamed my son's in Canada. I am very proud he refused to take part in this war."

Another witness from New Jersey,” the report continued, “was John Picciano Sr., a garment worker from Lodi whose only child John Jr. had been living in Sweden for five years as an Army deserter.” John Junior had emerged in recent months as one of UP’s activist core, often co-signing letters with Lew Simon after George Carrano’s departure. John Senior told Bela and her colleagues that he’d initially opposed his son’s resistance, and had gone to Sweden “and tried to persuade him to come back, but he made me see it [the war] was wrong.” Mr. Picciano spoke with “quiet dignity,” about the social patterns that led his son to join the Army despite his opposition to the war. “Johnny had to go,” he father said, “because we didn’t have the money to send him to college for a deferment.”

Bonnie Doran, the wife of the convicted draft resister in Oregon, had come to make the case for amnesty for her husband, Sean, and the thousands like him who had done time for refusing to serve in the military, and were subsequently deprived of certain civil rights. Bonnie talked about how, “when Sean came out of jail, he tried for a year and a half to get a job, but his felony conviction... made it impossible.” Bonnie said they “were living on about \$120 a month, the maximum welfare for a family of four.”

Another West Coast witness Marjorie Swartz of San Francisco testified that, “both she and her late husband, a career Marine, supported their son Larry’s desertion as a legitimate protest against being sent to Vietnam.” Marjorie then “movingly described her son’s revulsion with the racist and violent training he was subjected to by the Army,” but had found that “exile life in Canada... was a debilitating experience.” When Larry’s dad died, Marjorie testified, she “lived in fear of him attempting to attend the funeral and being arrested by the FBI.”

Lora Sowders, Eddie’s mom, was the next witness. She described herself as the wife of a disabled World War Two veteran, and mother of eight. Lora spoke to the experiences of those

who, like Eddie, having deserted the armed forces to oppose the war, struggled to survive, not in exile, but as fugitives in their own land. Lora said her family “never had an easy life,” and that her son Eddie, without the education he sought “was only prepared for the army, and they only trained him for war.” Then, suddenly “after concluding her statement, she dramatically introduced Eddie,” who had chosen that moment to end his three years of underground life by revealing his identity to the hearing.

We had obviously been planning this moment for months, and had long decided on the Abzug Hearings as the best setting for bringing maximum attention to Eddie’s public surrender. One reason the working media turned out in such numbers was that we had selectively leaked that Eddie, otherwise not identified in the press release, would use the occasion to voluntarily turn himself in, presumably to the FBI. In *Amnesty Report*, erroneously - no doubt compressing reality for dramatic effect - we have the Feds arriving shortly after Eddie’s revelation, “and seeing the assembled press corps, decided not to attempt an arrest but to defer to Capitol Police.”

What actually occurred was a bit more complicated. Since the FBI hadn’t appeared on our cue, following a phone call by Tod - identifying himself as Eddie’s lawyer - Eddie was able to read his entire statement. His brother Ronnie, sitting beside him, was prepared to continue on his behalf if that had become necessary. When Eddie finished his testimony, which essentially followed the script of his earlier Op Ed in the Times, “the thirty or so family members... stood as one and applauded. Each of the Congressmen... individually commended Eddie for his decision to resist,” posturing blatantly for the cameras, as politicians are wont to do. Getting the whole episode on film was a crew under the direction of Peter Davis, a former producer for CBS News who had formed a company called Touchstone, and had written us earlier in the month about “a documentary film” he was making about the Vietnam War. It could not be complete,” he wrote,

“until we have dealt with the crisis of conscience the war has caused many Americans; ...we intend to do this through the issue of amnesty.” This was a match for us, so we gladly let Davis in on our plans, never imagining that his finished work, *Hearts & Minds*, with its minor segment on the surrender of Eddie Sowers, would win an Oscar for best full length documentary the following April.

I can only imagine, in the absence of any written record to guide me, that we had decided to insert Lora and Eddie Sowers in the middle of the witness roster because we feared the Capitol constabulary or the FBI would in fact arrive prematurely, and prevent us from staging our dramatic crescendo. In retrospect, it appears that all testimony thereafter was anticlimactic as political theater, and perhaps a bit deflating for the witnesses who followed.

In the midst of all the hubbub and the lengthy interruption attending what was clearly the denouement for the media, with reporters now disrupting the proceedings clamoring for interviews with Eddie and Laura, the congressional panel returned to hear the final witnesses. The first to speak was a black veterans from Washington, Leroy Joseph, who “had been imprisoned in Vietnam’s notorious Long Binh stockade for having resisted military racism,” or at least that’s the spin we put on whatever offense he had been charged with. And I would still be strongly of the opinion, based on what I personally witnessed as a young lieutenant on active duty in the Army only four years earlier, that Leroy Joseph had indeed been subjected to racism from white soldiers and superiors during his military service. It was the racism, not the petty offense, that was the greater crime by far, and the justification for New Left groups like ours to politicize forms of the GI resistance that to less sympathetic eyes would have been seen as delinquency.²⁰

Leroy specifically addressed the impact of receiving a bad discharge from the service. The quote from *Amnesty Report* reads as if it were transcribed from a recording, and it succinctly expresses the dilemma and the choices confronting young black vets in Leroy's shoes. "If you get out with an honorable discharge, ok, maybe you got a half way chance of survival. If you get out with an undesirable or bad conduct or some discharge of this type, you would have been better off to stay in. My six years in the army was wasted. They promised to teach me a trade I could use on the outside, but the one they taught me, if I was to use it here, I would be put in jail."

Gail Parker from Seattle was next. She told the panel in a voice "cracked with emotion" of how her older brother Wayne had deserted, and whose opposition to the war led a younger brother Dan to refuse induction. But then her father suffered a heart attack that Gail believed was "the result of methods used by FBI agents in harassment of their family... The nightmarish quality of this experience," Gail recounted, "has profoundly affected my younger brother and sister. Their respect for a country that would torture their family has ended."

Following Gail, was a woman from Hagerstown, Maryland - where my own parents were now living, having left Long Island in a job-related move for my father. She is identified as Mrs. Barbara Burkholder, whose husband, Dan, had served eighteen months for draft refusal. Mrs. Burkholder came to the hearings accompanied by a number of other wives of prisoners convicted of draft related crimes. "Why should refusing to take part in illegal and immoral war like Vietnam be a crime," Mrs. Burkholder demanded of the panel? "Is it right that men like my husband had to go to prison and are now known as criminals and felons?"

The last set of witnesses, in a sense, served as a prelude to what would be Safe Return's final dramatic action of 1973, centered on the repatriation of Lew Simon. Lew's parents and

brother, Harris, had come to Washington to testify on his behalf before the “Abzug panel. Lew’s dad, “Abe, himself a World War Two veteran, was a favorite of Tod’s and mine. Abe had a label print shop near our office, and we’d dropped in on him from time to time, and even did some business with him. At the hearings Abe also took the line that resisters “should not pay a penalty for a crime which is not a crime.” Abe was a stand-up guy, very credible. He conceded that, at first, he was “steamed” when he’d heard his son had left the Army. “Here was a man who’d evaded his duty and was running away, I said. But as the years have gone by I have realized he was right... and acted accordingly.”

The final word went to Lew’s brother, Harris, who would read two statements, one of his own, the other from Lewis. Harris was quite eloquent in the account of his own evolving response to his elder brother’s resistance. When it all began, Harris said, “the scene was very confused and scary. My mother was hysterical... and she and my father tried to figure out a way to force him home. Everyone was talking as if Lew was dead. I went to sleep that night crying, shaking all over.” As the years passed Harris said he “gained an understanding of Lew’s act,” and had grown “to respect him a great deal. It wasn’t easy to start a new life in a foreign country.” Lewis’ statement, which Harris then read, covers two pages, the details of which will be summarized in a later chapter. With that statement the hearings came to a close.

Years later, I felt the poignancy of these anguished testimonies far more deeply than I would have allowed myself to experience at the time. All my emotions were wrapped up in the politics and the excitement of the spectacle, and, for me, the actors embodied only those elements and not their human selves. I am also - to be honest - more amused than pained by another glaring omission, the one-dimensional account in our newsletter in which we hear only the voices of the witnesses, with not a peep from members of the congressional panel. We did

run a photo of Abzug and her colleagues seated at their raised dais facing the witness table in a formal hearing room of the Rayburn House Office Building. But, for us, they were mere props or stick figures on a staged political set. The presence of the government in this production provided a necessary fig leaf of legitimacy for gaining the attention of both public and news organizations for the amnesty cause. From a New Left perspective, and despite the progressive, antiwar credentials of our politician-collaborators, we intended no serious engagement with a government that remained for us the war mongering enemy.

Eddie's surrender was one of the greatest media coups we ever achieved in its spread of national coverage. Judging from the reproductions of press clippings preserved in our files, it's clear that one of us stopped by the newsstand where out-of-town and foreign papers were sold on Times Square when we returned to New York the following morning. This was a ritual that Tod and I would have probably performed together, since we derived great pleasure from the act of gathering the evidence of our actions that appeared in print. We could be quite disappointed if, on the rare occasion, an article we had depended on failed to appear. But not this time.

We had excellent coverage in what were considered the country's two leading newspapers of record, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and also in the mass circulation tabloid New York's *Daily News*; while virtually every other regional daily in the country seemed to carry the long wire story by the *Associated Press*. But the most important clipping of all, because it provides details of Ed Sowders' personal story with which we had not previously concerned ourselves, is the blockbuster article from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* that jumped from page 1 with an AP photo of Eddie in the clutches of the Capitol police, to four additional full columns of copy inside the paper.²¹

We had apparently contacted Saul Friedman of the *Inquire* and offered him an in-depth interview with Ed and his mother, Lora, the evening before the surrender. Friedman was a reporter we had worked with in the CCI days, and, if I recall correctly, he was known to be friendly and fair to the antiwar movement. The reporter gives a colorful description on the setting for the interview, “a movement crash pad” where Eddie “flicked ashes into an empty asparagus can.”²² Eddie expressed “relief” at finally ending his surreptitious existence under a false identity, even as he likely faced military imprisonment. “I can remember,” he told Friedman, “all the times I cried out to be able to use my very own name.”

What the interview also clarified was that Eddie had enlisted because “the Army looked better” to him than the “.50 an hour apprentice meat cutter” job he worked in while enrolled in vocational school back in Detroit. And we learned of a letter Lora had written him, strongly urging that he not enlist because she well understood that the boys from his background were prime candidates for cannon fodder. But Eddie was drawn by a young man’s romance for war and adventure. “When the Vietnam War was heating up, a lot of guys wanted to go, including me,” he recalled. But he now knew that Lora “saw a lot of things I didn’t.” That she might be “afraid of losing a son,” as Eddie acknowledged, was not a consequential argument to a trapped and immortal youth looking to escape and bound for glory.

Every antiwar Vietnam vet I’ve ever met came to that stance because of what he had seen or done in the war zone, which, in turn, opened him to the counter-arguments of the war’s opponents back home. Indeed, what Eddie told Saul Friedman that night would have been welcome testimony for a CCI expose on U.S. war crimes. In writing this, I experience Eddie’s comments on his war experiences as if for the first time, because, while I had most certainly read Friedman’s article, I’d long since forgotten this troubling account. Then again, I probably never

questioned Eddie about it. Our focus with Safe Return had shifted elsewhere, and I had never relished listening to those atrocity stories, even during those many months I devoted so much energy in helping to bring them before the public.

But I can hear those echoes in reading the words Eddie spoke that evening about “the needless brutality” in the evacuation hospital fifteen miles from the Cambodian border where he served as a medic. “When a wounded Vietcong... came in, our intelligence guys wouldn’t wait for him to be treated before they began questioning him. They hurt them more. They used knives and cigarettes. They held up treatment. Even the medics sometimes joined in the torture, using clamps... Once I saw a medic simply cut off the IV tube in a Vietnamese patient, knowing it would kill him.”

None of the other press accounts of the surrender offer this deeply personal information on how the war had concretely motivated Eddie’s desertion, which gave Friedman’s article the air of an exclusive. Each article provided some unique details its rivals didn’t. The *Times*, for example, reported Bela Abzug’s rephrasing of what many of the witnesses may have reflected on that day, that “the nation is pondering the irony of Dr. Kissinger’s request for compassion for those connected with Watergate who subverted the democratic process, while the Administration denies compassion to those who refused to kill.”

The *Daily News* was the only paper to play the >some say, others say’ game, a pretense of journalistic balance, by quoting the head of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was outraged that on the day “former Vietnam prisoners of war... [were] being honored by the President... Rep. Bella Abzug and these other misguided members of Congress... have the discourtesy to hold these so-called hearings.” They owed an apology, he fumed, to the former PWs.

But it was the *Washington Post* that really captured the elements of Keystone Comedy and Theater of the Absurd that finally brought Eddie into contact with those who had the authority to arrest him. Several of the other articles had referred in passing to this snafu, but only the *Post* had enshrined it in their headline, “Deserter Finds It Tough to Surrender on the Hill.” This insinuation of incompetence was not the dominant impression we had wanted to see in print associated with a Safe Return action. The *Post* reporter’s account made us look slightly ridiculous, which I suppose was her intention, payback for our misguided presumption of her good will toward amnesty.

She wrote that “while Sowders was testifying, Tod Ensign of the Safe Return Amnesty Committee called the FBI and asked them to come to the Rayburn Building to pick him up. After being praised for his courage by the Rep. Abzug, Sowders... left the room trailed by reporters and cameramen to surrender. No FBI were outside... [but] down the corridor came 50 or so Capitol police... toward Sowders and the press. A TV man shouted, “This is it.” Cameras clicked and Sowders stiffened. But the police walked right by... [but one] police lieutenant stopped to inquire why the crowd had gathered.” When he was told, he “took Sowders to a basement police office and called the FBI” who told the lieutenant “they had no warrant on him,” and suggested that “he should turn himself in to the Armed Forces Police at the Navy Yard.”

And that’s just what happened. Tod took Eddie by cab to the small naval facility on the banks of the Potomac not far from Capitol Hill, from where he was soon transferred to nearby Ft. Meade, Maryland and detained in a Personnel Control Facility, where AWOLs and other malcontents were housed pending resolution of their cases. I’m sure the account in the *Post* would have momentarily pricked our collective self-esteem, but in the other media this

embarrassing episode was either ignored, or much underplayed. And we did not dwell on it. Given the big splash overall around Eddie's surrender we felt optimistic about the outcome.

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- 1 See chapter 2.
 - 2 Spencer Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History*. Entry on Clergy and Laity Concerned; 217.
 - 3 For a thorough study of how the POW/MIA issues was used to manipulate public opinion, see *M.I.A. or Mythmaking in America*, Bruce Franklin. Rutgers University Press, 1993.
 - 4 “Wander in No-Man’s Land,” by Lewis Parker. *The New York Times*, Wednesday, February 28, 1973.
 - 5 “Buckley on Amnesty,” Editorial. *The New York Times*, [Date TK].
 - 6 “The Amnesty of John David Herndon,” by Thomas P. Alder. *The New York Times Book Review*, Sunday, March 18, 1973.
 - 7 Another blow to the book came when, as Reston would write us, AMaria Jolas succeeded in killing a review in the *Nation*.
 - 8 “Prisoner of War,” by Thomas J. Cottle. *The Washington Post Book World*, April 1, 1973.
 - 9 “Families Begin Amnesty Drive,” by Richard Dudman. *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, April 4, 1973.
 - 10 David Deitch, a columnist for the Boston Globe, devoted at least two of his columns to the work of Safe Return and FORA. In one article written in the spring of 1973, AThe amnesty struggle and its broad meaning (my copy being undated), Deitch provides a class analysis for the issue which was very similar to the line taken by Tod Ensign and myself. Like us, Deitch professed a Marxian worldview.
 - 11 *Forty Days with the Enemy*, by Richard Dudman. Liveright, 1971.
 - 12 “Mother Pleads for Deserters: Though Son Died, She Asks Amnesty,” by Joseph Vole. *New York Daily News*, April 5, 1973.
 - 13 “The Truth About Deserters,” by Robert K. Musil. *The Nation*, April 16, 1973.
 - 14 *Protest and Survive: Underground GI Newspapers during the Vietnam War*, by James Lewes. Praeger, 2003.
 - 15 Cite bibliography? Never lose an opportunity to do so...?
 - 16 “Amnesty: Eddie McNally Comes Home,” by Judith Miller. *The Progressive*, February 1974.
 - 17 AWhat now for the men who balked,” by Donald Singleton. *New York Daily News*, April 24, 1973.
 - 18 “Group Formed to Spearhead Amnesty.” *The Oregon Journal*, April 17, 1973.
 - 19 Ron Dellums (CA), Parren Mitchell (MD, and former head of the NAACP), John Conyers, (MI), Don Edwards (CA) and Ben Rosenthal (NY).
 - 20 See my *Vietnam Awakening*.
 - 21 “Amnesty Panel Hear Deserter Who Then Surrenders,” *The New York Times*, May 25, 1973; “No Apology Deserter Tells Abzug Panel,” by Jeffrey Antevit. *The Daily News*, May 25, 1973; “Deserter Finds It Tough to

Surrender on the Hill,” by Mary Russell. *The Washington Post*, May 25, 1973; “Army Deserter Tells of Ordeal,” by Saul Friedman. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 25, 1973. Among the papers that ran the AP article, “Three years of hiding ends; Deserter urges full amnesty,” were *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Providence Journal*, *The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, *The Oregonian*, *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *The Courier Journal* of Louisville, Kentucky, *The Journal-News* of Rockland County, NY and the *Daily Review* of Hayward, CA.

22 The “movement crash pad,” was Jeremy Rifkin’s disheveled apartment located near DuPont Circle.