

10

Scene Two

My Summer of Exile

“Dear Eddie,” I wrote four days after his surrender, “I will try to keep in mind all the needs this and other letters may have to fulfill for you.” Thus began, following Tommy Michaud, a second round of awkward correspondence with a man whose incarceration I had played a hand in choreographing. It was one thing to recall that Eddie knew the score, and had volunteered for this conspicuous act of political defiance. This did not mitigate the fact that another Safe Return comrade and client now sat in a military slammer facing a stretch of at least six months.

My initial letter took the form of a pep talk, a quick sketch of what I understood him to be facing, followed by advice on how to face it. “Strategically,” I intoned, as if from high upon the Mount,” you have only to survive, and perhaps grow even stronger and more resolute...” Whereas,” tactically, you write letters, you read, study and write, maybe you start an informal rap or study group with interested and capable brothers, you advise and, where possible, lead. You do nothing reckless or precipitous, because you must maintain the long view. But you don’t sacrifice your rights or shrink from their defense. You know what you are, and that you are part of something greater than one individual, and hopefully that brings you through the tough times. @

I was writing to the self I projected in the place where Ed Sowders now sat. I was straining, and I knew it. “This looks a bit like an ill-prepared sermon,” I quipped, and then droned on for another paragraph or two in the same ponderous vein. But my true aim was honorable, to make sure Eddie received regular mail as an antidote to isolation, while Tod, as his attorney,

would handle the direct contact. If, in my initial letter, I came to fill the space with anxious sentiments, sincerely if clumsily expressed, it was largely because there wasn't much to report in those few days since his confinement. And besides, I don't think it was Eddie who needed bucking up at this point as much as I did, given what a horror it would have been for me if our circumstances had been reversed. But Eddie knew our m.o., and trusted he was in the hands of people whose support he could count on. In what was by now a typical rhetorical tick of mine by this stage, I did share one a bit of gossip on the larger amnesty movement I knew he'd enjoy reading about.

George Carrano had just returned from the Amnesty Action Conference in Toronto that had been organized by AMEX magazine. When NCUUA was founded, Carrano had been named to the steering committee to represent the exile constituency. At the Toronto conference, he was replaced on the NCUUA committee by "Bucky," our derisive nickname for the toothy Dee Knight, Safe Return's self-appointed chief scourge and competitor. "This outcome," I hastened to reassure Eddie, "was neither unexpected nor unwelcome." Either George acted alone, or the move had been scripted during an internal discussion at Safe Return, the purpose in either case, to avoid being drawn into another morass of coalition politics. Months before the published observations of reporter Judith Miller about NCUUA's self-inflicted ineffectiveness that are quoted in the previous chapter, I reminded Eddie that, already at this early stage of the coalition's existence, we found it "impossible to believe that certain parties will allow a principled program to stand, much less a real plan for implementation of that program."

There are perhaps a dozen pages of documents related to the Toronto conference in the Safe Return files for May 1973. From the list of participants, it is clear that this was indeed an attempt by AMEX to restage the failed Paris meeting, not as a media event as Tod and I had

planned, but as a full-fledged Movement free-for-all. As George Carrano put it, the place was” packed with vets and assorted ultra-leftists.¹ Carrano himself appears on this list representing both FORA and Safe Return, as well as Up From Exile.

A detailed post-conference report - in its thoroughness Dee Knight’s creation I have no doubt - summarizes the proposals put forth at the conference by individuals from several political currents, including Gold Star mother Louise Ransom who clearly had Safe Return in her sights. Ransom was announcing her creation of the resister family group, Americans for Amnesty, linked to CALC with which she was long affiliated. Ransom volunteered that her group was not meant to compete with the work of FORA. The fact she felt it necessary to add this unsolicited disclaimer shows, at least, that Ransom was not deceiving herself.

At Safe Return we resented this, of course. Yet, we were otherwise unfazed. Such bald faced take-over bids in our heated political milieu were hardly unprecedented. Moreover we looked upon the Toronto amnesty conference as nothing more than a conference about a conference, and not as a viable means to hasten amnesty’s prospects. In a margin note on one of the report I had scratched the pithy judgement that, in Toronto,” the main concern was internal democracy at a large meeting of strangers with different views.” And therefore,” no action could come out of this model, except mass mobilization - and amnesty was not the war.”

All antiwar activists were protestors, but not all antiwar protesters were activists. It seems very clear in retrospect that we had already entered the post-Vietnam period - the long term consequences of which, in the heat of action, we were slow to identify. In the absence of a mass of protestors, activists straggled on throughout the Seventies waging a rear guard action, husbanding and marshaling the last energies of the amazing radical *Sixties*. When that curtain finally dropped, the nation would once again turn to the right in a burst of self-doubt by electing

as president a mere booster of national pride and gate keeper for conservative ideologues, Ronald Reagan.

I closed my letter reminding Eddie that, by the following weekend, the first of June, he must write me care of Ann at the Department of Economics, Brandeis University, and that I expected to spend my summer” in study and writing.” Given the pressures around Eddie’s case, and Safe Return’s stubborn resolve to not give ground on building FORA, this was not a great time for me to be absent from New York. Tod was understanding, but not happy about my departure, and I doubt my own ambivalence about leaving was greatly masked. Without the routine and intensity of work I was accustomed to with Tod, and the big city lifestyle, I suffered a pretty boring and unproductive summer, although I dutifully made the rounds of leftwing meetings on behalf of Safe Return and amnesty. But because Ann’s temp research job was with a mentor she greatly respected, I had agreed to play house in Cambridge for three months as a prelude to the more permanent arrangement we were planning for New York in the fall.

I accomplished no *serious* writing that summer, writing, that is, which I would now describe as publishable. I was still a novice in the craft, and, in my core identity, a radical activist, not yet a writer. Writing was a necessary and useful tool at Safe Return for administrative and political tasks. The Smith Corona portables in our office were seldom silent. Tod was a fast and accurate typist, and my own skills, thanks to a crash course in typing imposed by the Army on young intelligence officers, were adequate. Tod certainly was the more experienced wordsmith, having produced legal briefs in law school, and bureaucratic memos in an abbreviated fling with a government job, along with a couple of published articles. But I also had an affinity for writing, and with my better than average powers of recall, never had a problem as a

student filling a scholastic blue book at test time. It was also the case that both Tod and I were avid readers; and serious writing is all but impossible if one lacks that habit.

It was the reading - a virtual immersion in the foundational texts of the revolutionary left - that led to my suddenly taking writing more seriously. I consumed works by Marx and Engels, and many other titles devoted to the October Revolution, and to the socialist and labor movements in the United States. There was also the constant stream of leftwing printed matter that today fills many boxes in our 'in-coming' files housed at Cornell, much of it having once been faithfully read or briefed. These periodicals and broadsides embodied the political idiom in which the external and internal struggles of the New Left were scripted and played out.

I'd been primed in the art of polemics in my graduate linguistics studies, where I leaned toward Noam Chomsky's theories, and was fully exposed to the critical work of those who fiercely opposed him. I'd already read many of Chomsky's political articles as well, and several of his books on American power and the Vietnam War. I admired that Chomsky's prose was always relentlessly assertive and densely factual. His goal was to demolish the arguments of those whose politics or policies he contested. There was little middle ground to negotiate in the polemics of the Left, and for someone like me shedding a vague childhood disposition, the appeal of powerful analysis was intellectually and morally intoxicating; and it was in that genre I also hoped to express myself.

It would be virtually impossible, given the narrative scope and focus of this memoir, to summarize much less synthesize, the encyclopedic volume of periodical and ephemeral literature that helped define and guide New Left activism, a representative subset of which forms a substantial part of our archival collection. But among my personal papers I have discovered in an

old briefcase a fair, if random, sampling of the kinds of publications and reprints steadfast activists like me were reading in the early to mid-Seventies. It is an eclectic mix:

*"Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism-Maoism," by Nigel Harris. My copy is an undated reprint, with the price of 254 penciled across the top. It is likely taken from *International Socialism*, the theoretical organ of the International Socialist Group in Britain which Harris edited. The article is an intricate display of erudition at the service of the theoretical wrangling and dissenting politics that has for so long occupied the diverse followers of Leon Trotsky, like Harris, and the ISG, in its polemical feuds with the equally fragmented heirs of Joseph Stalin who controlled the USSR and many other ruling communist parties throughout the Eastern Bloc, as well as in China, Vietnam and Cuba.

*There are also two copies of the Socialist Worker's Party monthly journal, the *International Socialist Review*, from the early Seventies. The SWP was the largest Trotskyist organization in the U.S., and was reviled throughout much of the New Left, where *Trots* of all affiliations - and there were many - were ridiculed as purists who supported revolution everywhere except where it had occurred. Militants of the SWP were perhaps even more impossible to work with than the rest of us. And still the SWP was an exceptionally effective mobilizer of mass protest during the second half of the Vietnam War. Moreover on many political questions, the skeptical analyses offered by our closet Trotskyist friends, although long expelled from the SWP, were often the most persuasive to Tod and me. As for their Leninist party orientation that held members to the majority line under the strict top down discipline of democratic centralism, this was a political straightjacket to individuals like Tod and I who prized above all seizing opportunities for timely, independent action.

*Perhaps the most interesting paper in this collection is a mimeograph reproduction titled, "Building a Revolutionary Party," written in the early Seventies. There are seven names of joint authorship affixed to the document, including at the top, Carl Feingold, a mentor for Tod and I who had been in the SWP, and was involved in several important labor and antiwar struggles in the Forties and Fifties. Carl owned a type shop, located for a while in the same building as Safe Return, and Tod came to know him through his services for composing our own printed materials. By this time Carl was a member of the International Socialists (unrelated to Nigel Harris' group in the UK), which had begun as a Marxist current within SDS, the Students for a Democratic Society, but now stood alone, and in which many former SWP Trotskyists like Carl were active.

I went to several lectures at the IS meeting hall, and always found them, not just informative, but intellectually stimulating. The IS had some very smart members, well grounded in theory and history, and the level of discussion was usually high and ideologically eclectic. But Carl was a political insider, not an intellectual, and this particular document, which advocated a strategy of regroupment with the SWP and several other Trotskyist splinter groups, was more likely written by the man whose signature appears second on the paper, Arthur Felberbaum.

The call for regroupment teeters unsteadily on a view that events in France of 1968 heralded a "fresh recognition of the absolute indispensability of a revolutionary alternative to the CP, a mass revolutionary socialist party." From there the text travels densely over ten typed legal pages embarked on identifying and fixing the "conjuncture," and adapting to it the necessary strategy and tactics toward achieving the grand revolutionary objectives of the Leninist left. Arthur would later found the New York Marxist School,² a very valuable contribution to New York radical intellectual and political life. His learning and scholastic qualities notwithstanding, Tod and I both saw Arthur as ineffective politically, very heavy-handed in argument and in

appearance too much a self-conscious, not un-comic, caricature of his idol Leon Trotsky. Carl was much more subtle, and therefore more influential. Two years later, Tod and I would co-author with Carl a retrospective on the events of revolutionary Portugal for the journal, *Radical America*, about which, more ahead.³

*Another dominant political trend that emerged widely within the Movement of the early Seventies was Maoism. As with the Trotskyists, there were several competing lines and groupings. Among some of these currents, Josef Stalin enjoyed a rehabilitated status, his contributions to smashing capitalism in the Soviet Union seen to outweigh his” excesses” as a butchering tyrant. What for years was” the largest independent radical newspaper in the U.S.,” the *Guardian*, previously close to the American Communist Party, had turned ideologically toward the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the so-called New Communist Movement - collectively known throughout the Left as Maoists. Within the *Guardian* itself, this was essentially a staffing change, replacing the original founders who were stepped in the Cold War politics of the Forties and Fifties with younger activists who had come of political age in the Vietnam-era. It also meant a turn from even critical support of the Soviet Union, and pitted the emerging Peoples Republic of China at the center of the world revolutionary struggle against the hegemony of both superpowers.

Among the documents in my sample stash are three publications promoting the Maoist worldview. Two were published by the *Guardian*. “Unite the Many, Defeat the Few,” is a 40 page pamphlet by the paper’s long term editor Jack A. Smith, bound in newsprint and selling for 65¢. The subject is” China’s revolutionary line in foreign affairs.” Indeed, with little of revolutionary note going on in the industrialized First World, notwithstanding the unexpected

May `68 eruptions in Paris, activist attention was turned on the liberation struggles of the Third World, Vietnam being the primary but not exclusive focus.

The story of the Chinese Revolution gained greater recognition though the circulation of iconic texts like *Fanshen* by William H. Hinton, a sympathetic account of the land reform program under Mao. The reversal of class power which Hinton witnessed in meetings where peasants held the upper hand over their former bourgeois landlords, was a digestible, if largely romantic, vision of the class struggle that had little application in industrial societies like ours. Much of this detailed attention to daily life in revolutionary China struck many in my own circle, somewhat contemptuously, as little more than Third World Worship.

Hinton's study had commenced with the Great Cultural Revolution circa 1964, which one version of history would later record as - not a mass movement from below - but an internal power struggle between Mao and a rival faction in the Red Army, not to mention a "clique" of Party members - dubbed 'running dogs' - openly in favor of market reform. For external consumption among true believers, Mao was always portrayed as a fountain of wisdom and tolerance, an aphorism from his *Little Red Book* for every occasion. A favorite, little applicable to the realities of Mao's China, but which resonated with the utopian fantasies of the American youth culture was, "let a hundred flowers bloom." I don't think Jack Smith was of that ilk, and his pamphlet is a tour de force of historical investigative journalism, and even today a compelling read.

The second pamphlet is also by a Guardian heavyweight and former SDS leader, Carl Davidson, "Left in Content, Right in Form, a critique of contemporary Trotskyism." The standard point here is that Trotsky always claimed to lead the principled Left Opposition in the world communist movement. But for the rest of the Bolsheviks who remained standing after

Stalin's murderous Moscow Purge Trials in the Thirties, Trotsky's ideas, while" theoretically elegant,⁴ were held too pure and impractical for the rough and tumble of real world revolutionary politics, not to mention for holding state power. In fact, among critics like Davidson, the Trotskyists weren't merely anti-Stalinist, as they themselves contended, but anti-communist.

If I ever had been, I am no longer interested in arguing the point. I once inclined toward the Trotskyist camp, as I have not ceased to emphasize. Whatever their own revolutionary delusions, the Trots always seemed far more grounded in their interpretations of topical political realities than the enthusiasts of the Maoist crowd who actively believed that conditions existed in the early Seventies to build a revolutionary party among the American working class. Channeling Mao made for psychedelic politics in a psychedelic era.

Davidson's pamphlet too is a thorough and relentless polemic, fully representative of the scope and variety of Marxist-oriented materials steadily available then to thousands of us throughout the wide American Left. The author lays out chapter and verse the great sins in Trotsky's theory and practice. If Marxism's strength lay in its ability to foretell, as Trotsky had written, well he was a lousy Marxist, all wet, according to Davidson, on his negative assessment of the Chinese peasantry's capacity to play a leading revolutionary role. "Everyone knows," boasts Davidson," of the magnificent and heroic role of the Chinese peasant masses as the main force of the revolution, as the backbone of the Red Army and under the proletarian leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, as a vital component part of socialist construction in China today." People just don't write like that anymore.

The third of the Maoist-influenced artifacts in my small trove of New Left publications was published in early 1971, an edition of *Liberated Guardian*. According to one account, the

paper was launched, when” a faction sympathetic to the Weather Underground... challenge[d] the staff majority” at the *Guardian*, and in April 1970, “physically seized” the paper’s office.⁵ After the split, the *Guardian* experienced a small dip in its circulation, picked up by the paper’s *liberated* version which stayed in print for a bit over a year. In appearance, at least, a reader could never confuse one paper for the other.

What remained of the culture of the Old Left at the *Guardian* was precisely its sober and stodgy appearance, an inky tabloid crammed with words, and little regard for visual appeal beyond cultic photos of the world’s top communist personalities, past and present. The youth culture, if nothing else, had style, to include innovation in design and layout, multiple expressions of which virtually exploded on the pages of the *Liberated Guardian*. Design-wise, the edition in my hands is a chaotic mess, totally lacking a unifying eye. Graphics, while agreeably numerous and inventive, are scattered pell mell across the pages, and the proliferation of competing typefaces flaunts taste and structure; a lot of change for change sake, seductive to hip young appetites perhaps, but not necessarily at the service of the texts. At least with the old *Guardian*, the boring layout didn’t distract from the words.

The *Liberated Guardian*’s political orientation is quite broad, more New Left laundry-list than Maoist party line. For example, free of editorial commentary, there’s the transcript of an activist forum offering differing views on strategy and tactics in the antiwar movement. Much of the paper’s content, however, is a prelude to the long culture wars that have followed for decades now, showcased in part through women’s struggles - the militant nature of which is punctuated by the drawing on the paper’s front page of the female medical symbol with a fist imbedded in place of the standard encircled cross.

In this edition activist women are defending prostitutes from police harassment, while another article about the gay liberation movement in Great Britain honors the Left's inclusive cultural agenda and the spirit of internationalism simultaneously. An article in support of a Black Liberation *brother* facing charges of murder shows how the radical Left, in any confrontation with the 'Pig,' always took the side of an African American, even if he should later prove to be one part freedom fighter, two-parts hoodlum. A centerfold poster in the Chinese heroic style shows the multi-racial masses on the march under the Maoist banner, "Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win." And the cleverly appropriated logo of the gas tank additive, STP, now emblem of the barefoot-doctor-emulating rank and file Maoists, blazes from a boxed-in ad among the classifieds urging comrades to, *Serve the People!*

*Another cluster of thoughtful intellectuals and committed radicals, otherwise unaffiliated with tendency or party, gathered around *Liberation* magazine, the final sample from this abbreviated survey. The magazine had been founded in the mid-fifties by high profile pacifists Dave Dellinger and A.J. Muste, but easily morphed into a general organ for New Left independents. *Liberation* had published C. Wright Mills in defense of the Cuban Revolution, and Martin Luther King, Jr. on Civil Rights. During the Vietnam War, contributors included some of the most highly regarded radical elders of the day like Dellinger, Staughton Lynd, and Howard Zinn, not to mention some of the up-and-comers of New Left vintage, like Todd Gitlin and Stanley Aronowitz.

The December 1973 edition before me was a 'special issue with papers on a mass party,' one in a persistent chain of attempts in those years to form a viable third party that could challenge and reform effectively within the context of the American political system. In Europe, the communists and socialists competed more or less freely in parliamentary elections, and, the

latter, at least, had often come to power in the post-World War Two era. But our domestic two party duopoly and the pervasive indoctrination of anti-communism had rendered the Left irrelevant in the U.S. electoral arena. The alternative party proposal hashed over in the pages of *Liberation* wasn't even a distant cousin to the revolutionary party model sponsored by our own native Bolsheviks in the pages of the *Guardian* and elsewhere.

By 1977, some fateful winds directing me, I was living in an East Village loft that had been the last address of *Liberation's* offices before the magazine folded - for which I paid key money to a member of the disbanded staff - in the building formerly owned by and housing the offices of the *Guardian*, and where, in the basement, the paper had once been printed on a massive web press.

Within a few years I'd be publishing in periodicals like these, even closer to the mainstream; but not yet. Beyond some compulsive note taking on two books by Frederick Engels, a work by William Dumhoff, and a manual on public interest organizing by Ralph Nader, the only writing I did that summer was through correspondence. A couple of days after Ann and I had settled into a 2x4 on the ground floor of a private house on a tree-lined Cambridge street, I wrote two letters, first to Eddie and then to the boys back in New York.

To Eddie I apologized for not writing even sooner, still feeling, perhaps, the sting of Michaud's conviction, and that no quantity of letters was going to be of great comfort to my friend who likely faced a similar fate. I joked that "tiny is an understatement" to describe our apartment, but we would remain there only until later in the month, then move into the first of two grand professors' homes where we'd be house sitting for the rest of the summer. The first house is on a

lake,” complete with canoes, plenty of room and plenty of fresh air...” So he should” arrange a little R&R.”

The invitation assumes that Eddie, like Tommy Michaud, will be assigned to a correction unit outside the stockade for an indeterminate period awaiting trial, and, in theory, eligible for a three day pass. With a hint of resignation I allowed that life in Cambridge was “so far... working out alright. Ann goes to work in the morning, and I go around making contact with local groups interested in working on amnesty... It takes a good deal of time to acclimate politically,” I added wearily. I was, of course, working to” generate support for your case,” I assured him. Local developments bearing on amnesty I would detail in my second letter that day to “Tod, John & George” back at the home office.

To my New York mates I conveyed jaundiced news of an amnesty conference rapidly being organized in Boston” to involve what’s left of the antiwar movement within the NE region.” A coalition of local activists, a bit slow in assessing amnesty’s potential, was now determined to catch up quickly and project a regional presence for the issue. For me it was like *deja vu* in the provinces. The conference organizers had no intention of consulting Safe Return, and had already picked Henry Schwarzschild for their main speaker. I alerted Tod and the others that I was attending the planning sessions, keeping a low profile, and angling only to have George invited to speak on behalf of those” directly involved” in the exile experience.

This letter is clearly written to entertain with its sneering descriptions of the competition, mixed with the pleadings of a disgruntled, displaced New Yorker. I am particularly condescending toward” the three “officers” of Boston VVAW who, by their own admission, make up the entire active membership. I had hoped to steer this chapter toward a plan I was hatching to create a veterans’ caucus within, but independent of, the city’s broader” civilian” amnesty

coalition. “Forget it,” I wrote. “After talking to those guys for five minutes, I was ready to call in Bobby L.,” a glib reference to Robert Jay Lifton. “A more pathetic nest of PVS’ers I have never seen.” I closed the topic observing disdainfully that there was even one guy, although back from Nam for years, who” still talks in GI patois. “You bic man?””

Lifton, a Yale psychiatrist and a fixture in antiwar circles of high-status professionals, had helped pioneer rap group therapy for VVAW vets in New York several years back, and he and his colleagues had coined the term Post-Vietnam Syndrome for what later would be known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I had attended one of these rap groups and been thoroughly turned off; I was looking to fashion a *political*, not a narrowly *veteran* identity, which I found distasteful as well as limiting. And for years now I’ve been acting out this pet peeve especially where I perceived vets in the anti-war movement who traded independent political action for the role of poster boys or guilty penitents” to be paraded out for every meeting, conference or march.”

My next swipe was at the Boston” CALC *chapter* consisting of one man,” and disposed of in a single sentence. According to what I’ve been told by the vets,” his line is, if most of our constituency comes out for conditional amnesty, than that must be our position,” and one so retrograde, given where the issue has already evolved, it was beyond ridicule. Then I summarized a meeting with an experienced activist at IPC, the Boston branch of the Indochina Peace Campaign recently created by Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda. This person too wants to trim amnesty’s sweep, doesn’t really see the issue’s potential for mass involvement, and moreover wants to separate out the bad discharge question from the other demands because it is rooted in deeper social problems than the war. “Obviously,” I comment, and add,” kinda CP line. Doesn’t want to see military as extension of class oppression, since he doesn’t want to talk of class or class antagonisms at all.@

I take a mild stance here because a civil discussion based on real differences trumps a contentious exchange around issues more submerged, as with a woman at Boston LISP, Legal In-Service Project, a draft counseling group linked to the ACLU, with whom I apparently didn't hit it off. Here I am catty and a bit cruel, and in every way resonant with my mates who will read it. "An artsy-fartsy type, right out of a Crumb cartoon; didn't have the energy to hitch to Berkeley, so ended up in Cambridge instead. Any man who disagrees with her is macho; any woman unliberated.@

The last half of the letter is an analysis of the AFSC, the American Friends Service Committee, their Cambridge office being the convener and host of the upcoming conference. As I've mentioned, we often found it difficult to cooperate with the AFSC for the same reasons people found it hard to work with Safe Return. On the surface we could not have been more different. AFSC was a powerful national service organization with strong resources, active wherever Quakers could be found in any sizeable community; while SR was a small project on a shoestring budget and the brainchild of two individuals. Stylistically, however, we functioned in a similar way, demanding full control over any undertaking of our own creation. Philosophically, of course, we were on contending poles, at least around their belief in pacifism as the panacea of the resistance.

The AFSC's politics, I loftily clucked," is one of bourgeois idealism. The ideology is thoroughly internalized by its members, so it can't be questioned and operates unconsciously." To my equally uncompromising New Left mind-set, the AFSC, like the ACLU, for all progressive appearances, had one foot set too deeply inside the system. In practice," their approach to everything, politics, outsiders, and even themselves is totally administrative problem-solving." As for the conference, it's a fait accompli," their idea... and their resources are paying for it."

After only two planning sessions” the structure, purpose and most of the speakers are... already resolved.” To this general sketch I appended the bullet points on the conference plenary and workshops, noting that the conference had no goal to further” a functioning coalition at this time,” which the AFSC wouldn’t join in any case, but rather was to serve” essentially as a teach-in” for the activist community. Henry would cover” the history and overview, Pat Simon [the Gold Star mother] for appeal to the heart, and a third speaker as yet undetermined.” I closed asking George to let me know if he was available on June 24th, so” I’ll know how hard to push.”

While I spun my wheels in Cambridge with the dull equivalent of political make-work, the crew in New York worked overtime to publicize Eddie’s case. Donor and solidarity mailings went out quickly with an attractive brochure featuring Eddie in uniform on the cover, the word *DESERTER* X’d out, and *RESISTER* red inked graffiti-like, above it. Most of the copy was cribbed from transcripts of Eddie and Lora Sowders’ testimonies at the Abzug hearings, but also included was an urgent appeal for contributions to Eddie’s defense fund. A cocktail party at the 57th Street apartment of a couple named Paula and Fred Landesman held just the evening before I wrote this letter to New York served as a more immediate source of cash flow. The invitation was simple, and vintage Jack Larson, a half sheet of good buff stock, elegantly hand-lettered. It listed George, representing UP, and author Jim Reston⁶ as co-hosts on behalf of Safe Return and noted that several” parents of war resisters,” certainly Mrs. Sowders, would also be in attendance.

Then came the startling news. Just days after the New York fund raiser, Tod got word that the Army would process the paperwork to speed Eddie on his way with an Undesirable Discharge within a week. The campaign to Free Eddie Sowders, instantly mooted, ground to a sudden halt. What seems astonishing, and a bit perplexing as I examine this record, is that I don’t appear to have gotten this news until the following Monday, perhaps even Tuesday, when a letter arrived

from Tod to which I immediately responded. What makes it clear that I was in the dark about the Army's decision when I received Tod's letter, was that on Sunday, already two days after that decision by the Army, I was still writing Eddie asking if he was permitted to receive books in the stockade. As with Tommy Michaud, I wanted to help Eddie pass the time with Isaac Deutscher's superb trilogy on the life of Leon Trotsky. Apparently this work struck me as a particularly rousing tale of revolutionary intrigue and adventure, having an effect in my late twenties similar to my reading of Horatio Hornblower at thirteen. It is also possible that Ann and I didn't have a phone in our temporary sublet, or that we had gone away for the weekend and were out of touch in that blessed era before mobile phones and email.

It's a mystery. But I can be certain there was no animus stemming from my absence in what appears to me now as a colossal lack of communication, given the spectacular emotional dimensions of this development. That view perhaps smacks of anachronism. I have already commented with some emphasis that we communicated among ourselves and others at a pace that was contemporary to our means and available modes. Even good news might travel slowly. And the news about Eddie certainly followed that pattern. Tod apparently chose to convey it in a letter written from the office on Saturday, the morning after he received the call from the Army.

As a set, these three letters - mine to Eddie Sowders [Sunday June 10th from Cambridge], and the exchange between Tod and I [his: Saturday June 9th from New York; mine: Tuesday June 12th from Cambridge] - reviewed here not as they are dated, but in the skewed sequence they passed through my hands - are rare examples in our organizational files expressing personal concerns and demonstrative feelings that muffle slightly the march of action or loud polemics of politics and ideas with which we surrounded ourselves.

The letter to Eddie is considerably longer than the one I'd gotten off to him, hastily, guiltily, within days of arriving in Cambridge. Here I take pains. It is in this form that I began to exercise my meager literary and critical chops, and this letter is a prime example of those gestating ambitions. At its core I have sketched a brief critical appreciation of Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, which I had just finished. With a rejectionist's zeal, I enthuse over how Mailer reveals the rot of bourgeois culture underlying the myth of the American Dream, exposing "smashed aspiration after smashed aspiration. Golden expectations turning to tarnished, mocking emptiness," to which I cheerfully appended, "you'd really dig this book." The unforgiving ghosts of Vietnam dictated that bad news about America was always welcome in our radical circles.

In a voice that seldom emerges throughout this record, I openly express conflict about the direction of my life, something more than my general restlessness about being in Cambridge. My work at Safe Return is "satisfying" and "affirming," but I'm questioning if it is also "narrowing my experiences, and insulating me from a broader, more varied reality." This is followed by the odd comparison of our daily office routine with the neurotic habits of "middle class businessmen who spend their weekends on the links, or the worker escaping to the neighborhood bar."

Was this just more melodrama about being far from that familiar routine, or was my impending return to New York with Ann, vaguely headed toward the altar, causing me to question the prospects of an activist career? Both probably. In practice, nothing changed. By the time I wrote Eddie, I had already been drawn more closely into the AFSC's conference planning, and assigned a workshop on family organizing. But my true value was recognized by putting me in

charge of” pre-conference press activity... to ensure at least some broader public participation... That’s like putting the fox in the henhouse,” I crowed.

“Is it” really@June 9th,” Tod muses, in apparent amazement at the speeding passage of time, addressing his letter affectionately to:” Brother Michael.” Tod’s calendar seems to have moved faster than mine. He expresses first that he enjoyed my” depressingly familiar... précis of the Cambridge scene,” and only then, in the manner of a casual aside, mentions having heard” late Friday afternoon” that “Eddie’s getting out (with UD).” I still have to wonder if I was really learning this for the first time in Tod’s letter. Had there possibly been a prior phone call with the news the night before, or even earlier to Ann’s phone at Brandeis? The dating of my letter to Eddie confirms this was not the case.

Abruptly dropping further commentary on this stunningly welcome news, Tod addresses next the on-going business one naturally shares with one’s trusted partner, regardless of where he finds himself. He will continue to get out Eddie’s brochure, targeting those names from our growing house donor list who had not received the invitation to the Landesman’s fund raiser. Tod predicts that this ought to be “good for a fast \$500, or so,” on top of the impressive - for the time - haul of \$1,600 from the cocktail party itself. Looking at the foundation scene, Tod reports that he found a woman connected to the Methodist Church who agreed to conduit the anticipated “fiscal shot in the arm” of \$5,000 we are hoping for from the Kaplan Fund. On the direct mail side Tod had invested \$1,200 in a mailing that went out under the signature of I.F. Stone. This left a balance in our account of \$4,500.

It was a decent cushion given our modest operating budget, but essentially ready-money to underwrite our costly actions. We weren’t into saving, and there wasn’t much fat for paying the added staff. There’d been some friction around that. “We had a good talk here yesterday.

George and I were able to straighten out the differences and misunderstandings.” Tod agreed to pay George’s work-related travel and throw in an additional \$25 dollars weekly. I believe George was living at home so, in the economy of the Seventies, this stipend would cover subways and lunches, with a few beers in the evening. Beyond that George was on his own. “The same arrangement will have to be made with Eddie,” although Tod thought Eddie’s original honorable discharge might qualify him for some veteran’s benefits, and also unemployment insurance, “enough to support himself.” Tod confirmed that he, Pam, Sailor John and Bob Holt, his boyhood friend from Battle Creek living in New York, planned to stay a few days with Ann and me at our lake side house-sit just before the 4th of July. “We miss you here, @he added in a postscript.

I doubt I paused long before hurrying my response “for the record, since I’m sure I’ll talk to you before this gets to NY. I was really taken aback with the development in Eddie’s case, to put it mildly!” And after a perfunctory nod to the welcome warmth of Tod’s “nice” letter, I immediately launched into a mind puzzle of speculation about the meaning behind the Army’s decision. “Was it too hot for them, or have we been absorbed?” Time to pile on, I wondered, multiple returnees, or would we just be “helping the military in rounding up the strays and right out the revolving door again with a reject stamp on their working papers?” Some additional reflection of a similar vein, inane to me now, thinly masking how much I’d been caught off guard by the news.

There were other letters in Safe Return’s files for June 1973 that, had Tod mentioned them at all on those few occasions we spoke long distance, he would have done so with passing disdain or satisfaction, bits of coded shorthand to sustain viewpoints mutually held. Two of most

interesting pieces of correspondence I had completely forgotten or never seen, and so they appear here as fresh, unanticipated and exciting discoveries as third party vistas on Safe Return.

The first is a long letter from Jack Colhoun of AMEX to Lew Simon of Up From Exile. During AMEX's Amnesty Conference Colhoun says he "had a chance to talk with George Carrano in a political and personal sense." Gerry Condon and Sandy Rutherford had assured him that "George is a good person, and it was most unfortunate that we met under the trying circumstances of the Paris Amnesty Conference." Despite what Colhoun characterizes, but does not define, as "political differences around Safe Return-FORA," his "breakthrough" with George has led him to conclude that "both groups know we have to find some better way of relating to each other." Jack next interprets a call he'd received from Gene Williams, still hanging around Washington in the early summer as FORA's informal Congressional contact, "as an attempt to cut through the ice." But AMEX, he warns, "could only go so far without talking to Mike and Tod who do not seem to want to talk at the moment.@"

Colhoun's opening gambit is a red herring. He knows quite well that AMEX - Dee Knight at least - has no interest in meaningful reconciliation with Safe Return, regardless of whether or not "Mike and Tod" were willing to talk... which we weren't. Jack is making nice for Lew's benefit, but, in fact, both groups - AMEX and Safe Return - were content for the moment to maintain de facto communications through surrogates like George Carrano and Gene Williams.

What truly troubled Jack, the principal reason for his letter to Lew Simon, was a matter touching the exile community directly, but to which Safe Return was not vulnerable. AMEX's rivals among the Toronto-based expatriates seemed "willing to do anything to stop work on amnesty," groaned Colhoun. The expats had initially planned to trash the AMEX conference where they "formed a coalition with the pacifists and tried to stop the Marxist groups from

moving ahead seriously on amnesty.” His use of the term “Marxists” here is clearly generic, describing the general temper and coloration of many Movement activists, including those at Safe Return and UP, and not just the disciplined Leninist elements among us.

The “Marxists” prevailed. But behind this dissension, Colhoun feared, dark forces were at work “to exploit the exile-expatriate split. If it is not agents, it could well be the development of genuine expatriate insecurity.” Colhoun doesn’t seem to know which, but is certain nevertheless that “real agents are coming to Canada,” and that “clearly the same process is at work in Sweden.” Here he is referring to a statement published by a few anti-amnesty expats in Stockholm who claimed they were denounced publicly by UP as FBI agents during the clandestine meeting the exile delegates had organized in Paris after the banning of our conference. “This is outright slander,” thundered Colhoun, who said he knew the charge to be false since he was present at that meeting.

Of course loose lips might utter reckless charges in the heat of discussion, more from contempt than fact. Who knows what someone might have spat out in Paris? And, as I have already noted, pig baiting was a favorite extracurricular pastime in the Movement. Even Eddie Sowders, Colhoun reports to his counterpart in Sweden, is suspected of being a cop by an activist at the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme, the most influential of the anti-amnesty expatriate groups in Canada. “This is nonsense as far as I know,” Colhoun comments weakly, given that “Dee knows Eddie pretty well.” Ed Sowders is no longer here to defend himself, but I suspect, given his own dynamic activism, that Eddie had contact with all the antiwar forces in Toronto during his own brief Canadian exile, and may have triggered suspicions among the more self-righteous draft resisters in that community - as I once had among elitist liberals in New York - just on the strength of having served in the military, not to mention the actual war.

I see Calhoun's letter as a sincere attempt to draw his fellow pro-amnesty exiles closer to AMEX around issues of mutual urgency. Mostly he just wants to know the general mood toward amnesty among U.S. exiles in Sweden, how that dovetails with the situation in Canada. It seems that since Paris members of the various exile communities, lacking the structure for collaboration that had briefly been provided by Safe Return, now maintained only sporadic contact with each other. With AMEX questioning its own base of support, and - as would become clear later - alienating some of the main players within NCUUA - Colhoun may still be trying to rally the exile block around a politics of shared experience and solidarity.

I get no sense that Jack is trying, not overtly in any case, to peel Lew Simon from his close affiliation with Safe Return. But the note of anxiety is unmistakable when Jack seeks clarification from Lew about UP's status now that "George has gone to work with FORA." Finally, in a long postscript to a letter already two pages long, after being vetted presumably by Dee Knight, Colhoun returns to the typewriter to ensure Lew that what he had written "on p.1 second paragraph" in response to Gene William's call is not meant "to sound hostile to FORA." What Colhoun lacked in guile, his partner more than made up for.

It was late June, almost a month before Lew Simon could reply to Jack Colhoun - sending copies of the exchange to New York - and he finally makes clear why timely correspondence was less convenient for him than for the rest of us. As Lew explains, he had to adjust his activism to married life with Fia, his Swedish wife, and while working the night shift in a hospital as a nurse's aid. He has nonetheless managed to carve enough time for a letter of equal length to the one he received from Colhoun, and, from where he was sitting, outlined the differences between AMEX and Safe Return that Jack had failed to define.

It is encouraging that you have characterized the remaining differences between you and Safe Return as political, rather than personal, e.g. “insensitivity to exiles” as has been done in the past. The crux... apparently lies in the different evaluations as to the relative effectiveness of working primarily through the existing US peace movement and its organs versus putting the primary stress on breaking new ground among average Americans who have hitherto not been involved in the struggle for peace and justice.

As for George Carrano, not only does he continue to serve as a spokesperson for UP wherever he resides, but “we are in full accord with the work FORA is doing, and with George’s role in it.” UP, moreover, continues to be the recognized voice of the exiles in Sweden where “support for amnesty is stronger than ever.” Lew next reassured Jack that what remained of the original ADC - the American Deserter Committee - the individuals claiming they were slandered as police agents by UP in Paris - consisted of four “doctrinaire vulgar Marxists,” three draft resisters and their leader’s Swedish girlfriend. Having been “embarrassed by the US antiwar movement’s support for amnesty,” the ADC had now dropped their opposition to the issue, but continued to demand preconditions for amnesty, like “freeing political prisoners in South Vietnam, stop the bombing, US reparations, etc.”

“Not a single deserter is in the group,” Lew noted, the implication being that, if “insensitivity to exiles” were to be alleged of any group, the ADC would be high on his list. In contrast with the ADC Lew held that “the anti-imperialist orientation must be the *implicit* core of our amnesty strategy, and serve as a constant source of revelation and deeper understanding for thousands of Americans... It is clear to us that Safe Return and FORA have had the strongest

stateside impact of any groups working for amnesty, rather than relying on peace movement rhetoricians, who are basically talking only to those who already share their views.”

The distinctions Lew paints in his letter are obviously flattering to Safe Return. I'm sure that both Tod and I would have been pleased by the directness of Lew's reply, and with the language of his arguments. But we took no one's loyalty for granted in those days of endlessly factious and shifting alliances. So it was all the more gratifying that Lew, totally unprompted, seemed to be expressing exactly what he thought. Yet, politics aside, our rivalries were indeed deeply personal. AMEX, and Dee Knight in particular, resented and coveted for their own small circle the cachet that Safe Return had attained for itself in the US media. It was this very preeminence that Lew Simon admired, and expressed in words that could not have been welcome to his correspondent in Canada.

The charges of “insensitivity” hurled at Tod and I from various quarters cannot be so easily dismissed. The genuine altruism motivating our activism was often clouded by hubris and disregard for the feelings of others, qualities, as I have said, we reinforced in each other. Even given the intensity of our efforts and demands on our attention, we exhibited a remarkable lack of curiosity about the details of the lives of those on whose behalf we tirelessly advocated for right and for justice. To take Lew Simon as the immediate example, one can see now that the reality he confronted created choices that fundamentally differed from those faced by the principals at both AMEX and Safe Return.

Moreover, Lew was apparently adjusting to exile where so many, perhaps the large majority, had failed. Unlike his closest associates in the amnesty movement, politics did not totally define his life, if for no other reason than such an option - at a price he was willing to pay - did not exist. He was a war resister; nothing would ever change that. But it wasn't his whole

identity. Most Vietnam War expatriate resisters never harbored a serious plan to adapt to their places of exile. But Lew was steadily going on with his life - whether whole or half-heartedly, I cannot say - reinventing himself in a foreign land, in a foreign tongue. Somehow Tod and I missed all that, and so Dee's and Jack's grievance on that score had ample justification. But those failings were personal too, not political.

Because George Carrano sat briefly on its steering committee, our files contain samples of NCUUA's correspondence which, of course, Safe Return had not been on the distribution list to receive. One letter written in early June is actually addressed to George as NCUUA's "co-convener," weeks after his decision to resign. It comes from the Director of Congregational Concerns of the American Lutheran Church in Minneapolis declining an invitation to join the coalition. This is a classic Mid-West to East Coast memorandum: Hello? We don't do over-the-top New York radical out here in the heartland. Desertion doesn't go down so easy out here. And a 'dishonorable discharge' still smacks of shirking one's duty. Cowardice. Furthermore to present NCUUA's program as "demands" is "unnecessarily inflammatory." The whole tenor of the invitation, moreover, "smacks of patronage and paternalism of the *in* group to the *naive* and *uninitiated*." In this man's mind, and very likely the minds of the prevailing majority among his congregants, when it came to the sanctity of performing military service with a clean record it was still World War II. Vietnam notwithstanding, that mindset had not been much disturbed.

The reply to this letter on behalf of NCUUA came from a fellow churchman in New York who acknowledged with sympathy his friend and colleague's "critique of the policy statement adopted by" the coalition. Citing the Minnesotan's many valid concerns, he goes on to provide a clear explanation for the demand to grant amnesty for those with 'less than honorable' discharges, noting that "the category does include the dishonorable discharge, as well as general, bad conduct

and undesirable discharge. It is our belief," he continues, "that there should only be one kind of discharge from the military," one without the power to disadvantage a former service member on return to civilian life.

Clearly this is not a position that most of the church-affiliated amnesty advocates would have promoted on their own. But the demand was by now boiler plated to the cause. NCCUA's padre next hints that the liberal churches have their own mechanisms for dealing with the amnesty ministry, and that he will seek a meeting soon to discuss these options. And more directly to the point, this New York churchman did not expect NCUUA's program to be "changed dramatically, as the coalition of groups which originally formulated it includes many who would oppose any watering down of the statement." Safe Return, of course, while outside the coalition, was very much among the loudest voices who "originally formulated" those uncompromising demands.

We were well aware that the churches, with their emphasis on acts of conscience, would have vast resources to pressure the government toward a policy of repatriation for exiled resisters, and leniency for draft evaders and deserters, in whatever "watered down" version they could help broker within the corridors of power. At the same time, there would be many individual churches at the grassroots, and a few national denominations, who would endorse or tolerate the more radical orientation promoted by the remaining oppositional forces of the antiwar movement. At Safe Return, we were happy to cooperate with members of the cloth, Dan Berrigan for example, who shared our stance in positioning the rightness of universal amnesty against the wrongness of Vietnam. Other than that there was little overlap between the day to day activities of the church-going world and the secular New Left.

Other institutional players, like lawyers - and not just the civil libertarians clustered nationally around the ACLU - also had their own nexus to the amnesty issue, many independently

of the activist community. There may have been few among these civilian practitioners with the competence to defend clients in military courts, a reality that possibly hampered our ability to represent the two deserters we sponsored who actually went to court martial, even if the military justice system seldom favored the defendant. But there was a much larger pool of attorneys who incorporated selective service law within their practices. If the numbers of cases of desertion during the Vietnam War were off the charts, those who defied the draft also numbered in the tens of thousands, with non-registrants alone believed to total more than a quarter of a million.

Not infrequently, the legal work generated by these draft cases was pro-bono, contributed by lawyers who opposed the war. Non-profit projects like the Eugene Legal Center in Oregon not only provided legal services to resisters, but sought an active role in influencing the politics of the amnesty movement through a project called Amnesty Now! The Center's director, Charles O. Porter, a former Congressman from before the war, and with whom Safe Return maintained a cordial relationship, also wrote George care of NCUUA in early June. Porter apparently had high hopes for NCUUA's potential to "promote mergers" among the various groups working on amnesty, and serve to coordinate a division of labor "for grassroots organizing, work with the media and bird dogging on Capitol Hill."

Like Lew Simon, Porter clearly admired Safe Return's success with the media, and he would have wanted us to continue in that role, but ideally within the institutional frame he hoped NCUUA would provide for the issue. It's intriguing to imagine how a rational corporate organizational model like Porter's might have joined all the competing movement parts into a coordinated whole to wage a more effective campaign for amnesty. But amnesty was never the true end for most of those competing parts he thought to join together; the issue was always primarily a means to perpetuate an anti-establishment political culture that the war had made

possible, and which still lingered tenaciously only to fade into irrelevance a few short years into the future. Porter, of course, did not share the uncompromising revolutionary zeal that so permeated the New Left.

It was in this spirit of persistent antiwar militancy that NCUUA was gearing up for action at mid-year in 1973. In essence, one of the largest militant blocks during the last years of the war, the Peoples Coalition for Peace and Justice - PCPJ - ranging over ideological currents from the Communist Party to the War Resisters League - was simply shifting members of its activist core toward involvement with amnesty. This was precisely the outcome Dee Knight had been seeking in his meetings with PCPJ in the weeks before our Paris conference, and ever since.

At its founding NCUUA's co-chair with George Carrano was a woman named Irma Zigas, a presence on New York's Movement scene for a number of years, and an individual who had the overbearing sense of entitlement I had come to identify with red diaper babies - Movement activists with family and cultural ties to the Old Left, and typically the Communist Party and its co-thinkers, like Women Strike for Peace, with which Irma was titularly affiliated. Whether or not Irma actually came from this background, it was the way both Tod and I would have perceived her, having become, owing to any number of past clashes, over-sensitized to what we experienced as "stalinoid" bullies. The disdain was mutual given that Tod and I could not be tamed for the kind of political work within the United Front framework that activists like Irma always favored as the field for their own leadership. Irma soon became NCUUA's principal administrative coordinator, another reason among several for Tod and me to avoid direct contact with the coalition.

Two additional NCUUA documents in Safe Return's files from early June were both promulgated by Irma Zigas. There's a brief reply to Charles Porter, assuring him that NCUUA

had no intention of becoming merely a clearing house for information as he had feared. "It is an organization with a stated program and leadership," she wrote. "Its main function will be to promote common overall action... which may be more comprehensive than would be possible for any individual group acting alone," this last a clear dig at Safe Return. The other document is a call to NCUUA's new steering committee to include Knight, Schwarzschild, Sandy Rutherford, and members of VVAW and CCCO, for a meeting in New York toward the end of June. There is a proposed agenda, the final item of which asks, "Should we begin to work on a common campaign." It was a question that, in practice, this multi-talented, ideologically fragmented ensemble of activists would never satisfactorily answer.

George and Sailor John attended Irma's meeting, which was summarized from their notes in a three-page memorandum by Tod, and distributed to Eddie Sowders, who was traveling in the Mid-west, Lew Simon in Stockholm, and me. All the major NCUUA players were present, divided between an Inside Six and an Outside Six. The former were the members who represented liberal institutions like the ACLU, CALC and the Council of Churches along with well-established leftwing and pacifist organizations like Women Strike for Peace and the War Resister's League. The latter, the Outside Six, are described as representatives of those who would benefit were an amnesty to be declared. Most, but not all the names of those in attendance are listed in Tod's memo. It's the usual suspects, Irma, Henry, Dee, Bob Musil for CCCO, Ed Demato for VVAW, Trudy Young - a new face - for CALC, and antiwar activist Jeanne Friedman who was elected at the Toronto conference to represent a new category called 'civilian resisters.' The two spheres are like oil and water; they can't even agree on a policy statement. There is in NCUUA's draft statement a particularly problematic paragraph:

The war in Southeast Asia is not over. The movement to achieve a universal and unconditional amnesty for American war resisters demands that the U.S. government fully implement the Cease Fire Agreements and thereby immediately cease all military operations in Southeast Asia, and support of its client governments in Indochina, and insist upon the release of all political prisoners in South Vietnam.

The Inner Six wanted to strip this paragraph altogether, a position vigorously opposed by the Outer Six who eventually agreed to drop it to the bottom of the page. "Maybe people won't read that far?" - was the parenthetical commentary in the Safe Return memo. God help us but these follies always gave us such perverse pleasure. The whole tenor of the memo demonstrates that, where the Outer Six had the upper hand in determining the politics - which had by this time migrated to embrace those demands of the antiwar movement that were a poor fit for the amnesty cause - the Inner Six could simply stonewall and continue to marshal their extracurricular maneuvers on amnesty independently of the coalition. Not the least of these parallel tracks was fund raising. It was Henry and the church bureaucrats who had entree to the directors of the Left foundations, like Bernstein, Kaplan, Stern, Rabinowitz, and to wealthy antiwar philanthropists like General Motors heir, Stewart Mott. They had the judges in their pockets, and they would not share them.

At one point in the meeting, "Jeanne Friedman demanded to have Henry Schwarzschild explain more about the tete-a-tetes with the foundations. In whose name had Henry approached them?" she asked. "In my own," Henry responded. Vintage Henry. He was no pushover. A discussion followed which "generated a lot of tension and evident bad feeling among the Outer Six." But they received no satisfaction to salve their concerns. George and Sailor had concluded

that, “there is no sign as to a commitment of ACLU/NCC, CALC, to pump real money into NCUUA. Specific discussion of specific budgets was carefully avoided.” When the Outer Six - mindful of Safe Return’s success in this arena - wanted to discuss using the mailing lists of the Inner Six for a direct mail campaign, “Henry was uncommunicative... the big groups didn’t like the idea.”

Irma Zigas, although a member of the Outer Six, was herself a committed antiwar activist, and hardly inexperienced in the rough and tumble of Movement politics. Her role as administrator of NCUUA, with sole check signing authority, was to keep the ultra-radicals with their impossible laundry list of demands in line in order to create the semblance of a functional organization. In the memo she is quoted as having chilled the wrath of the other activists warning them that, “if we don’t trust each other, we’ve got a big problem.” Apparently, the Outer Six got the message. As characterized by Carrano and McGarrity, “they seem to just want to hang on with an airline ticket here and there, maybe a conference once in a while.@"

There had been one programmatic initiative set in motion at the NCUUA meeting. Scheduled for mid-October, CALC, through its new family group Americans For Amnesty, would conduct an Amnesty Week, and involve NCUUA’s participation in some fashion yet to be determined. “There will be,” Trudy Young announced, “sermons across the country in support of amnesty.” What’s this, one of the memo’s compilers sneered, “Take a deserter to church?” The last line in the memo was a personal message from Tod to me. His 4th of July plans in Cambridge were off; he and Pam had broken up... again, a back and forth pattern between them that spread over many years. This always upset me. They were my role models, and I was invested emotionally in their relationship.

The AFSC Amnesty Conference came and went. I can barely summon a few shady memories, a feeling perhaps, of tedium which tells me there was little I believed to be worth remembering. Whatever else occurred, I am identified in a program as a Coordinator of Safe Return, and apparently had the floor for presentation of a statement. It's a one page tightly written brief making what are by now the familiar points. I like in particular the succinct concluding arguments supporting a full amnesty, "because resisters are not criminals, because we believe that the responsibility for the war and its human toll belongs rightfully on the shoulders of the war policy makers, because it would be a repudiation of America's war policies and perhaps will prevent future Vietnams." The Safe Return political line stood in stark contrast to the purist position that dominated among NCUUA's Outer Six. We did not seek to tie the postwar issue of amnesty through which our larger aims could be advanced to a demand for the implementation of the Peace Accords. With the removal of U.S. troops, the Vietnamese liberation forces had precisely what they wanted, the space necessary to take care of themselves. Our objective, as always, was to bring the war home, and, in the years ahead - whether implicitly or directly - to join the battle over how the Vietnam War would be remembered, a bitter legacy to weigh against future military adventures.

As for Ann and I, we settled into the semblance of a domestic routine. I recall strangely few of the details of our day to day existence together in Cambridge. Over one stretch I remember that we'd head out in the early morning for the tennis courts at Radcliffe College, volley back and forth a bit too competitively for a half hour or so. Ann would then bike the twenty miles to Brandeis in Waltham, where on one occasion when I had joined her there we had a terrible row. Blows were exchanged. A slap on the face from me, repeated blows with a wire hanger about my head and shoulders by her. The only plausible context I can reconstruct for my

behavior was that I had returned from a quick run to New York, and questioned her on who she'd been out with in my absence. There had been a fling, and she admitted to physical contact. I exploded in a rage of jealousy, instantly regretting my violent act, and she stood meekly to receive my punishment. We had a rough night in my vague recollection, but somehow survived it. I think we both saw the incident in more primitive terms than the usual prohibitions scripted by bourgeois morality. The shock seemed to make us more real to one another.

Notes in Progress:

1 In Hunt op. cit. the author places at least thirty members of what had recently evolved into VVAW/WSO [Winter Soldier Organization], at the amnesty conference in Toronto.

2 Still in existence in New York City as this is being written, and known today as the Brecht Forum.

3 Cite

4 The phrase comes from *Revolution in the Air*, a history of the New Communist Movement, by Max Elbaum.

5 Ibid.

6 There had been a late and unexpected notice of Reston's book a week earlier in *The Boston Phoenix*, an alternative weekly (May 29, 1973).