WAR RESISTERS IN EXILE: THE MEMOIRS OF AMEX-CANADA

INTRODUCTION

by Jack Colhoun

The single most important role in defeating Washington's aggressive aims in Indochina was played by the Vietnamese, Kampuchean, and Laotian resistance movements. Very significant, but little understood, was the erosion of the U.S. economy during the Vietnam War years, both internationally and domestically, which had a limiting effect on the extent of U.S. resources committed to the war. But we shouldn't underestimate the contribution made by the U.S. antiwar movement to helping the Indochinese liberation fighters defeat the American military machine.

The role of the civilian antiwar movement in leading American popular opinion against the war was crucial. In the end, the fact that U.S. troops could not be counted upon to fight the Indochinese had more telling effects on Washington's ability to wage the war than civilian antiwar protests, but the military resistance movement could not have taken place without the civilian antiwar movement and the public consciousness it created.

In commenting on the draft resistance movement in general, by highlighting Muhammad Ali's refusal to be drafted, New York Times columnist Tom Wicker had this to say:

> What, indeed, would happen if only, say 100,000 young men flatly refused to serve in the armed forces, regardless of their legal position, regardless of the consequences?
>
> A hundred thousand Muhammad Alis, of course, could be jailed. But if the Johnson Administration had to prosecute 100,000 Americans in order to maintain its authority, its real power to pursue the Vietnamese war or any other policy would be crippled if not destroyed. It would then be faced not with dissent but with civil disobedience on a scale amounting to revolt.

The memoirs of General Westmoreland and various officials of the Johnson and Nixon Administrations make it clear that Washington was seriously concerned about the extent of antiwar resistance and protests, and that the antiwar movement did, in fact, have a genuine effect on the timing and scope of U.S. war policies. During the Vietnam War period, roughly 503,000 GIs deserted from the ranks of the military; nearly 800,000 GIs were discharged from the military less-than-honorably; about 209,000 violations of the Selective Service System were reported to its headquarters in Washington; and in the range of 1,000,000 draft-age men never registered for the draft. In brief, the situation within the military services was so serious that it led military historian Colonel Robert D. Heinl to conclude in the June 1971 Armed Forces Journal that "the morale, discipline, and battleworthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States." It is no exaggeration to say that troop withdrawals from Vietnam were accelerated by the GI revolt and the alarming desertion rate. Clearly, the antiwar movement was able to open a critical second front during the Vietnam War.[1]

Our struggle to end the war was a people's struggle, and its history a people's history. If the rich and powerful who own the U.S.'s natural resources and corporations have their way--and it is the interests of this ruling class that the war itself served--then the history of the antiwar movement will remain unwritten, or will be told from their perspective. Too many high school and college history textbooks deal with the vast opposition to the war by saying that it was courageous politicians like the Kennedys, Gene McCarthy, George McGovern and so on, who brought the country to its senses; and that our democratic system of its own accord righted the wrongs of this "tragic" period in American history. But we know better. The politicians never moved against the war until they felt pressure from below, from the people who were supposed to fight, and to pay for the war with their taxes.

And if the history textbook writers ever get around to discussing the amnesty question, they will likely follow the same pattern. Many of the "courageous" politicians who had opposed various war policies saw the need for amnesty, and then along came Jimmy Carter to heal the nation's post-Vietnam wounds. Of course, that's not how it happened. But unless a people's history of the antiwar and amnesty movements is written, that's what future generations of Americans will be taught, if the subject is discussed at all, as the U.S. ruling class rewrites the history of the Vietnam era.

One major difficulty in writing a people's history, especially of the 1960s and 1970s, is that many written materials and records have been lost, and much more critical information was transmitted over the telephone. The antiwar movement developed out of a vacuum with respect to understanding past progressive movements in American history, and left a vacuum in its wake with respect to understanding itself. The New Left and the antiwar movement had little sense of history, and little regard for leaving a historical record which could be of value to future

American struggles against U.S. imperialism.

In looking back over our years of activism in the antiwar and amnesty movements, the editors of AMEX-Canada realized that although we had tried to leave materials from which a future historian could piece together our story, much crucial information was never recorded on paper and existed only in our memories. Although AMEX did not play a major role in the Stateside antiwar movement, we did play a central role in the development of communities of exiled draft resisters and deserters, particularly in Canada but also in Sweden, France and Great Britain. For the first time in American history, draft resisters and deserters had an effect on Washington's ability to conscript an imperialist army, and contributed to the declining combat effectiveness of that army. Furthermore, war resisters were able to make a significant contribution to organizing and public agitation against the very war they were supposed to be fighting, opening yet another antiwar front from the countries of their exile. Although a large body of literature has been produced on war resisters in exile,[2] we believe that no single work to date, nor the entire literature taken together, captures the full significance of the exile movement, especially the role of AMEX.

New Left influence was strong in the early development of war resister organizations in exile, but by the time the amnesty movement began to develop in late 1971, many of these groups had ceased their organizational involvement in the antiwar struggle. In many ways, the amnesty movement began where the antiwar movement left off. By this time, AMEX had learned that public education and organizing around the amnesty campaign was an effective way by which we could continue our antiwar work from exile. At first, AMEX was unable to get the remaining New Left antiwar organizations involved in the amnesty movement. Consequently, we helped begin the process of joining together a wide, cross-class section of groups interested in working on amnesty.

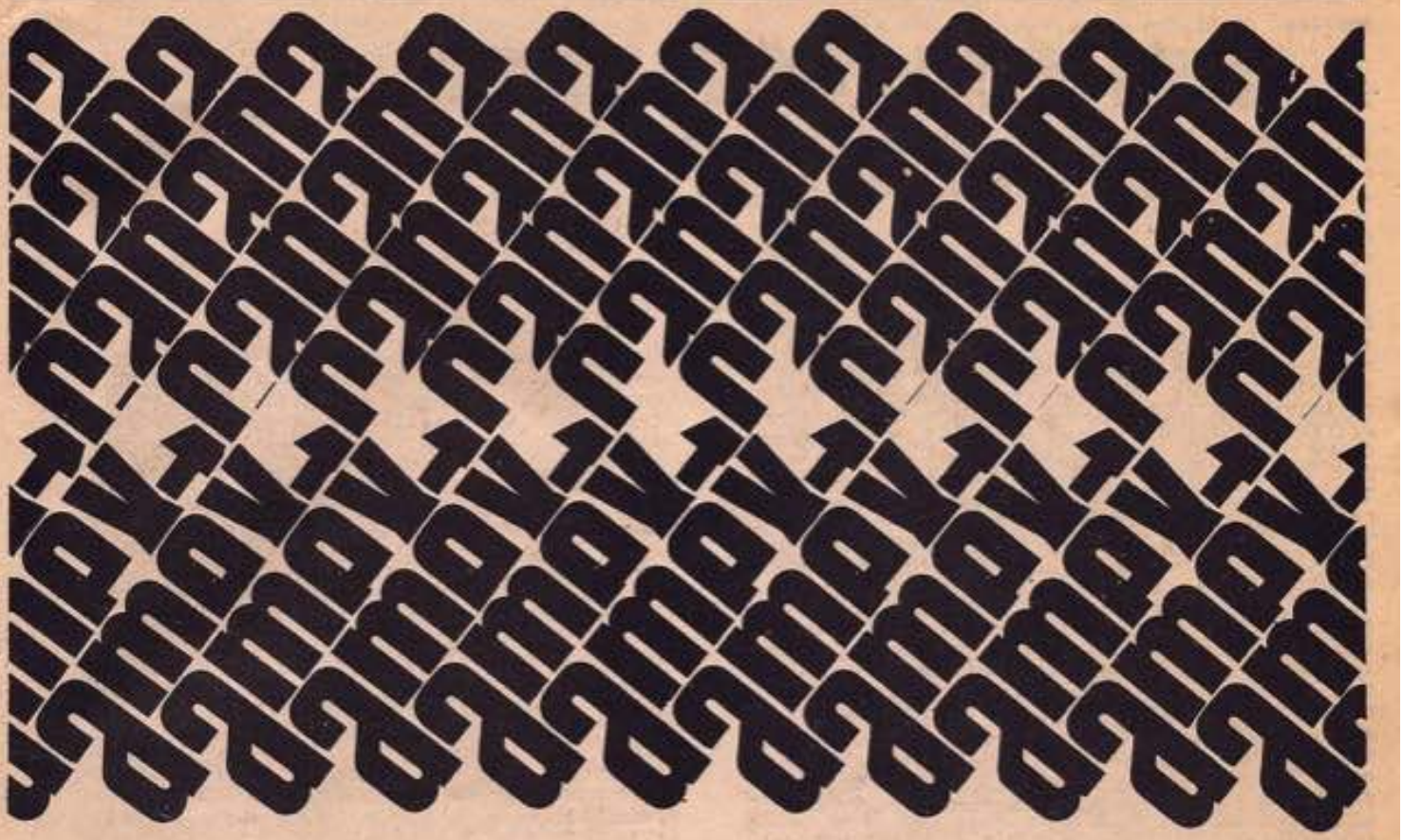
Out of this loose network of amnesty groups AMEX helped to form the National Council for Universal Unconditional Amnesty (NCUUA), an umbrella coalition of nearly one hundred local and national groups doing amnesty work. Gradually, AMEX began to play a leading role within NCUUA. We were eventually able to forge the amnesty coalition into an antiwar organization which helped transform the amnesty debate from a matter of postwar humanitarianism and a healing of the wounds of war, into a serious examination of the U.S. role in Vietnam. Instead of a sentimental and bankrupt liberal approach to amnesty, AMEX had considerable success in encouraging the amnesty movement to understand and organize around the unjust, aggressive nature of Washington's war, and the criminal U.S. prosecution of that war. Since most of the amnesty movement's work was done after the Paris Ceasefire Agreement was signed in January 1973, and its most significant public agitation came after the liberation of Indochina in April 1975, the amnesty movement had the effect of extending the Vietnam War debate into the postwar period.

What follows is the story of AMEX's nine-year struggle to understand the political forces which drove draft resisters and deserters into exile, and to discover and implement ways to make that exile politically useful to the broader fight to end the Indochina War. Once the Indochinese liberation forces had successfully driven the U.S. out of their homelands, we turned our full attention to winning back our political and civil rights as war resisters through the campaign for universal and unconditional amnesty.

Before moving on to AMEX's story, a few pre-

fatory remarks are necessary. Due to my professional training as a historian of the United States, ironically completed while in exile in Canada, I'm especially aware of this study's limitations. It is not a comprehensive history of the exile movement in Canada, nor is it a complete history of the amnesty movement. Rather, it is AMEX's political memoirs, a recounting of our own history from our perspective. Often AMEX crossed paths, and sometimes swords, with other war resister organizations in exile, and with amnesty groups in the States. Although these memoirs attempt to present AMEX's struggles with other organizations as fairly as possible, the story is told from our perspective. Although I have written these memoirs from existing AMEX and NCUUA documents, many events were reconstructed from AMEX's collective memory, and through careful study and discussion of these pages with my fellow editors Steve Grossman and Gerry Condon. Duane Shank, with whom AMEX worked closely during the latter period of the amnesty movement, also provided invaluable assistance through his critical reading of early stages of this project. Joe Somsky of the AMEX staff, in addition to helping produce this issue of AMEX-Canada magazine, provided important information he gained while working with the amnesty movement in the States, which filled gaps in our collective knowledge. Furthermore, Grossman's editing resulted in many stylistic improvements over the original manuscript.

We have tried to avoid as many mistakes of fact and interpretation as possible, and have done our best to let the facts speak for themselves with respect to AMEX's struggles with other organizations and individuals. Although AMEX has had many bitter struggles with members of NCUUA's nonleft over the years, many of which are recorded here, our purpose in recounting them is not petty mudslinging. We have attempted to capture the political significance of our differences, and to demonstrate how these internal struggles affected the overall outcome of the exile and amnesty movements. We have sincere admiration for the strong commitment to amnesty work shown by many of those with whom we have engaged in sometimes bitter political struggles, an admiration that transcends



the gulf that separated us politically.

Although we believe AMEX played an important role in the development of the exile, amnesty and antiwar movements, we are too close in time and too deeply involved personally to be totally objective about the results of our efforts. Before deciding to write these memoirs, we had doubts about the significance of AMEX's place in antiwar movement history. But in trying to draw our own conclusions about our victories, defeats and errors to further our own political growth, we were struck by the impact, variety and drama of our own history; and the telling of our story began to take on a life of its own. In the end, these pages may have little significance beyond unfolding an interesting story. However, they may serve a much more important function for a future generation of war resisters. We hope the lessons of our work can be useful to future resisters to future U.S. wars of aggression, and help ensure that the next such war will meet even greater opposition.

At various times in the following text, several different names for AMEX are used--"The American Exile in Canada," "The American Expatriate in Canada," AMEX, AMEX-Canada and AMEX. All but the last refer to the magazine we published. The last term, AMEX, refers to our organization and not to the magazine specifically. The reader will also notice the stylistic difference between the first chapter and the other five chapters. The first chapter develops the context in which AMEX began its amnesty work in late 1971, while the remaining five record our participation in the amnesty movement in detail. No attempt has been made to cover all aspects of the 1966-71 period of the early years of the exile movement in Canada, since a considerable literature explores these topics. Instead, the first chapter attempts to isolate the basic themes of these early years in the development of the exile communities in Canada, particularly in Toronto, and to put this experience into the broader context of the antiwar movement.

1. For further development of these arguments see Jack Colhoun, "The Antiwar Movement They Don't Talk About. War Resisters in Uniform: The GI Movement and Deserters," AMEX-Canada, Oct.-Nov. 1976.

2. Jim Christy, ed., The New Refugees: American Voices in Canada (Toronto, Peter Martin Associates, 1972); Kenneth Fred Emerick, War Resisters in Canada: The World of the American Military-Political Refugees (Knox, Pa., Free Press, 1972); Lucinda Franks, Waiting Out a War: The Exile of Private John Picciano (N.Y., Coward, McCann, & Georghean, Inc., 1974); Thomas Lee Hayes, American Deserters in Sweden: The Men and Their Challenge (N.Y., Association Press, 1971); Renee G. Kasinsky, Refugees from Militarism: Draft-Age Americans in Canada (New Brunswick, N.J., Transaction Books, 1976); Richard L. Killmer, Robert S. Lecky, and Deborah S. Wiley, They Can't Go Home Again: The Story of America's Political Refugees (Philadelphia, Pilgrim Press, 1971); James Reston, Jr., The Amnesty of John David Herndon (N.Y., Bantam Books, 1973); Roger Neville Williams, The New Exiles: American War Resisters in Canada (N.Y., Liveright Publishers, 1971).

I BUILDING THE EXILE COMMUNITY IN CANADA: THE EARLY YEARS, 1968 TO 1971

In 1968, the Vietnamese liberation fighters stunned the world by launching the Tét Offensive in late January, with coordinated, surprise attacks that rocked nearly every town, city, and major Washington-Saigon military base in South Vietnam. In the wake of the Tét Offensive, the illusions of imminent Washington-Saigon victory, criminally fostered by the Lyndon Johnson Administration, lay shattered. Before the year ended, Johnson announced his decision not to run for re-election, Martin Luther king, Jr. and Robert Kennedy were assasinated, antiwar demonstrators and supporters of Eugene McCarthy were clubed and beaten at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and Vietnam war hawk Richard Nixon staged a political comeback and was elected President. Nineteen sixty-eight was also the year AMEX was founded.

In April 1968, the Union of American Exiles (UAE) was formed in Toronto. The UAE began publishing a periodic mimeographed newsletter which by late August eveolved into a larger mimeographed newsletter with covers, produced by a regular staff. Before long, the UAE newsletter became "The American Exile in Canada." By summer 1969, when the magazine separated itself from the UAE, the name was changed to AMEX: The American Expatriate in Canada. By this time, the newsletter had evolved into a magazine, with a staff separated editorially from the UAE, and gradually developed into the only exile publication, linking war resister communities across Canada, Great Britian, Sweden and France. Two years later, the magazine's title was shortened to AMEX-Canada, for American Exiles in Canada.

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE EXILE COMMUNITY IN CANADA

The exile community in Canada evolved very slowly from the time the first draft resisters left the U.S. for exile in Canada in late 1965 and early 1966. By late 1966, the trickle of war resisters into Canada had grown to a steady flow. The concept of exile as a form of resistance to the Vietnam War grew as an alternative to the Resistance, or the larger draft resistance movement. The guiding principles of the Resistance were direct confrontation with the Selective Service System by refusing to be inducted into the military services, and going to jail after being convicted of draft law violation. Members of the Resistance believed this type of traditional civil disobedience could cripple the U.S. military machine by denying it the personnel necessary to fight the war, and believed it to be the most dramatic way to highlight the opposition of American youth to the war. The concept upon which the exile movement was founded was that it wasn't necessary to go to jail to demonstrate opposition to the war; that by going into exile upon receiving a draft notice, draft age men could show their refusal to fight in Vietnam and stay out of jail. Instead of serving a long jail sentence and depending on the draft resistance movement to publicize their reas for refusing to comply with Selective Serv laws, the early exiles searched for ways to continue their antiwar activities from exile.

In contrast to the organized draft resistance movement, there was no coordinated political movement which brought war resisters into exile. Individual draft resisters, and later military deserters, moved to Canada after learning about the alternative from the loosly coordinated network of draft counselors in the U.S., or from news stories. In fact, many In the Resistance movement, and new left groups including Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), frowned upon war resisters who went into exile. Because there was no central political movement, war resisters going into exile shared no common political ideology beyong opposition to the Vietnam War. One study of exiles in Canada found the following political self-definitions: Fifty percent "radical"; twenty-five percent "apolitical," in the sense of 1960's youth culture; and twenty-five percent "liberal." The lack of a common political ideology created many serious problems with respect to the creation of war resister groups in Canada.

The first such organizations in Canada were established by Canadians to assist newly arrived

war resisters to legally immigrate. As more war resisters passed the Canadian government's immigration requirements for "landed immigrant" status, exiles began to staff the immigration aid groups, which were still under the direction of local boards of sympathetic Canadians. In Toronto, for example, the University of Toronto Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA) established an office in 1966 to assist war resisters to immigrate to Canada. By late 1967, SUPA split into two factions; at the same time, American exiles involved in immigration counseling founded a new organization, the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme (TADP), to continue SUPA's counseling services. The Union of American Exiles was founded to supplement TADP's immigration counseling by providing housing and job services for war resisters waiting to get "landed," and a political and social forum for war resisters newly arrived in Toronto. In Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, where the majority of war resisters initially lived, American Deserters Committees (ADC) were established to deal with the special problems of deserters, and to coordinate exile community political activities.

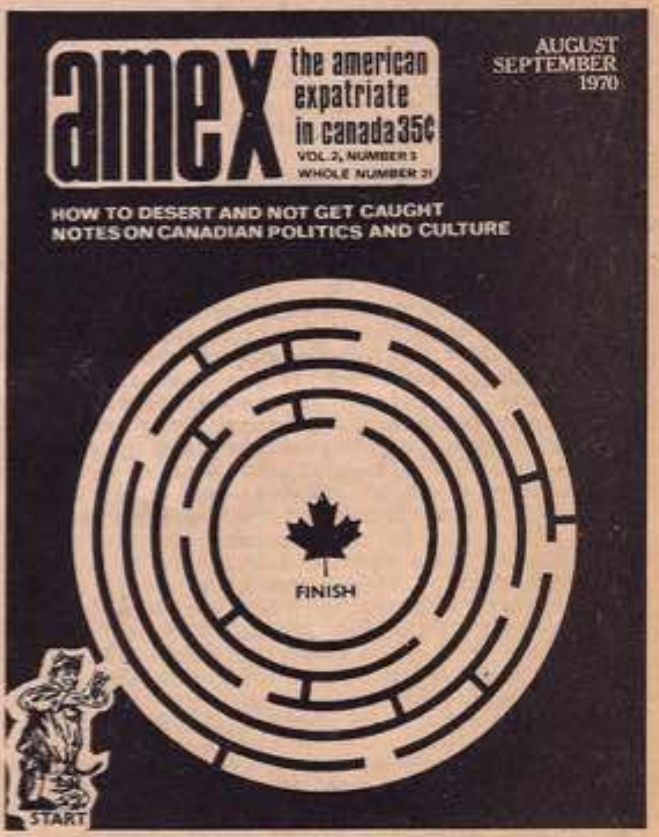
Due to the exile community's lack of a common political ideology, and the lack of a historic tradition of earlier American exile movements to provide guidance, the development of exile organizations was often by trial-and-error, and the debates over program and strategy were stormy. Consequently, the more politically advanced and militant groups, as the Montreal and Vancouver ADCs and the UAE, were shortlived. Not only did disunity over political direction and tactics contribute to the difficulty of sustaining such organizations, but U.S. police infiltrators collecting intelligence and instigating internal political strife exacerbated these inherent problems.

The UAE, for example, was a coalition of various political tendencies, including Maoists, anarchists, and liberal middle forces. Its program had to fit within areas of agreement. Besides providing housing and job services, the Union participated in antiwar and grape boycott activities in Toronto. The primary tasks of the UAE were helping newly arrived war resisters adjust to life in exile, and developing a fuller definition of the exile phenomenon. The UAE's search for "learning and communicating the 'why' of our exile" was expressed through the newsletter, and later "The American Exile in Canada." But the fear among exiles of being arrested and deported for overt antiwar activities in Toronto slowed this political development. Tom Kane, a founding member of the UAE, wrote in "The American Exile in Canada" that there was always concern that the Union not be "responsible for tighter immigration regulations if its activities proved to be too disturbing"[2] to the Canadian government, despite the arguments of the more politically developed. A political commentary in "The American Exile in Canada" by V.S. Brown pointed out: "We are offensive already to a lot of Canadians even if we never do a damn thing. We have done something rather controversial by coming here. We have a stigma and we had better make the best of it."[3] Nonetheless, the UAE and other political exile groups played an important role in the politicization of newly arrived war resisters, in terms of understanding both U.S. imperialism as the root cause, "the 'why' of our exile," and the history and politics of Canada. Winning the support of the Canadian people through speaking to church and civic groups, and developing ties to the Canadian left were also crucial to the growth of the exile community. These tasks were especially important since the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion reported in late 1968 that Canadian opinion was divided on "sympathy" for draft resisters, with thirty-two percent sympathetic and forty-seven percent unsympathetic.[4] However, another poll found that only twenty-eight percent believed that the Canadian government should accept draft resisters as immigrants, while fifty-one percent thought the government should not allow draft resisters to become immigrants to Canada.[5]

In contrast to the political exile groups discussed above, the aid groups devoted solely to immigration counseling were opposed to the development of an American exile community and politics. In Toronto, the TADP shunned media publicity of its work and of the growing war resister community. TADP feared that media coverage would cause the Canadian government to reduce or end the flow of war resisters across the border. TADP also deferred to the U.S. antiwar movement's early opposition to exile as a form of war resistance, arguing that wide publicity of the exile alternative might create a drain of radicals from the Stateside antiwar movement. At one point, TADP even wanted AMEX to cease mailing its magazine to the States, fearful of drawing too much attention to the nascent exile movement. According to the predominant thinking at TADP and the other major aid groups, once a war resister got landed he should quietly assimilate into Canadian life.

CLASS AND RACE FACTORS OF CANADIAN IMMIGRATION LAWS AND THE U.S. DRAFT SYSTEM

The class and race nature of the U.S. Selective Service System were spelled out in a July 1965 memorandum by the system's director, General Lewis B. Hershey. Entitled "Channeling," the memo



outlined the draft system's deferment procedure: A draft age young man would be placed in a deferred status by pursuing certain educational and occupational courses which were deemed to be in the "national interest." The effect of this policy was to channel middle class men into careers in engineering, the sciences and teaching; and to draft those who weren't engaged in such careers. In practice, middle class men with financial means could get draft deferments in universities and later in the professions; or could escape the draft by hiring a lawyer, doctor, or psychiatrist to find one of the many loopholes in the draft laws. For working class whites and minorities without means or college preparation in high school, channeling meant being drafted in their richer brothers' places.

Consequently, the channeling policy had a large effect on the class and race charartteristics of the various forms of war resistance. Middle class sons, taking advantage of college deferments, learned about the Vietnam War on campus before being drafted. When the dreaded notice arrived, they refused to be inducted into the military, becoming draft resisters. On the other hand, those working class and minority youth who filled the local draft boards quotas learned about the Vietnam War during the course of their military training and interaction with veterans of the Vietnam fighting, or from direct experience in the war. Many GIs decided to desert the military to protest the war, or remove themselves from it, and sought to gain the refuge of exile in Canada as draft resisters were doing. However, once absent from the military, deserters confronted the class and race discrimination of Canadian immigration laws.

Since the Second World War, Canadian immigration policy was based upon criteria which discriminated in favor of highly educated potential immigrants and those possessing needed occupational skills. In order to obtain landed immigrant status, an applicant had to compile at least fifty out of a total of one hundred assessment points under a Ministry of Manpower and Immigration point system. Sixty of the one hundred points were assigned by an immigration officer on the basis of educational and occupational skills. College educated, middle class draft resisters generally had little trouble passing the immigration test once obtaining a written job offer, especially with the benefit of immigration counseling, but deserters very often did not possess the necessary educational and occupational skills.

Although the Canadian immigration system was officially "colorblind," in practice it was much more difficult for a minority war resister to get landed immigrant status than it was for a white war resister with similar educational or occupational qualifications. Only a small number of black draft resisters and deserters settled in exile. Eusi Ndugu, a black draft resister from rural Mississippi worked with AMEX for a while, and noted "there's a race problem here, just like in the Northern cities of the U.S. Whites here are no different. The Canadian government is putting a quota on blacks immigrating from the States." Ndugu also mentioned the culture shock that a black war resister underwent in leaving the black community of his home: "If you leave Watts or the Black Bottom in Detroit and get into this, it's like jumping into a pitcher of buttermilk. It's all white -- the music on the radio, the pictures in the papers and magazines and on television." Charlie Coates, a black deserter, also emphasized the pain of leaving home. "Its the thing of leaving home, of leaving all your people. That's one reason why so few blacks have come."

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ACROSS CANADA / NEWS OF DRAFT DODGERS AND DESERTERS IN REGINA, MONTREAL, VANCOUVER, OTTAWA AND ACROSS CANADA

THE DRAFT DODGER IN CANADA AS POP CULTURE

BLACK DRAFT DODGER SPEAKS OUT ON CANADA

Coates also explained the difficulty of blacks learning about the alternative of exile: "A lot of the black military resisters don't know about Canada, and how you get in, and where to go and all that."[7] Because black resisters detected a "subtle antiblack bias"[8] at TADP and some other aid groups, the Black Refugee Organization was formed in Montreal and Toronto. A final complication for black American war resisters adjusting to Toronto was "there are so few blacks here, and most of them are West Indians, and that's like a different culture," as Coates explained to a journalist from the U.S. publication, The Race Relations Reporter.

POLITICAL OPPOSTTION IN CANADA TO ADMITTING DDESERTERS AS LANDED IMMIGRANTS

Although Canadian immigration officers were under official instruction to treat U.S. military deserters as they would any other applicant for landed immigrant status, in late 1968 it became apparent that deserters were systematically being denied legal status. The deserter crisis, as the closing of the Canadian border to deserters was called, brought to a head the problem created for the war resister community and the Canadian government by the large influx of deserters during 1967-68.

Because deserters had different needs from those of draft resisters, they presented the aid groups with a new set of problems. Most deserters came to Canada on short notice, often leaving the military with only pocket change and the clothes on their backs. Counseling deserters proved to be more difficult and time-consuming, since the point system was stacked against them, prolonging the deserters'

need for free housing, and contributing to a large number of unlanded deserters unable to legally immigrate.

But even more fundamental a problem, the aid groups believed, was that U.S. military deserters threatened to disrupt "the gentlemen's agreement that TADP and the other aid groups had with the Canadian government at that time. The Canadian government would not interfere with the counseling operations of the aid groups as long as they did not publicize that the government 'welcomed deserters.'" [10] Before the deserter crisis, the aid groups "used all kinds of cloak and dagger methods to keep them (deserters) away from the public view," according to Bill Spira, one of the early and most influential leaders of the TADP. [11] To inquiring reporters, TADP denied that deserters were coming to Canada "because we simply worried about the public image of Toronto Anti-Draft programme and of donations." [12] Another important reason, Spira believed, for not drawing public attention to deserters was "the fear that the Canadian government in response would close down the border." [13] Consequently, at first deserters not only had to face an immigration point system biased against them, but also received less-than-enthusiastic support from the aid groups established to help war resisters get landed immigrant status.

However, in early 1969 the aid groups finally concluded that the "gentlemen's agreement" with Ottawa had been broken by the government, as it became clear that the Canadian government had closed its borders to deserters. The Ministry of Manpower and Immigration had issued a July 1968 memorandum in which individual immigration officers were given complete discretion in their assignment of "personal assesment" points. Deserters were no longer welcome in Canada, but the Ministry wanted to shift the ultimate responsibility for this action onto the individual officers." [14] Ottawa's decision to close its borders to deserters forced the aid groups to deal with the deserter crisis by facing the issue squarely.

In early 1969, the aid groups exposed Ottawa's new policy to the Canadian media, initiating the public discussion in Canada. While utilizing normal channels of media interviews and contacts with prominent Canadians and Members of Parliament, some of the aid groups and five Canadian students at Toronto's Glendon College dramatized the problem. The five students went to five different border points in Ontario, posing as deserter William John Heintzelman, and were all turned away by border officials. The incident was carried widely by Canadian newspapers and placed in the context of Canadian collusion with U.S. authorities to catch deserters. Once placed in the perspective of collusion with Washington versus full Canadian sovereignty, the deserter issue took on more significance for Canadians. As Nancy Pocock of the Canadian Friends Service Committee in Toronto put it: "It was a great upsurge of the feeling of Canadian nationalism that had a lot to do with it. Most people felt if we wanted to take a deserter from another country, it was none of the other country's business to tell us whether we could take them or not. It was a feeling that the U.S. was trying to dictate to us in internal matters." [15] After the aid groups stopped relying on Ottawa to keep its part of the "gentlemen's agreement" and took the issue to the Canadian people publicly, the Canadian government was forced to withdraw the secret immigration memo. In May 1969, the Canadian border was once again open to U.S. military deserters.

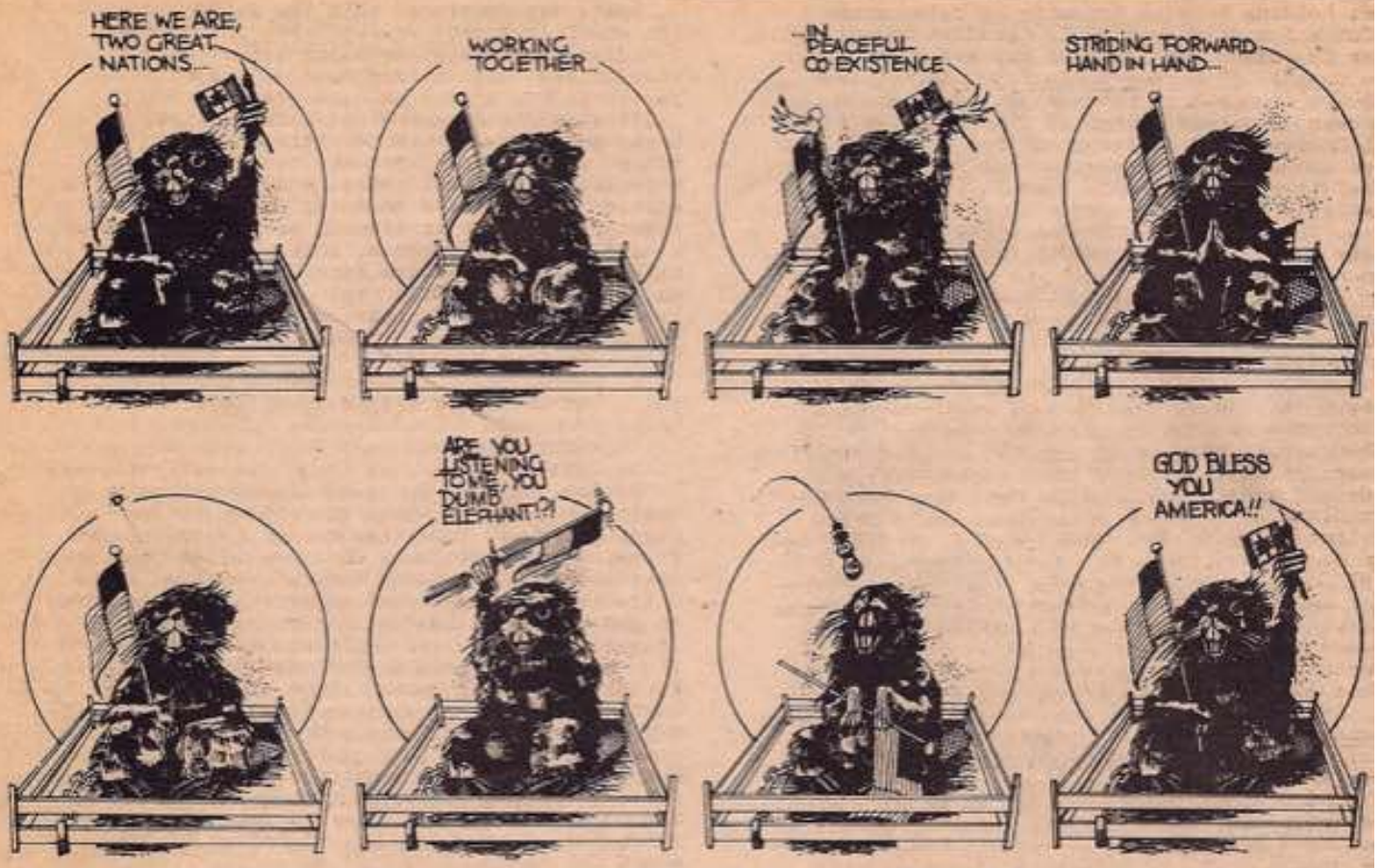
U.S. IMPERIALISM, AMERICAN EXILES, AND CANADIAN NATIONALISM

American capital and its needs dominate the most important sectors of the Canadian economy. Before 1867, Canada was a colony of France and then Britian. After Confederation in 1867, Britian continued to dominate the Canadian economy until the post-World War I period, when U.S. investments began to compete with those of the United Kningdom. After the Second World War, the United States replaced England as the leading foreign investor in the Canadian economy. In short, from the start Canada's economy has been developed by foreign investors. At the same time, Canada has developed the facade of economic and political independence, even though most basic decisions concerning the development of its economy have been made in foreign corporate board rooms.

During the post-World War II period, one basic trend of the Canadian economy was continentalism, or integration into a north-south oriented North American economy, as opposed to developing an east-west Canadian economy. As U.S.-based multinational corporations strengthen their hold on Canada, the economy was developed to meet their needs rather than those of Canada. For example, instead of creating a strong industiral economy, the multinationals developed Canada's abundant natural resources, many of which were transported southward for processing and utilization by U.S. corporations. The impact of American culture on Canadians is equally strong, with U.S. television networks beaming their signals into the land strip within a hundred miles of the U.S.-Canadian border where the vast majority of Canadians live. U.S. magazines such as Time, Newsweek, TV Guide, and The Readers Digest outsell Canadian publications. As one Canadian scholar put it: "By and large, the Canadian elite has recognized to remain liberal and capitalistic in our era necessitates continental integration. Canadians have learned that along with American branch plants come social patterns and consumption habits. Canada has been reduced to playing the dual role of consumer market and resource base in an emerging liberal empire whose centre is the United States." [16]

Traditionally, the attitude of Canadians to toward the U.S. has varied from one historic period to another. During the times of civil strife in the U.S., such as the Civil War, Canadians have tended to emphasize the differences between the two countries, and the superiority of the Canadian way of life. But in peaceful times, Canadians have focused on the similarities between the two societies, often emulating aspects of American society. [17] Since 1945, the Canadian ruling class has held up many features of American society for adoption by Canadians, and has regarded the U.S. as a powerful ally.

However, during the 1960s Canadian attitudes toward the U.S. were undergoing major changes due to the violence with which the civil rights and antiwar movements were met. Throughout much of the 1960s, the Canadian New Left followed the lead of the American New Left and adopted U.S.-oriented issues, often in support of civil rights and antiwar movements. It was in this context in the middle 1960s that the Toronto-based Student Union for Peace Action aided the immigration of U.S. war resisters to Canada as a means by which to support the antiwar movement. But by the end of the 1960s, Canadians began to question the relevance of U.S.-oriented



issues to Canadian political conditions. As one leading Canadian nationalist put it: "In general, American radicalism tends to be an inappropriate guide for Canadian radicals because it is conceived out of the conditions of the heart of the empire rather than the conditions of a dependent country like Canada."[18] By the late 1960s debate on the nature and role of U.S. imperialism in Canada was raging on the Canadian left.

By the early 1970s, the issue of the U.S. role in the Vietnam War, and Canadian complicity, had become less important than the Canadian nationalists' campaign against U.S. economic and cultural domination of Canada. From 1969 to 1971, AMEX-Canada published many articles by V. S. Brown calling on war resisters to get involved with the Canadian nationalist movement, arguing that the role of U.S. imperialism in Canada was the flip side of Washington's war in Vietnam. Other articles by Charles Campbell and Dee Charles Knight covered various aspects of Canadian culture, history, and the literature of the nationalist movement, encouraging exile readers to learn about Canada. In fact, by 1971 many former writers for AMEX-Canada had dropped out of exile politics to devote their full energies to Canadian nationalism.

Having refused to be the footsoldiers of U.S. imperialism in Southeast Asia, war resisters in Canada were shocked by articles published in the socialist magazine Canadian Dimension and AMEX-Canada, and by a radio interview on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, all by Professor Robin Mathews, a well known Canadian nationalist. Mathews attacked war resisters as agents of U.S. cultural imperialism in Canada. Writing in AMEX-Canada, Mathews said "the U.S. draft dodger speaks, to the Canadian ear, with the same accent as all U.S. citizens who have taken positions in Canada that should have gone to Canadians."[19] Mathews also criticized the May 1970 antiwar demonstration in Toronto against Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and the killing of four students at Kent State University by the National Guard. He argued that true Canadian anti-imperialists would have demonstrated over Canadian rather than American issues.

Mathews' concern that draft resisters were contributing to "the colonization of Canada" were based on the special historic relationship between the U.S. and Canada: "For the U.S. exile in Canada is different politcally, socially, culturally and individually from any other exile we could conceivably harbour, because of the immense effect of U.S. imperialism in Canada, because of his own conditioning before he comes here, and because of the attitude of resident U.S. citizens in Canada."[20] Mathews wanted to know when war resisters were going to establish "draft dodger seminar groups to learn about Canada from Canadians." When are they going to begin asking what they can do for Canada, for Canada's primary problems, because the Vietnam War is not the only nor even primary Canadian problem?"[21] Mathews went so far as to write that the presence of U.S. war resisters in Canada "may be contributing to the prolongation of the war and the slaughter of Vietnamese and U.S. people."[22] He believed that "there is every reason to believe that--for financial and political reasons--the U.S. government approves of the 'freedon train' for U.S. draft dodgers in Canada. The freedom train may well be talked about in policy meetings as a necessary safety valve if the war is going to continue without serious civil disruption."[23] He also berated war resisters in Canada for

not holding benefit concerts to raise money "for a few scholarships in Canadian universities for Canadians, in order to express their thanks to Canada."[24] Mathew's final suggestion was: "A few thousand of them--might even, at no cost, present a signed letter of thanks to the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration who, after all, is the Canadian representative closest to the fact that they have santuary here." "But my experience," Mathews notes, "is that draft dodgers, U.S. residents and Canadian organizers alike talk about the Minister and his work as if he is an enemy."[25]

A lot of the specific issues Robin Mathews raised in early 1970 were dismissed by war resisters as bitter anti-Americanism, but U.S. imperialism in Canada and the U.S. war resister community's unique position in Canada had to be taken seriously. For the next eighteen months, the pages of AMEX-Canada were filled with thoughtful articles on the special problems of American exiles attempting to continue their antiwar commitment, and at the same time become involved in Canadian political, social and cultural activities. Once the antiwar movements in Canada and the U.S. became less active from 1971 onward, it became very difficult, indeed, for war resisters in Canada to continue to identify themselves as such because former Canadian supporters of the exile community wanted exiles to act as new Canadians rather than American war resisters exiled in Canada.

The culmination of the discussion in AMEX-Canada concerning U.S. imperialism, U.S. exiles in Canada, and Canadian nationalism was an interview with Bill Spira, "the dean of the Toronto exile community." Spira like many nationalists, believed that war resisters couldn't bring U.S. political tactics to Canada. He argued that war resisters in Canada must learn the "dynamics of the struggle in the colony. And to organize as Americans can only retard, in my opinion, that understanding. My feeling is that people, after they have been here a while, have to look at the Canadian left very, very seriously, and really look at the various factions, the various sections of the Canadian left, and then work with those sections of the Canadian left."

Spira argued strongly that once in Canada, resisters had to cease seeing themselves as exiles, and define themselves as new Canadian leftists. He believed that to remain organized as antiwar Americans in exile was "American imperialism of the left." "Now I feel that that section of Americans who are political here, have to start realizing that they are here to stay, that going back simply is not a viable alternative. Now, being here, they have to address themselves to those problems and stop fighting the Pentagon--you can't fight the Pentagon sitting in Toronto or Vancouver; the only place you can meaningfully fight the Pentagon is in Washington. And this is of course where our disagreements have come in the past, because this was my orientation, while your orientation was primarily one of organizing Americans here, using Canada up to a certain point as a place for rest and recreation, and then re-invade, or re-enter the U.S. I simply feel this approach is really American imperialism of the left, where you look at the struggle in Canada as inconsequential." Up to fall 1971 when the interview was published, AMEX-Canada had hardly treated the struggle of Canadian leftists as inconsequential. What Spira was actually saying was that we should cease organizing as American exiles around Vietnam War-related issues.

Spira was convinced that the only course for American exiles was to "plug in" to the Canadian nationalist movement because otherwise exiles "will become meaningless to the people in the States, because really they (exiles) can't do anything in the States, being so to speak stranded here . . . ." "It's very very hard for Americans to stop thinking in American terms. But, brother you're either going to have to do it, or simply become completely irrelevant to the people around you."[26] Of course, AMEX would eventually wage years of effective battle with the Pentagon--and with three presidential administrations--from our exile in Toronto.

EXILE VERSUS EXPATRIATE

Actually, by the time the Spira interview was published, the war resister community had long been engaged in a debate over the political and personal identity of individual war resisters living in Canada. Those who identified themselves with their new homes in Canada preferred to be called expatriates, and concentrated on adapting themselves to Canada. Those who considered themselves exiles focused their politics on the U.S. and the Vietnam War, trying to contribute to the antiwar movement. Expatriates saw the exile vision as one that was "a negative identification that leads nowhere." "Ultimately, each American in Canada must ask himself whether he wishes to change the United States or the society in which he now finds himself."[27] In summer 1969, AMEX changed its name from The American Exile in Canada to AMEX-Canada: The American Expatriate in Canada.

Although its changed name reflected the majority feeling in the war resister community, AMEX continued its search for ways to relate politically to the U.S. antiwar movement, remained a forum for the discussion of issues pertaining to the war resister community in Canada. Even though the majority of the AMEX staff and editorial board planned to make Canada their permanent home, they felt it necessary to provide leadership for the war resister community in Canada. It was the fact that AMEX continued to exist, remaining as a symbol of American war resisters, that bothered many Canadians, from the nationalists to the editorial writers of the Toronto Star.

However, if American war resisters living in Canada had accepted the advice of Canadians and ceased organizing as antiwar Americans in exile, Robin Mathews' assertion that Canada was serving as a safety valve may have proved true. Mathews offered no evidence for his safety valve theory, and unless pertinent government documents in Ottawa or Washington are unearthed in the future, we may never know for certain if Washington did conceive of Canada as a safety valve. But as long as Canada accepted only highly-educated or trained draft resisters as landed immigrants, Canada benefitted. It was clear that Ottawa was forced by circumstances to admit U.S. deserters; nonetheless, by admitting war resisters on the same basis as other immigrants, Ottawa seemed to be asserting its independence from Washington's Vietnam policies. This helped Ottawa placate those Canadians opposed to the Vietnam War and calling for greater Canadian independence from U.S. foreign policy, while continuing to supply the U.S. war machine in Vietnam with munitions and military equipment, and to aid the American war effort through its diplomatic

corps. Canada could prove useful to Washington by providing refuge for draft-age American men, but only if the war exiles disappeared into the Canadian woodwork. In this way, Canada could serve as a safety valve by siphoning off some antiwar forces, admitting them to Canada on the same basis as other potential immigrants and not as political refugees.

But at the heart of the contradiction in Canada's decision to allow war resisters to immigrate to Canada while supporting Washington's Vietnam policies was the question of whether war resisters could transform the safety valve effect into its opposite: establishing highly-visable antiwar American exile organizations in Canada. In this way, exiled war resisters could create a phenomenon unique in American history. Not only could these exiles develop a community in Canada which could support a large influx of new draft resisters and deserters, thereby attempting to cripple the war effort, but exiles could also maintain high antiwar visability, opening up a new front for attacking the U.S. war. In short, Canada as a refuge for antiwar Americans could serve as a safety valve, but it could also funtion as a base for highly effective political struggle, with war resisters continuing to fight against the Vietnam War.

AMEX-CANADA MAGAZINE AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF EXILE

By 1969, the process of defining the role of the American exile community in Canada was not completed. AMEX-Canada encouraged war resisters to get involved with the Canadian left and to continue a commitment to exile politics. There was much less clarity about how to relate to people in the States. At one point, AMEX decided to limit the number of subscriptions from the exile community; concentrate on finding housing, jobs, and counseling for draft resisters; and contribute to the campaign to open up the Canadian border to deserters. AMEX had some contacts with the draft counseling network in the States, and other antiwar groups, but made no major systematic effort at that time to build ties with the most influential antiwar groups.

Once Ottawa began to allow deserters to legally immigrate, and deserters began coming in large numbers, new possibilities developed for the exile movement in Canada. The Montreal American Deserters Committee (ADC) attracted a number of antiwar GI organizers, both military and civilian, and the exile movement began to understand its relationship to the GI movement. From 1970 to 1974, AMEX worked closely with deserter Larry Svirchev, who had been deeply influenced by the GI coffeehouse movement at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. During part of this time, we also worked with Stephanie Durant from the Montreal ADC, who was a civilian working at the Fort Jackson coffeehouse.

One of the five motions passed at the late-May 1970 Pan-Canadian Conference of war resisters, organized and hosted in Montreal by the ADC, dealt specifically with antiwar organizing in the GI movement. The motion, which passed unanimously, urged "those within the U.S. armed services to educate and organize their brothers and sisters around the illegality and immorality of the war in Indo-China and U.S. imperialism at home and abroad." The motion also called upon young Americans in the States not yet inducted into the armed services to either refuse induction and agitate in U.S. schools and industries or to enlist with the express purpose of organizing and agitating within the service." The conference emphasized doing antiwar work as long as possible in the States before seeking refuge in Canada, thus easing the pressure on Ottawa to close its borders to U.S. war resisters coming to Canada in increasingly large numbers. "We realize because of the repressive nature of U.S. society, flight to Canada must be maintained as an alternative for those involved in active resistance Stateside. This Conference therefore calls for increased political resistance and the protection of the alternative of refuge here in Canada to defeat the U.S. system."

An editorial by Knight in the August-September 1970 AMEX further developed the relationship of exile in Canada to the struggle of antiwar GIs. "Expatriates in Canada have plenty to do getting organized to perform the truly useful anti-imperialist role of undermining the morale of the imperialist army with a viable, accessible alternative--and removing cannon fodder on both sides in the process. More deserters arrive here every day, and many more stay but fight against military despotism with more fury and confidence knowing there is a warm welcome awaiting them in Canada if they need it." Knight wrote. "The Montreal Conference has laid the groundwork for efficent and effective co-operation in keeping the borders open and helping our newly arrived brothers in every way.... Everyone here--man or woman--who is an American living in Canada for political reasons must help in every way possible: with money, sleeping space, food, thought, and solidarity. Those that fail for lack of will cannot be said to be here for political reasons. Which is to say they are either cowardly opportunists at best, or imperialists (as Robin Mathews says) at worst."

Although the Montreal Conference passed a resolution calling for greater publicity in Canada for the aid groups' work, it didn't really come to grips with developing the exile community's antiwar visability in the U.S. People from the States at the conference proposed a tour by prominent Americans to visit war resisters in Canada for fall 1970, which never materialized. Antiwar activist Tom Hayden tried to formulate a means by which war resisters in Canada could contribute to the antiwar struggle in the States. In the final speech of the Montreal conference, Hayden proposed that exiles joining with American liberals and radicals in demanding unconditional amnesty for war resisters. Hayden argued that the amnesty issue held a powerful propaganda value for the antiwar movement. "There's nothing political you can do for Canada without getting Canadians very upset eventually. Canadians don't need American advisors in their struggle against U.S. imperialism. You must oppose the U.S. as American exiles, not as Canadians or expatriates."[29] Hayden was the only person at the Montreal Conference to raise the amnesty issue. Most war resisters in Canada held that they wouldn't return to the States except for visits, even if an unconditional amnesty were granted, which seemed highly unlikely in the period immediately following Nixon's invasion of Cambodia. The Montreal Conference didn't respond formally to the Hayden proposal for an amnesty campaign.

Knight's editorial on the Montreal Conference quoted above entitled "Amnesty--Who Needs It?" it was AMEX's formal response to the amnesty debate. "There is almost certainly not one draft dodger or deserter in Canada who hasn't been

asked if he wants the U.S. to declare an amnesty, or if he thinks it will, or if he'd go back if it did. And the answer has always been the same, as we think it still should be: an emphatic no!" The editorial continued, "Who wants amnesty? Liberals. What for? To assuage their consciences and to continue ignoring that the American dream has become a nighmare drug--a habit which must be kicked, before it destroys outsiders . . . . Besides, amnesty would be a bad issue to organize around, for several reasons. Like other liberal issues, it asks for sympathy and trustworthiness from the world's most viciously heavy-handed and coniving regime. Worse yet, it gives the impression to the enemy that the movement is running on nothing more threatening than simpering warm-heartedness, by people who are not capable of shaping their lives themselves." Knight went on to argue that "from a tactical point of view, what good is it to fight for something we know we can't get? It is a waste of time, and smacks of defeatism." He proposed that it was more important for the exile community to concentrate on building a support base in Canada to help undermine the morale of the U.S. Army. Knight's opposition to amnesty work reflected the widespread opposition of the exile community. In mid-1970, it was too early to focus political energy around the amnesty question. The influx of deserters to Canada peaked during 1970 and 1971, and the problem of maintaining an exile support base for the rapidly increasing number of deserters had to be the main order of the day.

PROBLEMS BESET THE EXILE COMMUNITY

By late 1969, it was evident that the immigration aid groups could not deal with all the problems of newly arrived deserters. A group of Toronto deserters formed the American Deserters Committee in December 1969 to provide these deserters with counseling, with the longterm housing necessitated by the longer counseling period required by deserters, and with psychological support from other deserters who had obtained landed immigrant status. The Toronto ADC operated several hostels where newly arrived deserters could live cheaply and meet friends, while looking for the job offer they needed to obtain enough points to get landed.

Throughout 1970 and 1971, the job situation became tighter as unemployment in Canada grew. Many deserters were unable to get letters promising jobs, which they needed to sucessfully apply for landed immigrant status. A large backlog of deserter immigration cases developed, and many deserters became despondent since they couldn't meet the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration's standards. During the 1970-71 period, large numbers of unlanded deserters became a serious problem for the Toronto exile community. Men were forced by their poverty to pick up shortterm jobs well below the minimum wage, or panhandle on the streets to make ends meet. Exile organizations such as The Hall were plagued by petty theft, as deserters stole out of desperation. The Hall painfully attempted to enforce no sleeping, or "crashing," rules to keep from being overrun by sleepless deserters whose only homes were the streets. These problems were compounded by the fact that many were unlikely ever to get landed immigrant status under the point system; they faced permanent underground existence in Canada since large numbers had overstayed the legal limit for visitors. Their only alternative was to return to the States to live underground, or to return to military control which would mean serving a stockade sentence, then being branded for life with a less-than-honorable discharge.

Over summer 1970 two new exile organizations, a community center called The Hall, and the Committee to Aid Refugees from Militarism (CARM) were founded, but they were literally overwhelmed by unlanded deserters. In fall 1970, CARM initiated a short-lived counseling program aimed at forcing deserters to face their immigration problems squarely, rather than live marginally, with an illusion that they would get landed shortly. Sometimes these problems could be resolved merely by sending home for documents certifying job skills or educational levels, since deserters had usually lacked the time to collect these documents when they went AWOL. (This was in contrast to draft resisters who often came to Canada well prepared after laying careful plans for immigrating to Canada.) Other times, a deserter's only job skills had been developed in the military, and it was totally out of the question for a deserter to write to the military requesting job certification. By this time, unlanded deserters had grown into a major social problem for the exile community. Although little attention was drawn to it at the time, there were numerous suicides among those who couldn't get landed or were unable to adapt to the pain and loneliness of exile life.

Early in 1970 another Toronto exile organization, Red, White, and Black was formed. Red, White, and Black got off to a fast start by co-sponsoring with the Toronto Vietnam Mobilization Committee a February demonstration at the U.S. Consulate. In March, with the University of Toronto Student Administrative Council, it co-sponsored a rally for the antiwar Chicago Conspiracy trial defendents. In May, American exiles had high visability at another demonstration at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto, protesting the invasion of Cambodia and the killing of four students at Kent State University. Although only about fifteen of the ninety-one arrested at the demonstration were American war resisters, the exile community's participation in this demonstration, which erupted into a confrontation with Toronto police, created a backlash. As reported in AMEX, "Toronto's Mayor William Denison claimed that 'a few hippies and deserters' are Toronto's only problem with regard to violence which occurred on University Avenue in front of the Consulate."[30] The Toronto exile groups called a news conference shortly thereafter to protest Denison's scapegoating of war resisters, pointing out that such uninformed statements could turn Toronto's climate of opinion against exiles. AMEX reported that "since the episode, employment in certain locations formerly sympathetic to Americans has become harder to get."[31]

In October 1970, the Canadian government instituted a six-month period of martial law supposedly in response to the Front de Liberation du Quebec's (FLQ) kidnapping of Quebec Labor Minister Pierre LaPorte and British trade official James Cross, and the subsequent killing of the Quebec minister. Officially, Ottawa evoked what was known as the War Measures Act. In practice, the War Measures Act provided Ottawa with special powers to attempt to squash the entire separatist movement in Quebec, not just members of the clandestine FLQ.

In Montreal, Mayor Jean Drapeau included

draft resisters and deserters in what he called a "revolutionary conspiracy," forcing the Montreal ADC and Committee to Aid War Objectors underground.[32] In Toronto, a U.S. deserter was arrested because in Montreal he had been housed in a home Canadian authorities deemed sympathetic to the FLQ. In Vancouver, Mayor Tom Campbell declared his intention to use the special powers of the War Measures Act to round up war resisters. "I don't like draft dodgers and I'll do anything within the law that allows me to get rid of them," Campbell told the Toronto Star. "I'm not against dissent, but I believe the law should be used against any revolutionary whether he's a U.S. draft dodger or a hippie, if he is in an organization that advocates the overthrow of the government by force."[33] In Toronto, Mayor Denison put on the grapevine that he, too, was considering using the War Measures Act to round up war resisters.

In December, the Toronto Star editorialized against AMEX as the "mouthpiece" of the war resister community. The Star found it objectionable that "most of the contributors to the magazine obviously do not look on themselves or their readers as immigrants in the ordinary sense. They apparently regard themselves as militants temporarily exiled in Canada but still part of a struggle to 'liberate' the United States and perhaps the rest of the 'capitalist' world." The Star noted that in the past it had "approved and defended" Canada's "open door" immigration policy for war resisters, but that unless AMEX and the exile community made fitting into Canadian life their number one priority, "they risk arousing a growing hostility and suspicion among ordinary Canadians. That could end in disaster not only to themselves but to the much larger number of American immigrants who only want to make their new homes in Canada and to fit into Canadian life."[34]

The War Measures Act struck fear into the hearts of many exiles. After the Montreal exile groups were forced underground, CARM operated a twenty-four-hour Toronto community telephone switchboard in The Hall to act as a clearing house for news of repression that affected war resisters. At first, war resisters were encouraged to stay in their homes and apartments to avoid the risk of being stopped and questioned by police. It was believed to be a particularly risky time for unlanded war resisters to be on the streets, since they could easily be deported for overstaying their visitors visas. In the end, however, only a few war resisters were arrested under the special martial powers of the War Measures Act. Those arrested were soon released due to a lack of evidence connecting them with the FLQ. Nonetheless, martial law imposed with such sudden vengeance had the effect of shattering the illusions of many war resisters concerning Canada's political tranquility. Equally difficult for war resisters to accept was the widespread support English Canadians gave the War Measures Act. A combination of the political scapegoating which followed the high antiwar visibility of war resisters in Toronto during the first half of 1970, and the repression that followed the FLQ kidnapping, were evidence of a powerful political backlash directed by the Canadian ruling class. The message was clear: Unless exile activists want to bring repression down on the entire war resister community, we must quietly assimilate into Canadian society.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE HARASSMENT OF DRAFT RESISTERS AND DESERTERS

Commentating on the climate of general political repression of 1970, Charles Campbell wrote in AMEX that "this kind of harassment, although more blatant than usual, does not represent an overall escalation when seen in relation to the treatment of American expatriates by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) (and in certain instances, Canadian law courts) over the last several years." Campbell went on to conclude that "collusion with the FBI is pratically the RCMP's raison d'etre. As a result they interview dodgers and deserters who come to Canada, at the request of the American G-Men, ascertaining their immigrant status, whether they are employed and whether they plan to return to the States in order to 'fulfill your military obligation.' This information is relayed to Washington."[35]

One academic study of war resisters in Canada observed that "the deportation of American deserters by Canadian immigration and RCMP officials had intensified and probably reached an all-time high in the late 1960s and early 1970s."[36]

Although this study was unable to discover "any official figures for the number of American refugees who had been deported without the benefit of a deportation hearing, or kidnapped illegally and handed over to the American authorities,"[37] it did cite several examples that received considerable media coverage, and

others which received no publicity. ADC hostels were under frequent police surveillance with occasional late-night raids, which seemed to be intended to pressure unlanded deserters to either get landed status or leave Canada. Unlanded deserters ran the constant risk of being stopped by the police for the purpose of determining how long they had been residing in Canada, and then being allowed a short period of time to either get landed or face deportation. In this way, the "FBI and other American agents did not have to be physically present in Canada because they had the complete cooperation of the RCMP, which does all the federal police work in Canada and maintains a large security and intelligence department."[38] Considering all the other problems deserters faced in not being able to get landed easily, and "this picture of international police collusion to harass them on a continental basis, it is no surprise to learn that many of the deserters returned to the United States rather than stay underground in Canada and continue their fight for landed immigrant status."[39]

Back in 1969 when the Union of American Exiles and AMEX-Canada were founded, exiled draft resisters and deserters had high hopes of developing a tightly knit American exile community. But by late 1971, the combined phenomena of fear that the Canadian border would close to future war resisters, a developing Canadian nationalism, the political repression and scapegoating that intensified after a period of high antiwar visibility during 1970, Ottawa's class and race-biased immigration system which made it very difficult for deserters to get landed, and the exile community's inability to create a sufficiently strong support base for newly arrived deserters all contributed to the war resister community's slow development of a means by which to use exile in Canada as an international platform from which to make a contribution to the antiwar struggle.

Although attempts were made by the exile community to get Canada to grant asylum to deserters who couldn't get landed immigrant status, Ottawa refused to give any special consideration to deserters. In fact, the RCMP constantly harassed deserters and deserter organizations. By the early 1970s, it was estimated that 60,000 to 80,000 war resisters had come to Canada, but the total number of those who obtained landed immigrant status never reached more than about 25,000.[40] The clear majority of the 35,000 to 55,000 war resisters who never got landed immigrant status were white working class deserters. And it is likely that a very high percentage of these unlanded deserters were forced to return to the States, and all too often to military stockades. But even after it had become painfully clear to AMEX-Canada and other exiles what was happening to our fellow deserters, it took a long time for this concern to manifest itself politically. AMEX was finally able to see the amnesty campaign as a way to ease the plight of the deserter who could not make it in exile, and as a forum from which the exile community could make a continuing antiwar contribution. But in late 1971 when AMEX first embarked on its amnesty campaign, we had no idea we would be nearly totally absorbed in that fight for the next six years.

1. Renee G. Kasinsky, Refugees from Militarism: Draft-Age Americans in Canada (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), p. 14.
2. March 30, 1969, p. 10.
3. April 24, 1969, p. 6.
4. The Gallup Report by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, November 23, 1968.
5. Ibid., November 28, 1968.
6. Interviews in an article from The Race Relations Reporter, reprinted in AMEX, Vol. 2, No. 7, 1970, pp. 13-15.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Kasinsky, Refugees from Militarism, p. 111.
11. Quoted in ibid., p. 109.
12. Ibid., p. 110.
13. Quoted in ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 120.
15. Quoted in ibid., p. 125.
16. James Laxer, "The Student Movement and Canadian Independence," Canadian Dimension, August-September 1969, p. 27. For a slightly

different version of this article see James Laxer, "The Americanization of the Canadian Student Movement," Ian Lumsden, ed., Close the 49th Parallel etc.: The Americanization of Canada (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1970).

17. Gerald L. Caplan and James R. Laxer, "Un-American Traditions in Canada," Lumsden, Close the 49th Parallel, pp. 308-09.

18. Laxer, "The Student Movement," p. 30.

19. June 1970, pp. 24-25.

20. Robin Mathews, "Opinion: On Draft Dodging and U.S. Imperialism in Canada," Canadian Dimension, February-March 1970, p. 10.

21. Ibid., p. 11.

22. Ibid., p. 10.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., p. 11.

25. Ibid.

26. AMEX-Canada, September-October 1971, pp. 8-12.

27. "The American Exile in Canada," May 1969, pp. 12-13.

28. AMEX-Canada, June 1970, p. 11.

29. Quoted in ibid., Roger Williams, "The Parley in Montreal," p. 10.

30. Ibid., June 1970, p. 19.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., October-November 1970, pp. 4-5.

33. Toronto Star, October 26, 1970; see also AMEX-Canada, October-November 1970, p. 27 for a reprint of the Star article.

34. Toronto Star, editorial, December 17, 1970; see AMEX-Canada Vol. 2, No. 7, p. 6. for reprint of editorial.

35. Charles Campbell, "RCMP Harassment of U.S. Deserters: A Three Year History," AMEX-Canada, October-November 1970, p. 18.

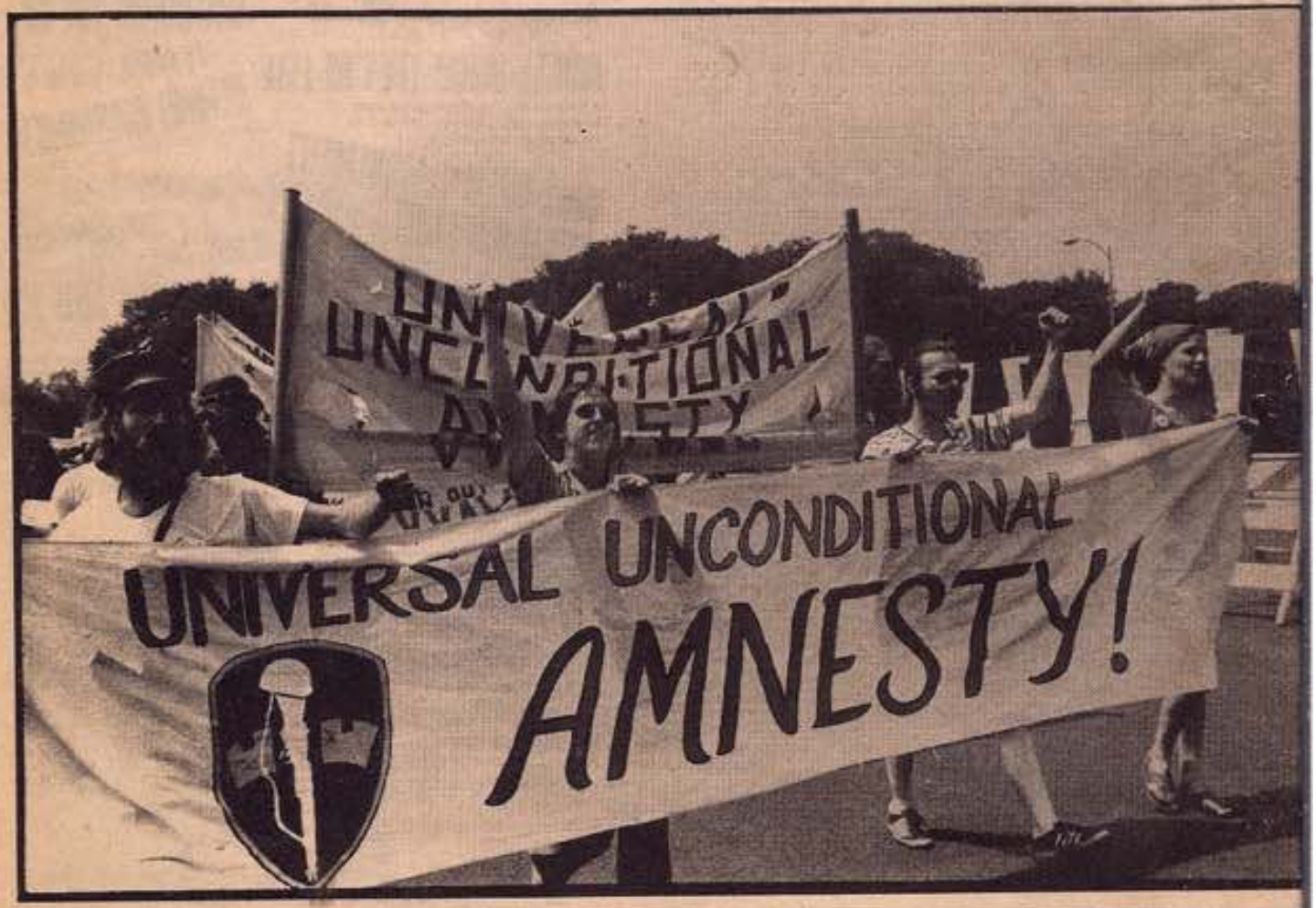
36. Kasinsky, Refugees from Militarism, p. 217.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., p. 215.

39. Ibid., p. 227.

40. Ibid., pp. 294-95; see also AMEX-Canada, November-December 1973, p. 24.



II AMEX AND THE EARLY STAGES OF THE FIGHT FOR AMNESTY: FALL 1971 TO SPRING 1973

In fall 1971, AMEX was in transition. The last several issues of the magazine had been edited by Stan Pietlock and Dee Knight. Pietlock's interests were turning to other things, and Knight was working fulltime as a union organizer in Toronto. For several years, AMEX had been encouraging war resisters primarily to get involved in progressive Canadian political organizations and secondly to maintain an antiwar commitment. Many of the former members of the Union of American Exiles active in the early days of AMEX had moved away from a political focus on exile activities. Since the magazine was apparently successful in helping the war resister community get more involved in Canadian activities, the question was whether or not the need still existed for an American war resister magazine. But an early summer appeal for funds produced a very positive response, which the editors took as a mandate to continue publication for at least one more issue.

Over summer and fall 1971, exiled deserter Jack Colhoun wrote several articles on amnesty. Colhoun had been active during the previous year with several Toronto-based exile organizations: The Hall, Red, White and Black, the American Deserters Committee, and the Toronto Anti Draft Programme at a time when Toronto was flooded with more deserters than could be housed and successfully counselled to pass the rigourous criteria to get landed immigrant status. The experience made Colhoun aware of the problems facing the majority of deserters. He slowly realized that a large percentage of working class deserters were not getting landed immigrant status in Canada and were forced to return to military control. While he understood that amnesty was not then a pressing concern for landed draft resisters something had to be done about the plight of deserters who found it impossible to get legal status in Canada. If an unconditional amnesty were won for draft resisters and deserters, unlanded deserters would no longer be forced into military stockades and discharged less-than-honorably from the military.

During fall 1971, several U.S. politicians began discussing the amnesty question. Senator George McGovern generated the most publicity for amnesty as he traveled American college campuses seeking the 1972 Democratic party's presidential nomination. He stood for an unconditional amnesty for draft resisters and a case-by-case review for deserters. Representative Edward Koch, a Democrat from New York, had discussed amnesty as early as 1969, but his proposal for conditional amnesty for draft resisters and deserters, with a one or two-year period of alternative service, now attracted more publicity. In December 1971, Senator Robert Taft, Jr., a conservative Republican from Ohio, unveiled his conditional amnesty proposal, similar to Koch's.

Colhoun sent his amnesty articles to several American magazines, but none were interested in the amnesty debate. He also did a mailing of copies of the articles to antiwar individuals and organizations for which he had addresses. Since Knight had written an AMEX editorial, "Amnesty -- Who Needs It?" in the August-September 1970 issue, arguing that amnesty was a "liberal issue" not worthy of an exile response, Colhoun was reluctant to send his articles to AMEX. Nonetheless, he went to a party thrown by AMEX in honor of the magazine's third birthday, amnesty articles in hand, and brought up the issue with Pietlock and Knight. To his surprise, the AMEX editors were interested in publishing his material. Pietlock thought the articles worthwhile for the next issue, which he hoped would be the last issue of AMEX. After several hours of discussion with Colhoun, Knight, whose union organizing project was drawing to a close, thought very carefully about the amnesty question and decided that political conditions had changed markedly since he wrote his anti-amnesty editorial the year before. He and Colhoun readily agreed that AMEX should devote major energy to the amnesty question so that exiles could define it, rather than leave that definition to the politicians. About the same time, Montreal American Deserters Committee activists Larry Schirchev also recognized the changing conditions and submitted an amnesty article to AMEX. A major turning point in the history of exile politics began.

IMMIGRATION COUNSELING GROUPS OPPOSED AMNESTY WORK

Although AMEX had changed its amnesty position in late 1971, the National Council of Churches supported immigration counseling groups remained opposed to working on amnesty. In late 1971, the exile chaplin Reverend Bob Gardiner wrote an article for The Nation in which he claimed that exiles had no interest in amnesty and were quite content to stay in Canada permanently. However, as the holiday season drew near, Toronto exiles experienced a sudden media deluge as editors went after a holiday slant in the developing amnesty story. The vastly increased media interest in exiles and amnesty convinced some people at TADP to begin planning for a news conference January 1972, to speak out on amnesty.

Since Colhoun was on good terms with people at TADP, he was brought into the early planning, which included involving representatives from other immigration aid programs from across Canada. Because of historical political differences between AMEX and the counseling groups, AMEX involvement would not have been possible had Colhoun not been available for liason. Beginning in early December, the planning stages for the news conference produced two basic positions. Colhoun, with support from a minority of the TADP staff, argued that the exile movement should try to develop the political definition of the amnesty debate. This would require that war resister groups commit themselves to ongoing work around amnesty from our perspective, to combat the perspective of the politicians and news media. The majority of TADP staffers wanted to use the press conference to tell the American people that exiles had no interest in amnesty beyond denouncing the proposals under current debate.

At the same time, Colhoun and Knight were busy editing the first issue of AMEX to deal with amnesty from the new political perspective of using the amnesty debate to explain why we resisted the Vietnam War, and why we believed this resistance politically correct. For AMEX, the January 1972 news conference was our first major amnesty event For Colhoun, it was a period of double assignment working on the special amnesty issue of AMEX whil attending frequent meetings planning the news

January 17 press conference (l to r): Dave Beauchene (American Refugee Service and Montreal Committee to Aid American War Objectors); Dick Burroughs (Toronto Anti-Draft Programme); Dee Knight (AMEX); Dick Brown (TADP); Jack Colhoun (AMEX); Larry Martin (Vancouver Committee to Aid War Objectors, also Victoria and Calgary Committees); and Pat Cook (Winnipeg Committee.

conference where he struggled against the aid groups' antiamnesty position.

The January 1972 news conference was the first time exiled war resisters in Canada spoke collectively to the American people about the Vietnam War and amnesty. It was well attended by journalists from the major media in Canada and the U.S. Ironically, even though Knight was not welcome at the December and January planning meetings, he was chosen to read the prepared press statement because he had the shortest hair and was thought to look the "most respectable." Since Colhoun was already the AMEX representative, this gave us two people at the news conference, and because we had our special amnesty issue ready for the news conference, spelling out our amnesty position in detail, we had a lot more influence than we would otherwise have had. This helped us keep the aid groups from simply denouncing the current amnesty proposals without taking up the amnesty issue as an offensive political weapon. Instead, the conference demanded an end to the war, and unconditional amnesty for draft resisters and deserters.

After the January 1972 press conference, the counseling groups decided to meet again in Toronto in March. At first, AMEX was not invited to attend the March meeting, but when we learned where it was being held we were finally allowed to attend. Now it was clear that AMEX could no longer stem the antiamnesty tide among counselors. Some TADP staffers who had given qualified support to AMEX during the press conference planning period were now deeply involved with the Karl Armstrong Defense Committee, and moving away from support for ongoing amnesty work. Citing how continued media interest in amnesty involving numerous interviews with war resisters was hindering their counseling work, the meeting of counselors from Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal decided to discontinue political work on amnesty. This meeting also decided to form a national organization of aid groups in Canada called the Canadian Coalition of War Resisters, which excluded AMEX and Montreal American Deserters Committee activist Svirchev. The old antiamnesty line had again been consolidated among the aid groups, and most other war resister groups had folded during 1970-71.

As AMEX continued to develop the theoretical politics of the amnesty question, we also became involved in the Armstrong Defense Committee. Armstrong was arrested in Toronto in February 1972 for the August 1970 bombing of the Army Mathematics Research Center (AMRC) on the Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin. Because Colhoun had lived in Madison for six years before going into exile, and had taken part in the anti-AMRC campaign there, support came naturally; but the case became controversial among exiles and the antiwar movement in the States because a post-doctoral physics student, working late at night in the adjoining Physics Building, was accidently killed by the explosion. It also became a source of controversy among the early amnesty supporters.

ANTIAMNESTY TENSIONS DEVELOP WITHIN AMEX

The March-April 1972 issue of AMEX was the first magazine to be edited solely by Knight. It was a whopping eighty-page issue, giving comprehensive coverage to the political theory of the amnesty question, and to the quickening pace of the amnesty debate. In this issue we began our practice of trying to cover and comment on all major amnesty

A "Free Karl Armstrong" parade down State Street in Madison, Wisconsin as his trial opened.

developments, and included some testimony from the congressional hearings held by Senator Edward Kennedy in March 1972. Knight and Colhoun saw a leadership vacuum in the fight for amnesty and began to take on a leadership role in developing an amnesty movement.

Colhoun was only beginning to learn the technical aspects of editing and producing a magazine, and worked as Knight's editorial assistant, continuing to write on amnesty. At this point, Pietlock was assuming an ambiguous posture toward the new level of political activity at AMEX. He had no personal interest in getting involved in amnesty work, and was planning to take out Canadian citizenship later that year. His involvement in exile activities was decreasing. He wanted to stop editing AMEX, but didn't want Knight and Colhoun to continue putting the magazine out. He apparently decided to wait out the new amnesty momentum and let the magazine die a natural death, but at about the same time Knight and Colhoun began to develop contacts with people already working on amnesty in the States. Knight and Colhoun also began to fundraise in the States for Knight to work at AMEX as a fulltime paid editor. Enough money was raised for Knight to begin working fulltime in March 1972, while Colhoun continued to put in a heavy part time volunteer schedule in addition to his York University graduate studies in American History.

Instead of fading out of the picture, amnesty work had transformed AMEX from a magazine going out of existence urging its exile readers to assimilate more fully into Canadian life and politics, to a magazine taking the major role in exile on the amnesty question. By mid-1972, tension between the pro-amnesty position and the New Canadian position rejecting amnesty work heightened in the exile community and within AMEX.

Since AMEX's inception, Pietlock had been the principal editor and at times virtually controlled the magazine. But now the political currents had changed and were moving in favor of Knight and Colhoun. A major editorial board split had developed, but Pietlock realized his allies in AMEX were loosing interest as they continued to assimilate into Canadian life, while the Knight-Colhoun side was attracting other exiles interested in working on amnesty and revitalizing the magazine. Pietlock allowed Knight and Colhoun to continue to edit the amnesty section of AMEX as long as he had full editorial control of particular sections, like "The Editor's Notebook", and some control over sections to be edited jointly. It was agreed that Colhoun would not continue to write the amnesty column, "Perspectives on Amnesty." Tension was in the air, and the two editorial factions usually worked seperately except when joint consultation was needed.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE AMNESTY MOVEMENT

There wasn't any single point at which the amnesty movement began. A call for amnesty went out at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968, but was lost amid louder struggles: The street fighting between Mayor Daley's gestapo and antiwar demonstrators outside, and the battle between Gene McCarthy's doves and the Johnson-Humphrey hawks on the convention floor. In late 1971, however, three groups began to focus on amnesty: AMEX; the Safe Return Amnesty Committee; and the American Civil Liberties Union Project on Amnesty. At the same time, the late Carl Braden of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), and Virginia Collins of the Republic of New Africa were in the middle of an amnesty speaking tour

Upper left: Walter Collins, SCEF organizer, draft resister, and co-subject of a national amnesty campaign and speaking tour by his mother Virginia Collins (right) of the Republic of New Africa; and Carl Braden (lower left) of SCEF.

through forty-two states, primarily on behalf of Virginia's son Walter Collins, one of SCEF's top organizers. Carl and Virginia knew the real reason Walter had been sentenced to five years in prison for refusing the draft was that he was a very effective black organizer against the draft, and an effective fighter for the rights of poor white and black people throughout the South. Carl and Virginia focused their campaign around Walter's case, and demanded amnesty for all war resisters and political prisoners, but their particular concern was Walter's safety while in jail. This was around the time when Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered the attack on the militant prisoners at Attica, and George Jackson was murdered in the yard of the Soledad prison in California.

During the early months of 1972, AMEX was in communication with Braden who gave us advice on developing the amnesty issue. In March, he came to Toronto to speak at an exile meeting in Toronto, called jointly by AMEX and the aid groups. The meeting, which was our first major effort to develop a wider base of exile support for amnesty work, drew about fifty people, both curious about the U.S. politicians' amnesty positions, and outraged at their punitive or discriminatory apects. Braden helped us explain that exiles could use amnesty as a tool with which we could direct this anger into political channels, but most of the counselors opposed this, and the results of the meeting were inconclusive.

During early 1972, Henry Schwarzschild, director of the ACLU Project on Amnesty, visited Toronto to consult with exiles on how war resisters believed the amnesty question should be defined. From the beginning of our relationship with Schwarzschild it was clear that our overall political views were far apart, but it was also evident to both the ACLU and AMEX that political circumstances were forcing us to become tactical allies. Since the aid groups weren't interested in developing a positive amnesty program, Schwarzschild had to

work with us; and we had to work with him because no other major liberal organizations had shown interest in pursuing amnesty work.

Unknown to AMEX at the time, in early 1972 Safe Return co-directors Todd Ensign and Michael Uhl were preparing to bring Army deserter John David Herndon back to the U.S. from his exile in Paris, France. When Herndon got off the plane on American soil in March 1972, he was immediately arrested in front of the nation's major newspaper, TV and radio journalists. Over the next several years, Safe Return was to repeat similar dramatic confrontations between the U.S. government and war resisters returning from exile or underground, with the media recording these events, along with the returning war resisters' motivations for resisting the war and the case for unconditional amnesty rather than jail.

By spring 1972, AMEX realized that the amnesty campaign required a movement, or a coalition of antiwar groups, in the U.S. We believed it necessary to develop coordinated activities for groups working on amnesty, and to reach out to other antiwar groups to join the amnesty fight. An initial Toronto meeting in spring 1972 between members of the Cambridge, Massachusetts Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and local exiles discussed a joint exile-VVAW amnesty meeting and action over the July 4th weekend. The Cambridge VVAW chapter folded, however, so AMEX decided to take on organizing the event. We called an amnesty conference to be held in Toronto that July. But Nixon responded to the spring offensive of the Vietnamese liberation fighters with a massive air war over southern and northern Vietnam of a magnitude that made Johnson's earlier bombing raids look like kid's stuff. The antiwar movement stayed away from the conference, afraid that amnesty work might detract from other antiwar activities.

Unfortunately, Knight and Colhoun had visualized the July 4th conference as a means of handling the amnesty baton over to the U.S. movement which, we believed, had to do the bulk of amnesty organizing. As it turned out, the conference failed to bring together a large number of potential amnesty activists. Schwarzschild of the ACLU Amnesty Project attended, as did Ensign, Uhl and Herndon from Safe Return, and Jack Smith of the New Haven, Connecticut VVAW chapter. AMEX postered around Toronto for the conference, which didn't bring out more than a dozen exiles, but it did attract the attention of two people who were to become major amnesty activists: Gerry Condon and Sandy Rutherford. Condon was a Green Beret deserter who had spent the last three years as an exile activist with the American Deserters Committee in Sweden.

The conference gave this little band, then constituting the amnesty movement, a chance to strategize about the future of our work; but it fell far short of our original goal of bringing new organizations into the fledgling amnesty campaign. Furthermore, the conference failed to provide the means by which those in attendance could formulate a common strategy, as Schwarzschild was not in favor of much visible activity, and Safe Return was already putting the finishing touches on its plans to surface Marine Corps deserter Tommy Michaud, who had been living underground in the States, at the Miami Democratic National Convention later that summer. Despite these failures, the conference did serve to maintain the momentum of our little movement at a time when it seemed unlikely that unconditional amnesty was possible in the near future. The spring 1972 escalation of the war made amnesty work most difficult. It seemed unlikely that the war would come to an early end, and highly unlikely that an unconditional amnesty would come from President Richard Nixon.

Deserter Herndon (r) with James Reston, Jr. in Paris. Reston's book, The Amnesty of John David Herndon, documented Safe Return's preparation and execution of Herndon's confrontation with the U.S. government over amnesty.

AMEX made two other attempts that spring to drum up interest in amnesty work among antiwar groups. In May, Knight traveled to the U.S. West Coast while the McGovern primary campaign was at its peak, trying to win support for a broader amnesty than McGovern proposed. He also tried to fundraise for AMEX within the fat cat circles of the West Coast Democratic party. In June, Colhoun went to Montreal to attend a weekend antiwar conference hosted by the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada. During that period of intense U.S. bombing, it seemed very important to express solidarity with the Vietnamese students. During the conference, Colhoun teamed up with Svirchev to talk with the many U.S. antiwar movement people present about the importance of actively supporting the amnesty struggle. Many contacts were made and people offered their support, but nothing substantial resulted. It was, however, the beginning of a five-year working association with the Vietnamese Patriots.

Over the summer, Knight and Colhoun continued to seek amnesty support. Colhoun covered Karl Armstrong's extradition hearing for AMEX. During recesses, he met with antiwar activists who had come to Toronto to testify on Armstrong's behalf that the Army-Math bombing was an antiwar act, not the work of a madman. The judge decided contrary to a mass of testimony, the bombing had nothing to do with the antiwar movement, and ordered Armstrong back to Wisconsin where he was soon found guilty of the bombing and sentenced to twenty-three years in prison. Knight left for the Democratic National Convention in Miami, where he had planned to seek amnesty support and to make fundraising contacts. Instead, he met up with Safe Return, which enlisted him in their effort to get Tommy Michaud onto the convention floor and in front of prime time TV cameras. Although some plans had been made for the California delegation and others to make a motion calling upon the rest of the delegates to support Michaud's call for amnesty, this support never materialized. Michaud was swiftly hustled off to a Marine Corps brig and, as the Nixon-Agnew law-and-order campaign heated up, McGovern began to back off from

his limited amnesty position. This was our fear writ large: Without any pressure from the anti-war movement, the Nixon antiamnesty onslaught would dominate the fall's amnesty discussion and set our movement back. But things could get worse, and did. Nixon was re-elected in a landslide.

SAFE RETURN AND THE PARIS AMNESTY CONFERENCE

During late summer and fall 1972, AMEX worked very closely with Safe Return, which introduced us to Lew Simon, an Army deserter exiled in Sweden. Simon was in Canada to visit his parents, but we spent a good deal of time discussing amnesty with him and Safe Return. Safe Return wanted to bring Knight to New York to edit their forthcoming amnesty newsletter, "Amnesty Report." We objected that this would make it impossible for AMEX and exile work in Canada to continue, but Safe Return's main concern was to build their organization. Once it was settled that Knight would remain in Toronto, our discussions with Safe Return moved to a decision to co-host an amnesty conference to be held in early 1973 in Paris, with them and Up from Exile, a new group Simon helped found in Stockholm in 1972.

At that point, Up from Exile was the only exile group working on amnesty, with the exception of AMEX and the Vancouver American Exiles Association, which Condon and Rutherford helped revitalize in late 1972. Unfortunately, Up from Exile was little more than Simon and George Carrano, a draft resister living in Sweden whose charges had been dropped. The rest of the exile community in Sweden was hostile to amnesty work, seeing the issue as a liberal one whose resolution wouldn't even affect the majority of exiles there, who were deserters. Up from Exile was dependent on Safe Return and did little amnesty organizing among exiles, whereas AMEX was an established exile organization with a good deal of independence from other groups and much deeper roots in the exile community.

In the planning stages for the Paris amnesty conference, we quickly learned that Safe Return saw the conference mainly as a media event. AMEX was also interested in creating an amnesty event that would get wide media coverage, but we also saw the conference as another attempt to build a Stateside amnesty movement. When Henry Kissinger announced in late October 1972 that "peace was at hand" in Vietnam, this second aspect of the Paris conference became even more important to us. Now that the war seemed to be coming to an end, we believed we could involve the antiwar movement in a major amnesty campaign. We slowly learned, however, that Safe Return had no intention of seeking wide participation from potential new amnesty supporters because that would make it more difficult to become the premier U.S. amnesty organization.

Furthermore, we were sadly discovering that Safe Return had little concern for exile needs, but was using AMEX and Up from Exile as co-sponsors of the conference to legitimize it. AMEX was never an equal partner in the decisionmaking process, and the majority of decisions were made by Safe Return. Of course, Safe Return had much more experience in raising the large sums of money that were necessary for the conference, and were experienced in directing extravagant media events, so in many areas of judgement we chose to defer to their decisions. But the strains were already beginning to show in the AMEX-Safe Return relationship.

On the flight to Paris, we saw an issue of Time magazine which reported that American exiles in Paris were opposed to the conference taking place because they feared that it would increase French repression of their community, since they were legally bound not to engage in political activities in France. Although we learned that Time had exaggerated the story, a good deal of ill will did exist among some Paris exiles. Most were not opposed to the conference, but were angry they hadn't been more involved in its planning. AMEX recognized a Safe Return trait: Since it was hard to organize exiles around amnesty, ignore them and rely on AMEX and Up from Exile to provide exile legitimacy.

When the AMEX delegates Knight, Colhoun, Gerry Condon, and Svirchev, along with AMEX staffer Maryanne Campbell, deplaned at Orly in late February 1973, it was with real foreboding. The perfect timing of the conference, coming on the heals of the late-January signing of the Paris Ceasefire Agreement, and a lot of pre-conference media interest, seemed too good to be true. We feared more bad media stemming from the Time article, and possible conflicts with Safe Return. But we immediately met with the unexpected. The perfect timing was too much for Richard Nixon, who called upon French President Georges Pompidou to ban the conference. Within hours of our arrival in Paris, we learned from a U.S. Army deserter that under pressure from the French authorities, Safe Return had cancelled the conference and telephoned those conference participants in the States not already on their way, to stay in New York. The conference had been called off by Safe Return, but we hadn't been consulted, even superficially.

The atmosphere by this time in Paris was cloak and Dagger. Safe Return was holed up in a hotel. According to Safe Return, the French police were staking out the hotel, threatening to arrest and deport anyone who tried to convene the conference. Since most of the exile delegates would likely be deported back to the States and jailed for draft or AWOL offenses, we were hesitant to risk arrest, but more concerned not to let Nixon get away with hindering our work. AMEX was convinced there was no need to cancel the remaining flights from the States because the conference could be convened underground in Paris.

During the next few days, we did convene a series of illegal meetings including some members of VVAW, exiles from Sweden, France, and Great Britian, one active duty GI from his base in West Germany, and some GI organizers from RITA Act in West Germany. A group of French intellectuals attempted to hold a press conference to denounce Pompidou's capitulation to Nixon, but the French authorities pressured the hotel hosting the conference to evict the French intellectuals. A small delegations later met with Jean-Paul Sartre and explained the details of the amnesty question. Sartre then wrote an open letter supporting unconditional amnesty which was published in several U.S. publications as well as in AMEX. We held our own illegal press conference with some U.S. media, but apparently the media executives in New York decided against the interviews. During our stay in Europe, Knight and Svirchev traveled to Rome to an international antiwar conference to raise the amnesty issue, while Colhoun and Campbell stayed in Paris to visit local political groups and educate them on the amnesty fight.

At one point, we were invited to the apartment of a man claiming to be a correspondent for the College Press Service and discussed amnesty. He expressed interest in writing a series of amnesty articles, but we never saw them. As it turned out, the "underground" correspondent, Sal Ferrera, is named by Philip Agee (the former CIA agent who wrote Inside the Company: A CIA Diary) as a

likely CIA agent who set Agee up in France.

The Paris Conference resulted in AMEX splitting from Safe Return, and was an important turning point for other reasons as well. AMEX was able to begin to build a base of support for amnesty work among war resisters exiled in European countries. Equally important, after our meetings with VVAW we were able to bring the militant antiwar veterans organization into the fledgling amnesty movement. VVAW National Office representative Ed Damato saw the importance of developing the amnesty campaign along anti-imperialist lines, and helped us see how vets with less-than-honorable discharges need amnesty, too.

GROWING PAINS OF THE EARLY AMNESTY MOVEMENT

Throughout 1972, AMEX often found itself caught between the conflicting political demands of Safe Return, and Henry Schwarzschild of the ACLU Amnesty Project. Because AMEX was an exile organization, we had little experience to apply toward what we hoped would be a national amnesty coalition in the U.S. This made us more dependent upon Safe Return and Schwarzschild than we might otherwise have been. Although we didn't scoff at working with liberals, Schwarzschild's goal of developing liberal institutional amnesty support wasn't our first priority. We wanted to reach the antiwar movement, which in turn would organize and educate the American public about amnesty in the context of the still-raging Vietnam War. Initially we looked to Safe Return to help us reach the antiwar movement because of their leftist political orientation, but slowly realized that Safe Return and Schwarzschild, but believed it necessary to work with both, much to the disgust of Safe Return which wanted us to reject Schwarzschild.

Because AMEX had never developed an independent financial base and had received only a small amount of money from the churches, when we decided to commit ourselves to full time amnesty organizing plus publishing a magazine, we needed more funds than ever before. Although Knight tried to fundraise in the States, our first big donations resulted from Schwarzschild's fundraising on our behalf. It was this donation that allowed us to pay Knight a salary. Throughout 1972, Schwarzschild never let us forget that while there were sharp political differences between us, we needed each other politically, and we needed his approval to get entree to the liberal foundations and wealthy individuals which looked to him for advice on how to distribute money for amnesty work. We were never happy with the AMEX-ACLU working relationship because we were forced to give him credibility in return for his adopting most of our basic amnesty arguments in his public statements.

During the first year-and-a-half of our amnesty work, AMEX published on a bimonthly basis, developing the politics of amnesty and helping to direct amnesty activities on an international and national U.S. level. Other than the public meetings we held in Toronto in March and July 1972, we did little local exile organizing, due to a lack of time and because amnesty was not an issue which would attract large numbers of exiles. We were always able to bring a dozen people to AMEX work parties, but it was difficult to involve a large number of people in the many chores of magazine production, all of which we did ourselves, rather than farm out, for financial reasons: typesetting, layout, paste-up, mailing, etc. Even by this time, the amnesty issue had become so complicated that it required specialized knowledge to write about, and even to understand the various struggles within the fledgling amnesty movement.

So Knight and Colhoun were delighted at the arrival of Swedish exile activists Condon and Rutherford in July 1972. They took an immediate interest in amnesty work and helped out a lot at the office. Early that spring, Bruce Beyer had immigrated to Canada from his exile in Sweden. We were hopeful that we could enlist him fulltime in the amnesty struggle, but he felt he needed to get some distance from exile politics and get intergrated into his second new home in the last two years. Our inability to get Beyer involved in our work made Condon and Rutherford's decision to leave Toronto that September for Vancouver, on Canada's west coast, a difficult one to accept since AMEX was committed to work way over our heads. However, before they moved we made an agreement that if Condon and Rutherford were able to work as exile activists in Vancouver, we would try to support them politically and financially. By the end of the year, Condon and Rutherford's presence in Vancouver helped revitalize the dormant Vancouver American Exiles Association and got it involved in amnesty work.

In Vancouver, Condon and Rutherford found the same exile resistance to amnesty work we had found in Toronto. In spring 1974, AMEX published an article by Colhoun and Joe Jones, another AMEX editor, called "Future Stress: The Psychology of Exile," which attempted to analyze our organizing problems. A good deal of research in social psychology, and interviews with a pschiatrist and clinical psychologist who had worked with exiles in Canada, gave us insight into dimensions of the problem. When individuals immigrate to a new country or are forced into exile, they go through a complex process of adjustment. It is necessary to adopt a new sense of national identity, and shed the old. For a while, many war resisters in Canada identified themselves as American antiwar exiles, but after a while, the possibility of being able to return to the U.S. became more and more remote, and this identity became a liability in adjusting to life in Canada.

Complicating this process of psychological adjustment was the peculiar situation of Americans living in Canada, a country that was in the midst of a resurgence of English Canadian nationalism developing alongside more traditional sources of Canadian anti-Americanism. Unfortunately for exiles, many Canadian nationalists failed to make distinctions between General Motors executives living in Canada, and U.S. war resisters who believed they were fighting against U.S. imperialism in Indochina and in Canada: Any American in Canada was a Yankee imperialist. As the influx of war resisters into Canada increased, the anxiety of many Canadians about such a large antiwar American presence developed to the point where many resisters learned to conceal their American identity and quickly adopt a Canadian identity. Also, the basic thrust of aid group politics, as described earlier, was to encourage quick assimilation into Canadian life.

The amnesty issue awakened the old American identity. Amnesty interrupted the psychological process of assimilation, and war resisters came to resent the amnesty discussion which seemed unrealistic as long as Nixon was president. And if unconditional amnesty were to come after Nixon left the White House it would be too late, since their new Canadian roots would be sunk too deeply.

AMEX quickly recognized that we wouldn't be able to build a large base of support in exile, but this could be compensated for by other means. If AMEX couldn't get hundreds of exiles out to amnesty demostrations in Toronto, we could use the media to express to the American people our response to the amnesty discussion. In the past,

with the exceptions of the Montreal and Vancouver American Deserters Committee and the shortlived Red, White and Black in Toronto, most exile groups in Canada kept a low profile in terms of media coverage. This was in line with the advice they received from their Canadian advisers: to fade into the woodwork.

Beginning during the 1971 holiday season, when the media made its annual trek to the North Country to report on "how the boys in Canada were making out," AMEX developed the expertise necessary to work with the media. We learned how to speak to the media in what we hoped was clear language, free of political jargon. We were willing to devote large amounts of time to media interviews, having to answer the reporters' generally uninformed questions in a way that more correctly described the reality of the exile situation. We also developed a list of war resisters willing to talk to the media. It took a lot of work to keep these lists up-to-date because many people refused to deal with the media after either being totally misquoted several times, or from having to put up with reporters' seemingly inherent disregard for our privacy, and disrespect generally. We were usually able to match up reporters from major U.S. cities with a draft resister or deserter from their city. The media came to learn that when an amnesty story broke suddenly, they could come to AMEX not only for "official" response, but also for the names of other exiles to interview. Although most exiles weren't willing to do day-to-day amnesty work, over the years AMEX won their respect, since we were able to articulate their feelings about amnesty, the Vietnam War and thes justness of our resistance to that war.

THE FOUNDING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR UNIVERSAL AND UNCONDITIONAL AMNESTY

After the signing of the Paris Ceasefire Agreement in January 1973, the conditions for forming a national amnesty coalition had changed for the better. The news that AMEX had split with Safe Return quickly spread among the liberal, church, and antiwar groups now ready to join an amnesty coalition. In Paris, VVAW had been recruited by AMEX to the amnesty movement. An ecumenical conference of religious organizations had adopted a relatively comprehensive amnesty statement in Kansas City in summer 1972. People like Gold Star mother Louise Ransom, and Irma Zigas of the War Resisters League and Women Strike for Peace were interested in learning more about amnesty and waiting for a chance to join the movement. As long as AMEX was perceived to be working closely with Safe Return, the conditions for forming an amnesty coalition seemed to be in the future, since it was well known that Safe Return wasn't interested in coalition work. Furthermore, an amnesty conference in Washington, D.C., which Schwarzschild had been talking about convening for spring 1972, was finally ready to be convened in May 1973. So in early spring 1973, the historic forces necessary for forming an amnesty coalition were in place.

In the weeks before the Washington amnesty conference, Knight was busy behind the scenes talking with people in this new amnesty grouping. Back from the Paris conference, AMEX was actively trying to get involved with this new grouping. In fact, Knight went so far as to help Louise Ransom write the constitution of Americans for Amnesty, a liberal organization of the families of exiled war resisters. Earlier that year, AMEX-Canada had published a proposal written by Ensign and Uhl of Safe Return for a families organization to be called Families of Resisters for Amnesty (FORA), but once we split from Safe Return we weren't willing to work with their families organization. From the beginning, AFA's politics were purely liberal, contrasting with the political potential of FORA which was being created by leftists. Still, this seemed to be a sensible decision at the time, not only in the context of the complicated politics of the nascent amnesty movement, but in retrospect as well. AFA was able to attract a larger number of parents because Ransom was a Gold Star Parent with whom the parents of exiles felt comfortable. Over the next several years, Ransom's articulation of amnesty and her antiwar politics were moved leftward by the politics of the amnesty coalition. She was also able to bring these parents into the amnesty movement in a way that Uhl and Ensign would never have been able to, despite the many amnesty activites sponsored by Safe Return-FORA, because they weren't willing to work in a coalition.

At this early May conference in Washington, it was decided that a grassroots education campaign was the best route to winning amnesty for war resisters, since Nixon had declared his opposition to amnesty many times, and Congress was clearly not inclined to pass unconditional amnesty legislation. This ACLU-convened conference resulted in the election of six members to the Steering Committee of what was eventually called the National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty (NCUUA). The six selected from religious, civil rights, civil libertarian, and peace institutions were: Virginia Collins of the Republic of New Africa; Bob Musil of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors; Henry Schwarzschild of the ACLU Amnesty Project; Irma Zigas of the War Resisters League and Women Strike for Peace; Fred Hofricter of the United Church of Christ and the Interreligious Taskforce on Amnesty; and Trudi Young of Clergy and Laity concerned (CALC). At this conference it was decided to hold a second founding conference of NCUUA that May in Toronto, where exiled war resisters could participate.

AMEX hosted the second NCUUA founding conference in late May 1973, at which time the various categories of war resisters needing amnesty got together to elect the remaining six Steering Committee members. The other people who had attended the Washington conference were invited to participate to a restricted degree in the Toronto conference, but the main purpose was for the war resister constituencies to strategize about launching a national program of grassroots amnesty education and organizing. To a large extent the political definition of the conference was determined by AMEX and a large VVAW contigent.

The AMEX and VVAW forces had to contend with liberals who wanted to make amnesty an issue of humantarianism and reconciliation. Another large political block was a loose coalition of U.S. and Canadian-based draft and military counselors whose work consisted mainly of reviewing draft cases with an eye to getting charges dropped, and helping deserters to get swift Undesirable discharges "for the good of the service." The AMEX and VVAW political approach was that individual counseling was an important means by which some war resisters could get their cases resolved on personal basis, but the only real solution to the problem was a collective one: to force Washington to grant a universal and unconditional amnesty. Casework, we believed, could not resolve all the thousands of cases of war resisters which lacked legal loopholes. The counselors faction believed that political agitation around amnesty would detract from the more humanitarian counseling effort, and often aligned

with the liberal forces who opposed the left forces of AMEX and VVAW. We wanted to wage a political amnesty campaign which would be clearly antiwar in nature. The predicament of the nonleft faction was that in order to work on amnesty they had to have the support of the war resisters needing amnesty. Many, but certainly not all, of the counselors didn't feel this restriction and openly argued against a "futile" left-oriented amnesty campaign.

The NCUUA Statement of Purpose was developed in the war resister constituency workshops including only people needing amnesty, and later brought before a plenary session in which all conferees participated. Although the nonleft was reluctantly prepared to accept the basic left thrust of the statement, it was anxious to rid the text of any "rhetoric." However, after being defeated during the drafting sessions, the counseling faction brought a motion to the plenary which called for a total reconsideration of the statement so it could join forces with the nonleft to weaken its political content. This move, at the last session of the conference, was so clearly out of order that it was overwhelmingly defeated. The nonleft wasn't prepared to be so blatant in trying to constrain the left wing of the new amnesty movement.

Consequently, the nonleft members of NCUUA were stuck with an NCUUA Statement of Purpose that could not be attacked politically; but they were never comfortable with it: "The purpose of the National Council for Universal Unconditional Amnesty is to mobilize the American people to work for a universal and unconditional amnesty; and to educate them concerning the structures and institutions that created the war in Southeast Asia, the nature of the war itself, and the necessity to resist any such wars in the future." The other aspect of NCUUA's principles of unity with which the nonleft felt uncomfortable was the definition of war resister categories to be included in a future uncondtional amnesty: Not only draft resisters, but also deserters, all vets with bad paper discharges, and civilians with "criminal" records for their opposition to the war and military racism. It was with great reluctance that the NCUUA nonleft accepted the Statement of Purpose, and the history of NCUUA which follows has many examples of continued resistance to putting into effect the unity principles upon which NCUUA was founded.

At this second NCUUA founding convention, AMEX realized that because of our strategic position in the amnesty movement as a war resister organization with a year-and-a-half of amnesty work under our belts when few other war resister constituencies had any interest in the issue, we had a special type of political power: We were the very people for whom NCUUA was trying to win amnesty, we were organized, and experienced in speaking on behalf of war resisters. Some liberals would have liked to replace us with a nonleft war resister organization, but this never happened. This was largely because we were still organized as antiwar exiles at a time when many former antiwar activists had gone on to other political work, or had retreated into their personal lives. For AMEX, our opposition to the continuing post-ceasefire war was a daily part of our lives, and the fight for amnesty was a means by which we could express antiwar convictions, long frustrated by our exile. Our opposition to the war came from deep inside us. So, largely because a part of our lives had been defined by the war and our opposition to it, it became impossible to compromise our antiwar politics without denying an intergral part of ourselves. This was also the case with many of the VVAW activists with whom we worked.

AMEX ACTIVITIES IN TORONTO

In fall 1972, Knight and Colhoun did the bulk of AMEX amnesty-oriented work, and Pietlock did a lot of nonamnesty editorial work. Maryann Campbell, an original member of the AMEX collective, and Anton Wagner, an exiled deserter, could also be counted on for help. In late December 1972, AMEX was visited by three other people, who were to play a large role in our future: Rick Ricketts, and Steve Grossman and Evangeline Mix. Ricketts was an Army deserter who had lived underground in Japan and London, but couldn't live in either country legally and came to Canada in the hope of establishing a permanent legal residence. What he didn't know was that the Canadian Government had announced in early November 1972 that people could no longer apply for landed immigrant status at a Canadian border point or from within Canada, but had to go to a third country or remain in their home countries for six months it took to have applications processed. This announcement cut off virtually all immigration to Canada by U.S. war resisters, and that is what we told Ricketts. We advised him to go back to Paris, where he had lived earlier, and apply for Canadian landed immigration status there. He would be able to survive because he was fluent in French. We met him again in Paris, where he helped us during the amnesty conference. He later got landed immigrant status in Canada, moved to Montreal and continued to work with AMEX until late 1977.

Grossman and Mix had just come from Chicago where Grossman was being tried by Judge Julius Hoffman, of Chicago conspiracy trial fame, for refusing the draft. Before Grossman's trial date had been set, he and Mix had been doing community organizing in southern Ohio, and joined the antiwar demonstrators in Miami in summer 1972 at the

Democratic and Republican conventions. Mix was a war resister in her own right, having long been active in antiwar activities. They too, could not get legal status in Canada. AMEX explored the possibility of sending them to Australia to try to open that country for U.S. exiles, but they finally decided to live underground in Canada. At the time, AMEX had no idea how important Grossman and Mix would become to our future work. Mix remained actively involved in amnesty work until fall 1975, and Grossman stayed on for the duration of AMEX's work.

Grossman began to learn the technical aspects of magazine production when he started working fulltime at AMEX in early 1973, was joined on the staff by Tom Needham, a founding member of AMEX and the Union of American Exiles. By the time the AMEX delegation left for the Paris amnesty conference, we had a core of a half a dozen activists working out of the crowded AMEX basement office. And we needed so large a staff. We were besieged by the media, were co-sponsors of the Paris amnesty conference, hosted the second NCUUA founding conference, published three issues of the magazine, and did a major organizing job at the annual Unitarian Universalist Association International conference in Toronto in early June 1973. By summer 1973, we had all been working on nervous energy for months and were physically and psychologically exhausted. Once again, we found ourselves way over our heads in amnesty work. Needham went back to his job as a household mover at the end of spring, but Joe Jones joined the AMEX ranks. This was the best thing to happen to AMEX that summer, as everything else appeared to go downhill over the next several months.

After the second NCUUA founding conference, AMEX entered into an extended period of criticism and self-criticism concerning our work that spring. Two members of what developed that spring as the left caucus of NCUUA, Anna Marie Trouger and Jeanne Friedman, led the criticism, focusing on Knight's sometimes unilateral leadership, and on Colhoun as a leftist intellectual intimidating to nonintellectuals just beginning political work. Pietlock joined the criticism of Knight, in growing disaffection over the amount of work AMEX was devoting to amnesty. Knight took several weeks vacation at this point to regain some energy, but when he came back to work fulltime the tension between him and Colhoun on the one hand, and Pietlock on the other was intensifying. To make matters worse, Grossman and Mix decided to move to British Columbia at the end of summer 1973.

In the fall of 1973, the conflict with Pietlock came to a head. Pietlock wanted to insure that AMEX would stop its amnesty work and eventually fold. He no longer wanted to devote most of his free time to AMEX, but didn't want the magazine to continue without him. At first, Pietlock focused on Knight who had been under pressure all summer. Pietlock demanded that Knight stop working fulltime at AMEX, get a job elsewhere, and do part time volunteer work at AMEX like everyone else. Knight agreed, because office pressures with Pietlock had become so intense. Knight got a daytime job and worked nights at AMEX with Colhoun. Knight and Colhoun then found an unemployed nonexiled American living in Toronto, John Young, who was interested in doing clerical work at AMEX during the days. With Young at the AMEX office during the days, and Knight and Colhoun at night, our work was proceeding almost as well as when Knight was working fulltime. Pietlock became even more upset; his demands had been met, but AMEX was continuing full steam ahead. Next, Pietlock demanded that Colhoun stop working at AMEX altogether. If he didn't, Pietlock threatened in a letter to Knight that he would destroy AMEX.

After holding an AMEX meeting to discuss Pietlock's demands, it was decided that Colhoun would continue his work at AMEX. We then promply moved out of our free office space on the University of Toronto campus because the university wouldn't allow us to have a lock on our office doors, and we took Pietlock's threat seriously. Although Pietlock was acting in an extremly angry and irrational way, his behavior underscored the level of antagonism that sometimes was directed toward AMEX by war resisters trying intensely to adopt a new Canadian identity. In fact, Pietlock was probably the war resister community's most visible New Canadian after he published a photograph of his Canadian citizenship ID card in a fall 1972 issue of AMEX. Knight and Colhoun were the community's most notorious exile activists working for amnesty, which to New Canadians often symbolized the country and exile politics they had come to reject. The fact that they were able to work together for so long was remarkable.

Although AMEX published a long critical letter-to-the-editor from Pietlock in a late 1973 issue of the magazine, he still made threats about going to Toronto newspapers announcing the split and what he called AMEX's "American chauvanism." No Toronto newspaper published anything about the split, but Pietlock did use AMEX's Canadian mailing list to mail out his short-lived newsletter, "The Real Majority Up Here," in which he continued to attack AMEX over the next six months. Even though AMEX work continued during the trying last six months of 1973, it was a time of very low spirits when only a very deep commitment to our work pulled us through.

III STALEMATE AT NCUUA: MAY 1973 TO AUGUST 1974

After the second NCUUA founding conference in Toronto in May 1973, the recently-developed amnesty left caucus of AMEX, VVAW, and other political allies, felt a definite sense of accomplishment. We had to struggle hard to win what was considered a politically supportable NCUUA Statement of Purpose. To do so, we had to push the nonleft forces about as far to the left as they were willing to tolerate. But we felt that we had laid a good political foundation for a broad cross-class coalition. We could have insisted on explicitly anti-imperialist principles of unity, but that would have forced the liberals out of the coalition. Since the antiwar movement and various left movements in the States had remained indifferent to the approaches AMEX had made over the year-and-a-half before NCUUA was founded, we believed it would be a great mistake to continue waiting for the broader antiwar and left movements to take amnesty seriously. Furthermore, coalitions composed of widely differing political views have been political tradition for generations of struggles. In the weeks following the Toronto conference, we set out to earn and exercise the leadership of the cross-class coalition we had helped found in May 1973.

We anticipated a future of struggle within the amnesty coalition's Steering Committee, but we were confident that we could provide strong leadership. What we had not counted on, however, was that the struggle within the Steering Committee would lead to a long period of stalemate and inaction in terms of initiating program. With the exception of a few small peices of program, a political and programmatic deadlock developed, which lasted until Nixon was forced to resign as president in August 1974.

Although the left had won the day in Toronto, we needed the cooperation of the church, liberal, civil libertarian, and counseling organizations to help us implement amnesty program. But the nonleft members of the new amnesty movement were having second thoughts about NCUUA. Throughout this period, in formal Steering Committee meetings and informal discussions, some churches and other organizations discussed the merits of supporting a conditional amnesty which would include alternative service requirements. This position held that conditional amnesty would be a first amnesty step, easier to obtain politically than the "unreasonable" demand for universal and unconditional amnesty. The latter demand, upon which NCUUA was founded, was felt to be too radical for their organizations to support. Consequently, the question was raised several times whether to allow organizations which did not support universal and unconditional amnesty to sit on the NCUUA Steering Committee. Of course, AMEX strongly opposed this. Not only would more nonleft votes on the Steering Committee disrupt the political balance between left and nonleft, but the Steering Committee could not be allowed to retreat from NCUUA's original principles of unity.

In the aftermath of the Toronto conference, the left forces realized that we couldn't use NCUUA entirely for our own purposes. The nonleft members of the coalition realized that they were stuck with the Toronto definition of universal and unconditional amnesty. The result was that some of the nonleft decided to try to build support for a conditional amnesty, while others decided not to visably oppose the Toronto amnesty definitions, but to block left program proposals within the Steering Committee; or to move so slowly in the direction of universal and unconditional amnesty that little action of consequence would come from NCUUA. The result of this prolonged period of political stalemate was that NCUUA was long unable to develop a strong national political presence.

An early left caucus proposal for an October 1973 National Amnesty Week never really got off the ground, largely due to the general political deadlock and a lack of operating funds. The only events of the October 1973 Amnesty Week were some amnesty sermons given by clergy sympathetic to Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC). AMEX was not opposed to Amnesty Week sermons, but we felt it necessary for NCUUA to define the amnesty question on political as well as religious grounds, especially since some of the churches were supporting forms of conditional amnesty.

The problem of obtaining adequate funding for NCUUA was crucial and complicated. The National Council of Churches Emergency Ministry to the Vietnam Generation, headed by the Rev. Richard Killmer, had traditionally been the major financial source for aid groups counseling in exile, but would not fund NCUUA's amnesty work. Henry Schwarzschild had been appointed by the NCUUA Steering Committee to be the coalition's chief fundraiser, but seemed content to use NCUUA's lack of funds as leverage to keep NCUUA from actively pursuing program, rather than actually raise funds. In fact, a formal fundraising proposal that Schwarzschild had promised to present to the Steering Committee for approval in October was not completed until December 1973.

NCUUA's chronic shortage of operating funds crippled the coalition's ability to develop program, because it was first necessary to hire a fulltime staffperson, and to pay rent for office space. NCUUA could not hire an office coordinator until late 1973. The first issue of NCUUA's newsletter, "Amnesty Update," wasn't published until April 1974, due to the twin problems of political stalemate and poverty.

Some Steering Committee members, including Schwarzschild, were fond of saying that the curren political climate made it unlikely that much amnesty work could be done anyway, considering

Henry Schwarzschild (r) debates amnesty with William Buckley on TV's "Firing Line."

the fact that Nixon felt so confident of stonewalling the Watergate investigations that he openly defied a congressional ban on continuing the U.S. bombing of Cambodia. But to NCUUA's embarrassment, Safe Return and FORA, as well as local amnesty coalitions which were slowly forming, were able to implement amnesty program. Safe Return and FORA held unofficial congressional amnesty hearings in Washington in May 1973, where deserter Ed Sowders told the audience why his opposition to the war led him to desert, and defied U.S. authorities to arrest him. Safe Return-FORA also announced an ambitious fall program, much of which never materialized, but did surface two more deserters, Lew Simon and Ed McNally, amid much publicity at their Christmas Homecoming 1973 event at New York's Village Gate folk club in Greenwich Village.

Representatives from Safe Return-FORA had been allowed to sit in on NCUUA Steering Committee meetings although they had refused to join the coalition, but in November 1973, the Steering Committee voted to discontinue this practice, as it seemed that their main purpose in attending was to learn NCUUA's plans. One of the strongest additions to NCUUA since its founding in May, was Gold Star mother Pat Simon, who founded Gold Star Parents for Amnesty, and joined the amnesty movement as a fulltime activist. Her untiring efforts on behalf of universal and unconditional amnesty were to become an inspiration to people at AMEX, even when we didn't agree with her on all points.

DISARRAY IN THE LEFT CAUCUS

Although AMEX had conceived of the left caucus as the political leadership of NCUUA, it was quite another thing to put this theoretical conception into practice. The left caucus was nominally composed of the following Steering Committee members: Virginia Collins of the Republic of New Africa; Walter Collins of SCEF; Jeff Hayes of the GI organization Highway 13; Dee Knight of AMEX, representing exiles; Ed Damato of VVAW; Jeanne Friedman (of VVAW) representing civilian resisters; and Sandy Rutherford (of the VAEA) representing families of resisters. In order for the left to function as a caucus at Steering Committee meetings, it was necessary to meet as a caucus prior to meetings to thrash out meeting strategy. In practice, however, left caucus meetings were not always convened, or were convened with only a few memebers. The left suffered a great deal from its inability to meet together to formulate coordinated plans for the amnesty movement.

Both Virginia and Walter Collins had poor left caucus and Steering Committee attendance due to severe government repression of Virginia's organization, and to SCEF internal struggles. Walter's SCEF responsibilities, especially when he became the national coordinator, necessarily took higher priority than NCUUA work. Amnesty never became priority work for Hayes and the GI movement. Even though Damato had taken on amnesty work as a priority for him within the VVAW National Office, VVAW was understandably preoccupied during summer 1973 with the Gainesville Eight conspiracy trial through which the government was attempting to destroy the antiwar vets organization. It was very expensive to keep in phone contact with Friedman whose organization, Campaign for Amnesty, was in San Francisco; and the same with Rutherford, who lived in Vancouver. Rutherford, however, worked closely with Gerry Condon and AMEX.

From the beginning of AMEX's amnesty work, we had looked to U.S. groups for the organizing experience in the States which we lacked. But the problem was that the other members of the left caucus who made amnesty work a priority didn't have much experience in leading a national coalition with broadly diverse political tendencies. AMEX was at first reluctant to take the initiative in proposing program, but slowly realized that, due to circumstances, we had to take up the slack. But even when we did present the left caucus with program ideas, they were often met with little enthusiasm, often because the political struggle in NCUUA had become so frustrating and draining. By late 1973, the left caucus actually debated whether remaining in NCUUA was politically worthwhile, and whether the left should pull out of the deadlocked coalition. As Knight summed up the NCUUA experience in late 1973 from the left caucus perspective: NCUUA had become a "fruitless tug-of-war."

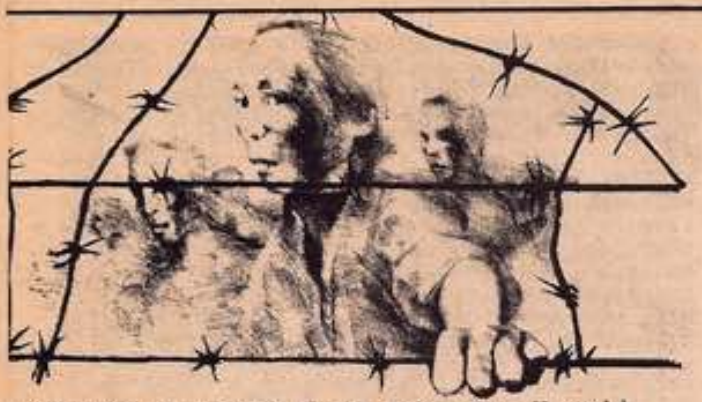
AMEX BEGINS TO ASSERT LEADERSHIP IN NCUUA

The basic problem facing the left caucus was that we didn't have enough progressive grassroots supporters to tip the stalemated political balance on the NCUUA Steering Committee. Much later, when all the original members of the left caucus had left NCUUA by summer 1975, and no other left support was forthcoming, AMEX would reconsider the source of our power in this new context. But from the beginning, slowly, AMEX began to assert a leadership in NCUUA based not so much on our numbers but rather on our strategic position within the movement, and on our ability to formulate program and to implement it either on our own or through NCUUA. But the development of AMEX's rise to leadership within the amnesty coalition was a slow process.

Exiles were the best organized constituency of war resisters in need of amnesty, so with NCUUA stalemated, the left caucus turned to AMEX to implement program during late 1973. In December, AMEX and VAEA, largely through the efforts of Condon and Rutherford, held meetings in Toronto and Vancouver linking the issue of amnesty for war resisters with the growing campaign to free the 200,000 political prisoners of the Nguyen Van Thieu regime in South Vietnam. AMEX's involvement with the South Vietnamese political prisoners issue was a long one.

In Paris in February 1973, Knight and Jack Colhoun visited the General Secretary of Amnesty International, Sean McBride. We had just learned that Amnesty International was about to launch

Vinh Sinh, of the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada; with Gerry Condon, Jeanne Friedman and Don Luce at the Vancouver amnesty/political prisoner meeting.



a campaign on behalf of the prisoners. We told McBride that it seemed to us an excellent idea to link the political prisoner campaign with amnesty for war resisters, because it would show how opposition to Washington/Saigon war policies had led to widespread repression in both countries. McBride was quite short with us: There would be no such linking of issues, because amnesty was too controversial and would drive away potential support for the political prisoner campaign.

We didn't think much further about a joined political prisoner/amnesty campaign until the May 1973 Toronto conference, when the aid groups in Canada raised the political prisoner campaign as being much more worthy than the amnesty struggle. Because the original NCUUA Statement of Purpose didn't mention the South Vietnamese political prisoners, the aid groups revived the Canadian Coalition of War Resisters, which had never existed except on paper, to write a statement to NCUUA saying that the CCWR would not join NCUUA because it neglected the political prisoner campaign. The NCUUA Steering Committee immediately included a section on the prisoners in its statement of Statement of Purpose. But support from the CCWR wasn't forthcoming.

The left caucus decided that AMEX and VAEA should take up the political prisoner issue again, both because of its political merits and in the hope that this would help NCUUA reach the political prisoner committees in the States. Consequently, AMEX successfully proposed that NCUUA support and fund public meetings in several Canadian cities with guest speakers Don Luce, who brought world attention to the tiger cages in South Vietnam where many prisoners were tortured, a representative from the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada, and an amnesty spokesperson, to discuss the issues of amnesty and South Vietnamese political prisoners. The lukewarm response of the counseling groups didn't surprise us much, but we were disappointed that we weren't able to bring more exiles and Canadians to the two meetings. In Toronto, we got about seventy people; Vancouver was slightly more successful, getting nearly ninety. We weren't able to inspire any of the aid groups to hold similar meetings on their own, but the long process of building support for the meetings among exile groups still in existance in Canada laid the groundwork for future amnesty work.

THE AMNESTY MOVEMENT CLASHES WITH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OVER FUNDING

In mid-August 1973, the Canadian government announced an "immigration amnesty" to eliminate what had become a major problem: The presence of an estimated 200,000 illegal immigrants in Canada. Of this total, the counseling groups and the NCC Emergency Ministry believed as many as 20,000 were U.S. war resisters, particularly deserters, who couldn't meet the Manpower and Immigration Ministry's requirements for landed immigrant status. The Canadian immigration amnesty program was scheduled to be in effect for sixty days beginning in mid-August.

Rev. Richard Killmer of the NCC Emergency Ministry quickly raised more than $110,000 to revive the aid group counseling network in Canada, at this point largely run out of gas. Killmer convened a meeting in Winnipeg with the counselors, where it was decided to freeze AMEX and VAEA out of any counseling funds, to refuse to take out a paid ad in AMEX-Canada magazine to advertise the existence of the immigration amnesty program, and to offer counseling services. AMEX did some postering in Toronto, and a mailing across Canada to our contacts about the immigration amnesty, but we could hardly compete with the lavishly-financed aid groups in terms of outreach.

AMEX and the VAEA quickly understood what had happened. $110,000 had been speedily raised by the NCC for war resister support work at a time when Schwartzchild was telling NCUUA that it was possible to raise only minimal funds for amnesty work. NCUUA kept its offices open, but was able to do little more. At a time when AMEX and VAEA were trying to enlarge our support base among exiles, we were frozen out of a chance to both contact thousands of exiled war resisters through the counseling program, and to convince them that only universal and unconditional amnesty could solve the problems caused by their resistance and exile. We also knew all too well that this latest incident was consistent with a long tradition whereby the NCC would fund only the apolitical aid centers at the expense of the political exile groups addressing the political roots of the problem.

Killmer's latest political and financial wheeling and dealing came at a time when the amnesty coalition was nearly bankrupt, and this made the significance of his actions clear to a much wider audience than when his maneuvers were restricted to politically active exiles in Canada and Sweden. When AMEX brought the problem to NCUUA's attention,

NCC-funded immigration counseling excluded amnesty groups.

even the nonleft was outraged. Although it seems likely that Killmer had a good deal of support within the NCC, some of the churches were shocked that none of the money he had raised would go to amnesty work.

Consequently, AMEX, with the backing of the left caucus, demanded at the September 1973 NCCUA Steering Committee meeting that Killmer fund a meeting of exile and aid groups in Winnipeg to iron out our differences. Killmer did facilitate such a meeting, which took place in October 1973. But not only did the meeting take place too late to make much difference, since the immigration amnesty was about to expire, but the three most powerful groups from Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver refused to attend. Although the Winnipeg meeting failed to integrate AMEX and the VAEA into the counseling network, it did help Knight and Colhoun from AMEX, and Condon from the VAEA to build some support for amnesty and South Vietnamese political prisoner work with the smaller aid groups from Winnipeg, headed by American social worker Tim Maloney. From the beginning of AMEX's amnesty work in early 1972, Maloney had been opposed to work on the issue, but apparently he realized by then that he should get his foot in the door. Maloney had become Killmer's closest ally within the counseling network. Therefore, the Winnipeg meeting was filled with political tension, cleverly manipulated by Schwarzschild, though Killmer himself was not even present.

At the October meeting in Winnipeg, the participants agreed to support the AMEX-VAEA proposal for the amnesty/political prisoner meetings. This was the first time since January 1972 that exile groups other than AMEX and VAEA had publicly endorsed not only the concept of amnesty work, but concrete program proposals. Winnipeg, Calgary, and Regina all agreed to investigate the possibility of having similar meetings, and to determine the cost. It was also agreed to meet again in December in Vancouver, to try to deepen and broaden the unity achieved in Winnipeg.

The NCC was willing to fund transportation costs for the Vancouver meeting. This time, the Vancouver Committee to Assist American War Objectors, and the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme attended, with only Montreal boycotting the meeting. By this time, the momentum generated by the Winnipeg meeting had neutralized the traditional antiamnesty positions of the Vancouver Committee and TADP. This meeting produced another amnesty/political prisoner unity statement, signed by all eleven aid group and exile organizations in Canada.

Again, Killmer found it inconvenient to attend the meeting. He also found it impossible to respond to political questions about the earlier struggle over funding the immigration counseling program, about freezing AMEX and VAEA out of the program, and questions about the amount of money the NCC was willing to allocate for the amnesty/political prisoner meetings to take place a few weeks later in December. At the same time Killmer balked at supplying crucial information, Schwarzschild was busily trying to exacerbate the many continuing tensions just under the surface, over amnesty work in Canada. Although AMEX and VAEA had outmaneuvered the counseling groups, forcing them to sign the December 1973 "Unity Statement of War Resisters on Amnesty," they retaliated by calling for the impeachment of Knight as the exile representative to NCUUA. They really opposed Knight's aggressive support of amnesty program on the Steering Committee. Because AMEX wasn't allocated enough funds by the NCC to have two representatives at the Vancouver meeting, Knight's record was successfully defended by Colhoun, thwarting the impeachment attempt.

Darryl Adams

Some of those at Vancouver meeting. Left: Maloney and Eric Stine. Right: Colhoun (speaking), Rutherford, Schwarzschild.

All in all, the Vancouver meeting was a success. The eleven groups which signed the "Unity Statement" constituted themselves as the Coalition of American War Resisters in Canada, replacing the long-defunct Canadian Coalition of War Resisters which had been founded in March 1972 expressly to freeze out AMEX from the otherwise Canada-wide coalition and lessen our political credibility. Although the new coalition did little more than issue the "Unity Statement," it was a clear expression of the political momentum that had developed among exiles.

In brief, in the period immediately following NCUUA's founding, exiles were the best organized war resister constituency in support of amnesty. But people like Killmer and Schwarzschild tried to keep the exile community so divided and hostile toward AMEX and VAEA, which were working for amnesty, that we would be discredited, and neutralized within NCUUA. At a time when Schwarzschild was saying that the left caucus didn't represent a large war resister community supporting our politics, he was actively attempting to keep the exile community as divided as possible. Nonetheless, AMEX and VAEA were able to make small gains in the exile community that fall, crucial because the left caucus turned to us to implement amnesty program when NCUUA was incapable of doing the job.

AMEX CALLS ON NCUUA TO SUPPORT OUR CAMPAIGN TO AMNESTY DICK BUCKLIN

By late 1973, AMEX decided to no longer count on the left caucus or NCUUA to develop program ideas; we decided to present our own plans and then get the caucus and NCUUA to support them. Until then, we had deferred to the left caucus because we thought they knew the U.S. political scene better than we. But when Army deserter Dick Bucklin was court-martialed and sentenced to fifteen months in the stockade and a Bad Conduct discharge for his five years AWOL in Sweden and Canada, we felt we had to mount a national campaign to get Bucklin's sentence reduced, raising the issue of amnesty for all war resisters and veterans.

People at AMEX felt close to the Bucklin case because he had arrived in Toronto in early 1973 from Sweden, stopping at AMEX for counseling in order to return to military control through the Chapter Ten administrative discharge procedure. When he realized it would be a few months before he could return, he got involved in AMEX work, continuing until his return to the military in summer 1973. When he returned to Fort Carson, Colorado, he soon learned that instead of dis-

charging him via the usual Chapter Ten, the Army was proceding to court-martial him, likely because he had been an exile activist in the Stockholm American Deserters Committee. Personally, we felt close to Bucklin, but we also believed that NCUUA had to generate program in the U.S. to break the political deadlock in the Steering Committee.

Before Bucklin's court-martial conviction, we had attempted to raise support for his trial in the Colorado area, but his defense committee was inadequately coordinated. In the AMEX proposal for the Bucklin campaign, we called on NCUUA to coordinate the program nationally, while we would provide personnel for a national speaking tour. The left caucus felt that besides Bucklin, a white working class deserter, the tour should also raise the case of jailed black draft resister Robert Johnson. It was believed that Johnson's record as an activist with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference figured in the authorities' desire to keep him in jail for the maximum sentence. We readily agreed to adding Johnson's case to Bucklin's.

AMEX had hoped to get the other organizations represented in the left caucus involved in the Bucklin-Johnson speaking tour, including SCEF, VVAW, and Campaign for Amnesty, but they were too involved in their own activities to give much more than moral support. We had hoped that these U.S.-based groups could carry some of the load, especially since no one at AMEX had ever developed the blueprint for a nationally-coordinated speaking tour. Carl Braden of SCEF sent us photocopies of correspondence and literature from his and Virginia Collins' 1971 amnesty tour, which

Dick Bucklin, at Fort Carson, Colorado.


Exile activists Sandy Rutherford (center) and Sarah Clemens (r) support Bucklin on a radio talk-show in the U.S.

helped us understand the basic requirements of a national campaign.

But getting the NCUUA Steering Committee to support the Bucklin-Johnson proposal was more difficult. AMEX had to find a staffperson to coordinate the speaking tour from the NCUUA office. Fortunately, Knight had recently met Jon Steinberg, formerly a national coordinator of the antiwar group, People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, and convinced him of the importance of amnesty work. Steinberg was willing to take on the job. However, the Steering Committee also demanded that AMEX pledge $1,500 to cover Steinberg's salary and operating expenses for three months.

Although Knight did most of the speaking engagements, he was joined at various points, and at other times spelled, by exile women Sandy Rutherford and Sheila Adams of the VAEA, and Sarah Clemens of AMEX. When the March-through-May 1974 speaking tour ended, we judged it a success, even though we weren't able to force the authorities to shorten either Bucklin's or Johnson's prison sentences. The Bucklin-Johnson campaign was important because it was NCUUA's first attempt to execute national program. The traveling speakers gave local amnesty groups an event to build for, and an opportunity to flex its muscles. The process of developing and, to a major extent, executing the campaign gave AMEX necessary experience, and confidence that we could develop amnesty program for NCUUA from exile and make it work.

To get the deadlocked NCUUA Steering Committee to support the Bucklin-Johnson campaign, AMEX had to develop the program, find a coordinator, raise the funds for operating expenses, and provide the personnel for the speaking tour. But the price we had to pay for spring 1974 NCUUA amnesty program was well worthwhile, because that experience was to prove invaluable in the future. We learned that the key to getting NCUUA moving was that we had to develop program ideas and then present them to the Steering Committee for NCUUA's endorsement. But, as happened many times in the future, we had to be prepared to implement the program on our own if NCUUA was unable to support our program. The Bucklin-Johnson speaking campaign taught us that unless we applied this type of pressure on NCUUA, the political malaise which had prevented NCUUA from launching any significant program since its inception the previous spring would continue to dominate.

In the May 1974 NCUUA Steering Committee meeting, Jerel Olsen's record as NCUUA coordinator over the last six months was reviewed. The

Steering Committee decided that Olsen be relieved of his duties and replaced temporarily by Irma Zigas, because he hadn't been an efficient coordinator and had, according to the minutes, "become an irritant among Steering Committee members and was not able to pull NCUUA together...." Other than the Bucklin-Johnson campaign, NCUUA's major event of 1971, planned since early in the year, was to provide an Amnesty Information Center at congressional hearings held by Rep. Robert Kastenmeier earlier that spring. Olsen had not been able to get the Center well enough organized to make it a success.

AMEX ACTIVITIES IN TORONTO AND SWEDEN AND FRANCE: SPRING AND SUMMER 1974

When Knight left Toronto in March 1974 on the Bucklin-Johnson campaign, AMEX pursuaded Condon to move from Vancouver to Toronto to manage the office. Despite our wanting Condon to continue his work with the VAEA, the move was necessary because John Young who had been managing the office was moving back to the States.

During the first half of 1974, there were many indications in the media that the top levels of the Republican party were making contingency plans for replacing Nixon with his vice president, Gerald Ford, and that if it became necessary to remove Nixon, they were willing to grant some form of conditional amnesty to war resisters. Former Nixon Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, former Nixon Army Secretary Robert Froehlke, and Ford himself had all indicated that they thought some form of conditional amnesty was in order. We published articles in AMEX and discussed the possibilities on Toronto TV shows, but few people took us seriously because they believed that nothing could force Nixon from office. Although we had no timetable for Nixon's departure, we tried to prepare exiles and the amnesty movement for the likelihood of having to deal with an amnesty move in the not-too-distant future.

Colhoun's trip to Sweden and France in late June 1974 was one such effort at building exile support for amnesty work around the possibility of a conditional amnesty. Largely because of Knight's and Colhoun's meetings with the Paris exile community during the 1973 Paris amnesty conference, there was a good deal of support for our amnesty work, but a lack of clarity about what war resisters could do about amnesty from Paris. Colhoun's visit updated their information about amnesty happenings.

In Sweden, however, he faced a much different situation. Exiles in Stockholm, in particular, were still hostile toward amnesty work. Many were still bitter about Safe Return and Up From Exile, and believed that amnesty was a liberal issue. But the fact that the NCUUA Steering Committee had recently endorsed the July 4, 1974 VVAW/WSO demonstration in Washington helped make amnesty work more politically "respectable." The VVAW/WSO demonstration was organized around five demands: 1) Universal and unconditional amnesty; 2) Implement the (Paris Ceasefire) Agreements and End all aid to Thieu and Lon Nol; 3) Single-Type Discharge for all vets; 4) Decent Benefits for all vets; 5) Kick Nixon Out. The VVAW/WSO demonstration had a significant effect on getting other elements of the left to take amnesty more seriously.

Although Colhoun left Sweden feeling the strong opposition to amnesty work among most exile activists, it was clear the issue was being reconsidered and some exiles were willing to indicate their support privately. The view held by many exiles that amnesty work would detract from antiwar work was diminished by the effective way that VVAW had linked amnesty and other antiwar issues. The early support for amnesty work that resulted from Colhoun's visit to Sweden, however, would become evident when Ford announced his punitive Clemency Program a few months later.

Back in Toronto, Condon had taken the initiative in organizing a benefit concert for AMEX. In mid-1973, Army deserter and musician Bill King had written to AMEX to express his support for our work and offer his help. King and Colhoun had become good friends since, and had discussed King's doing a benefit concert. King was anxious to do it, but since the exile community had many talented musicians, we decided to wait until we could line up some others, especially draft resister Jesse Winchester.

Colhoun and Condon visited Winchester playing at a Toronto night club, but the Montreal-based musician quickly refused. He was opposed to AMEX's amnesty work, and had recently taken out Canadian citizenship. He believed that draft resisters and deserters knew the score when they resisted the war and came to Canada, and must pay the price of that resistance for the rest of their lives. He felt that AMEX was doing a disservice to people like him who had become Canadian citizens, by implying that war resisters weren't happy in their new Canadian home. Our talk with Winchester was a real disappointment, but we weren't entirely surprised. Winchester had earlier written a song which lauded Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Canadian Prime Ministers Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau as friends of the poor.

Finally, we were able to schedule the AMEX benefit concert for early August 1974. In the past, we had success with social functions like pot luck dinners, billed as social events but including a little after-dinner political discussion, but events that were explicitly designated as political usually drew smaller crowds. Since by mid-summer the House Judiciary Committee's televised impeachment hearings were making it clear that Nixon's days were numbered, we named the concert "The Impeachment Ball." But soon after our initial postering, Nixon announced his resignation. We made new posters, crossing out "Impeachment" and adding "Victory." When the concert took place in late August, it was AMEX's most successful event of this kind, attracting about two hundred exiles and Canadians.

History was moving very quickly during those summer days. By the time the Victory Ball took place, Gerald Ford, in office as president for only a few days, announced in front of a booing

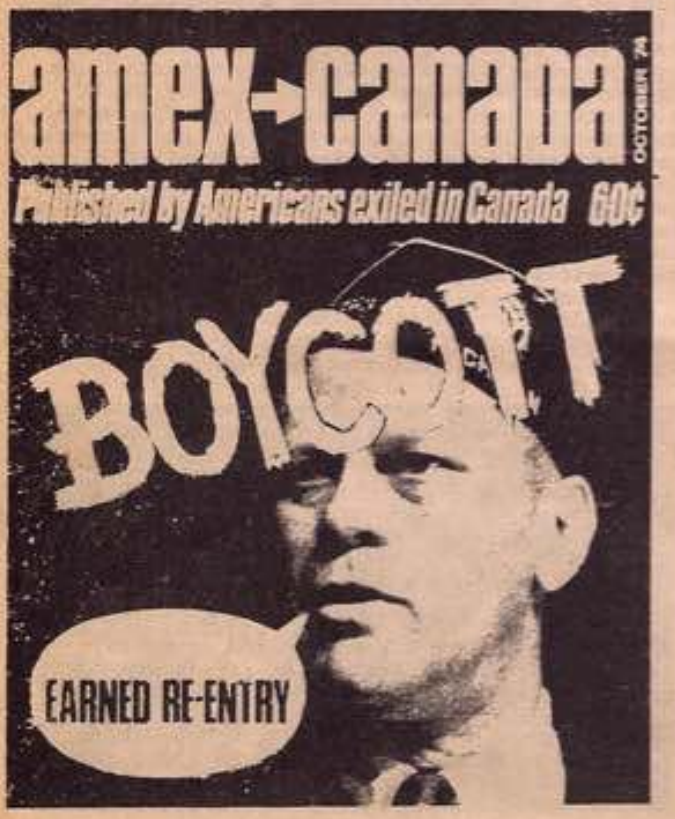
Exile musician Bill King at AMEX "Impeachment Victory Ball."

Veterans of Foreign Wars audience that he intended to declare a conditional amnesty for draft resisters, fugitive deserters and deserter-vets. Not only had the seemingly impossible event of Nixon being forced from the presidency in disgrace taken place, but the new president had indicated he was developing the details of a conditional amnesty. The Toronto exile community had never been more united. The old tensions between exiles and New Canadians seemed gone, and the spirit of the Victory Ball was incredibly high. We all boogied our brains out on the dance floor, united in our demand for universal and unconditional amnesty. We shared a sense of pride in our exile musicians Bill King, the Knights of the Mystic Sea and Tom McKay, and deeply appreciated the support of Canadian folk singer Michael Hasek at a time when we were about to do battle with President Ford's Clemency Program.

From the day Nixon left the White House, AMEX was beseiged with media inquiries about how this development related to amnesty. It was difficult to judge exactly what was happening. We had long been aware that Ford's amnesty program would not be to our liking. The fact that Nixon had been forced to resign was encouraging, but despite the media pundits' claims to the contrary, we didn't believe the people who controlled the American economy and governmental reigns of power had radically changed their attitudes about amnesty. But we hoped our media message of opposition to anything less than universal and unconditional amnesty in the days before Ford's amnesty announcement would play some part in broadening it.

Furthermore, once Ford's amnesty intentions began to be leaked in the media, the hopes of many exiles for amnesty, long bottled up in psychological self-protection, burst to the surface. Exiles who months before would have denied any interest in amnesty were now willing to be honest with themselves. Thus, when Ford startled the American people with his "full, free and absolute pardon" of Nixon, exiles were outraged at the stark contrast between unconditional pardon for a war criminal and crook, and punitive amnesty for war resisters. Once the shock of the Nixon pardon wore off, exile unity around unconditional amnesty increased greatly, bringing back the sense of unity and purpose that had marked the earlier days of our exile. Those feelings had dissipated over the years, as the difficulties of exile life set in, and as people began integrating into Canadian life. But now we were in fighting form.

IV FIGHTING THE FORD CLEMENCY PROGRAM: SEPTEMBER 1974 TO AUGUST 1975

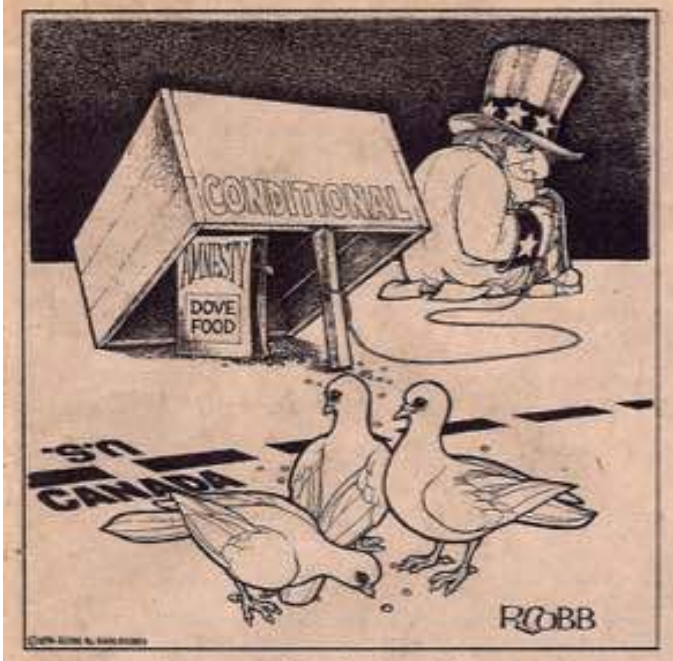


Once Ford declared his intention to grant a conditional form of amnesty to war resisters, AMEX began the fight to broaden it. Now that exiles in Canada saw there was a possibility for amnesty, they were more willing to follow our lead in working to obtain real amnesty. NCUUA, long unable to get political program off the ground, was also brought to life by the iminent Ford amnesty announcement. It would still take a lot of prodding, largely by AMEX, to move NCUUA forward, but the presence of an external opponent in the form of a presidential amnesty proclamation eased the internal political tensions.

Immediately after we learned of Ford's vague amnesty plans, AMEX began to meet in private and in public with other exiles, attempting to chart the best course in responding to the eventual announcement. Due to uncertainty within the new Ford Administration about how to handle the controversial issue which Nixon had refused even to consider, and due also to the backlash that followed Ford's pardon of Nixon, the date of the amnesty announcement was delayed several times. The wait became tortuous, as our office and home telephones rang constantly with the news of new amnesty leaks from journalists waiting for AMEX's response, and with calls from exiles growing more anxious with each day's news. Knight traveled up from New York to consult with Colhoun, Condon, and Joe Jones, all trying to keep on top of the news.

The four of us decided to write a series of press releases for each of the major positions we thought Ford might take, so we'd have our positions prepared the moment we learned the details of the program.

Because we had held a series of public meetings, we were well aware that a good number of exiles



were very interested in being able to return to the States, many more than we'd been able to determine earlier, when so many repressed their hopes. Colhoun and Condon, too, were hoping that the Ford amnesty plan would enable them to return without forcing them to compromise their political integrity, and Knight had already found political work in the States to be more satisfying than work in exile. Consequently, the press statements we drafted reflected our desire not to rule out limited cooperation with the Ford conditional amnesty, especially since building an amnesty movement and getting it to implement program was so difficult. The statement we read to the media on September 16, 1974, when Ford revealed the details of his Clemency Program, called upon war resisters in exile to boycott it, but that if individuals felt that they had to participate in the program, to do so demanding unconditional amnesty. But the media picked up mainly the boycott aspect of the statement, as we had hoped in designing the press release text.

AMEX had always made it a point to cooperate as much as possible with the media. Over our years of work, we gained the respect of journalists. This was evident when the details of the Clemency Program were announced, and we were kept busy nearly eighteen hours a day arranging and doing interviews. AMEX had become a newsmaker, our response was taken with utmost seriousness by the media, and we made the most of it. However, assisted by a stroke of luck, we were able to drag out the media's interest in us: We announced the convening of an International Conference of Exiled American War Resisters to be held over the weekend of September 21-22, 1974. AMEX had made an organizational response to the Ford Clemency Program, and now exile representatives from Sweden, France, Great Britian, and other parts of Canada would meet at a conference in Toronto, hosted by AMEX and sponsored by NCUUA.

Back at the February 1974 NCUUA Steering Committee meeting, AMEX had reminded NCUUA that it was necessary to hold a conference that spring so that exiles could elect a new exile representative to the NCUUA Steering Committee, as mandated by the NCUUA founding conference. Due to the political deadlock in NCUUA, decisions about the conference were postponed so long that the earliest the conference could have been convened was early fall. Earlier in the summer, the tentative date of September 21-22 was decided upon. What we had seen as a setback in the spring had now become a tremendous boost to the amnesty movement. Of course, had the Ford announcement not been delayed several times, the timing of the International Exile Conference would have been totally wrong. But luck was on our side!

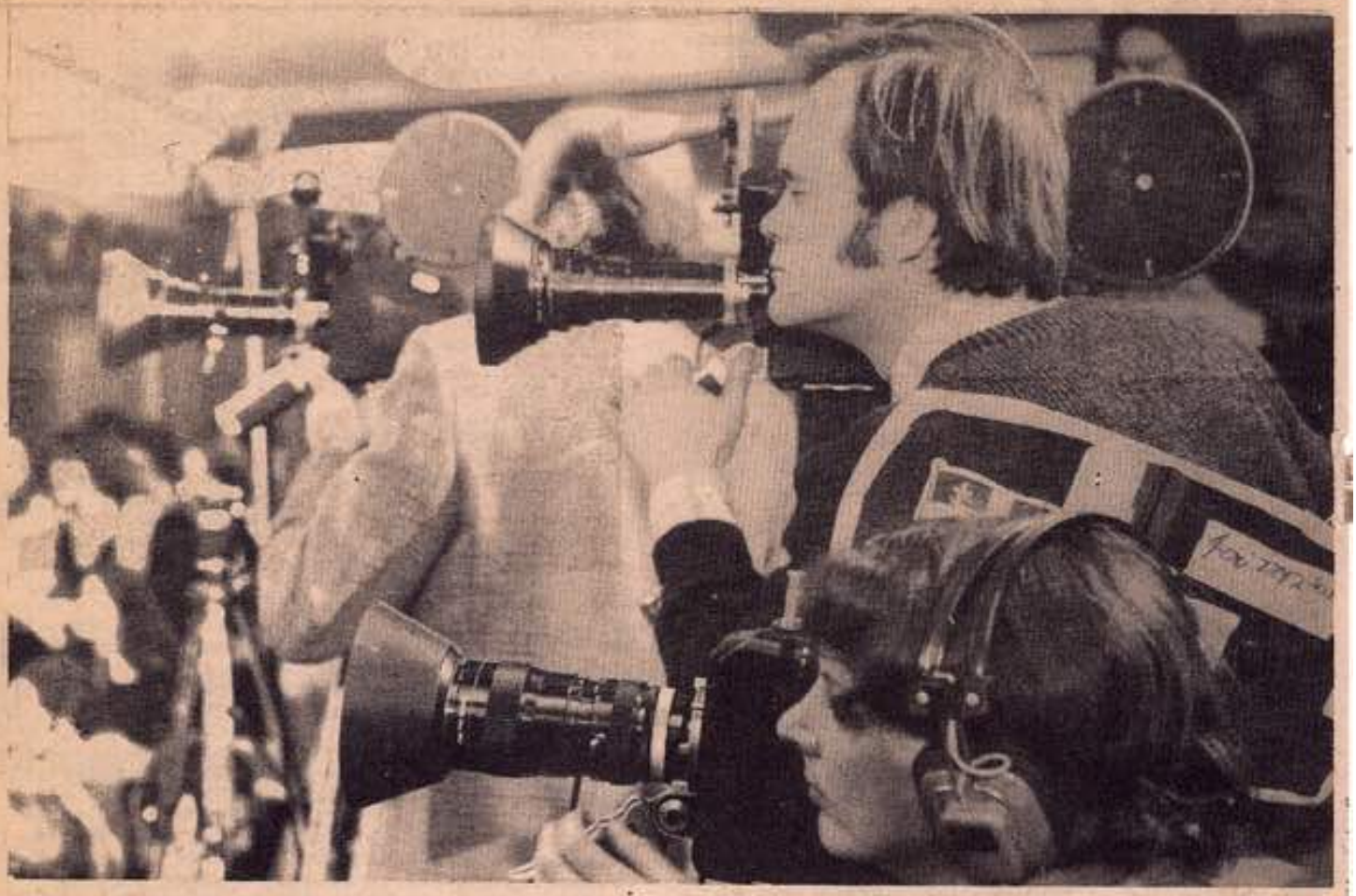
Unfortunately, there were many other problems facing us as the conference approached. Individual exiles and exile organizations responded very favorably to the AMEX call for a boycott of the Ford Clemency Program. When the conference delegates began to arrive, our first discussions were over whether to tighten up the AMEX call for a loose boycott that wasn't fully binding. But this question got put on a backburner when Richard Kilmer and the National Council of Churches and the aid groups they financed disclosed their plans.

In Canada, at the time of the announcement of the Ford Clemency Program, AMEX and the VAEA were the only exile groups still in existence, the aid groups having folded not long after spending their funding for the Canadian immigration amnesty. Katie McGovern of the Toronto Anti-Draft Program had attended several of the meetings AMEX held in the weeks before the Ford announcement, and had publicly indicated her support for our boycott call. After learning the details of the program, which called not only for up to two years of alternative service for draft resisters, deserters, and vets with bad discharge papers, but also the signing of a loyalty oath, the reasons for refusing participation were even stronger. At first, we weren't certain how the nonleft of the NCCUA Steering Committee would react to our boycott call, but the actual program proved so severe that NCUUA quickly supported the boycott. But Katie McGovern had been in close contact with Killmer and the other aid group counsellers, and revealed that NCC had raised more than $100,000 to finance an extensive counseling network in Canada, Sweden, and the States to counsel war resisters to participate in the Ford Clemency Program. We were astounded and enraged that again, at a critical crossroad in the amnesty fight, we had run against Killmer's lavishly-funded counseling network. NCUUA was nearly bankrupt, and Killmer had raised another large sum of money to channel war resisters into the Ford Clemency Program, without the slightest intention of bringing to the counselee's attention the amnesty movement's support of the boycott call.

In brief, the International Conference of Exiles had been transformed by the great media interest from a small delegate conference to elect a new Steering Committee representative, into a conference of major importance that would be given wide media coverage. AMEX had had enough experience in hosting conferences to be prepared for that, but weren't ready for the timebomb that Killmer had dropped, which would surely be discussed at the conference. Literally, the world was watching us.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF EXILED AMERICAN WAR RESISTERS

In the days before the conference convened, exile organization delegates from Canada and Europe met to work out common positions on the issues before us. The delegates had hoped that the broad support for the boycott in opposition to the NCC-funded counseling network, would not spill over to the open sessions of the conference. Widespread media announcements of the event prior



to the conference brought a lot of war resisters from Ontario and Quebec, and we didn't want the struggles over the counseling question to have a debilitating effect on exile unity around the boycott. For this reason, and the fact that we assumed there would be many cops in the crowd, both agents provocateur and the intelligence types, some of the plenary sessions were open to the media and others closed. Other sessions, where conference decisions were to be struggled out, were open only to delegates. Their decisions, however, were then presented to the entire conference body for discussion and ratification.

We felt that we had to proceed in this way because of the potentially explosive situation facing us. The real task before exiles, as far as the feedback we had from exiles in Europe and various parts of Canada, was to denounce the Ford Clemency Program as strongly and articulately as possible. If the conference broke into a heated debate between "cold hearted politicos" versus the "humanitarian" counselors, as Tim Maloney of the Winnipeg aid center tried to paint the issue, the conference would fail in its mission. Even some of the counselors, recently out of retirement at Killmer's behest, admitted that the Ford program was highly punitive. As AMEX had argued for years, the only way to resolve the problems of all exiles was to win the political fight for amnesty, not to focus our entire effort at helping the minority who could find legal loopholes through counseling. In fact, the reason the initial AMEX boycott call had been so loose was that we were acutely aware that many exiles did want to go back to the States. But we also knew that if exiles gave the impression that they would cooperate with even a highly punative amnesty plan, another better amnesty in the future would be unlikely. A $100,000 counseling network to encourage exiles to participate in the program made our boycott resolve more firm, even though it required some war resisters to sacrifice their ability to return to the States immediately.

Although the counseling program versus the boycott did spill over into a plenary session from which the media had been excluded, the vast majority of war resisters believed that exiles had to make an unequivocal rejection of the program. The effect of the heated struggle, seemingly over money, was to turn off some exiles to the remaining sessions of the conference.

In the end, however, the conference issued a series of resolutions which strengthened the original AMEX boycott by calling upon all war resisters to boycott the Clemency Program, except for those who returned to actively challange the program politically. With the continuing post-cease-fire war in Indochina very much on our minds, the conference demanded "an immediate end to American aid to the dictatorial regimes of Thieu, Lon Nol, and the reactionary forces in Laos." We also demanded a strict implimentation of the Paris Agreement. Other conference resolutions expressed solidarity with the liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies in Africa, and demanded that the "U.S. end its support for the dictatorial regime in Chile." We knew the eyes of the world were watching our deliberations, which made us even more determined to protect our political principles from compromise.

In addition to the confrontation with the NCC counseling program, we also had to deal with police infiltration. One draft resister from out of town told us that his FBI agent father phoned

him soon after the conference, told him all about the conference, and tried unsucessfully to persuade him to break the boycott. Despite the fact that we had been very conscious about police infiltration, an FBI agent, Mary Jo Cook, made her way into the closed delegate sessions. Because she had been working with a local VVAW/WSO chapter, we allowed her to attend these sessions with other members of VVAW. She had also infiltrated several other amnesty groups at the same time. Eventually, she confessed her role to the VVAW chapter, whose political dedication and sincerity had impressed her and made her question her FBI work. She then held a press conference in which she admitted she was an FBI agent.

POST-BOYCOTT CONFERENCE PLANS MAPPED OUT IN TORONTO

As soon as the conference ended and media interest diminished, we got down to the hard work of formulating ways to continue the political battle for a better amnesty. Our first priority was to publish another issue of our magazine, explaining the boycott and the details of the Ford program. The much more difficult task facing us was to seize the initative given us by the Ford amnesty move to continue building an amnesty movement in support of boycotting war resisters. We had made a dramatic response to Ford, but unless NCUUA actively supported us, the boycott would cease being an offensive tactic once the media became tired of the amnesty issue. We had to find new ways to explain to the American people the amnesty issue from our perspective.

An NCUUA Steering Committeee meeting was convened the day after the conference ended, in which NCUUA's support for the boycott was declared. During this meeting nearly unanimous opposition to the Killmer counseling program was expressed while many of the counselors were present. Like the previous fall, when Killmer had raised a large sum of money for counseling during the Canadian immigration amnesty, there was shock and opposition to his policy from some members of the church constituency. The Steering Committee decided that NCUUA must require Killmer to provide funds for establishing four regional Amnesty Information/Action Centers which would counsel inquiring war resisters about the Clemency Program, encourage them to boycott, and get themselves, friends and parents active in the amnesty movement. Eventually, Killmer was forced to allocate some funds for this purpose. It was also decided that NCUUA would hold a national conference in Louisville in mid-November to coordinate program for the remainder of the Ford Clemency Program period, scheduled to end on January 31, 1975.

During October, numerous meetings were held in Toronto between AMEX, VVAW/WSO, and some of the delegates from the European exile communities, particularly Steve Kinnamon from Sweden, to map out program for NCUUA. Grossman and Mix were in town, back from British Columbia, and participated in these meetings. Once all the action started in August, many of the local exiles who had worked with AMEX from time to time became more active. In fact, there was so much interest among Toronto exiles that we established a new organization, the Toronto American Exiles Association, which had a democratically elected Steering Committee as opposed to the closed AMEX editorial board, for which one had to "prove" oneself in past political experience and commitment. We established the TAEA so that the new group would be able to harness the energy of the many war resisters who had just recently become interested

'Okay, Okay, take it easy, one at a time! Line forms at the rear! One at a time!

in amnesty work. The TAEA became a thriving organization with a ten-person Steering Committee meeting as often as twice a week, with twice-monthly public meetings which attracted as many as 45-50 people at times.

By fall 1974, all the members of the NCUUA left caucus had dropped out of amnesty work except Knight of AMEX and Damato of VVAW/WSO, and Knight had stayed on in New York working with NCUUA. As the result of the politicization of Toronto exiles during the fall activities, and the meetings with VVAW during October, the left caucus had temporarily moved to Toronto. Instead of a left caucus that wasn't prepared to devote most of its energies to amnesty work, this new left caucus was devoting full time to it. As the result of this series of meetings, the following decisions were made: To begin a series of guerrilla-style speaking tours in the U.S. by war resisters who would take advantage of a fourteen-day grace period allowed to exiles returning to participate in the Clemency Program. Instead of entering the program, however, the war resisters would use the two weeks to speak out in opposition to Ford's punative program by going on a longer speaking tour, which would force the government either to arrest the war resister or to let him continue calling for a real amnesty and an end to all U.S. support for its client regimes in Indochina. We realized that if we went into NCUUA Louisville conference without program proposals, NCUUA might fall back into political deadlock.

AMNESTY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES: FALL 1974

While AMEX was immersed in Toronto activities after the announcement of the Ford Clemency Program, many developments were taking place in the States. In late August, CALC delivered 50,000 petition signatures to the White House calling for unconditional amnesty, and Safe Return sent a delegation of parents of war resisters to lobby at the Justice and Defense Departments. The first week of October was designated by NCUUA and Indochina Solidarity groups as a Week of Concern, to

bring attention to the continuing Indochina War and the demand for universal and unconditional amnesty.

In late October, the Justice Department released an initial list of 6,000 draft resisters still wanted for Selective Service offenses. By mid-November, Attorney General Saxbe ordered all U.S. Attorneys to review outstanding draft indictments and to dismiss those deemed not prosecutable. This review was to result in late January in the Justice Department releasing a final list of 4,490 draft resisters whose cases were thought to have prosecutorial merit by the U.S. Attorneys. When Ford announced his intention to grant a conditional amnesty in August, he had stated the figure of people wanted for draft resistance to be about 20,500.

The legal support arm of the amnesty movement went into action trying to influence the Clemency Board. In late September, Aryeh Neier told Clemency Board head Charles Goodell, a former "antiwar" Senator from New York, "Your job is to ratify injustice.... Our responsibility is to obstruct the work you're doing." Goodell responded that he felt he could accomplish some good with the Clemency Program. In October, a number of Washington-based lawyers specializing in Selective Service and military law formed the Clemency Law Coordinating Office (CALCO) to explore the possibility of serving as a referral office for the Clemency Board. After studying the legal criteria the Board was applying to cases, CALCO became convinced that the program offered little relief to war resisters. For example, after completing an alternative service requirement, deserters and vets with less-than-honorable discharges would not get Honorable discharges, but "Clemency" discharges, just a new type of bad discharge. Also, antiwar beliefs were not taken into account as a mitigating criterion in the Clemency Board hearings. By late November, CALCO voted to dissolve itself and refuse to refer war resisters to the Clemency Program, and urged other attorneys to do likewise. And in late December, the ACLU filed a suit against the Defense Department, charging a lack of due process at Fort Benjamin Harrison, where deserters were processed under the conditional amnesty program.

Grossman "surfaces," addresses Louisville amnesty conference.

AMEX FIGHTS THE CLEMENCY PROGRAM IN THE STATES AND FROM TORONTO

After having lived in British Columbia for nearly a year, Steve Grossman and Evangeline Mix drove across Canada to Toronto after they learned in August that Ford was considering the details of a forthcoming amnesty program. They wanted to be back in Toronto to help AMEX fight for a truly just amnesty. Grossman and Mix jumped right into the middle of the AMEX-led amnesty campaign by participating in the post-conference strategy sessions, then by volunteering to make the first fourteen-day speaking tour in support of the boycott. Many weeks of careful planning went into preparation for their tour to insure their safety. We were glad to have them back at AMEX and didn't want to see Grossman end up in jail for refusing to participate in the Clemency Program if arrested during the speaking tour. We didn't believe the government would risk the proamnesty publicity of an antiwar trial, which we planned in the event of arrest, but this was the first of what we hoped would be a series of similar speaking tours to challange the program.

Grossman's and Mix's tour began at the NCUUA conference in Louisville, and ended fourteen days later after having taken them to thirteen cities in seven states. We decided to begin the tour in Louisville to energize the conference, and to help maintain the political momentum we had developed within the coalition. The tour was coordinated by VVAW chapters, with Knight in New York. While on the road, Mix was responsible for logistics and security in conjunction with VVAW/WSO, a particularly vital responsibility since we couldn't afford to have this tactic foiled by U.S. authorities. In Washington, D.C., Grossman debated Goodell on TV, and in each of the other cities visited, his defiance of the Clemency Program attracted much media attention. When not doing interviews, Grossman and Mix spoke to public meetings called by VVAW to help build local amnesty support. Although the tour didn't generate national media coverage, the message was certainly brought home to the Ford Administration on again that the amnesty movement was capable of making a fighting response.

After Grossman and Mix returned safely to Toronto, we were unable to find other Toronto exiles to do a follow-up fourteen day tour, but in January 1975, Darryl Adams of the VAEA did a similar tour of the Pacific Northwest states. Also during late fall, AMEX coordinated a three-week speaking tour by Kerry Gershowitz in her home state of Texas. Gershowitz and her draft resister husband Jerald had been working with AMEX over the previous year, but she had never before done public speaking. She worked closely with Colhoun preparing for her tour, developing the necesary expertise on the complex issues of the Vietnam War and the Clemency Program. For a person who had never before spoken in public, Gershowitz cut her teeth in the most difficult of situations, conservative Texas. But her tour was a success in generating publicity and new amnesty interest in the Lone Star state.

By late December, AMEX was busily planning another speaking tour. This time by Condon, already sentenced in absentia to two years in the stockade and a Bad Conduct discharge, reduced from ten years and a Dishonorable discharge, for refusing orders to Vietnam after training as a Green Beret. If he were arrested, the amnesty movement would rally behind his case with antiwar defense. If after the fourteen-day grace period he weren't arrested, the amnesty movement, he would continue

to criss-cross the U.S., bringing the case for universal and unconditional amnesty to the American people. We figured the government would loose either way: Arrest him and create an amnesty movement cause celebre, or allow him to continue speaking as long as NCUUA could book meetings for him. Either way, we believed it would certainly energize the amnesty movement.

Of course, these weren't easy decisions. It wasn't easy for Grossman and Condon to decide to risk arrest to advance the cause of amnesty, and it wasn't easy for us to decide to risk losing irreplaceable AMEX editors and dear friends. These were extremely complex decisions, but the momentum which had developed since the dog days of August, when Ford tested out his clemency idea on the VFW, helped to propel us forward. In a sense, the decision to call a boycott and to follow it up with illegal speaking tours by AMEX editors were gambles against heavy odds. When we called the boycott, the amnesty movement was only loosely organized at best, and had been largely dependent on AMEX to develop its program. The boycott in itself was a dramatic event, but it would soon be forgotten in the rush of new political developments. In the period following the declaration of the boycott, it was necessary to build political support for it in the States. But the problem remained, could NCUUA do the job on its own? Equally perplexing, if AMEX had its leadership arrested, or out speaking for long periods in the States as Condon eventually did, or remaining in the States as Knight did, could AMEX survive to keep pressuring NCUUA to implement program?

In fall 1974, we couldn't provide answers to those questions with absolute certainty. We had to gamble in order to respond dramatically and quickly to amnesty developments as they unfolded. But none of the decisions made during this period was made without considerable analysis and sometimes heated debate. Some of these decisions cost us some exile support, at least temporarily. The one major debate that touced on many of the contradictory problems we faced, revolved around what was known as the "deserters loophole."

In late September 1974, the deserter's loophole was discovered. Under Ford's Clemency Program, a deserter who turned himself in, at Fort Benjamin Harrison, would be sentence by a board of senior military officers to perform a period of alternative service of up to two years. However, once discharged by the military, there was no legal means by which the former deserter could be forced to fulfill the alternative service service obligation. Furthermore, the Clemency discharge, awarded after the completion of alternative service, was considered to be more stigmatizing than the Undesirable discharge the deserter would retain if the alternative service weren't completed. Consequently, it made no practical sense for the deserter to fulfill the service requirement. No such loophole existed for draft resisters or vets with bad discharges.

In the context of the discussions of fall 1974, Colhoun and others argued for the utilization of the deserter loophole as a means by which antiwar deserters could return to the States, refuse to do alternative service, and then join the ranks of amnesty activists in the States. He argued that due to the punative nature of the Ford Clemency Program, the number of war resisters participating would be low, especially in light of the boycott. The basic problem was not winning the boycott statistically, but rather building the necessary political support for another amnesty move. He believed that at the time, NCUUA lacked enough seasoned amnesty activists to do the public education job necessary: to convince a much broader sector of the American public that unconditional amnesty was the only solution to the war resister problem. If the Ford Clemency Program turned out to be a statistical failure, Colhoun believed the administration could claim that it was no fault of the program that more war resisters didn't participate, and that there was no need to do any more about the situstion. The key, he believed, was convincing a large enough segment of the American people that war resisters were right in refusing to participate in the program.

Roger Smith

Condon, during his four-and-a-half month speaking tour.

Colhoun's argument in favor of utilizing the deserter's loophole was supported by Jones, Svirchev, and Bill Hartzog, a veteran exile activist from Montreal. But the majority strongly held that the deserter loophole tactic would make the boycott too ambiguous. The majority also believed that the presence of deserters who had cooperated to a limited extent with the Clemency Program would undermine the success of the boycott politically and statistically, and that the true source of its effectiveness was the boycott's dramatic demonstration that war resisters refused to go even half way with the Clemency Program. The only exceptions to the boycott, they argued, should be political challanges to the program. The debate continued throughout October and early November, when Colhoun and Jones dropped their arguments in favor of the clear majority position, but Hartzog tried to revive the debate in early December without support from anyone else. To this day, there is not total agreement on the deserter's loophole, but the reason for this lies probably in the fact that the proponents nor critics of utilizing the deserters loophole were able to fully analyze the contradictory aspects of the situation we faced in fall 1974. In the end, AMEX was able to help build the Stateside amnesty movement, lead the exile movement, and help force another president, two-and-a-half years later, to grant another limited amnesty. But three years after we decided to boy-

cott the Ford Clemency Program, of the original people who made the decision to boycott, Colhoun and Grossman are still in exile working on amnesty, Condon is doing fulltime amnesty work in the States, and Knight part time. Had all of the decisionmakers in fall 1974 known that AMEX would still be in the thick of the amnesty movement three years later, would we still have made the same decisions? It probably isn't possible to answer that question with certainty today, even knowing the outcome of the decisions we made in fall 1974. But once those decisions were made, everyone at AMEX pulled together to make them work.

AMEX AND TORONTO AMERICAN EXILES ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES DURING THE BOYCOTT PERIOD

Because so many technical skills were necessary to publish a magazine, and because we believed it necessary to maintain political consistency with respect to our amnesty work, it was not possible to build a large popular organization around AMEX. When Ford's Clemency Program repoliticized many exiles in Toronto, AMEX encouraged the development of the Toronto American Exiles Association. Although the TAEA became a popular political organization with varying political tendencies, it largely followed AMEX's leadership. The Exiles Association was the first exile organization which required members to pay monthly dues so that it could afford to undertake political action.

AMEX supplied office personnel to carry out TAEA program and to do boycott counseling. AMEX and TAEA sponsored speaking tours by Kerry Gershowitz to Texas, Michigan, and New York state, and paid for Gershowitz, Mix, Jeannette Jones, Jenny Stimac, and Lea Martell to represent us at various NCUUA and antiwar conferences and events in the States. Along with other Toronto antiwar groups, both organizations co-sponsored a benefit concert to raise money for a new school in Vietnam, with talks by South Vietnamese former political prisoners recently released from Thieu's jails, and antiwar Catholic pacifist Philip Berrigan. The two groups also organized several pot luck dinners and picnics at which we combined politicking and socializing. AMEX AND TAEA participated in a series of meetings with U.S. amnesty supporters from western New York state at Niagara Falls, Ontario in 1974 and 75. We also distributed antiwar/amnesty greeting cards designed by AMEX/TAEA member Charlie Stimac.

October 1974 exiles' demonstration at Toronto U.S. Consulate.

A lot of AMEX and TAEA effort went into a demonstration which brought out about seventy-five people to protest the continuing Indochina War and the Ford Clemency Program in front of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto in early October 1974, and into a weekly vigil in front of the Consulate from October 1974 until Vietnam's liberation on April 30, 1975. The vigil symbolized the difficulties of political work in exile. If we had chosen Saturdays to march in a loose circle in front of the Consulate, we could have brought more people out. But the Consulate is closed on Saturday's so U.S. authorities would be unaware of the protest. And the area of town in which the building is located is deserted on weekends, so few Canadians would know about the protest either. So we marched at noontime on Fridays to catch people's attention during their lunch break, but there were few receptive people among those who worked for the large downtown insurance companies, or relaxed in the exclusive men's club next to the Consulate. The people from the Royal Canadian Military Insitute up the street were hardly enthusiastic about our picket signs encouraging exiles to Boycott the Ford Clemency Program, or demanding that the U.S. End All Aid to Thieu and Lon Nol. Some told us to go back to Russia or the States, others stopped to talk to us, wanting to know who Thieu and Lon Nol were. Third World People, going to the Consulate for U.S. visas, seemed too fearful about not being allowed into the States to take any interest in us. But once we got used to the wind and the cold that swept up University Avenue, we came to enjoy the vigil, and it helped weld tight bonds among us as a group.

One reason why it was necessary to keep AMEX a closed organization, even during periods of heightened interest in exile politics, is that during such times, police agents attempted to infiltrate our organizations. After we had been doing the vigil for several months with little police harrassment, a new person came to a TAEA meeting the night before our regularly scheduled vigil and suggested that we occupy the Consulate by sitting in. We decided against the tactic, but the next day, when we arrived at the Consulate, we were greeted by two carloads of police called by the Consulate. The police indicated that they believed some of our members were sitting in at the Consulate, and that we'd all be arrested if they didn't leave immediately. We disappointed the police by telling them that we were doing the same thing that we had done for months--peacefully picket in front of the Consulate--and that we never went inside. We were sometimes uncertain about the significance of the vigil, especially on bitterly cold days, but the fact that some police agency, Canadian or American, was interested enough to try to set us up for a bust suggested that our presence was politically embarrassing to consular officials.

CLEMENCY PROGRAM DEADLINE IS EXTENDED TWICE DUE TO LACK OF PARTICIPATION

By the end of the Clemency Program deadline, there had been such a low participation rate that the program was extended at the end of January for another month. As of Janurary 31, 1975, only about

Conrad, Los Angeles Times

"What If We Gave an Amnesty and Nobody Came?"

8,500 of the 137,000 eligible had applied. When the participation rate began to rise, due to a period of intense publicity generated by supposedly antiwar members of the Clemency Board, Goodell and Notre Dame University President Theodore Hesburg, traveling around the U.S. singing the praises of the program, Ford granted a second, final one-month extension. Goodell insisted that war resisters weren't signing up because they didn't know about the program. But we knew better: People refused to participate in it because of loyalty oaths, the lack of due process, alternative service for draft resisters, and the fact that even after performing alternative service, deserters and vets with bad papers would get a worthless Clemency discharge. War resisters knew that they weren't criminals who needed to "earn" their "re-entry."

The first time the Clemency Program was extended at the end of January, we were prepared to claim a victory, but Ford and Goodell weren't prepared to admit defeat. The media showed no interest at all in a press conference we called in Toronto to show that our boycott had been a great victory. There was a little more media interest in Washington, where NCUUA/AFA held a Family Convocation. Nearly one hundred families of war resisters convened in Washington, D.C. to witness the surfacing of Green Beret deserter Gerry Condon. Condon's four-and-a-half-month speaking tour was kicked off by Ramsey Clark, a former Attorney General in the Johnson Administration.

Condon's tour proved to be a major turning point in NCUUA's history. He visited every region of the U.S. in NCUUA's first truly nationally-coordinated activity. Not only did Condon's arrival in towns and cities across America provide local groups with an event to build for, and a way to make local media contacts, but it also energized the entire movement. By the end of his national odyssey, the amnesty movement had demonstrated to itself that it was capable of mobilizing nationally, while building local amnesty organizations, and able to take its case to millions of Americans through public meetings and media exposure. By the time Condon's tour came to a natural end in June 1975, the amnesty movement was not only able to show its fighting opposition to the Ford program, but to demonstrate that the program failed miserably. When the Clemency Program finally expired, only nineteen percent of those eligible had participated. Or, read another way, eighty-one percent had refused to be tricked into further punishment disguised as clemency.

After his tour, Condon and the NCUUA left decided that he could do effective work in the NCUUA National Office, keeping the rest of us informed on internal NCUUA amnesty developments, and waging day-to-day line struggle at the office. Zigas balked at the initiative, but was outmaneuvered by Condon and AMEX, and he was hired. After several months formally on the NCUUA staff, doing office and road work, Condon took the job of national coordinator of CALC's amnesty program. With CALC's office adjoining those of NCUUA, Condon's NCUUA tasks continued, plus new CALC work.

When Condon left Toronto, he left a big spot to fill: That of the AMEX managing editor. Condon's decision to go on the tour was a difficult one, because the job of managing editor required technical skills, a vast knowledge of the complicated politics of NCUUA, and the ability to survive the twists and turns of exile politics. Grossman was the only person with the qualifications, and amazingly enough he was anxious to sit in the hot seat. This made it a lot easier on Colhoun, since Grossman would be the third managing editor he'd worked with since fall of 1973, trying to make certain that there was continuity during these times of transition. Soon after he took on the managing editor's job, the Justice Department gave Grossman another key to his job. His draft charges were dropped. We believed this was in response to his illegal speaking tour, and a way they felt they could deny him credibility as an exile leader. But the Government's trick didn't pay off because now that he was free to travel in the States, Grossman could fulfill his duties as an exile leader even better by attending NCUUA Steering Committee meetings and numerous Stateside political events.

One of the first events that Grossman attended was a demonstration on March 1, 1975, across from the White House in Lafayette Park, called by a pacifist group called the March 1st Coalition. When Phil Berrigan was in Toronto at the antiwar benefit which AMEX and the TAEA co-sponsored in early February, Berrigan met with us to explain the demonstration. We'd already been visited by two other members of the Coalition. The purpose of the demonstration was to protest the ongoing war and the phoney Clemency Program. But a fundamental problem we encountered with these committed pacifists, most of whom had already spent time in jail for various antiwar actions, was that they were opposed to making the demonstration a proamnesty event. They wanted to protest the punitive nature of the Clemency Program, but not to tie that protest into a demand for real amnesty. They took this position largely because they viewed their jail sentence and accompanying felony records as badges of honor, not as points of oppression. In fact, we were unable to convince some of them that felony records and bad discharge papers for war resistance were parts of the U.S. system of repression, making it difficult for people to get jobs and therefore "encouraging" people not to get politically active. Although we could not convince them of the importance of getting their war resister constituency involved in the amnesty fight, Condon, Grossman, Knight and Duane Shank of the NCUUA Steering Committee were able to bring greater organization to the demonstra-

tion of four hundred people, and inject some good amnesty politics into it. After the speeches, about 150 people marched across Pennsylvania Avenue to tour the White House, then to sit on the lawn demanding to see Ford. Later, sixty-two were arrested for refusing to leave the grounds.

AMEX LEADS THE FIGHT AGAINST NCUUA ENDORSING COMPROMISE AMNESTY LEGISLATION

During spring 1975, the amnesty movement was plunged into one of its most serious internal debates: Would NCUUA endorse congressional amnesty legislation that was less than universal and unconditional. A memorandum mailed out from the NCUUA National Office in February argued that the coalition must endorse compromise legislation introduced by Bella Abzug in the House and Phillip Hart in the Senate. The memo, written by Knight who was working at NCUUA, noted that the coalition had never before endorsed congressional legislation because existing bills had never been good enough politically, and had never stood a chance of passage. Now, it was believed, the chances for passage were much better, and improvements had been made in the compromise legislation; also, hearings on the bills would generate media coverage.

Actually, the contentious question of congressional lobbying surfaced at NCUUA's Louisville conference in November 1974, and would continue to do so until late 1975, when considerable liberal support in NCUUA developed around Rep. Kastenmeier's limited amnesty bill, which ultimately failed to be reported out of the House Judiciary Committee. At the Louisville conference, very heated debates resulted from a workshop on congressional lobbying to which Barry Lynn had invited several congressional aides sympathetic to amnesty. VVAW/WSO members were strongly opposed to any work in Congress; they felt such an approach was leading people to put their faith in a tool of bourgeois rule, supporting not the people's interests, but those of the rich who controlled the American economy. VVAW believed the amnesty movement must "rely on the masses of people to win universal and unconditional amnesty," not Congress. VVAW had a strong presence in Louisville, which caused great concern among NCUUA's nonleft. Some threatened to leave NCUUA if prevented from doing congressional lobbying. Ransom said she and AFA would be forced to drop out of NCUUA if the Steering Committee seat for families of resisters, which had been held by the left, were not given to AFA. And, in the showdown, AFA got the seat.

In a letter accompanying the NCUUA pro-endorsement memo, Knight expressed his concern that some liberal and religious organizations in NCUUA were going to lobby around the bills regardless of how AMEX and VVAW felt about it. He also feared that we would seriously alienate ourselves from the rest of the amnesty movement: "If we were to actively oppose their work, we would only thereby lose their cooperation and all influence with them." Although he anticipated that both AMEX and VVAW would oppose NCUUA's endorsement of the Abzug and Hart bills, he believed that "by taking a leadership role in support for these bills, NCUUA can see to it that the limitations of the bills are clearly highlighted...." Those who supported this lobbying believed that if NCUUA didn't endorse the bills, they probably wouldn't pass in any form at all. They also felt that there was litle hope for winning a presidential amnesty. Consequently, they saw supporting the compromise legislation as the only way to achieve a further amnesty move in the next several years.

AMEX and TAEA were at first undecided about how to respond to the NCUUA memo. We shared Knight's concern about the nonleft NCUUA Steering Committee members deeply committed to congressional lobbying, and we still suspected that some of their constituencies would actually support a limited amnesty. We were deeply troubled by the political turmoil which our opposition to the endorsement memo would generate. We didn't know if it would serve to bring about NCUUA's demise. But we also knew that VVAW's position was strongly held. We weren't opposed to congressionally-oriented amnesty work in principle, as was VVAW, but we wanted to be certain that in the process of making a tactical decision largely dictated by the strength of the nonleft in NCUUA, we would not objectively compromise the definition of universal and unconditional amnesty for which we had fought so hard at the coalition's founding.

After many AMEX and TAEA meetings, reading of political theory, discussions with Knight, and a March meeting attended by VVAW representatives, Knight, and those in Toronto, AMEX finally reached a decision. We concluded that NCUUA's endorsement of the bills would be in error, and that it involved compromising NCUUA's founding Statement of Principles, since neither bill gave unconditional amnesty to all vets with bad papers. AMEX and TAEA also decided that the endorsement question was so important that AMEX mailed out to the amnesty movement, in advance of magazine publication, its editorial stand. "For the National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty to endorse bills which are not both universal and unconditional is to take a giant step backward at a critical time in our struggle. Universal and unconditional amnesty is the foundation upon which NCUUA is built. It must remain so, or NCUUA will cease being the National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty, and become the National Council for Unconditional Amnesty for Some Categories of War Resisters." The editorial concluded that if the amnesty movement did decide to endorse compromise legislation, "it must be a deliberate, conscious decision, not a tactical decision made in haste in order to jump on the congressional bandwagon." The editorial also stated it was likely that if such a decision were made, AMEX would leave the coalition.

By taking the endorsement question to the grassroots of the amnesty movement with the advance mailing of the April 1975 AMEX editorial, we decided to take the chance of forcing some nonleft NCUUA members out of the coalition.

A few weeks later, a letter written jointly by VVAW and AMEX, and signed by NCUUA office staff and Steering Committee members, including Knight, Joe Urgo, Sandy Rutherford, and Condon, was also circulated within the amnesty movement. The endorsement question was, indeed, a controversial one. But the final decision was that because NCUUA represented the amnesty movement, it couldn't give the impression of willingness to compromise.

We were able to win the struggle within NCUUA by taking the debate to the amnesty movement's rank-and-file. After the May 1975 NCUUA Steering Committee meeting, the first since November 1974, NCUUA sent out a memo explaining the decision not to endorse compromise legislation, but reaffirming NCUUA's commitment to congressional work. This NCUUA memo, also written by Knight, concluded by noting "it should be understood that these decisions apply to NCUUA.... We hope all our affiliates can join in working together for this purpose. But there is no intent to try and prevent groups from carrying on their amnesty work as they see fit." Later that fall we would learn that the issue of congressional work was far from resolved.

Although the immediate question was resolved basically to our satisfaction, VVAW was not satisfied. At the end of July 1975, VVAW announced its decision to leave NCUUA. VVAW believed it no longer possible to work in NCUUA because "even while the Steering Committee passes one resolution, the NCUUA national office distorts these decisions and produces another which is put out in coalition literature and memos.... We feel it is more important to unite with the masses of people than to sit in some office struggling over positions, only to see them distorted and fall by the wayside."

Despite the fact that there was a great deal of truth to the VVAW resignation letter, during the endorsement debate we had come to believe that VVAW had already made the decision to leave NCUUA, and that it was using the endorsement struggle to justify its decision. By this time, the VVAW National Office and many of its key activists had become supporters or members of the Revolutionary Union (RU). Consequently, RU politics came to have a large influence in VVAW. RU was opposed to membership in coalitions including bourgeois elements. AMEX did its best to keep VVAW in NCUUA because the left caucus badly needed VVAW's support, especially now that the nonleft in NCUUA was flexing its muscles. Nonetheless, as RU came closer to its summer 1975 national conference at which it formed the Revolutionary Communist Party, it seemed to us that VVAW's decisions were being largely influenced by RU considerations. AMEX was very disappointed that VVAW chose to leave NCUUA, because we had worked so closely together in the past, and because VVAW's resignation greatly weakened both the left caucus and the amnesty movement. VVAW had added a working class base, including some black vets, and working class leadership to the amnesty movement, both vitally needed.

From the beginning of our amnesty work, AMEX had been aware that if organized amnesty pressure proved effective, the government would offer a partial amnesty hoping to split the amnesty movement and lay the issue to rest. As a result, we concluded that once the amnesty movement made a basic compromise on amnesty excluding a category of war resisters, it would be difficult to sustain a united movement. It was our job to make certain that no such compromises were made. In retrospect, our decision to take the endorsement issue to the grassroots was a wise one. Not only did we win the struggle and keep NCUUA within the bounds of its Statement of Purpose, but we further strengthened our leadership position in NCUUA. This last point was to become increasingly important because once VVAW left NCUUA, AMEX and its allies became the left caucus.

AMEX CELEBRATES THE LIBERATION OF VIETNAM: APRIL 30, 1975

Vietnam Liberation Day was a joyous day for AMEX and most members of the TAEA. Having worked closely with the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada, we had come to closely identify the struggle of the Vietnamese liberation fighters with our own war resistance. We had slowly moved away from the anticommunism with which we had grown up in the States. Throughout early 1975, as it became clear that the end of the war was drawing near, we watched the newspapers and TV news for the latest information from the battlefront, and were quick to phone each other when a new story broke.

On Liberation Day, however, we discovered how far we had moved from a lot of the antiwar movement, other exiles, and much of the population of North America. AMEX and the TAEA scheduled an "Indochina Victory Celebration" for mid-May. Soon after April 30, we postered Toronto for the celebration, which included the best exile rock band, Bill King's, but only about fifty people showed up. Our posters didn't bring out the exile community, as they had for the Victory Ball the previous summer, but they did bring on the wrath of a Canadian Nazi group, the Western Guard, many of whose members had roots in 1930s Eastern European fascist groups, spray-painted the sidewalk and walls of the building in which the celebration was to take place, with racist and anticommunist slogans. The main themes were "Death to white race traitors" and "exile garbage and commie puke." Although we had leafletted at a Toronto rally of antiwar supporters marking the end of the war, hardly any of those people came to our Indochina Victory Celebration. It took us a while to learn why it had been a failure: Although we were happy that the Vietnamese liberation fighters had finally won, many others who opposed the war had not wanted the Vietnamese communists to win, but had hoped that the Third Force would somehow come to power. This lesson was driven home again when we learned about the struggles over the use of the word "victory" at the End of the War Rally in New York's Central Park, where Ransom and Condon spoke before fifty thousand people on the end of the war and amnesty. Through this, we learned that some of the U.S. antiwar movement, too, was far from joyous over the victory of the liberation fighters. Nonetheless, we at AMEX had waited many years for Liberation Day. It was a day to celebrate the defeat of the mighty U.S. war machine in Vietnam, and the victory of the Vietnamese people. It was a day which will stand out in our memories for the rest of our lives.

AMEX'S INTERNAL POLITICAL DIFFERENCES HEIGHTENED

As a political organization, AMEX was a coalition of various political tendencies, ranging from a general Maoist Marxist-Leninist position, the Communist Party of Canada, and Marxist libertarian on the left, to bourgeois liberalism on the right. AMEX's principles of unity were based on a single political common denominator: Resistance to the Indochina War and the politics of universal, unconditional amnesty, both defined from an anti-imperialist perspective. The fact that as an organization we didn't share a comprehensive political ideology meant that political discussion was often the order of the day at work parties when we all gathered together. AMEX's more politically developed members closely followed the political debates of the day

in Canada and the U.S., and this had an effect on the intensity of our political debates.

Beginning in early 1975, the political tension within AMEX heightened, as the Cambodian liberation fighters moved closer to victory. In fall 1974, we had been approached several times by the Maoist Communist Party of Canada (M-L) to endorse their various political events and general program. Their approaches increased as they began to form what was supposed to be a Cambodia support committee. AMEX sent observers to several of these meetings because we wanted to support all the Indochinese liberation forces, but it soon became evident that the real purpose of the committee was to develop an "antisuperpower" committee to attack the Soviet Union. AMEX did not join the CPC (M-L) committee, concluding that support for the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian liberation movements was more important than taking sides, as an organization, in the worldwide political struggles over the foreign policies and class natures of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. We believed it more important, at this crucial time in the amnesty campaign, to maintain our basic political unity as an organization, rather than allow AMEX to be torn apart internally by the type of sectarian political struggles rampant on the American and Canadian left.

Of course, it was easier to make this organizational decision than to enforce it. A lot of the discussions around the NCUUA compromise legislation endorsement question turned on the role and politics of the Maoist Revolutionary Union in VVAW. Furthermore, the CP versus Maoist debate broke into the open in summer 1975, when a new member of the AMEX editorial board, with newly-acquired and rapidly-developing Maoist politics, tried to "purge the revisionists" on the board. Others, on the board or close to AMEX, who were in or close to the Canadian CP, fought back. The result was that both the Maoist and CPers left AMEX, leaving us with few experienced cadres.

By the end of summer 1975, the Toronto exile movement had hit a low spot. Joe and Jeanette Jones moved to Vancouver in early summer, while Eric Stine, who had worked with AEMX when living in Toronto, moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, to take an acting job in children's theatre. Not only had AMEX and the TAEA experienced an intense period of fighting the Ford Clemency Program, intense political struggles within NCUUA and within AMEX and TAEA, but now, for political and personal reasons, five people had to leave the Toronto exile movement. Summer has traditionally been a difficult time to do political work in exile, but by the end of summer 1975, Colhoun, Grossman and Mix, who remained as the core of AMEX, could feel in our weary bones that a political era was drawing to an end. What made it worse was that we weren't certain where to go from there.

Another internal political struggle which came to a head in spring 1975, concerned Knight as the exile representative on the NCUUA Steering Committee. Knight had been re-elected to the Steering Committee mainly because AEMX had no one else with the needed political experience who could legally travel to the States for NCUUA events. Neither Knight nor the rest of us at AMEX were enthusiastic about the situation, since he hadn't lived in exile since March 1974, but we had to make the best of it. In spring 1975, Grossman replaced Knight as the exile representative to NCUUA because it wasn't possible for Knight to keep in close enough communication with his exile base in Toronto. Also involved in this decision was that because Knight had been working on and off in the NCUUA National Office since fall 1974, he was under intense pressure from NCUUA's nonleft to moderate our politics. On several occasions, Knight applied a great deal of pressure on us to take positions we didn't support in order to placate the nonleft.

FALLOUT FROM THE HUNT FOR PATTY HEARST AND THE SLA DESCENDS ON AMEX IN 1975

AMEX believed that the Patty Hearst-SLA phenomenon was ultra-"left" at best, the work of police agents at worst, and likely a combination of the two, but that didn't make us immune to the political fallout it produced. Actually, the only AMEX people involved in the Hearst business were Colhoun, Grossman and mix, because the police search for Hearst and the SLA had such serious political implications that only those most deeply involved needed to know about it at the time. These SLA spin-offs involved the media, Americans posing as part of the SLA gang, and a former Nazi hunter on the Hearst trail. AMEX became involved because, other than the TAEA, we were the only exile organization still active in Toronto, and these parties believed us the key to the Hearst puzzle.

Sometime in early 1975, Patty's sister was arrested crossing the Ontario-New York state border near Niagara Falls. This convinced some in the media that AMEX must know where Patty was. Although Colhoun told a couple of reporters that we didn't, and that even if we did we wouldn't tell them, their editors wanted to scoop the police and find Patty first. So the media kept nosing around the Toronto region for clues until an aspiring writer somewhere decided that Patty was across the continent on the West Coast. We breathed easier, because the last thing we wanted was to get involved in the affair, not only because it could destroy our political credibility, but more importantly, because we didn't support the SLA or thier celebrity captive turned "urban guerrilla."

One grey winter day in 1975, an anxious young American man was referred to AMEX by a Canadian left group for immigration counseling. The first thing he said to Grossman upon entering the AEMX office was "Do you know the cobra? The seven-headed

cobra (which was the symbol of the SLA)? Immediately, Grossman told him to say no more, and took him outside, in case the office were bugged. The fugitive claimed to be a member of the SLA, traveling with Hearst and the other survivors of the Los Angeles police massacre. Grossman consulted with Mix, who was also working at the office, and telephoned Colhoun to come to AMEX for further consultation.

Colhoun, Grossman and Mix decided first to determine whether he was telling the truth, or had made up the Patty story so we would help him get a phony Canadian passport to get out of North America. We spent the afternoon walking the streets and sitting in cafes listening to his story, concerned that he might be tailed by the police. By the end of the afternoon, we were divided on whether he was telling the truth. Colhoun and Mix thought there were too many holes in his account of the SLA, but Grossman kept asking us if he were telling the truth could we just turn our backs on him and his friends? The three of us were unable to come to conclusions on either point. Since we couldn't obtain a false Canadian passport anyway, we decided to arrange a meeting with a representative of the Toronto political group which had referred him to us in the first place. That night, we met with the representative and the fugitive. In private, we told the representative that we weren't at all certain if the fugitive were a common criminal or a member of the SLA, but that, regardless, we couldn't help him get passports for himself and friends. That night the fugitive left with the political group's representative, and we never heard anything more about him.

About a month later in April, however, we were visited by a man in his late fifties with a German accent, who was convinced we knew where Patty Hearst was. He claimed that he was an Austrian citizen who had been, among other pursuits, a Nazi hunter in South America and a provincial police chief in Brazil. Again, Grossman and Mix were alone in the AMEX office; but the man, Eric Erdstein, talked mainly with Grossman. Erdstein told him that he had tracked down and killed at close range the famous Nazi physician Dr. Joseph Mengele, who had used Jews in his medical experiments. Erdstein said that he would give Grossman time to consult with others at AMEX, and referred him to Ladislas Farago's book The Aftermath to verify his story. Again, Grossman consulted with Mix and Colhoun.

Colhoun and Grossman discussed Erdstein en route to a library to find a copy of The Aftermath, which was not yet available. Grossman explained that Erdstein refused to believe we knew nothing about Hearst's whereabouts. But we were more concerned that the police had learned about the earlier fugitive, and that Erdstein had access to this intelligence, which explained his persistence. We decided it was necessary to learn what Erdstein knew about AMEX. We weren't certain if Erdstein were working for the FBI, Randolph Hearst, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or was, as he claimed, a former Nazi hunter trying to make the catch of his life. We explained our discussion to Mix, who had many of the same concerns.

Our biggest mistake in this matter was to meet again with Erdstein, because this convinced him that we knew where Hearst was; but regardless, it might not have been easy to rid ourselves of our unwanted visitor. He later staked out the house where Mix and Grossman lived, and made continual phone calls and visits to the office, once saying that if he were still a police chief in Brazil, he'd have Grossman tortured. Still, after spending an evening with him, we concluded that he knew nothing about our previous visitor, and had come to us bluffing, after eliminating other sources. People involved in the exile community, and Toronto journalists he talked to had pointed out AMEX as the last exile organization. By the time he got to us, he had become too desperate to let go easily. Erdstein left us after a week or so, and we never heard further about the case. The only thing we know for certain is that his briefcase was filled with clippings from international news stories about him as a Nazi hunter. More than a year later, Colhoun found a copy of The Aftermath, in which Erdstein was mentioned. He did, indeed, kill a German he believed to be Dr. Mengele, but the author maintained that Erdstein had shot the wrong man.

During the remainder of 1975, two more American fugitives came to AMEX with their versions of Patty stories; they maintained that we must help them or there would be another Los Angeles massacre. But by now, Patty stories had become clichés to AMEX. We listened and told them there was little we could do for them, or that we didn't believe them in the first place. They, too, weren't easy to get rid of because they were short of money and claimed to have nowhere else to turn. Sometimes, they would pay late night visits to Colhoun's house, peering into the windows and knocking on the door. This was one of the difficult aspects of doing counseling at AMEX. With the word out in Toronto that AMEX still helped Americans with legitimate war resistance problems, we got the desperados as well.

WORKING FOR AMNESTY AT THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION CONVENTION IN MONTREAL

After the Ford Clemency Program expired on March 31, 1975, the amnesty movement had to find ways to show how successful our boycott had been, but without much media interest in the subject. Our first major attempt to publicize the failure of the program was at the American Bar Association's annual convention in August 1975 in Montreal. We had hoped to be able to create media interest in amnesty by making it an issue at the convention, and by leafletting journalists. Several people from NCUUA, including Schwarzschild, Ransom and her lawyer husband Bob, were planning to attend. From our past experience with the Unitarian Universalist Association convention in June 1973, we knew that it was possible to create a highly visible presence at such a conference with even a small number of activists.

At first we hadn't been anxious to spend a week working at the conference of conservative lawyers, but because we knew that several limited amnesty resolutions were to be voted on, it seemed a good place to deliver the message to the ruling class that the amnesty question hadn't been resolved. Colhoun, Grossman, Mix and Joe Somsky joined Rick Ricketts, who lived in Montreal, and some other Montreal war resisters, at the ABA convention. We concluded that if we could get a pro-amnesty resolution passed by the ABA's House of Delegates, politically to the right of the U.S. House of Representatives, it would certainly help shape ruling class decisions concerning amnesty.

At the ABA convention, we were to come up against some real heavies. At first we worked to build support among the most "liberal" of the ABA sections, the Young Lawyers. After some private lobbying with the Young Lawyers, we were able to block an attempt by Albert Jenner to restrict their resolution to an unconditional amnesty for draft resisters only, with other cases reviewed on an individual basis. Jenner was the Republican party counsel on the House Judiciary Committee during the early stages of the Nixon impeachment proceedings, until Nixon ordered him fired. Jenner argued that the purpose

of the ABA amnesty resolution should be to give Ford a little maneuvering room on the issue by indicating some support for amnesty, but not force him out on a limb that would be totally unacceptable to Republicans. Although we quickly learned that any hope of getting a universal and unconditional amnesty resolution before the House of Delegates was wishful thinking, we discovered it was possible to outmaneuver people like Jenner and raise the level of discussion higher than they wanted it.

We selected certain small and large group meetings which we saturated with leaflets reproducing a New York Times article based on an interview with the National Urban League's director Vernon Jordon, who had recently resigned from the Ford Clemency Board calling for "universal and unconditional amnesty" as opposed to case-by-case review. The leaflet seemed to have a good effect, and provided an opportunity to button-hole sympathetic people for a more complete amnesty discussion. Even though the House of Delegates refused to allow Gold Star father and ABA lawyer Bob Ransom to speak in support of the amnesty resolutions, both of which were defeated, we did make the failure of Ford's Clemency Program a major topic of debate.

Had we not gone to the convention, Ford Clemency Board chief counsel Larry Baskir, who went to the convention to sing the praises of the Ford program, might have had a good deal of success. Baskir and Schwarzschild seemed to be very chummy throughout the conference. Schwarzschild seemed more disturbed by our activist presence versus his and the Ransom more "respectable" demeanor, than by Baskir's machinations. We were, however, able to work fairly closely with Louise and Bob at times. One indication of the success we all had in raising amnesty at the ABA convention was that a Coast Guard Admiral in charge of the service's legal corps stayed an extra day until the House of Delegates voted on amnesty. We had been warned earlier that if Bob Ransom were allowed to speak before the House of Delegates in favor of amnesty, senior military legal officers who belong to the ABA would speak against amnesty. And they were ready to do it.

We may never know how much effect we had in moving the amnesty question forward at the ABA convention. Even though we lost the vote on the amnesty resolutions, more than a third of the House voted for them, compared to the previous year when a resolution at the level of the Ford Clemency Program passed by the smallest of margins. One thing we do know, however, is that the experience we gained at the convention would be put to good use the next summer at the 1976 Democratic National Convention which nominated Jimmy Carter for president.

V MAKING AMNESTY AN ISSUE IN THE 1976 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

By the end of summer 1975, the TAEA had ceased to exist. The AMEX editorial collective was seriously weakened as the result of internal political struggles and editors moving away from Toronto. The boycott against the Ford Clemency Program had been very successful but it had not forced Ford to initiate another amnesty program. It didn't look like legislation at even lower levels than the Abzug and Hart bills could survive a vote in Congress, let alone a presidential veto. After the long struggle over the endorsement question and VVAW's withdrawal from the amnesty coalition, NCUUA's future was in doubt. The left caucus in NCUUA, other than a few AMEX supporters, could hardly claim to exist. The remaining AMEX editors understood that an era in the amnesty fight had come to an end, but weren't yet able to comprehend the new situation in which we found ourselves.

However, once we were able to deepen our analysis of the new stage of the amnesty campaign beyond its surface appearances, we discovered to our surprise that many new opportunities existed. Because of NCUUA's weakened condition, potential financial supporters were reluctant to put more money into NCCUA. It was now up to NCUUA to prove that it had survived the stormy weather and that some semblance of political harmony had been restored. Irma Zigas, who had assumed major power in the NCUUA National Office over the last eighteen months, now had to be more careful about the kinds of decisions she had made routinely in the past without consulting the Steering Committee or AMEX. In this new period, she was careful not to antagonize AMEX, apparently fearing that if we left NCUUA so soon after VVAW resigned, the coalition's chances for survival would be nil. From the start, it had been the participation of war resisters and veterans that had given NCUUA much of its legitimacy. Thus AMEX suddenly found that our influence in NCUUA was very strong. Although our numbers in the Steering Committee were smaller than ever, we had more ability to move program through NCUUA.

Perhaps as a gesture of reconciliation, Zigas contacted AMEX in late August, asking us to submit to the September 1975 Steering Committee meeting a program proposal for the fall. We took her seriously and prepared a detailed proposal for a national amnesty week, similar to the one that never got off the ground in fall 1973. Because of the short notice we were given, we had no longterm strategy at this point, but were trying to fill a dangerous vacuum in NCUUA program. If NCUUA weren't able to implement program during the fall, it wasn't clear whether NCUUA could get the financial backing to stay alive much beyond the end of 1975.

As usual, our program proposal was met with less than enthusiasm. Many of the nonleft still wanted to concentrate on lobbying Congress or confine our work to within the Democratic party. Our national amnesty week proposal was geared largely to public education and agitation on amnesty and the Vietnam War, but also included lobbying activities for universal and unconditional amnesty, not compromise legislation, in the House Judiciary Committee considering the new Kastenmeier amnesty bill. The nonleft on the Steering Committee couldn't reject the proposal outright, but that didn't mean they were happy about it. We proposed that the national amnesty week be held in November, but the Steering Committee felt that was too early and decided to

vestigate postponing it to late February 1976.

At first, we felt the NCUUA Steering Committee's balking at a nationally-coordinated amnesty week was a serious setback. But after sometime to develop our long term strategy more deeply, we saw that a National Amnesty Week in early 1976 could serve as the kickoff for a much longer series of amnesty activities throughout the 1976 presidential election campaign period. The purpose of this long term strategy was to make amnesty an issue which the candidates had to address both in the spring democratic primaries and in the fall campaign. We conceived of the entire election period as one during which the politicians would like to avoid a serious debate about most of the issues facing the American people, but one that afforded us the opportunity to force the politicians to discuss amnesty. We assumed that a democratic candidate would win in the fall, and that if we were sucessful in forcing the Democrats to speak more positively about amnesty, the new president would have to make an amnesty move early in the new Administration's term. Of course, such a strategy required a major effort by local amnesty activists nationwide, to make amnesty a visible issue. But once we placed National Amnesty Week in the context of a longterm amnesty strategy, we realized that it was largely up to AMEX to formulate a series of program ideas to follow it up, and up to AMEX to win Steering Committee approval for these ideas. Then it was up to the grassroots of the amnesty movement to implement our strategy. As in the past, the NCUUA Steering Committee would be the major obstacle.

AMEX HELPS STAFF THE INDOCHINA MOBILE EDUCATION PROJECT TRAVELING VANS, 1975-76

During late summer 1975, Condon had been approached by the Indochina Mobile Education Project (IMEP) about the possibility of finding people to help staff their two traveling vans. For several years, IMEP had kept two small vans on the road across the U.S. loaded with large photographs with written commentary, slideshows and films of the Vietnamese people and their struggle for freedom from foreign dominance. Before a van would pull into a selected town, local antiwar organizers would be contacted to find a school, shopping center, or large meeting hall for the display. The local organizers would do advance publicity about the displays, call public meetings, set up teach-ins, speeches and media interviews for the IMEP staff, and prepare themselves to stay with the displays to answer visitors' questions. Since the liberation of Vietnam, the basic purpose of the continuing IMEP tours was to build support for the U.S. recognition of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the fulfillment of Washington's pledge in the Paris Ceasefire Agreement to extend reconstruction aid to Vietnam. Now, IMEP wanted to add amnesty material to their Vietnam displays and to find an amnesty activist to travel with each of the two vans. IMEP had first contacted the NCUUA National Office in this regard, but were told that NCUUA was too busy even to develop the amnesty material for the displays, let alone find people to travel with the vans. When Condon learned of the NCUUA response, he contacted AMEX. Of course, we were very busy and understaffed, too, but we found the IMEP proposal irresistable. For years, we had been trying to get former antiwar activists involved in amnesty work; now IMEP was looking to the amnesty movement to help them integrate amnesty into their work. But, so far, IMEP had not been able to staff the two vans throughout the fall. We decided to prepare some amnesty material for the vans and to search for people to help staff them. Condon traveled with one of the vans for six weeks, was spelled by Knight for one week, and was replaced by Mix for the remaining month of the fall IMEP schedule.

Mix (seated) and Joycelyn Bowling (second from left) who toured the Southwest on an IMEP van, talk with University of Houston students near part of the IMEP Vietnam exhibit.

This was the experience Mix had been seeking. She was on her own, helping IMEP to develop their amnesty material in an atmosphere which was much less male-dominated and oriented than at AMEX. As she put it:

> The amnesty issue is male-dominated by its very nature. Women were not in (legal) jeopardy. We were never forced to make a decision about the war that would endanger our status. Because of this, we were never perceived as a part of the resistance community, no matter what role we played. The media would come in, ignore the women completely, treat them as non-entities and center on the men. This is understandable, given the society, but hard to live with, especially when you have shared all the decisions, the work, the pain, the uncertainty, the consequences of exile. (This quote is taken from Virginia Olsen Baron's pamphlet "Women in the Wake of War," published by Church Women United, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York.)

On the road with the IMEP tour Mix was able to further develop her skills in public speaking and organizing. Out of the exile context, she was taken seriously for what she was, an antiwar/amnesty activist, and the fact that she wasn't in legal jepardy for a draft or military offense no longer mattered. After filling in on the IMEP tour that fall, she decided to commit herself for a full, late January through May 1976 tour with an IMEP van, and had a great deal of success in generating support for Vietnam and for universal and unconditional amnesty. AMEX was also able to encourage Bill Canjemi, with whom we had worked on amnesty projects in upstate New York, to commit himself to the other van for January through May.

OTHER AMNESTY MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENTS DURING FALL 1975

In September, another opportunity to tie amnesty work presented itself when FRIENDSHIPMENT, a coalition of groups working on reconstruction aid and U.S. recognition of Vietnam, invited NCUUA to join its ranks. Since spring 1975, AMEX had encouraged NCUUA to link up these issues. Although the Steering Committee supported such work in principle, there was a good deal of footdragging when it came

to including Vietnam-support material in NCUUA program. We welcomed the invitation to join FRIENDSHIPMENT , and the Steering Committee voted to bring NCUUA into the FRIENDSHIPMENT campaign. The fact that NCUUA now belonged to FRIENDSHIPMENT helped to strengthen our hand in demanding more Vietnam-support activities in NCUUA's work, and more educational work around the war.

After undergoing a series of improvements during the spring and summer 1975, Representative Kastenmeier's still limited amnesty bill was believed ready to be voted out of his House Judiciary Subcommittee. Some people even believed it stood a good chance of passing the full House Judiciary Committee. Again, the question of endorsement was raised in NCUUA. By fall 1975, however, NCUUA's "perfect" amnesty bill had been put in legislative form by Lynn and Shank. This allowed those NCUUA constituencies which favored lobbying to try to build support in Congress by comparing the Kastenmeier bill with the NCUUA bill; NCUUA sent out a mailing, comparing the bills and calling upon people to write to Kastenmeier and other key members of the Judiciary Committee pointing out the defects of the bill.

This time a repeat crisis over endorsement was averted through the perfect NCUUA bill, but this didn't mean that powerful amnesty forces wouldn't use other means to endorse the Kastenmeier bill in a backhanded manner outside NCUUA. Both the ACLU and Killmer's Emergency Ministry of the National Council of Churches sent out mass mailings paying lip service to NCUUA's tactic of urging Kastenmeier to broaden his bill, but essentially urging their consituencies to call upon Judiciary Committee members to vote for the Kastenmeier bill in its present form.

In the end, the Kastenmeier bill didn't produce a major crisis within NCUUA. But it never got out of the Kastenmeier subcommittee due to the opposition of Representative Peter Rodino, the chairperson of the fall Judiciary Committee. We believed that Rodino, an upper-level member of the Democratic congressional leadership, acted on the advice of the party's leadership. Also, it was likely that with a large minority population in his constituency, Rodino didn't want to be put in the position of refusing to broaden the bill's provisions for vets with bad discharge papers, since the holders of less-than-honorable discharges come disproportionately from minority communities.

In November, NCUUA sent a delegation of Grossman, Zigas, Ransom, Lynn and Schwarzschild to the Democratic party "issues" conference in Louisville. This was supposed to be a time when the potential political issues of the coming Presidential campaign could be debated without the political jockeying dominating the discussion. NCUUA's job was to line up amnesty support. They set up an NCUUA amnesty table outside the plenary hall loaded with literature, attended press conferences, and spoke on amnesty from floor microphones. During the conference, amnesty did have good visibility at the conference, and judging by the applause when it was debated, sustantial support. It was a good start to AMEX's 1976 strategy of making amnesty an issue during the 1976 election campaign period.

The December 1975 NCUUA Steering Committee meeting approved AMEX's proposal for National Amnesty Week, and the date was set for the last week in February 1976. At this meeting, AMEX presented a draft of an NCUUA organizer's guide that we wanted NCUUA to publish, to give local amnesty organizer's a selection of amnesty tactics and materials to develop. The organizing guide included sample letters-to-the-editor, sample leaflets, and ideas on how to do public education and agitation work in addition to pressuring congressional and presidential candidates. We knew that if we waited for the NCUUA National Office to produce such a guide, it might not get done, due to Zigas's procrastination or the office's inexperience in producing such material. After editing the text, the National Office had the guide printed and mailed out to its list of key amnesty activists. In the future, we would go through the same routine of submitting drafts for various NCUUA organizing manuals, the same editing process, usually by Shank or Susan Ikenberry, a lot of footdragging and struggling over content by Zigas, and an end product that was reasonably similar to the draft we submitted weeks earlier.

At the December Steering Committee meeting, Grossman laid out our position on the amnesty bills in Congress: AMEX believed that it was most unlikely that Congress would act on amnesty legislation with the 1976 election season just about to open officially, and legislators traditionally reluctant to vote on controversial issues during an election year. The only realistic possibility for an amnesty in the near future was that a democratic candidate would be elected in November 1976, and would grant that amnesty, but only if the amnesty movement were able to develop sufficent grassroots pressure to compel the new president to do so. Consequently, Grossman argued, NCUUA's work should focus more than ever on local organizing and education work. He said NCUUA should stay clear of dangerous flirtation with bad congressional amnesty bills, which only results in confusing our own movement and factionalizing it when a piece of compromise legislation is considered for endorsement. An NCUUA united around universal and unconditional amnesty serves notice on the new Administration that it will settle for nothing less, giving us maximum leverage on the issue's future resolution. It was very gratifying when, during National Amnesty Week, Senator Philip Hart inadvertantly underscored Grossman's first point. Hart told an amnesty gathering that "Congress lacks the guts to do anything about amnesty."

Late 1975 also marked the closing of Killmer's NCC Emergency Ministries program, which after six years in operation had dispensed $1.5 million. At the end of the year, Schwarzchild's ACLU Amnesty Project also closed its doors. About the same time, the Ford Foundation awarded a $225,000 grant for a study on amnesty to be presented to the new President in January 1977. The study was to be headed by Larry Baskir and William Straus, both of the Ford Clemency Board legal staff, and supervised by Reverend Theodore Hesburgh at Notre Dame's Center for Civil Rights. What surrealism: McGeorge Bundy, a Johnson Administration Vietnam War architect, was now the head of the Ford Foundation, which assigned members of the Ford Clemency Board to study the failure of the Ford program in order to make recommendations on amnesty to a new president! NCUUA correctly refused to cooperate with the amnesty study.

In December, all the amnesty groups in western New York state held their second annual regional amnesty conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario which AMEX attended as well as Irma Zigas representing the NCUUA National Office, and Steering Committee member Duane Shank. Among the issues discussed was National Amnesty Week. Bruce Beyer's father Bob, who was the families representative on the Steering Committee, argued that National Amnesty Week couldn be properly organized for February and should be postponed until May 1976. By now, the nonleft footdragging on National Amnesty Week had been brought to the point of absurdity. At first, people seemed to support the postponement, but retreated from this position when it was pointed out that it had already been postponed from November. Once it was understood that National Amnesty Week was going to take place in February, people at the meeting got

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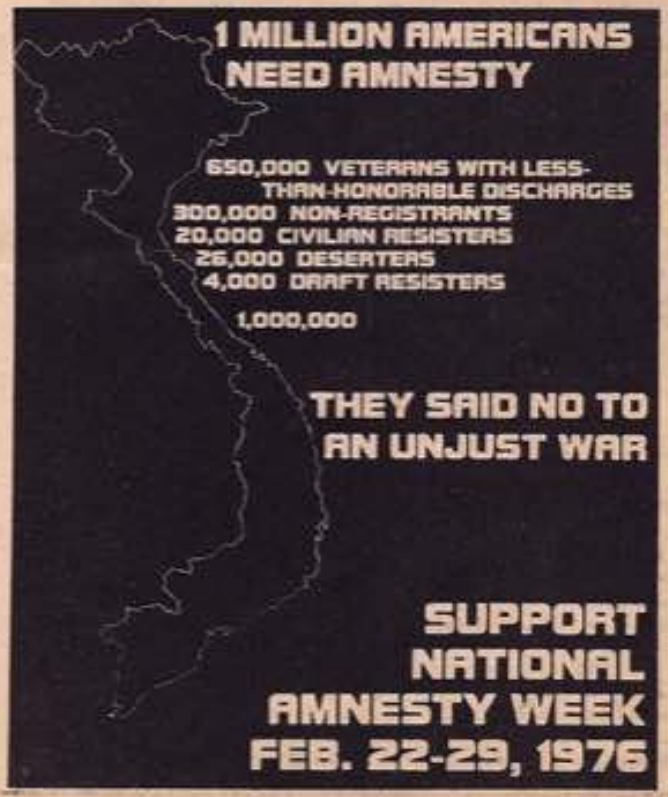
busy exchanging ideas for program for the nationally coordinated event. Similar regional amnesty meetings had been convened across the U.S. in fall 1975, as the amnesty movement began to take on a more national character. Condon worked closely with various West Coast groups, and AMEX worked closely with the western New York region, especially with Roger and Mary Ann Smith of the Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace.

After the meeting in Niagara Falls, Zigas and Shank traveled back to Toronto to meet with Colhoun and Grossman. The basic topic of discussion was the reorganization of the NCUUA Steering Committee. AMEX believed it was necessary to review the old parity formula of six seats for liberal organizations plus the various catagories of war resisters. Many of the original Steering Committee members had resigned, and local and regional amnesty activists wanted representation on the Steering Committee. The time for reorganization had come. We told Zigas that we felt the new Steering Committee must be politically balanced. In discussions with Condon, Knight and Bonnie Farrier in New York, we had formulated a nine person Steering Committee that included a nine-person Committee that included four nonleft activists, four left activists, and an honest swing vote. We told Zigas that we would be forced to leave NCUUA if the Steering Committee was stacked against us politically so that most of our proposals would be defeated. After a good deal of discussion, we won her support. She knew that we didn't want to leave NCUUA but would if it became necessary. She also understood very clearly that if AMEX resigned, NCUUA's credibility would be seriously undermined.

During the fall we had tried to develop closer political relations with Shank, and with Ikenberry of the NCUUA office staff. Although Shank worked for the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO), he was given a good amount of freedom in his job by NISBCO's director, Warren Hoover. Shank was a convicted draft resister and was developing politically. Working outside the NCUUA office had allowed him to stay clear of the sometimes bitter political struggles that had marked AMEX's relationship with the NCUUA National Office. This wasn't the case with Ikenberry, who had begun her amnesty work as Ransom's assistant at AFA, and worked in the National Office since AFA merged with NCUUA. AMEX's relationship with Ikenberry had to develop more slowly, so that she could see and understand our positions in the various struggles with Zigas and Ransom. After a while she began to view AMEX independently of what was said about us by her fellow office workers at NCUUA. We first saw Ikenberry and Shank as middle forces within NCUUA, but believed that they were principled, and that as long as we were honest with them and didn't put them into impossible situations vis-a-vis the National Office and the rest of the nonleft of the Steering Committee, they would move toward our positions. This is, in fact, what developed over the next year-and-a-half as they became key members of the new NCUUA left caucus. It was not always possible, however, to spare Ikenberry some untenable office situations.

NATIONAL AMNESTY WEEK PUTS AMNESTY BACK IN THE NEWS

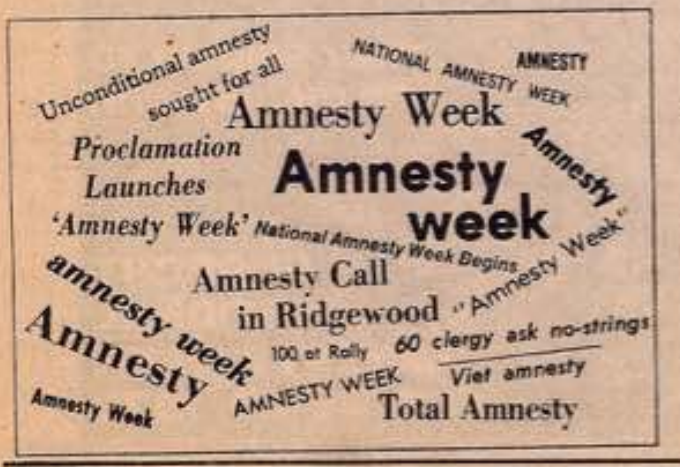
As NCUUA moved into the last stages of planning for National Amnesty Week, the contradiction between AMEX and the National Office intensified. Zigas and Ransom saw the main objective of these preparations to be getting as many governors as possible to declare the last week of February as National Amnesty Week. To accomplish this, they got Sarah Covener's liberal funding group, Arts, Letters and Politics, to write a slick letter to the governors putting amnesty in the light of reconciliation. AMEX objected to the letter's content, but it had already been sent out without consultation with the full Steering Committee. The Covenor letter to governors declared that a House-Senate Congressional Conference on Amnesty sponsored by Senator Hart and moderated by TV talk show host Martin Agronsky was the "key event of National Amnesty Week." But as Shank pointed out at the next Steering Committee meeting, the conference wasn't even sponsored by NCUUA, nor were its politics, geared toward universal and unconditional amnesty. As it turned out, radical war resisters on the panel were allowed only minimal participation. Condon was never recognized, and Grossman had to force his way into the discussion without being recognized by Agronsky. The congressional conference was an enactment of Schwarzschild's tired refrain: "When you war resisters get a chance to speak for yourselves, you are you're own worst enemies." In other words, let the liberal politic-



ans fight your battles; the same ones that voted without question for the Gulf of Tonkin resolution in 1964, and to support Ford's Mayuegez action in Spring 1975.

Another area of friction that developed during the preparations for National Amnesty Week was the National Office's failure to include the fall 1975 issue of AMEX-Canada magazine, specifically prepared for National Amnesty Week, in a major NCUUA mailing. This special AMEX argued for in explicit antiwar terms: a thoroughly documented article on the criminal nature of U.S. military strategy in Vietnam, and a well researched piece explaining the structural economic and political forces of U.S. imperialism at the foundation of U.S. Vietnam policies. Other organizations belonging to NCUUA had their literature included in the mailing, but somehow that AMEX was not included. As usual, we attempted to stay clear of political jargon in the magazine, sometimes more successfully than at other times, so that our literature wouldn't be rejected by the nonleft for "rhetoric." What we learned from this experience and countless others was that it wasn't "rhetoric" which offended some of the NCUUA nonleft, but rather carefully documented evidence for conclusions they wanted to avoid.

But despite the intensified struggle between AMEX and NCUUA's nonleft, National Amnesty Week was a much bigger success than any of us had anticipated; the week was an excellent beginning for the amnesty movement's strategy of making amnesty an issue during the 1976 election campaign. Altogether there were more than three hundred amnesty activities held throughout the U.S. Dozens of mayors and city councils declared amnesty week, including San Francisco, Baltimore and Detroit, and twelve governors proclaimed National Amnesty Week, including New Jersey, Washington, and Massachusetts. The real highlight of the week, however, was the work of Toronto exile Joe Somsky, who traveled to his home state of New Jersey, and local activist Bea Robbins, mother of an indicted draft resister. They got the governor to sign a proclamation for amnesty week, but he never publicized it. More importantly, however, they organized a mass pot luck dinner for amnesty attended by more than one hundred people, which included Ransom and black former POW James Daley as speakers. Art work by the children of exiled war resisters was displayed, which effectively drove home the point that exiles were no longer children themselves, and had lived long enough in exile to have five-year-old children born in Canada. In Boston, Pat Simon played a major role in organizing an event where Marine Corps deserter Austin Hodge surfaced and was eventually arrested. Simon was able to borrow a page from Safe Return's book on how to create a dramatic amnesty event. Hodge was discharged without serious mishap due to the public support organized by Simon and NCUUA.



BADGERING THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES DURING THE SPRING PRIMARIES

Condon was able to come to Toronto a few days in advance of the February 1976 NCUUA Steering Committee meeting, to consult with Colhoun and Grossman about the next stage of the 1976 amnesty campaign strategy: Pressing the democratic candidates to declare their amnesty positions and improve them. Colhoun and Grossman had already conceived the outlines of a proposed draft for an NCUUA organizing guide for primary election period amnesty activities, developing the rationale of the tactic, and ideas on how to achieve good visibility at political rallies. Because it took so long to get NCUUA moving on the publication of organizing manuals, we hardly had time to catch our breath from National Amnesty Week. As it turned out, though, we didn't have enough lead time, and the National Office didn't get the new materials mailed soon enough to give the grassroots organizers sufficent time for maximum advantage. Due to the fact that NCUUA wasn't able to get its organizing literature out in time for people in some states with early primaries, the tactic wasn't as successful as we had hoped. But the amnesty movement did have enough presence in a sufficent number of states to keep amnesty in the news during the primaries.

AMEX decided to complement NCUUA's work in the primaries because we saw it as too good an opportunity to pass up. During April and May, we telephoned the primary headquarters in key states, of Morris Udall, Jerry Brown, Frank Church, and Jimmy Carter inquiring about the candidates' amnesty positions, encouraging them to broaden those positions, and making our standard amnesty arguments. By late winter, we made a major assumption that Carter would win the nomination, so we concentrated on trying to get the other, more liberal candidates to criticize Carter's limited amnesty position.

Carter had carefully cultivated his amnesty position to appeal to both the right and the liberals. He used the code word "pardon" to imply that, like the nation's most notorious recipient of a presidential pardon, Richard Nixon, war resisters were guilty of something for which they must be pardoned. This somewhat placated the right. To appeal to the liberals, he talked about an unconditional pardon for "those in exile." Although Carter had released a press statement on amnesty which indicated that his pardon applied only to draft resisters, it was little noticed at the time. In early May, however, Condon informed us about a network radio news broadcast in which Carter was reported as having specifically excluded deserters from the pardon. We got on the phone to Carter's national headquarters in Atlanta to determine whether the newscast was correct. If it were true that Carter's pardon excluded even deserters, the amnesty movement would have its work cut out for it to pressure Carter to broaden his position to all catagories needing amnesty. We believed we had a better chance to force Carter to include other catgories of war resisters before he won the Democratic party's nomination than after. AMEX sent out mailings to several states in which Carter was running in May, to encourage amnesty activists to find ways to pressure the leading candidate, such as bringing large amnesty signs to rallies, passing out leaflets, and raising questions on amnesty.

We had mixed success in pressing the other candidates to be critical of Carter's amnesty position. Udall had a better amnesty position than that of Carter, but he didn't think discussing amnesty would get him any votes. Consequently, he preferred

to answer questions about amnesty rather than to raise the issue himself. Frank Church was more willing to talk about amnesty, perhaps partly due to the urging of his brother who was a strong amnesty supporter. Jerry Brown started out on the campaign trail without a position on amnesty, and only after several calls to his headquarters did he formulate one. Brown's position was abominable. This man, who spent a good part of the 1960's as a draft-deferred seminary student, favored a conditional amnesty requiring alternative service. All in all, the amnesty movement made a good showing, getting regional and national media attention in five or six states. AMEX wouldn't have become so involved, but for the fact that the process of getting program through NCUUA was so time-consuming that NCUUA was incapable of acting swiftly enough to get the job done.

In the spring, we sent a letter to Senator George McGovern calling on him to pressure Carter to broaden his amnesty position. McGovern replied that since Carter was a Washington outsider, he had no special access or influence with the candidate. Our letter to McGovern, however, seemed to pay off in another respect. Late in the primaries, Hubert Humphrey was poised to enter some of the final primaries to deny Carter the nomination. At a well publicized meeting with reporters, McGovern said he wanted to endorse the Humphrey candidacy, but for one problem: Humphrey's desire to reinstate a variation of the Ford Clemency Program for war resisters. We also circulated a variation of the letter to McGovern as an open letter to others on Capital Hill who had supported amnesty in the past. Ultimately, the most significant part of our work was an extensive phone interview with Stuart Eizenstat, Carter's issues and policies' director, on the details of the candidate's amnesty position. It took several attempts over a period of days before Grossman finally reached Eizenstat. Probably because Carter was trying to ward off the persistant criticism of being vague on the issues, Eizenstat felt compelled to be more specific on amnesty. The interview was tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. It was now clear that Carter did not intend to grant a blanket pardon to deserters, but instead planned to review each case individually. But as Eizenstat said, even if a GI could convince a review officer that he went AWOL due to opposition to the Vietnam War, it was unlikely that he would get an Honorable discharge.

AMEX transcribed the interview and mailed it to members of the NCUUA Steering Committee. We wanted to use the interview as an offensive weapon which the amnesty movement could use in pressing Carter on amnesty before he was nominated. Zigas at first belittled the significance of the interview, and Lynn felt it was inconclusive. We believed that if amnesty activists couldn't see the significance of an interview on amnesty with the leading candidate's director of issues and policy, speaking on the record to a war resisters' magazine, then such activists were bending over backward not to see its significance. Carter was campaigning as the champion of America's poor and minorities, yet his pardon extended only to draft resisters, generally white and middle class. The poor and minorities, disproportionately represented among deserters and vets with bad papers, were to be excluded.

We believed this got to the heart of Carter's demagogery. But some in the NCUUA nonleft seemed to do their best to shield Carter from the amnesty movement's criticisms. This tendency to defend Carter from attacks on his pardon as discriminatory on the basis of race and class continued at various levels of intensity from spring through the fall. In fact, it wasn't until the fall issue of NCUUA's "Amnesty Update" that we were able to get the Eizenstat interview published. Perhaps the NCUUA nonleft believed that Carter needed all the help he could get to be elected, and the amnesty movement's criticisms might cost him critical votes. AMEX felt it was not our job to help elect a bourgeois politician to office on the basis of vague amnesty promises, but rather to force him through public pressure to broaden his position. We had seen Gene McCarthy take the antiwar movement off the streets in 1968, to the antiwar movement's detriment. We weren't about to see Carter flash his famous smile at the amnesty movement, implying that he heard us loud and clear, and "just help me get elected and I'll give you what you want."

LOBBYING WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY VERSUS PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ORGANIZING

Rather than concentrate on public education and local organizing work during the spring primary election period, some of the NCUUA nonleft prefered to concentrate NCUUA's limited resources on a systematic program of lobbying within the Democratic party. Zigas brought Sarah Covener to a spring Steering Committee meeting to urge NCUUA to adopt such a lobbying strategy. Coverner proposed that NCUUA lobby the delegates to the July Democratic National Convention on a state-by-state, delegate-by-delegate basis. We thought there was limited pragmatic value to such a process, but that it was far beyond NCUUA's resources to attempt so ambitious a plan, especially since the effort would ensure that there would be no resources with which NCUUA could do public education, which we

believed was the real key to amnesty action. It was also proposed that local NCUUA amnesty people attend the regional platform drafting sessions of the Democratic party to testify on amnesty. AMEX proposed that these lobbying efforts go forward on a limited scale, but that NCUUA's major emphasis should be on using the election period's public events to compare the candidates' amnesty positions with universal and unconditional amnesty, which the Steering Committee adopted.

NCUUA's work within the Democratic party had some effect, but it is difficult to evaluate how much. In mid-June, the Democrats gathered in Washington to write the final draft of the 1976 party platform. Sam Brown, a former antiwar activist, introduced a motion which called for an unconditional pardon for "those who are in legal or financial jeopardy because of their peaceful opposition to the Vietnam War." The motion passed by ten-and-three-quarters votes. As soon as the vote was counted, Eizenstat, after a short discussion with Brown, made an amendment which called for deserters to be considered on a case-by-case basis, which Brown accepted. But Eizenstat indicated in his interview with Grossman that Carter didn't feel obligated to the platform's amnesty plank anyway. Although the platform didn't commit Carter to a broader amnesty, it was an indication that there was considerable support within the party for an inclusive amnesty. The only hitch was that it was the liberal wing of the party within which the amnesty movement had developed support. As became evident during the fall campaign, and later during the early part of the Carter Administration, the liberals had little influence with Carter.

THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE'S "APPEAL FOR RECONCILIATION"

At the June 1976, NCUUA Steering Committee meeting, the American Friends Service Committee representative John McAuliff introduced the AFSC's "Appeal for Reconciliation" campaign proposal for NCUUA's endorsement. The AFSC campaign proposed to link all the so-called postwar issues together: A petition statement combining reconstruction aid, U.S. recognition of Vietnam, and universal and unconditonal amnesty. They had made the petition statement politically vague, in the hope of reaching that segment of the American population which had yet to support the three causes, in McAuliff's view, people who had not yet made up their minds about the Vietnam War. Although AMEX wanted to help bring about reconciliation between the American people and the people of Vietnam, we didn't believe that amnesty for war resisters should be argued as reconciliation, at the expense of explaining why our resistance to the war was necessary and just. Throughout NCUUA's history, AMEX had fought to win NCUUA's support for a nonreconciliationist approach to amnesty. When we learned of the Appeal a few weeks before the Steering Committee, we feared that the nonleft members of the Steering Committee would join forces with the Appeal. We were in for a pleasant surprise, but we once again took the offensive. AMEX prepared a letter, transmitted to New York and some Steering Committee members by Condon in advance of the meeting, in which we put forward our opposition to any such campaign unless it directly, and negatively characterized the war from which these issues arose.

When McAuliff explained the Appeal to the Steering Committee, the Committee reacted in total unity: Left and nonleft were united in opposition to the Appeal campaign as it was currently developed. NCUUA had been working on amnesty for three years and most

lest we forget...An appeal for reconciliation

• Recognition • Reconstruction
• Amnesty • Rehabilitation

Steering Committee members felt affronted that the national AFSC, which had never made a major programmatic commitment to amnesty work, was now ready to move into the amnesty field with a big-budget, nationally-projected program for fall 1976, but with watered-down politics. After years of struggling with AMEX over characterizing the Vietnam War as unjust and war resistance as necessary and correct NCUUA had reached a certain level of unity on these matters. Even the nonleft felt that NCUUA should not allow the AFSC Appeal campaign to move into amnesty work unless it did so within the political principles established by NCUUA. NCUUA told McAuliff it would not allow the AFSC to water down the politics of amnesty: The Vietnam War must be negatively characterized, at least as "unjust," in the Appeal literature, or NCUUA would refuse to support the campaign, and would ask the AFSC to keep the campaign away from amnesty. Since this was the last planned major AFSC Vietnam-related project, a lot was at stake in the Appeal for Reconciliation. AMEX had already been heard from on the issue, and there is no question that the nonleft wanted to avoid another major ideological battle within NCUUA just before the amnesty movement was about to begin the final planning stages for our work at the Democratic National Convention. Although it took several meetings with the AFSC concerning the Appeal, a compromise was eventually achieved which resulted in the inclusion of a strong negative characterization of the war, and a story emphasis on veterans' issues.

NCUUA INVADES THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

In fall 1975, AMEX was contacted by draft resister Fritz Efaw who had worked with AMEX on and off since the early 1970's from his base in exile in London, England. Efaw, in consultation with an American journalist, Had decided to investigate the possibility of taking advantage of a new Democratic party ruling which allowed Democrats living overseas to be represented by a delegation at the Democratic National Convention. Efaw wanted to run for one of the "Democrats Abroad" delegate seats to the July 1976 convention, but he wanted our support before making further plans. At first, we were skeptical about his chances of election but decided to give him whatever help we could. He had also been in communication with NCUUA but AMEX's approval was necessary since NCUUA didn't want to precipatate a battle over the issue.

When it came time for Efaw to begin his campaign in spring 1976, we were busy preparing NCUUA program and literature, but sent out a mailing to our exile contacts in Canada, Sweden, and France supporting Efaw's candidacy. Most exiles we contacted thought his candidacy was a long shot and needed a good deal of convincing, which we didn't have time

for. The exile vote was small, but Efaw was able to drum up enough support in England through his own organizing and through his commitment to universal, unconditional amnesty to be elected as an alternative delegate. Even that required some in-party wheeling-and-dealing by Covener and other liberal Democrats. Well before Efaw's election, AMEX had decided that it was important to create an amnesty "presence" at the convention; Efaw's victory now opened new opportunities for convention activities. First, amnesty forces cleared the legal hurdles of convincing the Democratic leadership to allow him to attend the convention even though he was an indicted draft resister. Next, after Efaw arrived in New York, met by a huge and spirited press conference at Kennedy Airport, NCUUA attorneys had to convince a U.S. Magistrate in Brooklyn that Efaw shouldn't be immediately transported to Oklahoma City to be tried for his draft offense. The magistrate agreed to delay sending Efaw back to Oklahoma until after the convention.

After winning these legal battles, NCUUA convened a large amnesty movement contingent composed of AMEX activists Grossman, Condon and Knight, NCUUA office staff, CALC staff, Village Independent Democrats amnesty committee, Gold Star Parents for Amnesty activists, and other amnesty workers. Together they sought to raise the amnesty issue as visibly and clearly as possible within the convention and before millions of TV viewers.

One of the amnesty activists' first attempts to find a legal means of having Efaw address the convention as an alternative delegate of Democrats Abroad was to obtain 582 petition signatures calling for a discussion of amnesty under a possible new ruling, the "Bleicher Report," which would provide a twenty-minute "pro-and-con" presentation of petition signatures. Amnesty was second in the number of signatures obtained; first was won by antiabortion activists. But the Carter organization chose to block this discussion period through instructing Carter delegates to vote against the procedure.

Next, the amnesty activists worked to get the fifty delegate signatures necessary to nominate Efaw for vice president. Grossman learned the procedures for vice presidential nominations, but was told by the office of Dorothy Bush, the Democratic Party Secretary, that "nonserious" nominations seldom take place because of "internal suppression," which meant that Carter delegates, the overwhelming majority at the convention, would be instructed not to sign nominating petitions. However, Grossman and the signature-gathering group were able to obtain more than eighty signatures. Next, NCUUA was informed by the party parliamentarian that Efaw was too young to be nominated, and that would rule the Efaw nomination out of order. So the petition crew went out again, this time to get the required number of signatures to nominate Gold Star mother Ransom whose age met the constitutional requirement. With sufficient signatures obtained, the plan would be for Efaw to nominate Ransom. During this process, amnesty workers were told that the party and Carter organizations would arrange for Efaw to be booed off the podium. But once Democratic Party National Chairman Robert Strauss realized that the party had been outmaneuvered, he and the party's parliamentarian gave their assurances that the amnesty movement would be given fifteen minutes to nominate and second Efaw for Vice President. Actually, they preferred Efaw to Gold Star mother Ransom. But Grossman had his eye on having our cake and eating it, too. He wanted Ransom to speak, nominating Efaw!

Amnesty task force discusses strategy at our hotel office.

The Democratic Party chieftains were not the only hurdles to be cleared before Efaw's nomination. Coming into the convention Zigas was opposed to "inside" work, but her opposition was overcome by the more than dozen amnesty activists at the convention. Another struggle was whether to demonstrate "mainstream" political support for total amnesty by having well-known politicians speak in favor of Efaw's nomination, or to have people directly affected by the Vietnam War nominate and second Efaw. Both Ramsey Clark, who was Attorney General when Efaw refused to be drafted, and Milton Shapp, Governor of Pennsylvania, were willing to speak on behalf of Efaw and amnesty.

Utilizing his rich experience in the theatre, Grossman visualized the political and emotional impact of having Ransom and Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, confined to a wheelchair due to paralysis from the chest down, nominate and second Efaw for Vice President. After much discussion, it was decided to have Ransom and Kovic do the job. And what a job they did!

"My credentials for addressing this convention have been earned in the hardest possible way," Louise Ransom told the delegates and the TV viewers. "My oldest son was killed in Vietnam on Mother's Day, 1968." she continued, as the crowd began to pay full attention. "The only way that we can give meaning to the lives of our sons and to guarantee that their deaths shall not have been for nothing is to demonstrate that we have learned something from them, and insure that never again will there be another Vietnam." "Total amnesty," she concluded, "would be a fitting memorial to the sacrifice of my son." "Therefore, with pride, I put into nomination the name of exiled war resister, Fritz Efaw." The crowd rose to its feet in applause, many with tears in their eyes.

When Kovic was wheeled to the podium, the crowd

photos by Roger Smith

Efaw seeks amnesty support among Udall delegates to the Democratic National Convention in New York, July 1976.

Kovic addresses the convention, seconding Efaw's nomination.

fell into a deep, reflective silence. "I am the living death. Your Memorial Day on wheels. Your Yankee Doodle Dandy. Your John Wayne come home. Your Fourth of July firecracker exploding in the grave...." Kovic's words pierced the silence, cut through days of Bicentennial rhetoric with some of the bitter truth of the Vietnam War. He related how his childhood patriotism was changed forever by his experience in Vietnam: accidentally killing one of his own men; shooting a group of innocent Vietnamese civilians, including two small children; and being shot himself and paralyzed for life. He spoke of enlisting in the Marines and going to Vietnam for two tours of duty, of turning against the war and later speaking out "wherever people would listen to me." He concluded: "I have the proud distinction of nominating Fritz Efaw for Vice President of the United States. Welcome home, Fritz!"

Then Efaw came to the podium and he and Kovic embraced. "Welcome home, Fritz!" The words echoed through the hall and around the country. The delegates were on their feet, some cheering, others crying. Large amnesty banners wound through the crowd proclaiming "Universal Unconditional Amnesty," "Veterans Need Amnesty Too," and "Total Amnesty Now." Then Efaw spoke. He told the audience that the proposed draft resisters-only pardon would affect him, but that he had "chosen to come home at the risk of imprisonment to tell you more about those Americans in jeopardy (because of their opposition to the War) because we must ensure that all of them are included in next January's presidential pardon." After explaining, category by category, the various types of war resisters that needed amnesty, he concluded: "I am proud to come to this convention to represent war resisters. The risk involved in coming before you was certainly worth taking. I respectfully decline nomination for Vice President of the United States. I seek no office, and no further recognition." Efaw received a standing ovation. He then made his way around the convention floor, pushing Ron Kovic's wheelchair, as Kovic introduced himself and Efaw to the delegates.

Although we don't know the exact number of TV viewers, and the estimates range as high as sixty million, we do know that it was NCUUA's greatest moment of political theatre. But the point that all amnesty activists know so well is that our movement doesn't need to read the lines someone else has written for us. The Vietnam War has produced enough tragedy and courage that all we need is an audience willing to listen to our own stories. The 1976 Democratic National Convention was the amnesty movement's stage. It was the dedicated core of amnesty activists, working day and night at the convention, who injected some reality into an otherwise banal political celebration. But without similar tireless efforts by amnesty activists throughout the U.S., none of it would have been possible.

THE AMNESTY MOVEMENT MAINTAINS THE MOMENTUM GENERATED BY THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

After the convention, the amnesty movement kept the momentum going by launching a nationwide postcard campaign pressing presidential candidate Carte to broaden his amnesty position. The postcard campaign had been raised by Susan Ikenberry at the Jun 1976 NCUUA Steering Committee meeting, and AMEX had been asked to submit a proposed text for the postcard. We did so in late June, but apparently the text proposal was misplaced in the NCUUA National Office. By early August, a struggle had already developed over the wording of the cards. AMEX wanted critical analysis of the Vietnam War and to tie amnesty into the demands of recognition and reconstruction aid for Vietnam. Zigas and Ransom wanted more "popular" language, and questioned the recognition and reconstruction demands. During the debat on the text, Zigas rounded up support from other nonleft members of the Steering Committee in opposition to the AMEX proposal. Soon the entire projec became stalemated. Shank and Lynn were authorized t poll the Steering Committee on the various text proposals. Although this struggle became quite heated, the AMEX proposal was in line with the general political unity of NCUUA. As in other political struggles in NCUUA, we had to force NCUUA to put into effect the political principles upon which it was founded. But, as often in the past, the final postcard text was remarkably similar in politics to the original AMEX proposal.

Part of the underlying tension within NCUUA in early fall 1976 was that now that Carter was the Democratic candidate for president, many in NCUUA feared the amnesty movement's attacks on Carter's amnesty position might have the objective effect of losing votes for him. Shank brought up this problem in a memorandum that he circulated among the Steering Committee. The minutes of the October 1976 NCUU Steering Committee meeting summarize the polarizati within NCUUA: "Duane summarized his memo as: it i important to keep the antiwar educational component visable, and not allow the prospect of Jimmy Carter being elected and granting some kind of amnesty to lead us to drop that part of our work. Steve said that it is the last period when educational work cs be done, and we ought to step it up. He recommended that we must avoid (a) the tendency not to talk abc the war, and (b) the tendency not to talk about Cas ter. Louise stated that our goal is universal unconditional amnesty, not education, that there are a variety of opinions and tactic around uua, that the combination of the pragmatic goal of uua and overall education shouldn't jeopardize each other. Gerry pointed out that we should be careful what words we use, but we shouldn't lose important concepts thereby."

In late August, AMEX decided to move to the offensive with respect to publicizing the defects of the Carter amnesty plan. One major tactic was to do a mailing to about 350 radio talk shows all across the U.S. Zigas had obtained a directory whic listed such programs, and had given it to AMEX. We decided not to wait for the media to come to interview us; the decision to go directly to talk-show

producers and moderators was a break from our past practice. We expected about a ten per cent response from the talk shows, and that is about how many shows we did during the fall 1976 campaign period. Unlike NCUUA, AMEX had no fear of costing Carter votes as the result of our criticism of his amnesty position. In fact, we believed that if the amnesty movement didn't publicize the limitations of his amnesty proposal while he was candidate, it would be much more difficult once he were president. Again, we were operating on the assumption that Carter would win the election, as assumption that was a calculated risk based on the wide lead Carter had over Ford in public opinion polls.

We advertised the talk show proposal on the basis of the Eizenstat interview Grossman conducted the previous spring. Colhoun and Grossman did the talk show interviews via long-distance telephone. We became quite professional in the way we developed our amnesty arguments, supplementing each other's points, so that we managed not to sound like a tape recording. When the moderators would allow it, we held antiamnesty callers on the line for discussion. Sometimes this would enable us to knock out the underpinning of common antiamnesty arguments based on fiction rather than fact. In this way, we reached a lot of vets with bad papers who were opposed to amnesty for draft resisters and deserters, and explained that any amnesty should include vets like them. Often on the air we were able to talk antiamnesty callers into supporting amnesty, and in other cases were able to expose the inability of some antiamnesty callers to deal rationally with the arguments we presented. We found it possible to talk extensively about the Vietnam War because the shows were live, unlike having a reporter or editor cut out most of our discussions of the war. We were repeatedly told by callers and talk show moderators about the effectiveness of our calling from exile to talk about amnesty. It was such an effective tactic that we wondered why we hadn't though of it earlier.

Another tactic we implemented over the 1976 Labor Day weekend also made us wonder why we never tried it before: leafletting American tourists in Niagara Falls, Ontario. AMEX teamed up with the Genesee Valley Citizens for peace (near Rochester, N.Y.), and people with the War Resisters League Continental Walk. We made a symbolic linkup with the Continental Walk, and staged a small demonstration at the Peace Bridge, connecting the U.S. and Canada. Grossman continued over the bridge with the Continental Walk, and spoke at several meetings organized by the Walk people in western New York State. Before crossing the international bridge, we marched through the Niagara Falls park area, but were nearly arrested by the park police.

Undaunted, we decided to distribute our leaflets by placing them under the winshield wipers of parked cars with U.S. license plates, until we got chased out of several parking lots by attendants. Next we started passing out leaflets to moving cars in congested parts of the tourist area. Condon pioneered the the technique of making the slowly-passing cars believe that the leaflets entitled them to free samples of junk food or something, so cars often lined up to get leaflets attacking the class and race discrimination of Carter's amnesty plan. This was quite an improvement over the angry reception we got from some tourists when we marched through the park with large amnesty banners handing out leaflets. Although AMEX leaflets criticized Carter very strongly, some people called us the "Carter boys," thinking that we were campaigning for the millionaire Georgia peanut farmer.

Several weeks later Grossman, Jeanne Kaylor the CALC representative on the NCUUA Steering Committee, and Shank participated in a Washington, D.C. event marking the end of the Continental Walk route. At this demonstration and march through the streets of the nation's capital, they passed out thousands of similar leaflets attacking the proposed Carter amnesty plan.

Back in Toronto, AMEX continued its campaign of criticising the Carter amnesty plan, even before he was elected president, by postering downtown Toronto with similar leaflets. The purpose of the Toronto postering was to educate war resisters about the details of the Carter pardon well in advance of his probable election so that Toronto exiles would be well acquainted with it when the media descended on us in the post-election period. We also hoped to be able to build our base of support, but we made contact with very few new exiles. During this time, exiles consciously refused to get their hopes up that Carter would actually be elected and follow through with his "pardon," even the draft resisters only program on which he was campaigning. Too many exiles had allowed their hopes to rise in the weeks before the Ford Clemency Program was announced; this time people were playing their cards close to their chests. However, the Toronto postering did give AMEX high visibility throughout the city, resulting in several Canadian media interviews which gave us even greater prominence. Consequently, once Carter was elected, the widespread presence created by the postering helped the media know where to come, and reacquainted many war resisters, who had assimilated themselves into the Canadian woodwork, with AMEX.

Roger Smith

Amnesty demonstrators including exiles link up with the Continental Walk for Disarmament and Social Change, some crossing the border at Niagara Falls. Front left to right: Dr. Arnold Matlan, Grossman, Condon and Bonnie Farrier.

CONFLICT IN NCUUA OVER STRATEGY OF ATTACKING CARTER: FALL ELECTION PERIOD TO INAUGURAL

For a long time, AMEX had believed that a continuing discussion about the Indochina War was something the ruling class wanted very much to avoid. After all, on Vietnam Liberation Day, Ford had proclaimed that the last chapter in the book of Vietnam was closed. Of course, education about the war was a primary thrust of our amnesty work, and we believed that much of the motivation for granting some form of amnesty was tied to the ruling class's desire to close the Vietnam discussion that amnesty agitation kept open. We also believed that the amnesty movement's strength was not our ability to deny Carter a large block of votes if he didn't broaden his amnesty position, but our unique capacity to hit Carter where he was most vulnerable: To attack the self-proclaimed champion of the poor and minorities for the class and race discrimination of his amnesty plan even before he took office. AMEX argued that the amnesty movement should focus on the class and race inequities of the Carter plan and explain why war resisters were right to resist the unjust Indochina War, from the Labor Day kickoff of the fall election period through Carter's inauguration. We believed it necessary to demonstrate to Carter that we had the ability to deliver a strong blow of exposure if he failed to broaden his amnesty. We called this the black eye strategy: Since he had said amnesty would be one of the first items on his political agenda we would hit him hard, early in his administration, on the class and race issue on which he was so sensitive, by attacking an executive action to which he obviously attached particular symbolic importance. Not surprisingly, our strategy proved to be controversial with NCUUA's nonleft.

After the Democratic National Convention, Efaw was hired by NCUUA to do public speaking and liason work with the Democratic party. His experience at the convention seemed to have affected him to a large extent, and the way Democratic party liberals think seemed to have rubbed off on him. By late 1976 in an amnesty article published in The Nation, Efaw declared himself a "born again Democrat," waiting for Carter to prove himself another FDR. He joined with the other nonleft NCUUA members in opposing the AMEX strategy of pushing Carter hard on the class and race discrimination of his amnesty plan. Efaw, Zigas, Ransom and Lynn continued to argue that the Eizenstat interview actually didn't mean much because Eizenstat didn't know what he was talking about; therefore, they felt AMEX was making too much of the interview, and of class and race. In fact, in late August Efaw met with some of the Carter staff in Atlanta and concluded that the basic problem with Carter on amnesty was a matter of education. According to Efaw, Carter and his staff were actually ignorant about the complexities of the amnesty question, which accounted, at least partially for their amnesty position. Other nonleft NCUUA activists agreed with this conclusion. Shank responded to this reasoning at a fall NCUUA Steering Committee meeting, saying that as a career Navy officer, Carter certainly had a good understanding of the military discharge system, and the amnesty movement shouldn't fool itself into thinking that out major problem was educating the Carter organization.

In fact, AMEX had been requested by the Carter organization in June to submit a position paper on amnesty, we sent several papers on the subject, and on our objections to the Carter position. We learned in the middle of the fall election campaign that the papers had been received but not read. We also had our own "friendly" contact within the Carter campaign staff and later the transition staff. She counselled us to trust Carter; that once he was elected his amnesty program would amount to just about what we wanted, though it wouldn't look or sound like universal and unconditional amnesty. We found that interesting, but it didn't affect our basic strategy. The only way we believed we would get a just amnesty from Carter was to build popular pressure to force the move, and not to count on political promises.

One of the tactics that united AMEX and NCUUA nonleft activists was the idea of post-election delegations to Carter to discuss amnesty, delegations of veterans, clergy, Gold Star parents, etc. We believed the delegations could stimulate media coverage of Carter's amnesty position and the amnesty movement's objections, deepening public awareness. We thought the delegations might have a secondary educational effect on the Carter staff working on amnesty, but when the first delegation took place we learned that some of the NCUUA nonleft saw the delegate meeting primarily as a bargaining session.

Carter did not appoint staff to work on amnesty, immediately after his election; but by late Novembe 1976 David Berg, a young, liberal ACLU attorney fro Texas got the job. AMEX was told by a TV network correspondent that the ACLU would have good input into the formulation of the post-election Carter amnesty program, and that Berg saw the problem as one of how much he could sell to Carter. However, by mid-December 1976, Berg was replaced by Carter's longtime political adviser Charles Kirbo, a conservative Georgian and a senior partner in one of the South's most powerful ruling class law firms.

NCUUA was able to arrange an amnesty delegation meeting with Kirbo, but the meeting turned out to be another internal friction point for NCUUA. Some of the nonleft in the delegation wanted to turn the meeting into a bargaining session in which improvements in the program would be traded off for concessions on NCUUA's part. Kirbo was particularly concerned that if vets with bad papers had them upgraded to General or Honorable, they would be eligible for veterans benefits. He didn't think that

would wash politically, and wanted to determine if NCUUA were willing to accept upgraded discharges without eligibility for benefits. AMEX opposed any kind of negotiations, believing our strongest posture to be unwaivering commitment to our historical definition of universal, unconditional amnesty. Naturally, this produced tension within NCUUA. Again, the amnesty movement was faced with the same old contradiction that had surfaced over the endorsement question in 1975. Would NCUUA settle for less than universal and unconditional amnesty? Pressures were again developing in NCUUA to settle for less, as Carter moved closer to the White House. We believed that last-minute negotiations on "what the amnesty movement would really settle for" would be a sign to Carter that the amnesty movement was divided, and that the pressure was off him. We were also concerned that once NCUUA's unity was broken, there was no telling what some NCUUA activists would settle for, or be tricked into accepting.

The one notion that was dispelled by the meeting with Kirbo was that the Carter staff needed basic amnesty education. The delegates came away from the Kirbo meeting impressed with the conservative Georgian's general intellegience, and his familiarity with the amnesty question. Kirbo expressed his concern that the amnesty Carter was about to grant might jeopardize America's ability to raise a conscript army in the future. As far as AMEX was concerned, we, too, were interested in this question. But from our perspective, we hoped our amnesty efforts make it much more difficult to raise a conscript military, or to field any kind of military, for future U.S. wars of aggression.

TV's ARCHIE BUNKER TACKLES AMNESTY ON CHRISTMAS DAY

In summer 1976, Pat Simon, director of Gold Star Parents for Amnesty, was contacted by the staff of TV producer Norman Lear about what was to become the Christmas Day installment of "All In The Family." Over the next few months, Simon advised Lear's writers on the script, which featured a confrontation between a war resister illegally returned from Canada, Archie's Gold Star father friend, and antiamnesty Archie. The Lear people assured Simon and NCUUA that the show would be about a deserter unaffected by the upcoming Carter pardon of draft resisters, but apparently at the last minute a draft resister was substituted. The show could no longer effect broadening the amnesty debate by tackling the categories of war resisters not included in the Carter plan. It was a liberal cheap shot, a show that appeared to be controversial but actually served only to build support for what Carter had been pledged to do for more than a year, without getting at the true dimensions of the issue. But it must be added that the show was quite moving, since the amnesty debate always became more emotional during the holiday season. It was a potential coup for the amnesty movement that didn't quite materialize. Simon's consultation, however, made the Gold Star father's decision to support amnesty very compelling.

VETERANS AND THE AMNESTY MOVEMENT: FALL 1976

Since summer 1975 when VVAW left NCUUA, the amnesty movement was faced with a major problem: Although vets with bad papers compromised the largest categories of people needing amnesty, veterans' participation in the amnesty fight was minimal. When VVAW belonged to NCUUA, AMEX had seen the vets question as a political bottom line for the amnesty movement. With a strong veterans representation in NCUUA, the amnesty movement would be locked into the demand that all vets with bad papers be included in any future amnesty. From the earliest days of our amnesty work, we had anticipated that Washington would try to co-opt the amnesty movement with a draft resister amnesty, which could have the effect of satisfying the middle class elements of the movement at the expense of minority and working class deserters and vets. As long as VVAW was in NCUUA, AMEX had a strong political ally, and together we fought against the tendency of NCUUA's nonleft to liquidate the class, race and anti-imperialist politics of the amnesty struggle. This was one of the reasons the fight against NCUUA's endorsement of compromise legislation in 1975 was so crucial: If the vets question were compromised, we feared NCUUA would be well along the way of losing its politics. But as long as vets were well represented in NCUUA, it would be much more difficult for the nonleft to make compromises concerning veterans. Futhermore, if the amnesty movement weren't able to maintain a strong vets component, its credibility concerning the need for all bad paper vets to have their discharges upgraded to Honorable would be seriously weakened.

To help attract non-VVAW veterans to NCUUA, a vets subcommittee composed of Condon, Susan Ikenberry of the NCUUA staff, and Shank was formed in late 1975. However, it wasn't until fall 1976 that the subcommittee completed its pamphlet "Amnesty for Vets, Too!" due to the three living in different cities and rarely being able to meet. In general, in fall 1976 the amnesty movement was finally able to reach a broader cross-section of veterans with its message that universal and unconditional amnesty included them, too. The vets pamphlet played an important role in reaching out to vets. Amnesty articles in the Continental Walk literature also were centered on the need of including veterans with bad papers in any future amnesty. Ironically, the Continental Walk amnesty literature was a reprint of AMEX material selected by Zigas.

However, as more vets became interested in NCUUA's work, we quickly realized that because vets are mainly minority and white working class, there was no guarantee that they would have good politics. In fact, we learned that many of the recent vets attracted to the amnesty movement complemented the politics of the NCUUA nonleft. Most of the Vets in VVAW had been involved in the antiwar movement since returning from Vietnam, and this greatly affected their political growth. Most of the new vets in NCUUA lacked political roots in the antiwar movement. Many were vets counselors whose programs were funded fully or partially by various government agencies, which precluded them from becoming too politically involved. They didn't want to focus on the antiwar aspect of the amnesty question, but rather on the humanitarian side. AMEX and VVAW had always focused our discussion on the fact that GI's who resisted the war were doubly punished, through stockade sentences and then bad discharges. The vets counselors wanted to focus on the other side of the complex phenomenon of bad papers: Many vets became victimized by the heavy and arbitrary hand of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. AMEX, of course, understood that many vets with bad papers were the victims of military injustice and racism, but believed that to focus primarily on this victimization rather than GI resistance was a serious error. Throughout AMEX's history as an exile magazine, we published material on the GI movement and political repression. In our amnesty work, we had emphasized that those GI's who resisted the war or military racism were usually

court-martialed and sentenced to long stockade terms. Some of the vets counselors were opposed to upgrading Bad Conduct and Dishonorable discharges that resulted from courts-martial trials, supporting only vets with General and Undesirable discharges which were given administratively. Consequently, the new influx of vets into NCUUA beginning in late 1976 began to create a new set of political tensions: AMEX versus a loose coalition of some vets with the NCUUA nonleft.

Another important development in fall 1976 was the convening of regional conferences jointly by Ikenberry, and Heidi Kuglin of FRIENSHIPMENT. Mix and Kuglin had worked together on the IMEP van. Now NCUUA and FRIENDSHIPMENT activists were able to work together to formulate regional and local programs for the period leading up to the Carter inaugural, which would link amnesty and postwar Vietnam issues.

AMEX BATTLES CARTER FROM TORONTO: THE POST-ELECTION TO INAUGURAL PERIOD

From the night of the election in early November until Inauguration Day in late January, AMEX was deluged with U.S., international, and Canadian media seeking amnesty interviews with a wide range of exiled war resisters. As usual, the local U.S. media wanted war resisters from every geographical corner. At the time of the election, AMEX had a list of five of six exiles willing to talk to the media, since many others had been misquoted, abused, their lives made more difficult by journalists, and now refused to be interviewed. Colhoun had a lot of experience in referring media to various war resisters in the past, and took on this job fulltime during this period. Because Grossman was in the States nearly half of each month since fall attending NCUUA meetings and doing amnesty work, AMEX was in a weak position in terms of Toronto personnel. Despite this, by the end of January Colhoun had developed a list of nearly one hundred exiles willing to be interviewed. We must have facilitated or personally done about 150 interviews during this period, which were very critical of the proposed Carter amnesty plan.

In November 1976 when Carter was elected, AMEX had a support base of about ten people upon whom we could count politically, and who would help Colhoun and Grossman with AMEX work. As a result of our wide visibility, we were contacted by hundreds of war resisters. Again, as when Ford announced his Clemency Program, many exiles were re-politicized and anxious to do whatever they could to help AMEX. Consequently, we were able to build a large base by the inauguration, and able to successfully host the NCUUA amnesty conference in Toronto at the end of January. We were able to build our base quickly because people knew that AMEX had political and media expertise, and had seen effective examples of our work many times in the past.

In the immediate post-election period, AMEX activists gave most of our waking hours to the media. We had little time to consider the broader problems facing the amnesty movement, but did learn that there was tremendous media interest in the exile story from Toronto. Perhaps because AMEX was the first war resister group to call the boycott of the Ford conditional amnesty, editors took AMEX's position seriously. Also, we were armed with crucial Ford Administration figures about the class and race breakdown of draft resisters as compared with deserters and vets with less-than-honorable discharges, forcing the media to accept our charges of race and class discrimination in Carter's proposed amnesty plan. We were amazed that we were able to get so much media coverage on our opposition to the president-elect's program. Although telephones constant ringing with journalists' inquiries prevented us from setting aside sufficient time for reflection, we tried to think of new ways to keep the media interested in amnesty, and new ways to build support for our amnesty position.

By late November, we knew the media would come to Toronto when Carter made his official pardon announcement sometime during the first week of his term. At this point, we were thinking in terms of holding a press conference to present AMEX's official response to the Carter pardon. We thought it would be possible to get telegrams from the remaining exile groups in Sweden, France and Vancouver supporting our response. We had kept in contact with these groups, reporting on current amnesty developments. But because the transportation costs necessary to get European exile representatives to Canada were so high, we didn't think we could raise sufficient funds on short notice to bring them over. And we weren't certain we had enough time, due to our constant media work, to make the necessary preparations for a major amnesty conference.

In early December, however, Knight and Bonnie Farrier traveled from New York to Toronto to discuss how to create added amnesty media coverage to help force Carter to broaden his limited unconditional pardon. Although Knight hadn't been doing fulltime amnesty work since mid-1975, he had worked effectively on short-term projects such as the Democratic National Convention. He now proposed a massive border crossing of about one hundred exiled draft resisters and deserters before the pardon announcement, defying Washington to arrest them. This type of border confrontation, Knight believed, would generate wide media coverage with which we could continue to make our points about class and race, and the right to resist unjust wars.

Colhoun and Grossman were highly skeptical about our ability to get one hundred war resisters in Canada willing to risk jail, due to family and job responsibilities. We also recalled that we had little success in getting exiles to do the illegal fourteen-day speaking tours during the Ford Clemency Program. Knight thought many of the one hundred would come from Sweden and France, but that gave us the problem of raising a large sum of money for transportation.

Nonetheless, from this weekend's amnesty strategizing sessions came the basic idea for a major amnesty conference in Toronto to respond to the Carter pardon announcement, including exile representatives from Europe and other parts of Canada, veterans and NCUUA activists. But we were faced with two major problems: Raising the necessary funds and getting NCUUA's support.

As to the first problem of funds, Colhoun and Grossman felt there wasn't enough time for adequate fundraising, and noted that AMEX had just made a major fund appeal to our supporters in November. We also needed to have enough funds on hand to carry AMEX through at least the first several months of 1977. But Knight convinced us that he'd be able to raise money from new sources. Since Knight had a lot of experience in raising money for special political events, we told him to go ahead. We tried to work up a rough budget for the conference, and established a date by which to have a firm idea of how much money would be available. If Knight weren't successful in getting sufficent money committed to the conference by that point, we would cease further preparations. We concluded it would take from $11,000 to $15,000 to put on the conference.

The next major problem was the NCUUA Steering Committee. Would NCUUA endorse a conference on AMEX home turf, which would give us an added advantage in influencing the conference's politics. At first, we decided that AMEX would sponsor the conference and

ask NCUUA to endorse it. This way we wouldn't have to worry about NCUUA watering down the politics of the conference. But we also wanted the amnesty movement's united political backing of the conference, and we weren't certain how Zigas and Ransom of the NCUUA National Office would respond. We also found that our fears about quickly raising funds during the holiday season were valid, because financial commitments came in too slowly for us to be certain of sufficent funding.

Grossman had raised the idea of having some type of conference in Toronto at a November Steering Committee meeting, but it got bogged down in debate over whether to have it in Washington or Toronto. This time our thinking about the conference was more developed, but it would still be slow going at the Steering Committee level, because several on the Committee though it best to have the conference in Washington, with the emphasis on bad paper vets. We knew the media traditionally came to Toronto for the amnesty story, and that we could use the media to build the conference, as we did in September 1974. Finally, Amex decided to continue fundraising and initial preparations for a Toronto conference, present the idea to the December 10th Steering Committee meeting as a fait accompli, and ask for NCUUA's endorsement. This way we couldn't be prevented from organizing the conference.

As we had planned, the NCUUA National Office realized that we had the initiative. In fact, Zigas argued to hold a conference in Toronto at the December Steering Committee meeting. The Steering Committee decided to sponsor the Toronto conference, which would be hosted by AMEX. The NCUUA nonleft realized it was necessary to sponsor the Toronto conference, and accepted the fact that AMEX would have a large role in its political definition. Financially, it turned out to have been a wise decision for us to allow NCUUA to sponsor the conference. AMEX was able to raise only about $7,000 before NCUUA decided to sponsor the conference and take over fundraising. In the end, the total cost of the conference was close to $25,000, largely raised by Ransom.

Politically, this decision meant that we'd have to engage in a lot of political struggle with NCUUA's nonleft during the remainder of December and through January. But it was clear that a good deal of struggle would be necessary just to keep the amnesty movement united in the days before Carter's announcement. The Steering Committee resolved the debate over whether to have the conference in Toronto or Washington by deciding to hold a weeklong series of amnesty events in Washington emphasizing vet's demands immediately following the Toronto conference. That, too, was a wise decision, because in Toronto AMEX could make all the necessary physical and political arrangements for a major conference because we had the necessary support base, while in Washington the amnesty movement had few supporters with experience in building for a major conference.

Although Condon had moved to San Francisco to found Amnesty for Vets, and work with West Coast vets groups, he was very much involved in AMEX's planning during this period, but it was very expensive for him to travel back to the East. Since we wanted Condon and many of the vets he'd been working with to come to Toronto to help us provide leadership for the conference, we decided to help Condon raise enough money to continue his amnesty work, and to help him and other vets travel to Toronto. Although Sandy Rutherford hadn't been active in amnesty work since late 1974, she committed herself to several weeks of fulltime work raising money from West Coast sources if we would give her and Condon seed money. We sent some seed money and agreed to split the funds she was able to raise. It turned out to be a very worthwhile venture which helped keep Condon's work with vets funded. At the conference and afterward, it would become evident that Condon's work with West Coast vets had paid off in getting vets involved in amnesty work.

FORD GETS BACKED INTO CONSIDERING ANOTHER AMNESTY IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION

In the closing days of the Ford Administration, a most unexpected series of events forced Ford to consider pre-empting President-elect Carter's pardon announcement. On December 27, 1976, Senator Philip Hart died. Hart had been a longtime supporter of unconditional amnesty for limited categories of war resisters. When Ford telephoned Jane Hart, the Senator's widow, to offer condolences, he asked if there were anything he could do. Jane Hart's response caught Ford off guard. She said he could grant an amnesty because it was "the last thing Phil in his last weeks wished he could get through." A stunned Ford answered that he would "consider" her request, although he knew it was out of the question, due to the Reagan faction's total opposition to amnesty. Nonetheless, there was considerable media speculation that Ford would have to do something after Jane Hart told the press about her phone conversation. AMEX never believed Ford would do anything significant, but that the amnesty movement should utilize this media speculation to apply more pressure on Carter to broaden his pardon. Jane Hart had been an amnesty supporter for several years, and was happy to team up with NCUUA for a mid-January press conference, followed by an evening amnesty memorial reception for congress people and their aides in Washington, both emphasizing the need to include vets with bad discharge papers in any amnesty move. These events were part of an NCUUA and FRIENDSHIPMENT coordinated "National End the War Week: Amnesty and Vietnam Reconstruction/Recognition," January 8-16, 1977.

Bea Robbins, who had moved to the D.C. area, teamed up once again with Toronto exile Joe Somsky for the week, and distributed literature and petitions to Washington church groups. Somsky also worked part time at the NCUUA National Office in New York, and was successful in generating amnesty media in his native northern New Jersey.

Another unexpected boost to the amnesty movement's campaign to apply maximum pressure on Carter before he took office was Colhoun and Grossman being asked by The Nation and the New York Times Magazine to write amnesty articles. Grossman's article appeared in the day-after-New Year's edition of the Sunday Times, and Colhoun's in a mid-January issue of The Nation, both well in advance of the Carter pardon announcement.

In the last few days before Carter was scheduled to announce his pardon decision, there were several leaks from Washington about when it would happen. One leak held it that it would be included in Carter's Inaugural address, but we learned a few days later that Carter felt this would give too much prominence to the announcement. It was finally decided that the announcement would come sometime during Carter's first week in the White House, January 21-28, 1977. As we tensely waited for the crucial day, we couldn't help looking back with satisfaction on a year during which AMEX and NCUUA had transformed amnesty from an issue that was hardly discussed publicly, into a burning issue which captured the front pages of American newspapers off and on from the Convention in July 1976 until January 1977.

VI FIGHTING THE LIMITED CARTER PARDON: JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1977

January 1977 was consumed arranging media interviews and building for the International Conference of War Resisters and Veterans to be sponsored by NCUUA and hosted by AMEX in Toronto, January 29-30. AMEX addressed the enormous task of preparing for the conference by building political support among a large number of Toronto exiles, and developing leadership among recently re-politicized exiles to help us with the many responsibilities of hosting a conference including security, day care, publicity, housing and logistics.

Throughout November, December, and January AMEX had received more than our usual influx of hate mail, coupled with threats from the facist Western Guard of Toronto, whose messages jogged our memories about the Indochina Victory Celebration. Since the May 1975 Western Guard grafitti were racist and anticommunist, we were concerned, about the large number of black vets we hoped to have at the conference, as well as a featured speech by the President of the Union of Vietnamese in Canada (formerly called the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada). Consequently, we had to take serious security precautions, but not allow the conference to be so security-conscious that it would be difficult for exiles and vets new to the amnesty movement to participate.

Early in our preparations for the conference, we made it clear that while AMEX could provide leadership for the conference, we couldn't do all the jobs required. Knight took time off from his job in New York to come to Toronto during parts of December and January. Gar McArthur also traveled from New York to work with us in Toronto during a very crucial period in January. Exiled deserter Roy Pearson booked time off his job to work with us during parts of December and January, and headed up the security force during the conference. We got another big boost from the early arrivals of exiles from Sweden, France and other parts of Canada: Steve Kinnamon and Joe Stuart from Sweden; George Kazolias and Tom Nagel from France; Bruce Boyer from rural Bancroft, Ontario; Joe Jones from Vancouver, British Columbia; and Rick Ricketts from Montreal, Quebec. These were all people with considerable experience working on amnesty over the last several years. David Minugh, also from Sweden, had not done amnesty work before, but had picked up a lot from his amnesty activist parents, and quickly learned the ropes. Condon flew in from San Francisco to be on hand for some of the planning sessions in advance of the conference. This group joined Colhoun and Grossman in working with the Toronto exile support group which we had organized in late 1976, to form a very strong leadership caucus for the conference.

INTERNAL POLITICAL TENSIONS FLARE UP IN NCUUA

In late 1976, a tendency led by Zigas and Ransom developed within the NCUUA Steering Committee to close the National Office by the end of 1976. In late fall, the Steering Committee began to consider its commitment to future amnesty work, and how long key activists intended to commit themselves to the movement. AMEX fought against this liquidation tendency because it would undermine our black eye strategy of forcing Carter to broaden his amnesty or get hit for racism and class discrimination by exiles and vets, and the amnesty movement at the Toronto conference. It seemed to us that Zigas and Ransom were partially motivated by the same desire to protect Carter from strong NCUUA criticism which we had fought from the early days of 1976.

In fact, a major agenda item for the Steering Committee in November 1976 was "an absolutely fran and "open discussion" on how long the amnesty move ment should continue its work. Another important factor which colored the discussion on closing the NCUUA National Office was chronic physical and psychological fatigue. All the key amnesty movemen activists suffered from this well-earned chronic exhaustion: We had been running a long distance race at the pace of a sprinter for years, without an opportunity to rest long enough to regain our energy. But despite our exhaustion, AMEX felt it would be politically irresponsible to dismantle NCUUA before the Carter pardon announcement.

At this point, we wanted to keep the amnesty movement going until March, long enough to protest the limited nature of the Carter pardon which we believed would surely exclude most vets with bad papers. We also believed that NCUUA had a deep responsibility to the vets just entering amnesty movement ranks, to help them continue an amnesty campaign. AMEX had already begun to discuss transforming NCUUA from an amnesty coalition to a reorganized coalition combining the remainder of amnes work with activities geared to building resistance to future U.S. wars of agression against Third Wor national liberation struggles. As it turned out, our timeline of how long it would take to accompli our goals was naive. The November 1976 to March 19 period was so intense that by its end we were so drained of energy we were walking zombies. But our continuing responsibilities proved so important that we just had to keep going.

The exile movement was at its peak during the conference period. There were nightly meetings wit the out-of-town and local exiles and supporters during the week preceding the conference. We discussed internal amnesty movement problems, such as

the liquidationist tendency, and other general problems with the NCUUA nonleft, so those exiles not working on amnesty on a daily basis were aware of the difficulties with NCUUA likely to develop during the conference.

We also discussed at length the general political situation in the States, and its relationship to future amnesty work. As AMEX had written in a long memorandum summarizing the political scene in late 1976, we did not believe that a boycott of the Carter pardon would be the proper response this time, as it had been in 1974: We weren't sure the amnesty movement could survive long enough to move beyond a boycotted amnesty into organizing for yet another move. We didn't anticipate any major struggles at the conference. There would be no issues like the boycott of the Ford Clemency program, or the NCC counseling program to undercut that boycott. As far as we could see, the basic problems would be with the NCUUA nonleft. Some of these problems would be political in nature, and some would be problems of creating structures by which the conference could reach unity. Grossman had been in nearly daily communication with Zigas and Ranson, working out solutions to the latter problems. On January 21, 1977, the pardon was announced, and we began to struggle with the NCUUA nonleft over political differences.

On his first full day in office, the new president had his press secretary Jody Powell reveal the details of the pardon to a news conference. The unconditional pardon applied to all still-indicted draft law violators, and to draft resisters convicted of Selective Service offenses; it also extended to draft nonregistrants. However, the pardon excluded deserters, vets with less-than-honorable discharges, and civilians with antiwar charges or convictions. The administration also promised a special Pentagon study to make recommendations concerning deserters and some bad paper vets. AMEX's response to the news of the pardon announcement was one the media called "bitter disappointment." We blasted the Carter pardon for being thoroughly discriminatory on the basis of class and race, one which objectively included white, middle class draft resisters but excluded poor white and minority forms of war resistance.

We had anticipated that the pardon would exclude many violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, thus making tens of thousands of bad paper vets ineligible for the pardon, but we didn't expect the fate of deserters to be left to a Defense Department recommendation to Carter. To us, the Carter pardon announcement had the trappings of a trick. Carter Administration officials had indicated that deserters would be screened on an individual basis, and weren't actually a part of the draft-resisters-only pardon. But it now appeared that Carter didn't feel secure enough politically to deal with military deserters, and was stalling for time to arrange some sort of negotiated decision. No doubt this affected the tone of AMEX's uncompromising attack on the Carter pardon.

Through a telephone conference call arranged by the NCUUA National Office on the day of the pardon, we learned, much to our surprise, that some amnesty movement activists were offering conditional praise. Early on the day of the pardon, the American Friends Service Committee, and Ransom, had taken that line, while Zigas criticized AMEX for our critical line. However, during the course of the conference call Zigas, Ransom, and the AFSC withdrew their position of lukewarm support for the Carter action. As people supporting this tendency were to learn at the Toronto conference, it was difficult to praise the Carter pardon in front of a deserter or bad paper vet.

Although this political line struggle was resolved, the structures of conference speechmaking and decisionmaking remained to be finalized. The Toronto caucus, which had been meeting all week, had already decided who would make speeches for the various exile communities, and what general political points the speeches would make. The day before the conference convened, Grossman and Shank met with Zigas and Ranson, and reached agreement over speechmaking and decisionmaking at the conference. Colhoun, Condon, Beyer and Jones would give five-minute speeches, and the Swedish and French exile communities would issue a ten-minute joint statement. We also wanted Vinh Quy, president of the Union of Vietnamese in Canada, and Bob Chenoweth, an antiwar former POW, to give speeches, and this, too, was accepted. Gold Star mothers Ransom and Simon, and Carolyn Minugh, mother of Swedish delegate Dave Minugh, would also speak at the opening session of the conference, co-chaired by Grossman and Zigas. A Conference Steering Committee, including all the regular Steering Committee members, plus representatives of the exile constituencies and veterans, would be responsible for conducting the conference and for writing resolutions to be proposed to the conference body for amendment and ratification.

The night before the conference convened, the speakers and NCUUA national activists pored over drafts of the speeches. We had worked hard to eliminate as much "rhetoric" as possible from the speeches, so there was little fat to trim. The NCUUA nonleft realized that aside from stylistic considerations, there was little room for discussion as far as the Toronto caucus was concerned. Since the politics of our speeches were within

Virginia Horton

George Kazolias (deserter, representing France), Steve Kirmmse (deserter, representing Sweden), Bruce Beyer (exiled civilian resister), Condon (antiwar bad paper vet), Colhoun (exiled deserter), Grossman and Zigas (conference co-chairpeople).

NCUUA's historical unity, the nonleft couldn't struggle against our political points without provoking a major ideological battle, and all of us wanted to maintain our political unity through the conference. The result was that the opening day of the conference was clearly under the leadership of AMEX and its allies.

That evening, when the Conference Steering Committee met to draft the conference resolutions, the NCUUA nonleft had consolidated its position and tried to take control of the political direction of the conference on the final day, which included a press conference. The nonleft wanted to soften the tone and politics of the conference resolutions. The greatest battle was over whether or not to include a specific criticism of a collective letter to the government of Vietnam accusing postwar Vietnam of political repression, written by Jim Forest of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and signed by other former antiwar activists. AMEX wanted to include a specific criticism in a resolution which called upon Washington to live up to the 1973 Paris Ceasefire Agreement by recognizing the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and extending reconstruction aid. The nonleft plus Shank thought it incorrect to mention the Forest letter by name. Unlike the nonleft, Shank fully supported Vietnam, but believed that focusing on the letter would play into the media's hands by highlighting an antiwar movement split; moreover, Shank believed that a strong resolution in support of Vietnam would be sufficient to indicate the conference's opposition to the Forest letter.

At the Conference Steering Committee meeting it became clear that the old NCUUA political stalemate had made another comeback. We found a great deal of opposition to the Forest letter criticism, as well as to the content and wording of the conference press statement with respect to the Carter pardon. We had to settle for a strong resolution in support of Vietnam that included an indirect attack on the Forest letter. Drafting committees stayed up until dawn before political deadlocks were broken by compromise on both sides of the ideological dividing lines. Until the sky began to brighten, it looked like the nonleft in the Conference Steering Committee would set the tone of the final day's sessions. But in the end, both the left and nonleft were satisfied with the resolutions in the sense that if we did not all get what we wanted, we got what we needed.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TORONTO AMNESTY CONFERENCE

The Toronto amnesty conference was a genuine triumph for AMEX. It was the second time we had led the exile and amnesty movements in telling an American president that his amnesty wasn't good enough. The conference was the zenith of the exile movement: Not only had a five-year campaign won exiled draft resisters an unconditional amnesty, but AMEX had kept the exile and amnesty movements united in their support for all war resisters and veterans needing amnesty. The Toronto conference was able to deliver a well-developed political rejection of the Carter pardon, the politics of which had been largely developed in the pages of AMEX-Canada magazine over that five-year period.

Because the conference resolutions and decisions concretized NCUUA's political obligation to deserters, bad paper vets, and civilian antiwar protestors "wanted" or with "criminal" records, the liquidation movement within NCUUA was temporarily stopped. In the Conference Steering Committee meeting, AMEX led the criticism of the line holding that NCUUA could now close its doors. This line was taken by some of the same people who had react to the Carter draft resister pardon with condition praise. We brought to the attention of these amnes activists, who were white and middle class, that NCUUA couldn't end the amnesty fight when white an middle class draft resisters had been pardoned but other categories of war resisters, largely working class whites and minorities, were excluded. To do so, we argued, would reflect the coalition's class and race composition in a way that was objectively discriminatory on the basis of class and race. The liquidation struggle was to go on through February and March, but the lines were clearly drawn in Toronto.

FROM TORONTO THE AMNESTY MOVEMENT MOVES ON TO WASHINGTON

One of the slogans of the Toronto conference was "On to Washington." During the first ten days of February, the amnesty movement actually did

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Part of February 5 White House demonstration. Left, with banner: AMEX staffer and amnesty activist Joe Somsky.

move on to Washington to participate in a series of veteran-oriented amnesty actions, and the AFSC "Appeal for Reconciliation" activities. A veterans vigil picket line was set up in front of the Veterans Administration building, and on February 5, 1977 a spirited rally of several hundred demonstrated in Lafayette Park across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, and in front of the White House. Nearly fifteen AMEX people and recently-pardoned draft resisters traveled from Toronto, to make exiles' support for bad paper vets as visible as possible.

The Appeal for Reconciliation Conference took place on February 9-10, 1977, and was able to generate a good deal of media coverage for amnesty and the demands for U.S. recognition of Vietnam and the extension of reconstruction aid. About 80,000 signatures from the Appeal petition campaign were delivered to the White House. Shank gave one of the Appeal conference's two keynote addresses, in which he strongly and clearly summarized the politics of the Toronto amnesty conference. Lynn and vet Ron Bitzer gave amnesty presentations at the Appeal's congressional briefing.

In short, the vets Washington activities maintained some of the momentum of the Toronto conference, but the project was so loosely organized that much of its potential was lost. Some of the vets perceived of the ten-day series of vets actions as mainly a hunger strike and a form of moral suasion, by which Carter could be forced to grant a more generous upgrading program for vets with less-than-honorable discharges. AMEX saw it more as a means by which to demonstrate the amnesty movement's support for vets through demonstrations, pickets, leafletting, and bringing the East Coast left into these events. The problem was that the amnesty movement didn't have a strong enough base in Washington to organize such a series of events at the same time that final preparations for the Toronto conference were taking place. Consequently, much of the decisionmaking for the D.C. events was done by Bitzer unilaterally, too many of the proposed events never materialized, and many of those that did happen were poorly organized. At the same time, NCUUA activists began to grapple with the problem of finding a way to bring more veterans onto the Steering Committee. By the time the amnesty movement traveled to Washington, we were faced with too many problems, too little time, and too much fatigue to be able to bring the events off with the same degree of success as in Toronto. But the momentum from Toronto was not lost. NCUUA was still publicly committed to working for amnesty.

NCUUA ATTEMPTS TO BRING VETS INTO AMNESTY MOVEMENT DECISIONMAKING

Ever since VVAW resigned from the NCUUA Steering Committee, there had been virtually no veterans' representation in the amnesty movement's decisionmaking process. Tom Catlow was the official vets Steering Committee member, but he seldom attended meetings. After the Toronto conference, two phenomina were taking place at the same time: Many key Steering Committee members were planning to resign over the spring, and the vets who had been active at the Toronto and Washington activities wanted to be given Steering Committee seats. To make matters more complicated, NCUUA's search for a mechanism to allow vets to participate in the decisionmaking process was largely colored by the traditional left versus nonleft political struggle of the Steering Committee.

AMEX had been searching for vets to bring into the amnesty movement ever since VVAW left NCUUA, but since some of the NCUUA nonleft had argued in favor of closing the NCUUA office in late 1976, the need to bring vets into NCUUA had become more urgent. We wanted to bring progressive vets into NCUUA, but wanted to avoid adding nonleft and bureaucratic counselors to the Steering Committee. At first, some of the NCUUA nonleft opposed bringing vets onto the Steering Committee since they wanted to liquidate, but with NCUUA continuing they were forced to develop tactical alliances with nonleft vets. Because the NCUUA left was trying to encourage progressive vets to join NCUUA, the entire process of bringing vets into the amnesty movement got bogged down in political deadlock.

Within the ranks of the vets who had recently become involved in amnesty activities, there was also a great deal of confusion. There was little unity on what amnesty meant. Did amnesty apply to working class whites and minority vets, as NCUUA said, or was it something that affected only white and middle class draft resisters in exile, as much of the media had reported over the years? How did veterans relate to amnesty? NCUUA had always argued that war resisters needed amnesty, but some vets believed that vets were victims, not resisters. The exile movement was highly antiwar, while most of these vets had not been in the antiwar movement, and many vets self-help groups hadn't even come out against the war. Although it was quickly dispelled in Toronto, some vets had felt that antiwar exiles would look down on those who had served in the military. The exile movement had dealt with this problem better than the early antiwar movement, because draft resisters had come to understand that deserters turned against the war as a result of their experiences in the military, while draft resisters were able to stay out of the service on deferments to learn about Vietnam indirectly. Some of the early Stateside antiwar movement, however, had characterized vets as war criminals.

This was the context in which the NCUUA Steering Committee met in Washington in early February. It was finally decided that a vets caucus would elect an interim committee of twelve vets with one-half vote each, while NCUUA was in the process of transforming its leadership body. This was easily accomplished. But a more sticky question arose over whether the new vets would be required to support the NCUUA principles of unity. Condon, Grossman, Knight and Shank insisted that new Steering Committee members must support NCUUA's definition of universal and unconditional amnesty. Ransom argued that it would be "unrealistic" to demand that a person's organization be for universal and unconditional amnesty, so personal commitment was all that should be necessary. A final problem that arose was how to choose the new vets representatives for the Steering Committee to replace the interim committee of twelve. Would it be necessary to convene a vets conference in order to select the new vets members of the NCUUA Steering Committee? These problems were postponed in the hope that they could be resolved outside the deadlocked formal Steering Committee format.

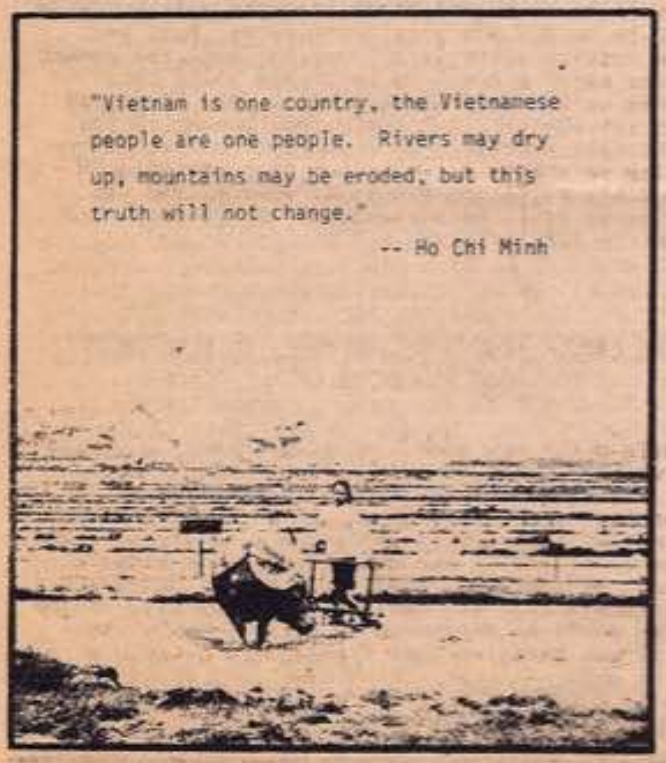
AMEX MEETS WITH VIETNAMESE REPRESENTATIVES IN CANADA

At the Toronto conference, Vinh Quy, who had addressed the conference on behalf of the Union of Vietnamese in Canada, invited AMEX to send representatives to the annual Têt celebration his or-

ganization put on. Colhoun and Grossman traveled to Montreal in February to participate in the Vietnamese Têt celebration. Quy had especially wanted us to come to Montreal to meet Mr. Luong Manh Tuan, the Charge d'Affaires of the newly-opened Vietnamese Embassy in Ottawa. Since the Embassy was not officially open until the ambassador arrived later that summer, we realized that AMEX was being paid a very high honor by being summoned to meet with the Charge d'Affaires. Quy congratulated us for the Toronto conference, and thanked us very warmly for the resolution on Vietnam and for our letter to the Toronto Globe and Mail, "Canada's National Newspaper," in which we criticized an anti-Vietnam editorial based partly on the Forest letter.

Vinh Quy suggested that we accept Luong Manh Tuan's invitation to visit the Vietnamese Embassy in Ottawa, and that we consider assembling an AMEX delegation to visit Vietnam. We weren't certain if we were being prompted to visit Ottawa to be invited to visit Vietnam, but we were anxious to visit the new Embassy. So late in February, Colhoun and Grossman went to Ottawa. Luong Manh Tuan met with us for more than an hour, praising AMEX's work and a series of articles on the Vietnam War written by Colhoun in AMEX-Canada over a four-and-a-half year period, which he compared with the work of a "good Vietnamese journalist." We told him how deeply our political lives had been affected by the development of his country's struggle, from a war of national liberation to a newly-unified Vietnam building socialism.

When he didn't raise the possibility of a trip to Vietnam by AMEX, we suggested it. From the time that Vinh Quy brought up the question of going to Vietnam, we had discussed the possibility with Condon and Knight at great length. We had come to the conclusion that if we were to visit Vietnam that spring, it might be possible to get NCUUA to sponsor a late spring speaking tour which would include some of the AMEX delegates to Vietnam. In this way, we could very effectively combine the messages which we fought to make the basis of the amnesty movement. It was necessary and correct for Americans to resist the Vietnam War. That is why there should be universal and unconditional amnesty. And because the U.S. war in Vietnam was a war of aggression, progressive Americans should also support the recognition/reconstruction aid demands. The Charge d'Affaires was delighted with the outline of our proposal. As far as he was concerned, he wanted AMEX to make the visit. But he had to go through the normal channels of his government to obtain the necessary visas, which would take several weeks.



Of course, there were many problems to overcome with respect to the Vietnam visit. One major factor was the cost of the trip. We wanted to send at least a four-person delegation, consisting of Colhoun, Mix, Condon and Grossman, which necessitated raising $8000. Another serious snag was that Colhoun's U.S. passport had expired. He applied for a new passport at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto but they had maintained a file on his exile activities and refused him a passport as long as he remained AWOL from the Army. If he had taken out Canadian citizenship, he could have traveled under a Canadian passport; but to take out Canadian citizenship would mean that he would classified as an "undesirable alien" by the U.S., under the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act. Being classified as an undesirable alien would mean that in the event of his military charges being dropped, he would still be forbidden to enter the States because he left the U.S. during a time of war and subsequently took out foreign citizenship. Colhoun hadn't taken out Canadian citizenship because he wanted to return to live in the States. The only remaining chance for travel papers was to apply for a Canadian Card of Identity issued to political refugees without valid travel documents. Toronto lawyer Paul Copeland tried to help Colhoun obtain a Card of Identity, but they discovered that under Canadian statute, U.S. citizens are by definition not considered to be political refugees and are, therefore, ineligible for temporary travel papers.

The other obstacle to be hurdled with respect to the Vietnam delegation was the NCUUA Steering Committee. AMEX had developed, simultaneously with the Vietnam trip proposal, a plan for a spring amnesty speaking tour of representatives of the various categories of war resisters excluded from the Carter draft resisters pardon. To be included in this NCUUA national tour would be a deserter (Colhoun), a vet with bad papers (undecided), and a "wanted" antiwar civilian (Bruce Beyer). The purpose of the speaking tour would be to apply more pressure on the Carter Administration which had yet to announce the second stage of its pardon, a program for deserters and bad paper vets. The tour would also give local amnesty groups an event to mobilize around as it came into their areas. And the tour would enable NCUUA to determine how the grassroots amnesty groups felt about continuing the amnesty movement. The speaking tour would also provide some national program for NCUUA affiliates, because the movement had lost the momentum generated by the Toronto conference; the amnesty movement had been caught standing still waiting for the Administration to announce its second-step pardon, promised "any day now" for weeks. We feared that if NCUUA didn't develop spring program during the March Steering Committee meeting, it would be too late to do so.

MARCH NCUUA STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING CREATES A CRISIS AMONG THE NONLEFT

AMEX made the spring speaking tour proposal to the March Steering Committee meeting. Although the nonleft wasn't enthusiastic about the tour, they

had no plans for spring program and reluctantly accepted it. Zigas and Ransom again reminded the Steering Committee that they were soon to resign, but extended their commitment until March 31, 1977. To take their place in the National Office, the Steering Committee approved the proposal to hire Barbara Webster as a fulltime office worker. Webster had formerly worked in the National Office of the antiwar coalition, the Peoples' Coalition for Peace and Justice, and had been recruited for the job by Knight, Ikenberry, Shank and Grossman. The endorsement of War Resisters League representative Karl Bissinger turned the question. The discussions that followed in the wake of the February Steering Committee meeting over how to incorporate vets into the Steering Committee had become so heated that Zigas and Ransom suggested that the Steering Committee meet without the vets present before the March meeting. AMEX agreed with this because we believed the presence of the vets would confuse the matter even further. Later, we realized this was an error which further alienated vets from NCUUA. But what became evident in the closed meeting was that both the left and the nonleft had lined up "their" vets for the new Steering Committee. It was re-decided that NCUUA would retain its original Statement of Purpose. When the Steering Committee met the next day with representatives of the interim vets committee, some vets expressed their opposition to the February decision to limit the twelve interim committee members to six votes. But eventually, it was decided to continue to go by the February decision.

Although we were pleased with the results of the March Steering Committee meeting, the results of the meeting were too much for Zigas and Ransom. Not only were key progressive vets in position to move on to the Steering Committee, but the AMEX speaking tour proposal had also been accepted. As long as NCUUA had program ready to implement, talk of shutting the office down was irrelevent. Our arguments in support of the speaking tour were too effective to have been successfully opposed without looking very bad politically. Again, AMEX had outmaneuvered the NCUUA nonleft, but we had not yet seen the last of the liquidation struggle. Or of the spring speaking tour.

After the March Steering Committee meeting an impasse developed in the NCUUA National Office. Through late 1975 and 1976, Ikenberry had increasingly come to side with the amnesty movement left. This resulted in her growing isolation from Zigas and Ransom in the office, especially now, after the March meeting. The political tension and the anger expressed toward Ikenberry by Zigas and Ransom became so intense that it became impossible for them to work together. Ikenberry's vital technical office skills and national organizing ability had been wholly integral to keeping the office operating. Now she sided with those who believed it politically irresposible to disband. She reported to us that Zigas and Ransom were making preparations that would necessitate shutting down the office when they resigned at the end of March.

During this period, Knight reported to us that Zigas and Ransom were impending his efforts to raise money for the spring speaking tours. The Steering Committee had tentatively approved the AMEX speaking tour proposal, contingent on raising sufficent funds; it was understood at that meeting that Knight would do the background work on determining whether a sufficent sum could be raised. However, Zigas refused to allow Knight to fund raise in NCUUA's name, and refused to allow him to use office facilities for that purpose.

It seemed to us, that Zigas and Ransom were doing their best to assure that no additional funds could be raised to supplement the quickly diminishing NCUUA treasury. Colhoun telephoned Zigas and told her that it was her right to resign, but she had no right to take NCUUA down with her. As long as she blocked fundraising for the period after which her and Ransom's resignation took effect, she was objectively impending NCUUA's work. Zigas didn't have a response other than to protest that Colhoun had misinterpreted her action. But by this time we had several reports from Ikenberry and Webster to the effect that there was no room for misinterpretation of their actions. Because office activity had ground to a stanstill, Ikenberry consulted with several Steering Committee members concerning the office crisis. Karl Bissinger suggested calling an emergency meeting of the Steering Committee to resolve the problems in the office. We agreed with Ikenberry and Webster that an emergency meeting was imperative; otherwise, by the time the regular meeting took place, NCUUA might be fatally damaged: bankrupt and without spring program.

An emergency NCUUA Steering Committee meeting was held in late March. From our perspective, the purpose of the meeting was to bring out into the open the critical situation in the National Office, and by doing so, to formally resolve the problems. Zigas and Ransom used the meeting to call for reexamination of the AMEX proposal for a spring speaking tour. Ikenberry and Webster had prepared a detailed report on the tour. But because NCUUA was nearing financial bankruptcy, and because other Steering Committee members had come to favor liquidation, when the proposal came up for a second vote, it was defeated by a five to two margin. Shank noted that the vote had clear overtones concerning the Steering Committee's feelings about NCUUA's continued existence. As Grossman told the Steering Committee members, by voting the tour proposal down, NCUUA would insure that there would be little or no nationally-coordinated program that spring. NCUUA survived the emergency Steering Committee meeting, but just barely. Although Zigas and Ransom weren't able to take NCUUA down with them when they resigned at the end of March, they did insure that NCUUA would be able to accomplish little without them.

At this meeting, however, the Steering Committee approved the hiring of black hispanic veteran Celso Castro to be NCUUA's vets coordinator. But, as became evident after each Steering Committee member told the meeting how long he or she would continue to serve on the Steering Committee, the hiring of Castro for the vets job was merely a gesture the nonleft felt necessary in order not to further antagonize veterans. It was clear that the life of the amnesty coalition was to be short-lived, at least as it could be measured by its leaders' commitment to further work.

THE CARTER PARDON SECOND STEP FOR DESERTERS AND BAD PAPER VETS

While NCUUA was embroiled in political struggle over whether the amnesty coalition should shut down, the Carter Administration finally acted on its promise to provide a program for deserters and veterans with less-than-honorable discharges. Again, Carter chose not to announce the program himself. Instead, on March 28, 1977 Secretary of Defense Harold Brown told the media that the details of the program would be announced on April 5, at which time it was revealed that Vietnam-era deserters with no other military charges pending against them would be eligible to return to military control to be expeditiously discharged less-than-honorably

from the military. Longterm AWOLS, after being discharged, could apply, along with 432,000 vets with General and Undesirable discharges, to have their bad papers reviewed under a Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP). The SDRP criteria for upgrading these discharges was highly technical and geared toward allowing the model GI, or a person who had served in Vietnam, to have his discharge upgraded. Although a conscience clause was included in the secondary level of criteria, it was evident that most vets would gain little from the program, since it was little more than an institutionalization of current discharge review procedures.

The program had been hastily drawn up, and its details were released in a piecemeal fashion over the next several weeks. From the time of the announcement, the Carter Administration did its best to take the spotlight off the second-step pardon program, and it had no intention of giving a lot of publicity to the program's existence. It now seemed that the amnesty movement would have to publicize the second-step pardon at the same time that it criticized the program's political bankruptcy; otherwise, it would expire after six months on October 4, 1977, before most potential applicants were even aware of its existence.

The next regularly-scheduled NCUUA Steering Committee meeting was convened in mid-April at which time the details of the Carter program for deserters and vets were discussed and clarified. Although ideas on how to respond to the program poltically were discussed, the question of whether NCUUA would soon close its doors remained the most crucial problem facing the amnesty coalition. Despite the fact that Zigas and Ransom had resigned from NCUUA, they came to the meeting. The nonleft had not given up its struggle to disband. Some Steering Committee members, particularly some of the vets, had argued at the last open meeting that the committee did not have the authority to vote to dissolve. Lynn and Jeanne Kaylor, who replaced Condon as the CALC representative to the Steering Committee, again raised the liquidation question. They believed, contrary to the previous consensus, that the Steering Committee did have the authority to dissolve the amnesty coalition. Again, the Steering Committee voted not to disband.

Once NCUUA resolved to keep its doors open, at least long enough to launch some kind of campaign to protest the seriously flawed Carter second-step pardon program, the major discussion revolved around NCUUA's future programmatic direction and the structure of the new decisionmaking body. Ikenberry and Webster proposed that NCUUA hold a national conference in June to elect a new Steering Committee and to decide on NCUUA's future "New Directions." They proposed that amnesty groups circulate position papers in advance of the conference with proposals for the coalition's new directions, now that many felt it no longer feasible to focus solely on amnesty.

To make the problem of representation on the Steering Committee even more complex, the seven vets present at the meeting were voted by the remainder of the Steering Committee to constitute the interim vets committee. Several of the original twelve vets were unable to attend because they lived far from New York, where most of the meetings were held, and couldn't afford the transportation fares. The National Office had appealed to the grassroots affiliates to submit names of people who wanted to be on the reconstituted Steering Committee, and a lot of names were forthcoming. These people were passed over, but it seemed necessary to make NCUUA's commitment to vets more than a series of empty promises.

The next Steering Committee meeting took place in mid-May, at which time the plans for the NCUUA "New Directions" Conference in Milwaukee were finalized. Colhoun was able to represent AMEX at his first Steering Committee meeting in the States because he went through the Army's deserter program. At the meeting, he noted the absence of Zigas and Ransom, as well as Kaylor, Lynn, and Simon. At the time, he said that their lack of attendance seemed to indicate key nonleft NCUUA Steering Committee members had left the amnesty movement. Although most had legitamate reasons for not attending, they weren't at the next two NCUUA meetings, either. Lynn and Simon were to continue amnesty work on their own, and Ransom was later to help NCUUA raise some funds. Colhoun's conclusion from their lack of attendance that the key nonleft NCUUA activists had, in effect, resigned from NCUUA was technically wrong, but correct in substance.

It is difficult to draw one single conclusion concerning the departure of the nonleft members of the NCUUA Steering Committee. Some were likely concerned that a large influx of veterans into the Steering Committee would generate a momentum in NCUUA that would make it diffucult to resign at some point in the future without being reminded of the "class and race" implications of leaving the amnesty movement before universal and unconditional amnesty were won. AMEX's concern was that vets with little antiwar politics would turn NCUUA into a veterans lobbying organization and drop the antiwar politics it had taken us years to develop within NCUUA.

Another factor which played a large role in some nonleft members dropping out of NCUUA was utter fatigue. The January 1976 to March 1977 period was one of intense political struggle and constant activity with little time for rest. NCUUA's left and nonleft wanted to stay united through this period, but the constant political battles left us frustrated and exhausted. Many of us had ignored our personal lives, or what was left of them, for too long, and needed time to rebuild them. AMEX wasn't immune to these difficulties. But the difference was that we had too much commitment to quit at such a critical turning point; because we had been at the center of the amnesty fight for so long, we believed it would have been politically irresponsible for us to do so.

Since people like Lynn and Simon, and to a lesser extent Ransom, have continued working on amnesty outside of the NCUUA Steering Committee context, it isn't fully accurate to conclude all the nonleft was satisfied with the draft resisters-only pardon, and its class and race discrimination. However, since there was a general nonleft backing to the liquidation moves beginning in late 1976, and continuing into the first part of 1977, it is difficult not to conclude that the NCUUA nonleft

Virginia Horton

Longterm, dedicated amnesty activists Pat Simon, director of Gold Star Parents for Amnesty; and the Rev. Barry Lynn of the United Church of Christ, at 1977 Toronto conference.

had less political commitment to working class white and minority categories of war resisters than to white and middle class draft resisters. AMEX quickly understood that our initial timetable of ending our amnesty work by spring had to be revised due to the political developments of early 1977. We, too, needed to rest and to move on to other things in our lives, especially since there was no end in sight to the battle to win universal and unconditional amnesty, but to allow the amnesty movement to be bought off by an unconditional pardon of a largely white and middle class war resister constituency would have been tantamount to abandoning the political foundations of our amnesty work over the previous five-and-a-half years: to prevent the amnesty movement from being stopped in its tracks by a partial amnesty.

AMEX BATTLES THE CARTER SECOND-STEP PARDON FROM TORONTO

Although the details of the Carter second-step pardon for deserters and some bad paper vets were supposed to have been announced on April 5, 1977, it was readily apparent that there were many critical gaps in the operational aspects of the program for which the Carter Administration had made no plans. The general outline of the program for deserters was depressing enough. Despite our years of fighting for amnesty, the Carter program made longterm AWOL's return to military control to be issued Undersirable discharges, to become bad paper vets. The initial reactions of many deserters was anger, then anxiety about returning to the military which some had left up to a decade earlier. But it became even more frustrating to learn that the Government agencies overseeing the operations of the program knew little more about it than what one could get following the inadequate news reports.

Once the program was announced, AMEX quickly realized it was up to us to track down the operational details of the program and to become competent counselors for inquiring deserters since there were no longer any NCC-funded aid groups in Canada. Fortunately, Joe Somsky had returned from his amnesty work in the States; he teamed up with Colhoun to investigate the details of the program and eventually became AMEX's primary counselor. At the same time, Grossman focused mainly on the production of the next issue of AMEX-Canada magazine which would analyze the two steps of the Carter pardon politically and legally.

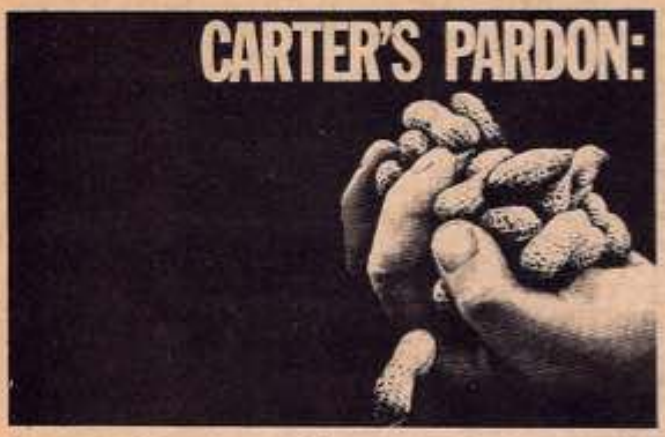
Colhoun and Somsky soon concluded in the course of their research on the Carter second step that the administration was not going to publicize the existence of the program widely. AMEX also saw the political writing on wall: Not only was the program politically unjust, but the Pentagon and the Congress were teaming up to undercut its limited benefits by not advertising it, and by trying to deny those vets who got their discharges upgraded the veterans benefits to which they were now legally entitled. Anti-amnesty bills in Congress were passing by large majorities. A significantly improved amnesty for deserters and vets, let alone for civilians with antiwar "criminal" records, seemed far in the distance. We decided the program for deserters might be the last chance for a good number of years for deserters to get discharged and legally visit or live in the U.S; for many, the first time in nearly a decade. The period between the unconditonal pardon for draft resisters and the limited pardon for deserters was a difficult one, as both draft resisters and deserters began to consider visiting or living again in the States; for deserters, however, the border was still a legal barrier. We concluded that it would be up to AMEX to get information on the program out to exiled deserters.

Over the spring and sugmer, we did postering in Toronto and Montreal to advertise the program and our counseling services. We didn't want deserters to go into the program cold, and we watched as many as possible to know, at least, about its existance. We got radio stations to make public service announcements about the program and AMEX's counseling services, did numerous newspaper and radio talk show interviews, and arranged for deserters in other parts of Canada to do media interviews. We paid for ads in Toronto newspapers to publicize the program, and later the Reverend Peter Salerno of the Presbyterian Church supplied us with funds to advertise our counseling services in ten Canadian cities.

Although counseling did become a major activity during the duration of the six-month program which expired on October 4, 1977, at times, before we could counsel deserters we had to attempt to force technical changes in the program. In the process of researching the Carter program, we discovered major discrepancies in the different services' processing of deserters. The Marine Corps at Camp Pendleton, for example, was threatening to court-martial returning AWOL's instead of following the guidelines of the program. Some services' programs took one day, while others took seven-to-ten. AMEX had developed a contact in the White House to whom we reported these inequities, who in turn denied that they existed, but wrote administration memos concerning them. Eventually, after several calls of this sort, the administration was able to make the various services' programs more uniform.

One serious flaw in the program concerned deserters who had taken out Canadian citizenship. As discussed earlier, such a person could be categorized as an undesirable alien and forbidden even to visit the U.S. Although the Carter Administration had waived this application of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act for draft resisters earlier in the year, it didn't for deserters. At first, we believed that the White House would understand the sheer Catch-22 insidiousness of discharging such deserters, only to bar them from entering the U.S. because of the "crime" of taking out Canadian citizenship.

We reported to the White House aide that the U.S. Consulate in Calgary, Alberta had told two deserters with recently-acquired Canadian citizenship that they were eligible for the deserter program, but that as soon as they were discharged they would be classified as undesirable aliens. We also determined that the supervisor of U.S. Immigration at the Toronto International Airport had said the same thing. But our White House contact replied that it just wasn't true. We were continually deceived by this aide about the likelihood of the undesirable alien clause being waived "within the next seven-to-ten days." Our legal advisers in Washington were also advising us that it would be only a matter of days until this problem was resolved. This continued from mid-April until late May, when we realized the administration was either unwilling or unable to make the necessary change. Then we tried to get the U.S. and Canadian media interested in the problem, but the aide lied to "our" journalist, who disbelieved us and took the White House line. By the time the deserter program ended, this Catch-22 was not resolved and the program's limited legal relief was largely undercut. This immigration law thwarted the desire of those draft resisters and deserters who took out Canadian citizenship but wanted to regain U.S. citizenship and move back to the States. They could apply on the same basis as any alien applying



for U.S. permanent residence, meaning years of red tape.

AMEX became expert on the Carter second-step pardon, and exercised some influence in making some technical changes in the early stages of the program. But when it came to issues of substance, such as the undesirable alien problem, there was little we could do. After we understood that AMEX was being put off by the White House aide, who didn't want to deal with the problems we raised, we mounted a telephone campaign by affected war resisters and their families. This resulted in the aide refusing to talk to us further.

At the same time we were publicizing the program for deserters and some bad paper vets, we launched a campaign attacking the program technically and politically. Colhoun wrote articles for The Nation and AMEX, WIN magazine, and NCUUA's "Amnesty Update." We were able to criticize the program in media interviews, but even fewer media were willing to publish or broadcast our criticisms than were willing to publicize the program itself. Through these efforts, however, we tried to lead the amnesty movement in the tactic of combining publicity and criticism of the program, while many of the military counselors waited for problems in the program to be cleared up. During the program's first three months, much of our time was devoted to researching it, publicizing our counseling services, trying to force technical changes, and, finally, counseling.

THE AMEX BOOK PROJECT

Another project that consumed a lot of time off and on during the first half of 1977 and espeically April and May, was a possible AMEX book or film script. This was the revival of an old AMEX project that had been considered in 1973 and again in 1974, but put aside each time because we didn't have enough time or a firm commitment from a publisher. This time, however, Grossman's article in the New York Times Magazine produced several inquiries from publishers and made-for-TV movie producers, about his or AMEX's interest in such a project.

We discussed the book and movie proposals in the midst of the near pandamonium of January, but decided to put the decision off until summer when we would have time to consider the offers. But in March Knight asked Colhoun and Grossman to allow him to go forward with one of the book offers. We gave Knight a go ahead, and he contacted a lawyer specializing in book contracts, and a publisher who had made an inquiry about our writing such a book. This resulted in the need to draft a twenty-five-page bork outine. Colhoun and Grossman discussed the outline in general terms with Knight on the telephone. Although we all thought we had common ideas about the book, it became clear after Knight produced an outline that our ideas were similar only on the surface. Colhoun and Grossman were able to think about the outline more deeply and realized that we didn't fully agree with Knight concept. Knight urged us to continue the book project, but since he was the only one with sufficient time to do the writing, we decided to put the project off until the fall when we might have more time to iron out our differences.

NCUUA SEARCHES FOR NEW DIRECTIONS: SPRING 1977

Spring 1977 was a trying time for the amnesty movement. By now the Carter Administration had announced both steps of the pardon program. NCUUA had done its best to force Carter to broaden both programs, and had protested both announcements. In the process, there had been a great deal of internal political struggle which left NCUUA weakened. The question facing the amnesty movement was whether there were enough remaining activists at the grassroots level to continue the amnesty fight, and whether NCUUA could combine this amnesty work with other related areas of resistance-oriented activiti

It wasn't clear whether the resignations of key nonleft NCUUA Steering Committee members was an indication of widespread similar feelings among grassroots amnesty activists that amnesty work should not and/or could not be continued. The AMEX speaking tour proposal, which had been first passed by the Steering Committee in March, and then rejected in April, would have allowed national activists to feel the pulse of the NCUUA network at the local level. Now the National Office's best indication of the condition of remaining forces was the position papers submitted by various groups for the upcoming national conference.

After Colhoun finished researching the Carter second-step pardon, and once the AMEX counseling program was well underway, he turned to trying to help coordinate the discussion of NCUUA's future among key amnesty activists: Castro, Ikenberry, and Webster in the National Office, Shank, Grossman Condon, Knight and the newly-formed Military and Veterans Action Center in New York City to which Knight now belonged, and local amnesty activists Gar M'Arthur in New York City and Roger and Mary Ann Smith of the Genessee Valley Citizens for Peace These discussions moved slowly because the process required understanding what various activists and groups were doing and thinking, how the national amnesty leadership could relate continued amnesty work to ongoing local activities, and how to give the entire process leadership.

A major complication, however, was that many of us, particularly AMEX, Ikenberry, and Shank had extended the length of our commitment to amnesty work many times in the past, and were now feeling that we couldn't bear the strain much longer. Webster had taken the NCUUA office job only on a temporary basis, and also wanted to move on to other things. We saw ourselves as providing leadership during this transitional period, then easing ourselves out of coalition work during late summer and early fall. Our job was to make certain that we did all we could to insure that an NCUUA with a slightly new orientation would continue without us.

We viewed NCUUA's New Directions conference in June as an open conference where ideas would be exchanged and a consensus reached. The New Directions conference, we hoped, would not only bring

vets and other new forces into the mainstream of NCUUA's work, but at the same time bring back experienced nonleft amnesty activists and groups such as the AFSC and CCCO which had dropped out of NCUUA. We hoped that NCUUA's new directions could regenerate interest at the grassroots level from groups which didn't perceive themselves as left, which inturn would help to bring back the nonleft at the national level.

Because we all understood that the amnesty movement stood at a critical and delicate crossroad, we didn't want to play a "heavy" leadership role at the conference, especially since most of us were planning to retire later in the year. We believed that for NCUUA to continue to exist, the coalition had to be transformed in a way which would retain its cross-class nature, to keep as many as possible of our old supporters, while bringing in new middle, working class and minority forces. Since infighting and mistrust were dominant themes in early 1977, we believed it wise to allow the conference to move slowly, after a full debate over NCUUA's new directions.

NCUUA'S NEW DIRECTIONS CONFERENCE IN MILWAUKEE

Going into the Milwaukee conference, the three-person AMEX delegation was thoroughly exhausted; but Colhoun, Grossman, and Stuart Hutchinson, a draft resister and actor who was working at the AMEX office, were ready to play a low-key leadership role. Colhoun gave the keynote address, consisting of a compressed history of the antiwar and amnesty movements, led with Shank a workshop on "The Lessons of Vietnam and Future Wars," and co-chaired a small group discussion with Ikenberry on NCUUA's future. Grossman was on a three-person panel with Karyl Lee and Susan Schnall of the Military and Veterans Action Center, on the role of women in the amnesty movement. Shank gave a speech on the legal and political meaning of the two steps of the Carter pardon program. Webster, Ikenberry, Shank and Castro chaired most of the meetings. Other than that we didn't play a large role in the plenary debates over NCUUA's future directions, which felt appropriate since we had planned to phase out of the amnesty work once the transition period was completed. In fact, to our embarassment, Colhoun, Grossman, and Shank had to decline nominations to the new NCUUA Steering Committee. This was a strange feeling after playing a major role throughout NCUUA's history. Strange and somewhat painful.

The New Directions conference decided upon what AMEX believed to be a good and realistic program for the future. NCUUA would continue to publicize and criticize the Carter second-step pardon, but with an increasing emphasis on vets issues, especially the Single-Type Discharge. It was also decided to begin work on military and counter-recruitment in high schools and elsewhere, to support GI organizing struggles, as well as to continue work on civilian antiwar resisters, following up the slogan developed by the left earlier in the year at the Toronto conference: "Amnesty for the Future, Not Just the Past." AMEX argued the need to make connections between resistance to the Vietnam War and resistance to future U.S. wars of agression in the Third World. As the AMEX position paper for the Milwaukee conference stated: "AMEX believes that this new (NCUUA) direction should use the history and practical lessons of Vietnam-era resistance to speak to the need for future resistance to future U.S. wars of aggression through combining amnesty work with general anti-militaristic work in a Right to Resist Coalition." Or, as Shank put in his position paper: NCUUA should work "to insure that the next war will be met with an even greater resistance."

The conference also mandated that all such work advance the fight against sexism and racism. The conference highlighted for the first time the important contributions made by woman to the anti-war and amnesty movements, and pledged to give more visibility to women war resisters, NCUUA's continued work around bad paper vets, disproportionately from minority communities, and commitment to support the Camp Pendleton Fourteen case (fourteen black Marines who resisted attacks by the Ku Klux Klan within the Marine Corps and now faced long stockade sentences) began to concretize NCUUA's antiracist program.

AMEX was pleased with the general outcome of the New Directions conference. We think that the approach of trying to find out what was actually happening at the grassroots level, and giving leadership to the coordination of these local initiatives at the national level along with continued amnesty program was appropriate. We saw this as the democratic approach of working from the bottom up, rather than trying to force program at the national level that might look good on paper but never be realized in practice. Of course, this wouldn't have worked had there been sharply conflicting proposals that separated the remaining national leadership from the grassroots activists. Although some conference position papers indicated that some local groups no longer saw amnesty as an issue around which future organizing could be done, the liquidation question never became a major topic at the conference.

CONGRESSIONAL BACKLASH AGAINST THE CARTER PARDON PROGRAM

The position AMEX took in late 1975 that any future amnesty would come from a new President rather than from Congress was confirmed, not only by the fact that Carter acted on amnesty, but also by the considerable congressional backlash that developed in response to Carter's limited pardon programs. The essence of these different bills and amendments was to undercut the Carter programs. For example, in June the House of Representatives passed an amendment denying the Department of Justice funds with which to implement the draft resister pardon. The Senate defeated an amendment by Republican Senator Mark Hatfield which would have deleted the anti-draft resister pardon amendment from Department of Justice appropriations for Fiscal Year 1978. Both the Senate and the House passed bills denying veterans benefits to those vets who got their discharges upgraded under the Carter SDRP program, but would not have qualified for upgrading under the regular criteria. And Carter chose to sign into law this legislation which essentially undermined his own seriously-flawed program. Congress voted to deny the Department of Justice any funds with which to advertise its program for deserters and vets. Many of these amendments passed by two-to-one margins. Due to the many conservatives and representatives of the military-industrial complex in Congress, it has not been possible to develop enough support for the passage of even the most limited amnesty bill. Although NCUUA's nonleft consistently attempted to focus the amnesty movement's tactics on Congress, none of these bills ever stood a chance of passage; and NCUUA's historic flirtations with congressional lobbying presented opportunities for compromise which consistently brought the cross-class coalition into crisis. As the late Senator Philip Hart said: "Congress lacks the guts to do anything on amnesty."

CONCLUSION

When the first American war resisters left the United States for exile in Canada during the mid-1960s, they did so as individuals opposed to the Vietnam War but unwilling to go to jail for refusing to fight in Vietnam. No coordinated exile movement existed to serve the needs of newly arriving war resisters, let alone to provide political program for expressing a continuing opposition to the war. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, local immigration aid groups developed to help the new arrivals find housing, jobs, and landed immigrant status. At the same time, exile groups were formed which, in addition to helping new arrivals, attempted to find political means by which to express the exile community's continuing opposition to the Vietnam War.

After an initial period of exile community activism, with increasing political harassment and repression from Canadian police and politicians, the driving force of the exile movement began to wane and American war resisters became more involved in Canadian life. Many joined organizations of the Canadian left and nationalist movement, and many others phased out of political work to concentrate on building a new life in Canada. Others were never highly politically conscious or politically motivated.

In fall 1971, AMEX reflected the political and social trend of assimilation into Canadian life. At that time, however, AMEX embarked on a six-year campaign to win unconditional amnesty for all war resisters. First, it was necessary to develop support for the amnesty campaign in the exile communities in Sweden, France, and Great Britian. This international exile support evolved simultaneously with the creation of a broad, cross-class amnesty coalition in the U.S. AMEX played a leading role not only in bringing the National Council for Universal, Unconditional Amnesty into being, but also in devising political program for the new amnesty coalition.

During our six-year amnesty struggle, AMEX was involved in surfacing a military deserter at the 1972 Democratic National Convention, whose arrest brought the amnesty question to the floor of the convention hall. In 1976, we were involved in winning fifteen minutes of prime time TV during which to nominate a draft resister for vice president. From exile, AMEX has battled three presidents--Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter--over the amnesty issue. We watched Nixon go off to his own exile in San Clemente with an unconditional pardon in his pocket after years of opposing amnesty for war resisters. In the aftermath of the Nixon pardon, President Ford declared a punitive, conditional amnesty. AMEX led a call for a boycott of this phony Clemency Program. The boycott was successful. Although Ford refused to grant another amnesty, we helped keep the issue alive until the 1976 election campaign during which the grassroots of the amnesty coalition pressed the leading Democratic presidential candidates. AMEX helped focus the amnesty campaign on candidate Jimmy Carter. From the time of Carter's nomination in July 1976 until his inauguration in January 1977, we led the attack against the class and race discrimination of Carter's proposed draft resister-only pardon.

London demonstration: Union of American Exiles in Britain.

When Carter announced his unconditional pardon on January 21, 1977, AMEX hosted an NCUUA amnesty conference where the amnesty movement blasted Carter for not including deserters, bad paper vets, and civilians with antiwar charges and records. On April 5, 1977, the Carter Administration announced the details of its program for some deserters and limited categories of vets with less-than-honorable discharges. AMEX led NCUUA in attacking the second step of the Carter pardon program.

In 1971, at the beginning of AMEX's struggle for amnesty, we were often told by supporters and critics that there would never be an unconditional amnesty. At some point in the post-Vietnam War period, it became likely that there would be some form of limited pardon, but we believed it would benefit white, middle-class draft resisters at the expense of working class and minority war resisters. If the possibility of winning a broad unconditional amnesty existed, we believed it would result only from widespread grassroots political campaign. It was our goal to build such a grassroots movement, to force such a presidential action. Six years later, AMEX can take satisfaction in our part in the amnesty struggle even though we didn't win our goal of universal and unconditional amnesty.

During the course of our political work in exile, AMEX helped forge a new antiwar alternative: going into exile. From exile, we were able to lead a popular movement through which we explained to the American people the reasons for our resistance and our amnesty demand. We helped to maintain the amnesty discussion for six years, and the popular debate about the Vietnam War for two years after the liberation of Vietnam, and more than four years after the signing of the Paris Ceasefire Agreement. AMEX was instrumental in developing exile as a part of the antiwar movement.

After a frustrating initial period of political stalemate between the nonleft and left forces in NCUUA, we did learn that it was possible to work in a cross-class coalition without making basic political compromises. We came to view NCUUA through the perspective of the leftist legacy of united front work. At the founding of NCUUA, AMEX and our allies established a politically satisfactory statement of purpose. Had we insisted on a more politically advanced level of unity, we would have forced the nonleft out of the coalition. However, had

AMEX not waged a persistent struggle to force NCUUA to implement its statement of purpose, the amnesty coalition would have discarded many of its most progressive points of unity. Over our years in NCUUA, AMEX also fought to raise the overall level of NCUUA politics. Over these years of internal political struggle, members of the Steering Committee, the National Office, and many grassroots organizers came to follow our leadership. At various times, NCUUA came to depend not only on our political guidance but also on our technical skills.

With respect to the theory of united front work, AMEX functioned as the leadership substitute for a communist party in exposing bankrupt political lines, supplying politically principled lines, and creating program for the coalition. In the process, AMEX won many new supporters and made our share of enemies; but we were able to steer an unwavering course for NCUUA, preventing the coalition from making basic political compromises. We believe we provided strong leadership for a democratic rights struggle which would otherwise have been led by liberals.

A liberal-led amnesty movement, we believe, would not have focused on developing grassroots support, but would rather have emphasized congressional and Democratic party lobbying. Whatever public education work the nonleft did would have been based on the notion of postwar reconciliation and forgetting the war. In contrast, AMEX led the struggle to make NCUUA commit itself to public education, agitation, and organizing around amnesty which would put the war itself, and its aggressive and unjust nature on trial, along with the men who planned it from their Washington offices. From the beginning of our work, we saw amnesty as an antiwar instrument with which we could educate Americans about the nature of U.S. imperialism. The Vietnam War did not result from Washington's

good intentions turned sour, nor was it an aberration of policy. The war was fought to maintain U.S. hegemony over the global economy, to protect the interests of world capitalism at the expense of Third World peoples. It was a battle to insure easy access to the critical raw materials of Indochina and its Southeast Asian neighbors--tin, tungsten, rubber, oil, etc. It was a war to end all wars of national liberation in the Third World, wars waged by colonized peoples to regain control over their natural resources and national destinies. It was a war to preserve markets for American-made goods, and access to the unorganized, "cheap" labor of the Third World.

Due to the nature of the war itself, the Washington decisionmakers were stuck with a war that was hard to sell to Americans once it escalated after the mid-1960s. Ruling class families thought the war was important enough to wage, but not with their own sons. As draft calls began to mount, middle class families became uncertain whether they wanted their sons to fight this war. By taking advantage of the many loopholes in the Selective Service System, middle class sons were channeled into defered college courses and occupations, leaving the brunt of the draft quotas to be filled by working class and minority sons. Viewed in this context, the amnesty question could be utilized to illustrate class and race oppression in the U.S.: Not only were working class and minority sons bearing a disproportionate share of the fighting, but they were also refusing to fight the war in epidemic proportions, and now needed amnesty.

Despite the fact that AMEX focused especially on the working class and minority forms of resistance--deserters and bad paper vets--we were never able to develop as much support for amnesty among these sectors of society as we hoped. These forms of resistance had been aimed at the Achilles heel of the military arm of U.S. imperialism. If the U.S. were not able to count on working class and minority sons to fight similar wars in the future, Uncle Sam would be in a terrible fix. An unconditional amnesty for all Vietnam-era deserters and bad paper vets would set a more dangerous precedent than a draft resisters amnesty. Although during the war years public opinion polls detected less support for the war among the working class and minorities than among middle-class professionals, the middle class-led antiwar movement was unable to build strong support bases in these communi-

ties.

The amnesty movement was also unable to transcend this major charateristic of Vietnam-era American politics. It was not able to win strong support from minority communities and groups, trade unions and other working class organizations, the women's movement and the left. In this regard, the amnesty movement was able to gain support in the form of organizational statements on amnesty, and pro-amnesty news reports in organizational publications when amnesty periodically became frontpage news in the corporate-owned media, but was generally unable to accomplish even that during periods of political lull. Part of the blame for this rests with AMEX and the amnesty movement for not developing closer ties with these constituencies, due to a lack of personnel to assign to these tasks. But more fundamental was that these constituencies had vastly different political priorities. Nonetheless, despite these crippling shortcomings, the amnesty movement was able to wage its campaign for more than four-and-a-half years.

In conclusion, AMEX discovered that a small group of dedicated activists, working within a community lacking widespread political consciousness and commitment to amnesty work, could lead the exile movement in progressive directions. As we grew with that movement, we remained acutely conscious of the special possibilities of our role as American exiles. It was never easy to decide our course of action at particular times, but we were able to make detailed analyses of what could and should be done within the concrete political and logistical realities of the day, and attempted, as Marxists, to apply dialectical materialism to our work. By working together over a long period of time, we were able to insure consistency and to develop a collective discipline that grew naturally from our longterm political and personal relationships. Once we had made a strong commitment to AMEX's amnesty work, the collective organism of the organization took on a life of its own, making it impossible for AMEX's work to stop before we had done all that was possible from our exile base in Toronto. We discovered in the process that AMEX could make a significant contribution to the antiwar movement and to the evolution and promotion of a new form of war resistance. We hope our most important legacy will be a contribution to the right of future generations of Americans to resist unjust wars against Third World national liberation movements, should the need arise.■