

Toronto musician turns down amnesty

King has no desire to "work his way back"

By PAUL STUART

Bill King is a Toronto based musician of some fame who has played with Janis Joplin, Chuck Berry and Linda Ronstadt and was musical director of the Canadian version of Jesus Christ Superstar.

King is also a deserter from the United States Army.

He differs from most of his fellow American exiles because he recently returned to his home state in an attempt to take advantage of President Ford's amnesty programme.

King looks and sounds like an Indiana boy. He's got a nice old house near High Park, which he apparently is not going to give up for a chance to "work his way back" into the USA.

He first came to Toronto in 1969, after being in the army less than a year. While in the service he played in a parade band where he "tickled the ivories in the wee hours for lieutenant colonels and their wives".

The fulfilment to be found in such pastimes waned however, when he was due to be shipped to Vietnam.

"I'd been to Toronto in '63, when I went to music school," he drawled, "so I had an idea what it was going to be like living here. I didn't talk about it with anyone except Kristine (his wife) and I guess I just left."

Were people here friendly to American refugees of his stripe in those days?

"Not very friendly," he said, "but it's like that in any city when you first come in. You know, you meet the people who are on the bottom and it's those kind of people that are

always on your head.

"Once you don't have to live and work with them anymore, things improve a lot."

When Ford's amnesty offer was made a couple of months back, most of King's fellow-exiles urged him not to accept.

"This was because they thought it would be entrapment," he explained. "To some extent it was. They were nice to us at the army base, but behind the niceness there was a really lousy offer."

King showed me a letter he got from the Indiana Selective Service Commission, and its terms did not look very appealing.

The directives defining alternate service work, read the letter, "require that the type of employment be in the national health and safety interest, require 40 hours per week, that the employing activity be of a non-profit type of employment, that such work assignment be not in competition with the normal labour market and further requires that the activity or agency furnishing the employment be approved by the undersigned." (an Army officer in charge of King's case).

The letter was dated October 3, and gave King 30 days to live up to the terms of the agreement by which he received his undesirable discharge.

Bill's deadline is now up, but he is not too concerned. As he put it, "I just went back to get out of the army," and he made it clear that he is not anxious to actually take part in

the programme.

"I couldn't believe it when I saw the part about 'non-profit' jobs," he said. "What am I supposed to live on for two years? What about my family, am I supposed to move into some hospital ward with them?"

The problem with Ford's programme, aside from its implication that conscientious objectors to the Vietnam war were morally wrong, is that even those who wish to take part in it may find it difficult to do so, due to the state of the American economy.

"There aren't any jobs down there at all," said King. "They can't find jobs for people so they're quite willing to let people look for themselves. They think I'm down in Indiana

right now doing just that."

When King found out that Ford's programme was almost unworkable he returned to Canada.

Despite his resumption of exile status, King feels the situation is improving for American draft-evaders and deserters.

"People are tired of the whole issue down there. I was in one of the worst states and I only met one asshole," he said.

"Most people were more like 'Hi son, how are you? You been gone a long time?' If they disagreed with what I did, they were not letting me know.

"People don't want to hear about Ford and the Nixon supporters anymore, they want to own their

homes and eat and do them things."

King feels the recent American elections, which returned a more liberal Congress, are an indication that American political exiles may not have to wait too much longer before they can go back home with no strings attached.

King is not particularly anxious to return to the States.

"That country is rotting," he said, "just rotting. There aren't any jobs, and you'll notice that a lot of environmentalists got elected, because the air is so badly polluted that you can hardly breathe."

When I left him, King was getting ready to go to an engagement in North Bay and thoughts about his native land were far away.

Resisters boycott amnesty ploy

By KATHY HONSL

A Globe and Mail article on November 8 pronounced President Ford's earned re-entry amnesty plan a flop.

So far, only 80 draft-evaders have signed up for it, and most of these had been living underground in the United States. Only one resister from Canada has returned to the US to sign up.

Why the boycott on the amnesty plan? Excalibur talked to Jerry Condor, a York teaching assistant and representative from AMEX magazine to get his view. (AMEX is a principal magazine, based in Toronto, for resisters living in Canada.)

Excalibur: What is this amnesty plan? How did it come about?

Condor: When Ford came into power, he, Melvin Laird, and his conservative representatives were on the record as being supporters of a conditional amnesty. He felt obligated to act on the question. Also, it seemed ludicrous to grant President Nixon a pardon without even mentioning a pardon for war resisters and deserters. He had to tackle the question sometime anyway.

The plan was drawn up by Ford and the justice department, by people who personally didn't believe in giving even conditional amnesty to war resisters.

Excalibur: How does it work?

Condor: The army war resister goes back to the States and turns himself in. Then, he reaffirms allegiance to the constitution of the United States. In order to be eligible for the programme, he next must sign a justice department form waiving some of his constitutional rights: the right to a speedy trial (amendment six); the fifth amendment right prohibiting being charged twice for the same offence; the right to have an indictment presented to the grand jury, if one has not already been obtained within the prescribed statute of limitations; and rule 48(b) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure which provides for the dismissal of charges if there is an unnecessary delay to bring the case to trial.

There are mitigating circumstances involved as well: first, the length of satisfactory service completed prior to unauthorized absence; second, length of service in Southeast Asia in hostile fire zones; third, awards and decorations received; fourth, wounds incurred in combat.

In addition, an opportunity is provided for you to "provide such statements and affidavits regarding your employment or your conduct in the community during the time of your unauthorized absence." It has been said that Ford's program leaves no room



for principled objection to the Indochina War, and actually penalizes war resisters for it.

HOSPITAL ORDERLY

The resister is then subject to a punishment of 24 months of alternate service. The alternate service may involve serving as a hospital orderly or working in a lumber camp.

Each case is tried separately by a board and punishment of individuals may differ widely according to the part of the country in which his case is heard.

Excalibur: Why is the amnesty plan being boycotted?

Condor: The typical draft dodger or deserter is not an out and out pacifist. If the life of his country were truly endangered he would be more than willing to fight, say if there were an invasion of American soil.

American involvement in Vietnam was based on the wrong objectives. While the government maintained the Americans were in Vietnam to stop the spread of communism, they were really in there for other reasons, such as preserving their "Empire of the East" and its supply of raw materials which were necessary for running and expanding the American industrial complex.

DOMINO THEORY

America had a dependence on Third World raw materials. US bigshots believed in the domino theory: let one country 'fall away' from American influence, and the others would soon follow.

The loss of Vietnam would jeopardize Japan, the keystone of an American-oriented Pacific capitalist economy.

Those who refused to fight were, in effect, conscientious objectors.

The present amnesty plan sets out to punish war resisters for not participating in a war they felt to be unjust. By re-swearing allegiance to the American constitution and undergoing two years of "social service", they are admitting, "Yes, we were bad little boys for not fighting; we are now making amends." War resisters feel they were right for not participating in the war.

CLEMENCY DISCHARGE

At the end of the mandatory service period, the resister will receive a "Clemency Discharge". Like a dishonourable discharge it will influence future employers deciding whether or not to hire him.

Excalibur: What would draft-resisters and deserters like to see in an amnesty plan?

Condor: They would like to see a universal, unconditional amnesty. This would include organizers of anti-Vietnam war demonstrations who are in jail, too. The government is very sneaky with regard to types of discharges and their effect on the lives of the veterans involved.

Ford's amnesty plan was designed to take the wind out of the sails of campaigners for unconditional amnesty. His ploy has failed. The number of people advocating unconditional amnesty is growing.

Student centre at York

On Monday the York International Student Centre is opening. The official opening will take place in the Centre's office in room 214, Bethune College, and members of the community are invited to attend.

The centre will run for an experimental period of eight months and is funded initially by a grant from the president's office.

The goals of the centre are two-fold. It will try to keep tabs on and coordinate the activities of such organizations as the Canadian Development Agency, Canadian Crossroads International, Canadian Development Agency, Candian Crossroads International, Canadian University Services Overseas, and the World University Service (Canada).

The centre will also give a hand to foreign students who come to York. It will meet them at the airport, help them adjust to the customs and mores of Canadian life, and try to guide them through their first few weeks at York.

In short, the centre hopes to provide a resources contacts for all students who are interested in overseas education opportunities and foreign travel generally.

It also hopes to provide contact between members of the University and agencies in the Toronto area which have an interest in international cultural and ethnic affairs.

The centre will be open weekdays from 12 noon to 6 p.m.

Applications for the position of

Student Member
on the
Board of Governors

are now being received by the
caucus of student senators

Applicants must submit a resume, including address, telephone number, date of birth, number of years at York, and any other relevant information.

Applicants will be interviewed by the caucus, and applications should be submitted to:

M.W. Ransom
Room S945 Ross Building

no later than 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, November 21.

Applications may also be deposited at the
C.Y.S.F. Office Room N111 Ross Building

Additional information may be obtained from
Alan Cox, 661-9465 or John Spencer, 667-6005