

Preface

I chose to go to prison. I not only raided government offices and stole and destroyed Selective Service files of men about to be inducted into military service and sent to Vietnam but I publically flipped-off the government by raising the clenched fist of *Resist!* It was a time when shouting “Resist illegitimate authority!” and attacking the government was the only way to be patriotic. I destroyed tens of thousands of 1-A draft files. I also stole blank cards and classification rubber stamps and took them to Toronto enabling military deserters, draft resisters, and war exiles to return to the US with official proof of having fulfilled their military obligation. Every day I preached and taught and roared *Resist!* on college campuses, to families in the pews, and joined with returning Vietnam Veterans Against the War to attack the government’s war machine at every turn. Little known to many, it was the returning Vietnam veterans who blew us away with their battlefield experiences and got us war resisters off our individual and collective asses to up the ante, to bring the battlefield home, into the streets and suites, especially into the draft offices all across America.

From 1968 onward, hundreds of draft boards were being raided across the country, in vast metropolitan areas and small rural towns. Indicative of that fact was that in backwater Minnesota’s federal court district over half of the pending cases were for draft violations. This latter fact is an untold story, but only a sideline note to the one told here.

By the time I, as one of the “Minnesota 8,” was caught, in July of 1970 by J. Edgar Hoover’s finest—who bumbled about trying to infiltrate the anti-war Movement like Keystone Kops led by the Three Stooges—the government didn’t know what to do with us. Quietly bury us and keep us out of the public eye? After all, at the time, the infamous “Chicago 8” courtroom debacle had shown the feds that even if they might get a conviction against radicals that they’d lose their case in the media. *All praise to Yippie, Abbie Hoffman and Black Panther, Bobbie Seale!* But they gave it another go. Charged us with “sabotage of the national defense,” a ten year sentence. Plus set a \$50,000 bail which kept us in jail for a week as the streets of Minneapolis teemed with protesters and rioters, more arrests, and until the bail was lowered. But you can anticipate the ending. Realize, I *chose* to go to prison. *Now how fucking stupid was that?* It was me against the United States of America, and in the end I lost big time—and not only on the legal front—which

is the story I will tell you here. But remember the times: my five year maximum sentence elated “Tricky Dick” Nixon—“Leader of the Free World!”—who was soon disgraced as a bungling crook and rightly judged as corrupt to the core. I went into prison in the spring of 1972 just in time to catch the evening news report that for the first time ever a United States Attorney General, John N. Mitchell—“America’s Top Cop!”—was being indicted for crimes. It was academic at the time to ask, *Who are the real criminals?* History has exonerated me and condemned them. I find little solace in that judgment.

So, I kicked some government ass, aided in the ending of the Vietnam War, and stood proudly upon my conscientious convictions. Good for me, right? *Fuck!* I’m still classified as a “violent felon” for destroying paper and not killing humans. In the current war of paranoia, I’d be listed as a domestic terrorist, but that’s not of concern right now. Why? Because when I heard “Five years in a federal prison,” another battle was just beginning for me, right here on American soil. Now this is when the story of “An Outlaw’s Theology” really begins. Like a green, battlefield “grunt” on his first foray in-country in Vietnam I found myself locked-down in an upside-down world of savagery and darkness that no one had ever told me even existed. Sure, I had been in the seminary and the monastery, held a Masters degree in Theology, felt the cold smack of an FBI gun at the back of my neck, went on trial...yeah, *blah blah!*...but nothing and no one prepared me for entering the hellish zone where captives raged against their captors in a sector of darkness “where everything human is soon absent.”

I chose being an outlaw. I chose being a theologian. I remain an outlaw theologian, continuing to *Resist illegitimate authority!* The Vietnam War of my youth never-ended. For near fifty years it has mutated into one war after another, plunging the world into Endless Warfare. Under the banner of “globalization” this has become a predatory war not only against peoples but the Earth, itself. We humans face a choice. We can either continue to war endlessly and ravage the Earth in terms of people and resources or we can rise to the challenge and imagine and embody a fresh and vigorous vision to *Resist!* predatory globalization. My challenge to you, issued here in my elder years, is to embody such a vision. Will you choose to become an outlaw theologian—*Resist!*—and engage in the creation of a global vision, that of the “Earthfolk,” so that we all may dwell peacefully and comfortably at home on the living Earth?