

Amnesty Strategy Parley Set for Paris

By GEORGE VECSEY

The drive for total amnesty for all war resisters will take a new dimension in Paris from Feb. 19 to 22, when three groups hold a strategy conference for exiles and their supporters.

The Paris meeting was announced yesterday at a news conference in New York by officials of Safe Return, an American-based committee that had alliances with AMEX (Canada) and Up From Exile (Sweden).

One of the speakers at yesterday's meeting was Mrs. Louise Ransom of Bronxville, whose son was killed in Vietnam four years ago. The Gold Star Mother called for "mercy" for 100,000 other "victims" of Vietnam—the number of draft resisters she says are living in exile.

Also at yesterday's meeting, an aide to Representative Bella S. Abzug, Democrat of Manhattan, said she had filed a bill asking for a universal, unconditional amnesty for all war resisters, including antiwar demonstrators who have been arrested at protests.

'Dishonor the Dead'

"Everybody says it dishonors the dead to give amnesty," Mrs. Ransom said at the news conference. "A lot of people cannot presume to speak for the dead. But I presume to speak for the dead. And I believe that it will dishonor the dead if we discredit these other victims of the Vietnam war."

Mrs. Ransom, the Right Rev. Paul Moore, Episcopal Bishop of New York, and officials of Safe Return all indicated their unhappiness with the recent statement against amnesty made by President Nixon. But they expressed hope that a mounted

campaign might move Congress toward amnesty legislation.

Officials spoke of letter-writing campaign, increased contact among parents of exiles and direct political pressure as tactics, now that the war has apparently ended and efforts can be re-directed.

"We have not advanced the cause of freedom one bit unless we learn mercy without punishment," Mrs. Ransom said.

Mrs. Ransom said she had no problem in supporting amnesty because her son, Mike, was "totally against the war before going over there—he even sang antiwar songs at his O.C.S. [Officer Candidate School] graduation."

All the speakers took exception to President Nixon's statement last week saying he could not forgive the "hundreds" of men who had resisted the draft.

"I can't understand why he lies like that," Mrs. Ransom said. "He must know there are thousands of exiles. Of course he knows. He just doesn't want Americans to come to grips with the seriousness of the problem."

Tod Ensign, a lawyer with Safe Return, said that the Canadian Government had estimated that between 70,000 and 100,000 Americans had crossed the border because of the war.

Mr. Ensign said the Paris conference would be attended by 100 "delegates"—including perhaps 30 exiles from various European and Canadian groups. He said other delegates would come from such groups as the Civil Liberties Union, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, the War Resisters League, the United Methodist League and Clergy and Laymen Concerned.

In a separate development, the Rev. Dr. Robert V. Moss,

president of the two-million-member United Church of Christ, called yesterday for President Nixon to declare a "general amnesty." Dr. Moss made his remarks before an interdenominational meeting of ministers in Chicago.

No Slur Intended

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5 (AP)—President Nixon was not in any way at all being derogatory toward the Peace Corps when he said last week that the price to be paid by draft deserters "is not a junket in the Peace Corps," his chief spokesman said Monday.

Ronald L. Ziegler, White House press secretary, said Mr. Nixon's remark related to the penalty the President believes the men should pay for leaving the country to avoid Vietnam service.

* "those few hundreds who went to Canada or Sweden or someplace else" - see transcript of news conference, NYTimes 1 Feb 73.