

8. [Program Workshop] JH U

The Program workshop decided to take the National Office proposal in the NO Report as the basis to discuss a national program for VVAW/WSO. The first part is a summary of the general discussion of the proposal and then some specific areas of the proposal were covered. Q U

The main danger in taking a program to the masses of vets is the "Right" danger. This comes from trying to see our work of building the anti-imperialist vets movement in "stages." That is, first uniting with vets around their immediate needs and then at some undetermined point in the future, raising the question of the system of imperialism. What has to be done from the very first is laying out who the real enemy is, that the system can never provide for the peoples' needs. Q U

Also, a danger exists in isolating the demand for "Decent Benefits" from the overall struggle against the system, not making the links between the struggle of vets and the struggles of all working and oppressed people. This could lead to a situation where questions like the war in Indochina are hidden from the vets we are trying to mobilize. Q U

There was a discussion of a very brief nature on the need to have a follow-up program that goes hand-in-hand with the mobilizing program. Many people pointed out how after making an initial contact with vets at an action or activity at the VA, these people would not come forward or did not show up at meetings. What is needed is a program to go after these people, not wait for them to come to us. Q U VVAW

People should not equate militancy with the struggle against the system. It was pointed out that many reformists take militant actions, such as AVM where they occupied a Senator's office. The key here is that militant action is directed against the system, not just some bureaucrats or one aspect of the problem. Q U

We are not fighting for a bigger slice of a small part of the pie, but the whole pie itself. In this context, our main blow is directed not at with wanting better benefits, but is directed at the ruling class, to take the whole shebang from them. "Benefits" is a ruling class term. They are not "benefits" but rights that have been fought for with the blood of our mothers and fathers (figuratively). Q U

The "Left" error is in seeing that vets only come from the working class and that our demands can only reflect the interests of working class vets. Vets come from all strata of society, crossing class, national and sexual lines. Our task is to unite as many of these as can be united against the common enemy. Q U

DEMANDS: *Q u*

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There was good discussion of what is a "key" demand(s). Depending on time, condition and place, one or several demands can be key. The reason that "Decent Benefits" was felt to be key at this time is that vets are already spontaneously moving around that demand. That uniting with that demand and fighting to win it provides the basis from which to unfold the other demands and the whole question of the system. It was also pointed out that all the demands do not have to be listed on our leaflets, that one, if it is put forward in a good way, can explain what we are fighting for just as well as listing and explaining all the demands. *Q u*

The workshop also took up the question of a demand around the rising economic crisis of imperialism. There was struggle over the wording of the demand, basically centering on how to put forward this demand in such a way as to point to the working class as the leading class of the struggle. After taking a vote, the workshop united on the following wording for the new demand: *Q u*