

STRUGGLE IN VVAW/WSO



"Raise level of class consciousness to internationalism, combat racism and sexism and discredit economists..."
INSIDE THE WHITE WORKING CLASS (centerfold)

A major struggle is shaping up inside the Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization (VVAW/WSO). The lines are being drawn between members and supporters of the Revolutionary Union (RU), who are in control of the National Office (NO) and the VVAW/WSO newspaper, WINTER SOLDIER; and the "Anti-imperialist Minority Focus" (AIMF) which is strongest in the largest and most active regions: New York and California, for example. The AIMF is now in the process of defining itself politically, and the analysis in this article does not claim in any way to represent the AIMF or any part of it.

By flooding the organization with secret cadre, setting up a number of new chapters and even regions, and beginning to recruit from the ranks of VVAW/WSO, the RU has gained a strong foothold in the organization. Some RU regions, it should be noted, are smaller than a single committee of a single chapter of the larger regions, but as of now each region carries equal voting strength within the organization. The Buffalo Chapter, in a paper entitled "Tell No Lies, Claim No Easy Victories", has charged the RU with "direct efforts at manipulation within the organization. A clear example is the formation of new chapters and regions of VVAW/WSO by the RU. This serves to push a particular line through a mechanical manipulation of "democratic" processes, rather than applying principled political struggle and education of the masses."

Communist members of VVAW/WSO have a special responsibility to examine the line and practice of the RU, both in VVAW/WSO and in the rest of the movement. They must not see the struggle in VVAW/WSO as isolated from the rest of the movement; the RU line is also being pushed elsewhere. VVAW/WSO members should talk to other groups—particularly TW and Womens'—about their experience and opinion regarding the RU.

The most useful and available expression of the RU line and influence in VVAW/WSO are the new National Program and the WINTER SOLDIER paper. The AIMF, on the other hand, has at this point no clearly consolidated political line.

ECONOMISM AND VVAW/WSO

VVAW/WSO has adopted a "Vets and GI base and focus". The new national program defines how work is to be done in this focus. We quote: "We say that the key demand at this time is DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS." Most of the six-page program deals with work around this demand. The other demands, relating to Indochina, Amnesty, and a Single type discharge, are seen as more difficult for veterans to relate to. Movements around these demands are supposed to "develop dialectically" or "unfold" from work in this area at a later point. Quote again from the National Program:

"Besides consistency, it was pointed out earlier that mobilizing vets around the key demand of "Decent Benefits" will lead to related movements around amnesty and Indochina. It has been said by many chapters that people, especially vets, do not relate to the amnesty demand or the Indochina demand when first approached. This is very understandable, since anti-imperialist consciousness does not come out of the sky. People must be won to it. By uniting with and leading the struggle around demands that veterans immediately grasp are in their interests provides the

material basis for explaining the other demands and winning their support of them, not the other way around. This will not happen if the fight around the immediate needs is conducted in an economist or reformist way, never attacking the system or bringing out the system's true nature."

Despite the disclaimer tacked onto the end, this stinks of economism. Let's see what Lenin says on this subject.

"The idea preached by our economists, that the economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into the political movement, is so extremely harmful and extremely reactionary in its political significance." "...as a matter of fact, it is possible to 'raise the activity of the masses of workers' only provided this activity is not restricted to 'political agitation on an economic basis'..." "Those who concentrate the attention, observation, and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone, are not Social Democrats (communists)". WHAT IS TO BE DONE

The NO and the RU think that building an anti-imperialist Vets movement requires an economic bait. There is a blindness in this, because no-one could seriously argue that most or even a small minority of the members of VVAW/WSO are active because of their immediate economic interests.

One characteristic of economism is a failure to engage in cultural revolution—tackling the cultural forces of imperialism—sexism, self-interest, racism, individualism, etc. Perhaps this is why the RU influence seems to many VVAW/WSO members to be devoid of warmth, humanity, and collective development. What Amilcar Cabral said about national liberation and culture applies equally to socialist revolution in the oppressor nation:

"...it may be seen that if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural oppression, National Liberation is necessarily and act of culture. On the basis of what has just been said, we may consider the National Liberation movement as the organized political expression of the culture of the people who are undertaking the struggle. For this reason, those who lead the movement must have a clear idea of the value of the culture in the framework of the struggle..."



Two main aspects of the economist position in VVAW/WSO are its failure to deal with sexism and its racist position towards national movements within the US. These are explained further below.

FAILURE TO FIGHT SEXISM

The seventh objective of VVAW/WSO reads in part as follows: "7. Resolved to fight sexism, to show that sexism plays a major part in promoting war. We must show Americans our society is permeated by sexism, which forces an inferior status on women, reducing them to subservient sexual objects, and which robs both men and women of their natural growth."

A survey of the last year of WINTER SOLDIER does not turn up a single attack on sexism. The new national program does not even mention the word or the concept. The March, 1974 centerfold on International Women's Day reflects the RU line, and is an insult to the womens' movement and a violation of the 7th objective. It again fails to mention the word or concept of sexism. The last womens' struggle mentioned in its history happened in 1909. Again and again it repeats that women must unite with

men to struggle. But it never calls on men to combat sexism in their own ranks. The fact is that there is a strong and growing anti-imperialist womens' movement in the US. Most women in that movement already understand the need to ally with men in order to defeat US imperialism. What they need is for majority male organizations like VVAW/WSO to actively combat sexism and to support the womens' movement so that they can unite. Under RU influence, however, this is out of the question.

The position of the NO as expressed in WINTER SOLDIER would make us believe that it is more important for women to struggle against feminism than for men to struggle against sexism. We got news for the NO: it isn't feminism that has supported imperialism all these years. If VVAW/WSO is not anti-sexist, then it is not anti-imperialist.

NATIONAL CHAUVINISM vs INTERNATIONALISM

Starting as a pure white group, the RU has attempted to integrate its way to leadership over not only the white movement but also over the TW movements. While they believe that veterans, for example, should organize independently, they oppose independent Black or Brown groups. Most recently the RU line has been clearly exposed in Boston as the RU takes up the cry against the busing of Black school children to segregated white schools—while supporting busing and integration in principle (?) and attacking nationalism as the main deviation in the revolutionary movement! Shades of PL!

After six years of existence the RU is still almost totally white, with understandably poor relations to most TW organizations in the US.

In VVAW/WSO this has serious implications. If one looks through the past six months of WINTER SOLDIER, no evidence will be found that Black, Chicano, or Native American liberation movements even exist in the US, much less that they are actively supported by some VVAW/WSO chapters.

In San Jose, California, the VVAW/WSO chapter has built close alliances with groups in the Chicano movement through work in a "Coalition Against Racism". Several chapter members are active participants in a large mass

group, mostly Chicano, including some Chicano veterans. There has been no reason to recruit these vets because it has been clear that their oppression as Chicanos is primary. When Chicanos move as veterans, they move in national forms, such as GI Forum. How does the new National Program propose to relate to TW veterans? It declares that VVAW/WSO, a white organization, shall become multi-national through a fight for economic issues like better benefits and jobs for all. They predict that this will "win over" TW veterans to VVAW/WSO. When the NO talks about the VA in WINTER SOLDIER, however, they don't deal with the specific conditions of TW veterans (See Sept-Oct 1974 and January 1975 issues). In the November, 1974 centerfold on military oppression they say, "The only solution to this problem (racism) is through the understanding that the common enemy of both Third World and white GIs has no color at all. US imperialism is the system that we

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 mass and armed struggle. As the masses rise to higher forms of struggle, revolutionaries must be in the vanguard attempting to give direction and science to the masses' efforts. We must be doing self-defense work in Third World communities and economic organizing in all communities. We cannot tail the masses when they make leaps to new forms of struggle. As Lenin states we must learn from the masses, "Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defense and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of a given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematizers' in the seclu-



"No one who thinks of himself as a human being, as a revolutionary, can go to bed at night with a clear conscience if he has not taken some action on behalf of Vietnam."
 --Che

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are all struggling against, and it is this common form of oppression that we all share that should be the basis for unity." (emphasis added).

This is clearly incorrect. It shows how economism in the oppressor nation turns out to be national chauvinism. The ruling class of US imperialism has a color. It's white. White people in the US are an oppressor nation-- Black, Brown, and other peoples are oppressed nations and nationalities. The oppression of white and TW GIs are qualitatively different.

For a 99% white organization like VVAW/WSO internationalism must mean opposing imperialism within the borders of the US as well as without. Otherwise "anti-imperialism" is a sham, and otherwise VVAW/WSO cannot expect support or alliance, much less recruits, from Third World communities.

BUILDING THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST CAUCUS

The AIMF in VVAW/WSO cannot be a purely "reactionary" force-- reacting to the RU presence. Hopefully, the RU invasion will serve as a catalyst to the sisters and brothers in the AIMF to improve their work through a higher degree of organization and ideology. The white revolutionary movement needs the strength and clarity which can result if the advanced members of the AIMF develop collectives, coordinate their practice and theoretical development, unite with other forces in the white anti-imperialist movement fighting for socialist revolution, allying closely with TW liberation forces.

Though no political line has yet been firmly established, the outlines are beginning to come clear. While there is no opposition to building the vets and GI movements, the AIMF intends to do so while raising political demands such as support of liberation movements, combatting sexism, supporting the Vietnamese, etc. It is particularly clear that the AIMF can unite around the ideas that as a white male dominated group they must fight racism and support TW liberation movements fight sexism and support the women's movement to build unity and that the economism of the RU must be discredited and dumped. We call on our sisters and brothers in the revolutionary movements to support the anti-imperialist forces in VVAW/WSO.

sion of their studies."
 Besides recognizing that revolutionary violence is an inevitable outgrowth of political/economic conditions and the struggles of the masses, Revolutionaries must understand that clandestine work is an art which must be learned. Lenin states that, "...it is appropriate and essential for a Marxist to assess the technical side of the struggle, the technical questions which arise in its course. To recognize a definite form of struggle and not to recognize the necessity for studying its technique is like recognizing the necessity of taking part in particular elections while ignoring the law which lays down the technique of these elections." Armed groups such as the Black Liberation Army and the Weather Underground have repeatedly stated that they have no illusions about their level of struggle become primary. It is metaphysical to believe that without preparation we will be ready for new forms of struggle. Practice has always been the most direct teacher. Lenin again, "Military tactics depend on the level of military technique. This plain truth Engels demonstrated and brought home to all Marxists. Military technique today is not what it was in the middle of the 19th century. It would

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SAXBE ACCUSATIONS DENOUNCED BY C.A.S.A.

A call to unity, to resist the racist rhetoric and tactics of the government, was made by CASA Hermandad de Trabajadores in a press conference held last week. This was in response to statements made by Attorney General William B. Saxbe who stated that the presence of undocumented workers constitutes a 'severe national crisis'. Singling out Mexicano workers, Saxbe called for the arbitrary and anti-human deportation of one million undocumented workers as the solution for the present economic crisis.

The false accusations made by Saxbe are attempts by the government to divide all workers, placing the blame for the inflationary crisis on one sector of the working class. Saxbe's statements serve to divert attention from the real cause of the national economic crisis: government policies and the practices of multinational corporations.

GOVERNMENT ATTEMPT TO DIVIDE WORKERS COUNTERED

Saxbe said that undocumented workers hold millions of jobs, but no group of workers can cause unemployment, which is solely the result of production cutbacks used to protect corporate profits in times of economic instability.

He claims that undocumented workers drain social services funds. In fact, these workers do pay federal, state, and municipal taxes in the form of paycheck deductions, rents, and sales taxes, but do not collect benefits of these payments as other workers do.

Saxbe also claims that undocumented workers send millions of dollars to their home countries annually. Considering the high cost of living (one of the highest in the world) and the low wages (especially amongst immigrant workers) it is clear that this is impossible. On the contrary, there is an inflow of wealth into the US because of the pirating practices of multinational corporations which drain the natural resources of Latin America and other countries.

The policy adopted by directors of the United Farm Workers reflect the traditional racist policy of the AFL-CIO leadership. These false leaders of labor openly agree with the government and attack a sector of the working class.

Workers are workers regardless of national origin, culture, or skin color---any attempt to divide workers serves the profit interests of big business, big corporations, and not workers. His-

be folly to contend against artillery in crowds and defend barricades with revolvers." George Jackson and Lenin jointly sum up the need to learn the art of people's war; "No argument has any substance if it conflicts with the objective conditions, the clear, incontrovertible facts. In our case, these facts can be read from the nation's dailies in the obituary section. Blacks who seriously advocate revolution are killed. Blacks who attack property relations are slated for the graveyard or the prison camp. It's a national cultural tradition. Since these are the facts, it follows that: 'An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot forget unless we become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists, that we are living in a class society, that there is no way out of this society, and there can be none, except by means of the class struggle. In every class society, whether it is based on slavery, serfdom or as at present, on wage labour the oppressing class is armed'. (George Jackson quoting Lenin)". In the future it can be said that revolutionaries who survive will be those that can shoot straight.

torically, deportation have not solved any of the recurring US economic crises. Deportations have proven to be an inhumane practice which ignores the civil and human rights of immigrant workers. This is a government policy designed to provoke anti-immigrant feelings, and more particularly, anti-Mexicano and Latino feelings which divide working people.

Attorney General Saxbe's statements amount to placing Latinos in the historically used role of scapegoats for big business. This is a role we must resist and combat.

AN INJURY TO ONE, IS AN INJURY TO ALL!



"THE PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DESTROY THOSE FORCES WHICH THREATEN THEIR SURVIVAL."

The Vietnamese people have shown their courage many times in the battlefield. "When you are ready to die for your freedom, the threat of death no longer intimidates you." NVA recruit.
 "Better to die on my feet than to live the rest of my life on my knees." Emiliano Zapata.

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