



INSIDE-OUT

Same Struggle - Same Fight!

no. 13 VVAW-WSO Newsletter for Prisoners

Oct. 75

VVAW/WSO National Office, P. O. Box 20184, Chicago, Illinois 60620

Militant Greetings:

As you may have noticed from the envelope, the VVAW National Office has moved; the new address is P. O. Box 20184, Chicago, IL 60620. And that's not the only change. The newspaper, formerly Winter Soldier is now named The Veteran. Although the content of the paper is much the same (depending on what struggles are moving forward at any given time), we decided that the name The Veteran was a better reflection of what VVAW is--and what we are is our practice which is primarily directed toward the struggles of vets. We've also found, from going out to vets in order to sell the paper, that the name Winter Soldier didn't mean much to people--so we changed it.

It's been awhile since the last issue of the paper or of Inside/Out. The reason is simple--we just didn't have the money. In fact, this issue of the paper was printed simply because the VVAW chapters around the country scrounged up the money and sent it to us. Of course we still hope to get the paper out monthly, but it probably won't happen quite that often. The economic crisis has hit us in the National Office as well as the members of the organization. One change that means for us is that instead of putting in full time work with the National Office of VVAW, we will also be working outside. And that also means that the time we will have will also be less--so please understand when letters aren't answered as quickly as we would like.

One more item: many of you have been corresponding with Marla Watson (now Marla Schorr) in the National Office. For the past month or so, Marla has been ill; a week and a half in the hospital didn't help much, and she is now out of Chicago recuperating. At this point we don't know when she will be back and able to carry forward the revolutionary work she has been doing so well. She sends her comradely greetings and solidarity. The struggle continues.

With Clenched Fist,

The VVAW National Collective



We are reprinting here a section from the Programme and Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party USA, published in October 1975. The section puts forward the position of the Party on "Prisoners and the Proletariat." This is just one section--a page--of the full Programme of the Party, and is much fuller when it is read together with the rest of the Programme. However, we would like you to see at least this much of the Programme and to let us know what you think about it.

"Prisons are an arm of the bourgeois state. Most of the men and women who fill America's prisons are not criminals by profession. The overwhelming majority are from working class backgrounds, and over one third are Black or Latin.

The bail system and the whole legal system is set up so that workers and other poor people frequently spend long stretches behind bars without ever being convicted of a crime, or by being framed. Nearly all prisoners are brutalized and deprived of the most elementary rights.

Capitalist society breeds crime--it even glorifies it in its movies. The prisons do not rehabilitate convicts, they are hell-holes which offer a 'first timer' a full education in criminal technique from those who are 'pros,' including many guards and prison officials.

Prisoners have always conducted riots and strikes to resist the brutal oppression they face, but the recent period has seen these become imbued with revolutionary content, like the heroic Attica uprising. Socialized by prison work and regimentation and spurred by struggles 'on the outside,' thousands of prisoners have waged many sharp battles and made use of their confinement time to study, and, aided by imprisoned revolutionaries, are becoming genuinely 'rehabilitated' --grasping the nature of capitalist society and resolving to join the fight to bring it down.

The proletariat has a profound hatred for crime, of which it is the main victim, but it supports and draws inspiration from the struggles of prisoners against oppression. In the process of seizing power the proletariat, guns in hand, will open the prison doors and offer the masses of prisoners themselves the chance to join the proletarian army and fully remold themselves into fighters for the working class."

People interested in reading the full document can order it for \$1 from the RCP, P. O. Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654. Again, we would like to hear your thoughts on the position put forward.



According to the August 25th issue of US News and World Report, one of the mouthpieces of the US ruling class, there's going to be a big change in prisons; as the magazine says it, "There's a revolution going on inside prisons... Many prison experts, joined by citizens who are fed up with rising crime, now have concluded that the rehabilitation system is 'bankrupt.' It is not really reforming criminals. Prisons, as a result, are beginning to turn from reform to punishment as their primary purpose."

Among the concrete changes that the magazine, after talking to a bunch of so-called experts, sees as coming about are:

- * Quicker sentencing
- * No more indefinite sentences
- * Less power in parole boards, and abolition of many parole boards.
- * Less use of probation
- * Harsh sentences for "career and violent offenders."

The article ends up, "All this will happen, experts predict, because society appears ready to abandon the idea that criminals can be reformed in prisons."

We've talked with a number of prisoners about some of these changes--many of you seem to agree with the idea of doing away with the indeterminate sentences and the parole boards, since they usually won't give parole to anyone who has fought back during their time in the kamps around the country. Probation, parole, indeterminate sentences, all of these are more tools used by the prison administrators to try to control people inside the prisons, either as a threat (you won't get parole if you don't do something or other) or as a "reward" for being a good lackey or snitch. We'd like to hear more about your thoughts on the subject to give us the material to put out some information about it.

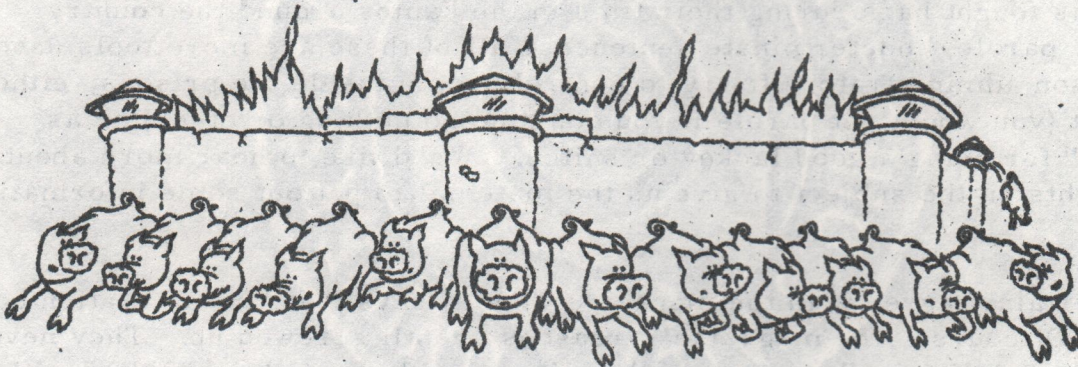
We certainly agree with the magazine when it says that "rehabilitation hasn't worked." Of course, the magazine's reasons are all screwed up. They never ask what "rehabilitation" means--to them it means learn to be exploited without fighting back in prison so that you can get out and be exploited, still without complaining. No way that kind of rehabilitation's going to work. Even that kind of rehabilitation doesn't get much done with the kind of system in American prisons--with the kinds of jobs that prison's come up with, there's not much to do on the outside. There's no demand for making license plates, and even prison industry which makes more sense--clothing, shoes, etc--usually has such outdated equipment that the experience means nothing on the outside. The basic answer is pretty simple: most people want to be involved in productive work. If there is no work, or if the individual cannot get what work is available, he or she still has to eat and support a family and buy a roof over their heads. When the system cannot deal with those simple needs, there's going to be crime.

Nothing in the new ideas of how to run a prison is going to change any of that. The same people are going to end up in prisons, and we all know they still aren't going to be the rich who can buy their way out, or whose crimes (like pushing a war in Indochina) aren't called "crimes." What it will mean is that the prison administrators won't have to appear to be "liberal" anymore, but will be able to just lock people up and forget about them. It will probably mean the construction

of more prisons which will be good for the construction industry and will probably give a lot of state officials (including prison officials) a good chance to line their own pockets. It could well mean changes for the worse in visiting regulations (which are already bad enough in most places), since what the administrators call the "privilege" of having visitors is seen as part of the process of "re-adapting" prisoners to outside society. And there are no doubt other changes, probably all for the worse.

In short, what the whole scheme looks like is another attack by the people who run this country. They will still be able to railroad poor and working people off to prison, and lock them away for as long as they can. Instead of paying lip-service to making prisons serve a useful purpose, they will be able to call them exactly what they are--punishment. And they will come up with all kinds of devices to sugar-coat the ideas to hide the basic facts from the general public--that what they are really doing is turning back the clock to the days of dungeons.

Based on the information we have so far, that's the way it looks--but we would certainly like to hear your ideas. Let us know.



We were asked to print the following information for those interested in the Church of the New Song. Reverend William Frank Small Jr, S. R. M. , is Director of International Headquarters, North Carolina New Song Center, at Mooresville, North Carolina. The C. O. N. S. Center is open for business. Matters concerning Church business, or anyone wishing to get in touch with Dr Jerry Mack Dorrough, should direct their correspondence to: Rev. William Frank Mall Jr, S. R. M. , Director, International Headquarters, N. C. New Song Center, Church of the New Song, 1035 Davis Street, Mooresville, N. C. 28115.

DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETERANS

THE CRIME IS THE SYSTEM

"Crime in the Streets" continues to be a favorite topic of the papers and TV these days. The FBI breaking and enterin The FBI keeps on cranking out figures about the rise of serious crime (do they count the FBI breaking and entering?). Law-order Jerry Ford keeps telling us he's going to do something about it.

The local newspaper carries stories about women getting into crime, and they draw maps that show which areas of the city are the most dangerous. They play up endless gory details of their favorite cases. And of course, they tell us what needs to be done about it all--more cops, tougher laws, gun control and meaner judges.

Yes, crime is increasing in our society--and it will continue to get worse. But the daily papers and TV don't tell us why. The whole system we live under is built on legalized robbery--factory owners and rich businessmen getting rich on what working people produced. The laws, courts and cops are all around to protect these rich and keep their system running.

The crime that fills the pages of the News and Post-Herald is murder, robbery and rape. Poor and working people are almost always the victims of this crime, and we have a deep anger and hatred for these acts. But the cops and courts aren't going to stop it--they weren't meant to. Their job is to protect the rich--their property, their businesses, their system.

It's no wonder that many people in this country turn to crime. The richest country in the world, the U.S., throws workers into the streets like used-up machines and forces millions into a degrading welfare system.

Increasingly, there's junkie crime, as drugs are pumped into our schools and communities, poisoning the lives of our young people. If the cops aren't selling it, they're being paid to look the other way--despite all the honest mob-busting cops on the tube.

The system itself glorifies crime--like in movies such as "The Mack," "Shaft," and "The Godfather." They're saying: "If you can't make it legally in this system, you can always make it illegally." The way these gangsters "make it," of course, is by ripping off working people or small businessmen with rackets, gambling, prosti-



"We're in here when the real criminals are out there!"

tution, or dope.

Prisons themselves are a major breeding ground for crime. Many kids, especially Black, are picked up off the streets for minor offenses. Unable to afford a lawyer or bail, they often rot in jail for months. By the time they get out of these brutalizing hell-holes, many have gotten a full education in criminal technique from the pros.

Crime also comes from capitalism destroying hopes for a better future, from the frustration of boring and meaningless dead-end jobs. It comes down as another attack on the masses of working people by the system, because we are the ones getting robbed and mugged and murdered and raped.

So what are we going to do about it? Ban handguns? The hell you say, we need guns to defend ourselves.

More cops, and judges that lock people up and throw away the key? No way--cops and judges are the first to come down on us when we go on strike, demonstrate, fight evictions or otherwise stand up for our rights. The police are already an occupying army in the Black communities of our cities. They are our enemies.

No, we won't let the ruling class of this country turn it into a police state, using the crime that the system causes as an excuse. Our answer is to fight--fight low wages, lousy education and housing, no jobs, war and all the rest of the problems the system brings down on us. Only that fight gives us a future, where the causes of crime are eliminated.

While defending ourselves against people forced to turn to crime and other outright criminals, we have to get on the offensive and build a powerful united workers' movement to rip out the roots of the problem--the rich man and his system.

