



INSIDE-OUT

Same Struggle - Same Fight!

no. 5 VVAW-WSO Newsletter for Prisoners

Oct '74

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

PARDON seems to be a key word these days--PARDON for the criminal who cut back on welfare and bombed the civilian population of Cambodia and let loose the largest bombing in the history of the world during the terror bombing of Hanoi at Christmas 1972, and continued the war in southeast Asia. For crimes against the people of this country and the people of the world there can be no pardon, no matter how sick or depressed the crook happens to be in the comfort of his San Clemente mansion.

Around the country VVAW/WSO chapters, working with a number of other groups and individuals are greeting Ford wherever he shows his imperialist face with demands for amnesty for war resisters, no amnesty for war-makers.

And we will oppose as strongly as we can the super-pardon for Rockefeller, the butcher of Attica, whose crimes are not only forgotten but who is being rewarded as the vice-presidential nominee.

The Winter Soldier paper which comes along with this newsletter gives our positions on the various events surrounding amnesty in the past month and a half. VVAW/WSO is on the move around the country--watch for us in the local papers. The struggle we are carrying on in the streets is the struggle for all of us.

A couple of months ago we asked you for comments on the methods of control used inside prisons--the responses, or at least some of them, are included in this issue. We would like any further responses you might have. Also in this issue is an article on the struggle going on within VVAW/WSO, a struggle which we feel will lead to a higher degree of unity and commitment in the future--we would also like to hear your thoughts on that subject.

We see that there is work to do: Ford's conditional amnesty for a few resisters demonstrates that the ruling class feels the need to slow down the growing peoples' movement for amnesty; the pardon of Nixon shows that the crooks--all of them--are rightly afraid of peoples' justice. We intend to hit them while they're down, and the deeper into the mud we can stomp them, the better. United, we will win.

In struggle and solidarity,

The VVAW/WSO National Collective



UNITY STRUGGLE VICTORY



VVAW/WSO Adopts New National Program of Work

At our National Steering Committee Meeting in August, VVAW/WSO adopted a new, 9-month National Program which is to guide the work of the organization and heighten the programmatic unity of our work around the country. This Program is briefly discussed in this month's issue of Winter Soldier (see centerfold article). Our previous National Program ended with the national demonstration held in Washington, DC from July 1-4. Because we felt that the last National Program was such a success, we decided to go it again.

Our new program is based around the four demands which are remaining from the Washington demonstration. One of our demands, Kick Nixon Out!, was realized and we view this as a real people's victory. We also realize that one of the major reasons for Nixon's resignation was the mass movement of the people in this country, and we learned that such movements can win all of our demands if we are willing to fight for them. Thus, we are now building a campaign around the following four demands: UNIVERSAL UNCONDITIONAL AMNESTY; IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT - END ALL AID TO THIEU AND LON NOL; SINGLE-TYPE DISCHARGE FOR ALL VETS; DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS. The campaign around these demands will be built through our day-to-day work within our communities as we take these demands to the people we live with and work to raise the anti-imperialist consciousnesses of the people of this country.

Along with our day-to-day work, we have selected specific dates which will serve as "high points" in our over-all campaign around our demands. On these dates we will be calling for militant demonstrations to focus on the nature of our demands and local actions will be planned for all across the country. The dates we have selected to focus on are: Veterans Day -- October 28 and November 11 (Veterans Day

in many states is different from the federal "holiday"); Anniversary of the Signing of the Paris Peace Agreement -- January 27; Honor Vietnam Veterans Day -- March 29; and Armed Forces (Farces) Day -- May 16. We hope that the demonstrations on these days will be large and spirited, but we also realize that they cannot be separated from our on-going, daily work.

We would hope that our brothers and sisters in prisons would be interested in plugging into our National Program. We asked you sign our declarations of Solidarity and Support for our July demonstration in Washington, DC, and the response we received to that request was overwhelming. Now, we are asking for your ideas as to how you feel you could relate to our new Program. We hope to have you involved in this new Program and the building of our campaign, so please send us your ideas as to how this could most effectively be done, and we will then get the ideas back out to you in a later newsletter. Give it some thought, and we hope to have you with us as our new Program begins to unfold.

**“WE HAVE THE SOLUTION.
THE SOLUTION IS UNITY.”**

...A Brother from D yard

We Need Your Input -- Two-line Struggle Within VVAW/WSO

In August, VVAW/WSO held its 13th National Steering Committee Meeting (our steering committee is the highest decision-making body in the organization). At this meeting, a sharp, two-line struggle concerning the nature and future of VVAW/WSO became the primary focus of our discussions. Since this two-line struggle relates to the future of our Prison Project and the direction it is to take, we felt it necessary to explain this struggle and some of the questions that arose at our meeting. We ask that those of you who are members of VVAW/WSO (and anyone else who is interested) take the initiative to respond to this discussion with your ideas and views on the direction that our organization should take.

When boiling down the two lines in the current struggle, we come to the basic problem of defining who and what we are as an organization. Both lines agree that VVAW/WSO is a mass, anti-imperialist organization with a veteran and GI base. The differences comes into play when we begin to define the focus of our work. One position states that our focus should be on veterans and GIs. This is because the struggles of veterans and GIs are an important part in the developing united front against imperialism, and that the best way we can help to build the anti-imperialist movement is by uniting with the day-to-day needs and struggles of veterans and link

these struggles up with all people's struggles against imperialism. By doing this, we can unite with the spontaneously developing veterans movement, and begin to develop strong anti-imperialist consciousnesses among veterans and bring them into the growing movement to defeat imperialism.

The other position is that anti-imperialism should be our focus. This line states that it would be reformist for us to focus primarily on veteran and GI issues, and that it would be wrong to view veterans as a "constituency group" and raise demands that relate to vets instead of raising general anti-imperialist demands at all times. This position felt that though VVAW/WSO grew out of the struggles of vets and GIs against the Indochina war, we should now be solely an anti-imperialist organization without a focus on any particular section of the people.

Part of the key to understanding this struggle is seen when discussing the differences between organizing and supporting. This first position would mean that our primary task is to organize veterans and GIs into the anti-imperialist struggle, but at the same time, we should lend as much support as is possible to other anti-imperialist demands and struggles. The second position would mean that our primary task is to organize around anti-imperialist demands in general, and that as an organization, we should not focus specifically on the struggles of veterans.

In a consensus vote which was taken of the delegates of the meeting, 43 votes were cast in favor of the first position (that we focus on vets and GIs) and 18.3 votes were cast in favor of the second position (that we should have an anti-imperialist focus). Again, both positions believe that we are an anti-imperialist organization with a veteran and GI base. This discussion should be seen in the context of the meeting. The struggle around these lines was very sharp, in part, because the National Collective wrote a 21-page position paper stating why we felt that the first position was best for the direction of VVAW/WSO. Much of the discussion centered around people trying to understand exactly what that position paper meant in terms of VVAW/WSO and discussing some of the questions that people had. Thus, the second position did not have the time to become as well formulated as did the first position.

This 2-line struggle also arose around the discussion of our prison work. The Prison Project workshop agreed that we, as an organization, cannot organize the prison movement, but that we can support prisoners by political discussion and guidance, and by sharing our knowledge of organizing and leadership. Because of this, the workshop discussed the idea that what is needed is an anti-imperialist prison organization. As the workshop states: "We have learned that we simply do not, on a national level, have the time, energy, people power, or expertise to do more than support. We cannot provide legal help, publicity, funding, or any of the many other necessities that are needed in doing prison organizing. We see political support as our role and understand that, as the anti-imperialist politics of prisoners grow, they will be more oppressed and we will have to support their struggles. Nevertheless, prisoners are the only ones who do the prison organizing inside. Our task is to educate the masses around prisons and the prison movement, and is to organize support. Whenever we can lend political support we should. Outside support is vital to the prison movement and must expose the system. We take our political analysis to the people inside and learn from them so we can take their analysis and use it to accurately educate the people outside."

Though this workshop report was accepted by the steering committee, there was a good deal of political struggle around the nature of our prison work in light of the 2-line struggle now going on within VVAW/WSO. Many questions arose about

the future of our prison project, specifically, how would prisoners relate to VVAW/WSO if it is a "mass, anti-imperialist organization with a veterans and GI base and focus." Some people felt that the prison support work we are now doing is in fact organizing prisoners so that they can organize themselves. Therefore, if prisoners organize themselves in the context of VVAW/WSO, the question arises as to whether or not we will in fact be creating an identifiable organization for prisoners to relate to.

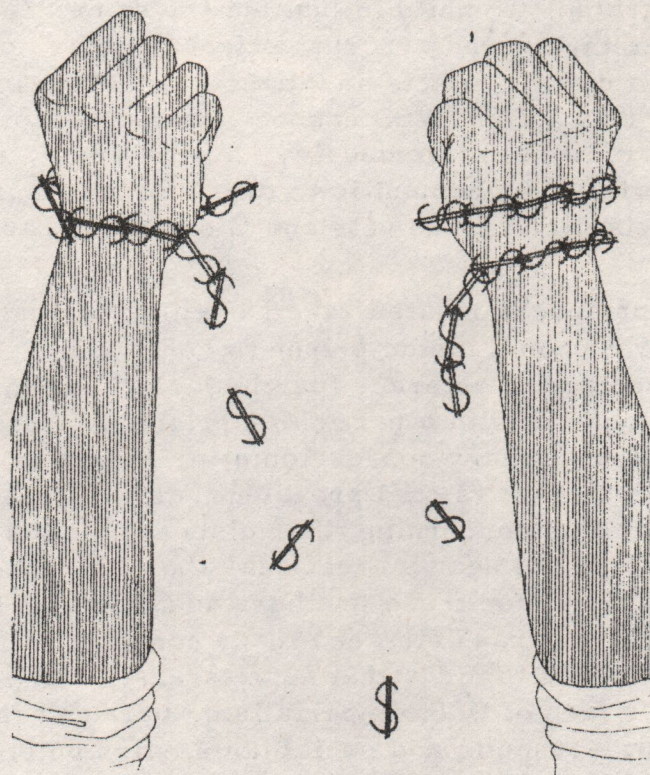
This is a very complex question and one which we hope you will respond to. As the National Collective sees things (the National Collective is also the Prison Project Office), we agree that we cannot organize prisoners, though we can provide some of the tools by which prisoners can organize themselves. There is a difference between organizing and supporting people in their organizing efforts. In some cases, this tool may be the organizational structure of VVAW/WSO, but in most cases, it is the materials we publish (newspaper, newsletter, etc) and the letters we write which provide the most effective tool. It should be obvious to everyone that our prison membership and our prison chapters are quite different from the chapters we have on the "outside." This is because members and chapters on the "inside" are unable to do the consistent, cohesive work that goes on in chapter communities outside prison walls. The level of programmatic unity is just not the same. We do not feel that our organization is something sacred, but that prisoners may use VVAW/WSO as a vehicle for their own organizing projects and directions. We, in the national collective, also firmly believe that VVAW/WSO cannot become the anti-imperialist prison organization that we feel is need in this country. As we see it, our responsibility to the growing anti-imperialist movement is to organize veterans and GIs -- that is where we have the expertise, and since vets and GIs are our base, that is what we should be building from.

We also know that prisoners relate to the base of our organization. In the majority of cases, the first people inside prison to contact us are veterans. There is an unusually high percentage of veterans (particularly Vietnam-era vets) inside prisons, and our initial contacts with a particular prison almost inevitably come from a veteran. Though the primary oppression of prisoners is being in prison, the oppression of being a veterans is still prevalent, as witnessed by the fact that many vets in prison write to us concerning their discharges, the GI Bill, VA benefits for disability, etc -- i. e. we hear a great deal about the specific problems of being veterans in prison. Even for those brothers and sisters who are not veterans, the fact that we have a veterans base attracts many non-vets to VVAW/WSO. As many have expressed it, this is the idea that as veterans, VVAW/WSO members saw the most blatant, ugly face of U. S. imperialism abroad as the U. S. government tried to force its political, economic and social domination on other countries of the world; for a prisoner, you have seen the most blatant, ugly face of U. S. imperialism here at home as the U. S. government tries to hold on to its control of the American people. We are facing the same enemy -- the system of imperialism. The ties between the two groups of people -- vets and prisoners -- are undeniable. This is especially true in light of the fact that all groups' of peoples struggles against imperialism are closely linked. But both groups -- vets and prisoners -- are organized in different ways, and the National Collective feels that it would be difficult to organize both groups of people -- in terms of the time and energy involved, and in terms of the fact that prisoners have to be organized from the inside.

We need your in-put on this entire discussion so that we will have the ideas of our brothers and sisters in prison to take to the Prison Workshop at our next steering committee meeting in December. If there are any further questions and clarification is needed, just let us know and we'll do what we can to clear up any confus-

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ion that this might have created. It is a complex question, but one which is vitally important for the future of VVAW/WSO. If you feel yourself a part of our movement and organization, then it is your responsibility to help us come to the resolution of any contradictions that exist within VVAW/WSO. People should also be aware that our prison work will not end as a result of this two-line struggle within the organization. Hopefully, as long as time, energy and money holds out, we will continue to do the type of work with prisoners that we have been doing all along and supporting the struggles of prisoners against imperialism. This is especially in light of the fact that there are so few national, political organizations doing any kind of work with prisoners, and we hope to be able to help fill this void -- at least until it can be better filled by another organization. So, our work with our brothers and sisters in prisons will remain and we will continue to do our best to tie in the struggles of prisoners with the struggles against imperialism that are going on everywhere. Let us know what you think about all of this!



Tactics of Control

For as long as there has been a class of men who wanted to live off the work of other classes of men, there has been a need for "control." The way in which this control is worked depends on the circumstances, but whatever the method of control, it exists at every level of a society which depends on exploitation for its survival.

During the days of slavery, methods of control were straightforward: the slave was simply owned. If he or she did not do what the owner wanted, he could be beaten, killed, or sold; he could be permanently separated from his family or simply worked to death at the end of a whip. But slavery wasn't efficient enough; since there was no reason for the slave to do more than just get by, he had no incentive to produce more or work harder. Even worse, from the point of view of the slave-owner, was the growing outrage at this form of exploitation; the owner could not work to reform slavery--there was no such thing as "better slavery." So the system of control was finally scrapped and a new one instituted.

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On the largest scale, the institution of the "state" is the most widespread form of control. Simply, the system of the state is the means by which one class controls another class. Through all the levels of government there is one fundamental reason for its existence: to permit the elite--the ruling class--to control and exploit all other classes. The classes have different interests--look at the difference between what Nelson Rockefeller wants and what the vast majority of the American people want and need--and there has to be a means by which Rockefeller and his class can maintain their domination: that's the state, with its bureaucracy, and its tools of repression such as the military, the police, the courts, and the prison system. Of course, the methods of control go beyond the simple use of force, though that is always there if needed (bring out the national guard to keep the trucks running, for instance). But there are more complicated methods of control. A situation where the ruling class can decide what should and should not be printed in the newspapers, or shown on TV, gives them a potent weapon to control what people think because they have control of the information that people get. And there is also a whole system of rewards and punishments which the government uses every day--we all know the righteous people who struggled for the good of the people in their communities and who were bought off by the government. Now they hold down nice offices with fancy titles, and no longer care about the people they used to try to serve. The veterans movement has its veterans' pimps, the poverty program has its poverty pimps, and on and on--merely another method by which the government can control the people and co-opt the peoples' movement.

In one of these newsletters we asked about the specific methods of control being used in prisons around the country. And we found that all the systems used by the government--buying people off either with money or with some other reward, censorship, force and brutality--have their counterparts inside prisons. Some of the responses we got from you are printed below.

From El Reno, Oklahoma: "The brothers here are finally coming together against something the administration has dreamed up "to better our existence and create some incentive for better behavior." It seems strange that whenever the government wants something, if they can't use force to achieve their needs, they use money.

"Their new program calls for a few dollars to be "awarded" those individuals that have accumulated "merits" throughout the month, by keeping their personal appearance up to par, and not hassling the Man. The merit, or brownie points, are to be given by the police in general, for anything they deem deserving to include snitching, etc.

"The biggest farce of all is the fact that they try to convince us that the extra money is coming from what they have left over in their budget. It also seems strange that we've all taken a cut in pay, beginning this month. I'll be damned if I pay some snitch to catch me another case."

For administrators there are more methods than money; from Eddyville, Ky, comes the directive about "meritorious good time" which says, in part, "Meritorious good time, in an amount ranging from one to five days but not to exceed five days per month, may be awarded in addition to statutory good time to those inmates who during their period of incarceration are performing exceptional meritorious services or duties of outstanding importance in conjunction with institutional operations and programs." Among the eligibility requirements are "that the inmate clearly shows a superior overall adjustment to the institutional programs," and that "the inmate has faithfully performed the tasks assigned to him in a conscientious and cooperative manner." In the words of one of the brothers at Eddyville, "they have come up with a new one which may prove to be more effective than any other; particularly where the short-term inmates are concerned, they (the administration) can win them over to their side with

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this new "good time." This is going to turn good men into informants. I, for one, do not want their good time nor no part of it and I encourage other brothers not to take part in anything that involves this good time."

Control through a system of rewards works only when people do not see through the system. Psychological warfare is not always so clear. The various psychological testing/adjustment centers/behavior modification techniques are well known, as are the tactics used within the clockwork orange test centers. But a daily feature of behavior modification inside prisons is described in a letter from London, Ohio: "The manner in which the inmates here are controlled is through "mass psychology." This type of action is applied in all penal institutions from time to time but here it is "the" practice. The administration is psychology conscious and have good reason to be as at least one member possesses a degree in psychology and makes no bones about using it "against" us. He reminds me of a mad scientist who is so intelligent that he has resorted to "way-out" type practices for personal gratification and satisfaction just to show himself how good he really is. And lo and behold to the individuals that they are not able to control. All of the brothers here see and recognize what is happening but few can fully comprehend the situation and even fewer choose to fight it. And those who do, usually fall victim to the monster's clutches and get denied parole, placed in isolation, sent to Lucasville, his mail becomes mysteriously misplaced or read, he becomes the brunt of the administration's mind-breaking harrassment tactics. One of these tactics is for three or four of the top guards (capt's, etc) to get in a group and begin to look at the subject as if they are talking about him and then laugh occasionally. This produces a great feeling of "being alone" in your battles against them and they want you to have this feeling for when you are fighting alone they want you to know how easy it is to dispose of you. It becomes a battle of your psyche against theirs. When and if they resort to physical torture, beating you, placing you in isolation, etc you can chalk up "one point" for you because they are in essence telling you that if they can't gain control of your mind, they'll beat you into submission. But I feel that as long as a man's mind is his own, whatever type of physical harm done to the body can only strengthen his mind."

Psychological warfare can't do the whole job; administrators are always faced with brothers and sisters who get together to unify against whatever form of control



is coming down. Twenty years ago, prison officials, in most places, could simply lock everyone up or murder a couple of prisoners. Today, the American people, in many places, have begun to understand what prisons are all about--that there is a double standard of justice in this country and, through events such as Attica or McAlester or the writings of a George Jackson, the awareness of what goes on in prisons is growing. As a result administrators have begun to have to justify their brutality. And that means developing new methods of control

(From Marion, Ohio): "There are times when prison administrations will take it upon themselves to create a riot or disturbance for a purpose of "cleaning their skirts" or so to speak. They will do all that they can to make the disturbance one of a racial nature as they are much more able to control something such as this. The old divide and conquer game is very effective in this area. They will usually begin such actions when they have come under attack from some high official and/or groups for running a warehouse instead of a rehabilitation center, and are possibly going to be investigated. They can usually hold up under an investigation but continued pressure being applied is something else. So a disturbance of some kind will give them the opportunity to make excuses for running a warehouse instead of a rehabilitation center. They can then tell the public "See, all these animals want to do is fight amongst themselves and destroy valuable property. How are we to rehabilitate animals?" This last tactic was used during the riot in Oklahoma when the inmates had secluded themselves in an area of the joint and would not come out of their area. At this time two inmates had begun to fight (one was a snitch and was receiving payment). The prison officials as well as the National Guard both made public statements that they were not about to make any attempts to save the man's life who was being stabbed to death because they were not going to jeopardize the lives of "good" men (speaking of guardsmen and prison officials) when the inmates could not show the unity that they were trying so hard to make everyone believe that they had. In applying such actions they have created a very strong feeling of doubt and mistrust among the individuals incarcerated and such feelings among these men or women will assist them in maintaining control of things in the future."

As pointed to in this description, the primary device used to control people in prison--that is, to keep people from unifying--is racism. "The tools the administration uses to keep the racial tension at a level where the brothers here are divided and at each others' throats is kind of hard for me to express. There are so many little things that they do, say, etc, that it's hard to pin it down. Rumors are spread, racial harassment spreads unrest towards the guards, and by the animosity towards the guards, it's but a small step to feel the same animosity towards the brothers of the same color. Sometimes a white guard will bust a black brother and he will receive the maximum punishment but the same guard will bust a white brother and the man will get away with maybe a verbal reprimand. The blacks get hot behind this, tension grows, and after a series of these kind of incidents, a riot comes down."

As written to us from a brother in Angola, Louisiana, the prison system does not come upon all these control ideas by accident. He writes, "I have served over 28 years in America's penal system. Prison Behavior Modification has become the topic of the day in prisons all across the nation. Had prisoners been more alert they would have had all this knowledge on Behavior Modification as far back as 1962 when James V. Bennett, then director of the U. S. Bureau of Prisons, sat as chairman at a seminar of prison wardens and psychologists.

"Dr E. H. Scheim spoke on a topic "Man Against Man; Brainwashing." at that seminar and told the assembled wardens: "My basic argument is this: in order to produce marked change of behavior and/or attitude, it is necessary to weaken, undermine, or remove the supports of old patterns of behavior and the old attitudes": this can be done "either by removing the individual physically and preventing any communi-

cation with those whom he cares about, or by proving to him that those whom he respects are not worthy of it and, indeed, should be actively mistrusted. "

"The key to Dr (Dr--ain't that a joke?) Scheims game is, simply, "first disorganize, then undermine, and finally put on the pressure. The only thing Dr Scheims did was to put into words what ignorant guards and illiterate people have been doing for thousands of years.

What is slowing the progress of the inmate movement? The answer is old style modification dictated by the ignorant and the illiterate who know it is easy to pit a Black man against a White man; pit a rapist against a robber; pit a young man against an old man; pit two men against each other over a job, a submissive homosexual, a gift, a privilege. Any fool knows how to use an informer--give him something, pay him for his information. He will even 'make something up to continue to secure favors. '

Call it any name you will: behavior modification, conditioning, hyper-suggestibility, or hypnosis; use any tool you know of, drugs, scalpels, or sensory deprivation or a big stick; In reality, none of these methods can conquer a determined Nation of Convict. The convict must always be used to destroy himself, for he is his own worst and best enemy.

Disorganization of prisons is based primarily on a very few factors; race is first and the most powerful weapon; second is inmate ignorance (the fact that many inmates are without the proper education prohibits proper reasoning); the third is homosexuality (remember what Dr. Scheims said: "physically taking the individual away from the ones he cares about... ", and last, we have the most talked about but the least threat to our problems, the Informer. He is the scapegoat for all prisoners' failure; the universal cry: "man, an informer got us," is indeed a childlike defense.... "

The first step to breaking down the control--no matter what method is being used-- is to see how the tactic is being used. When the system falls, it will be the result of understanding and resistance to the tactics of those who exploit and control all our lives--inside and out.

