

Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Winter Soldier Organization

NEWSLETTER

number 34

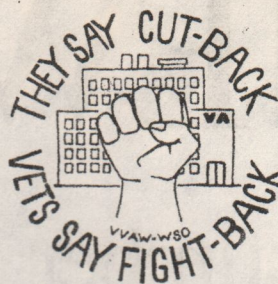
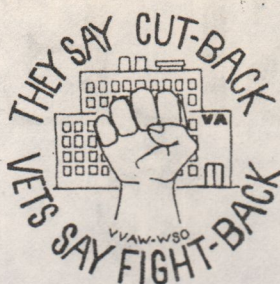
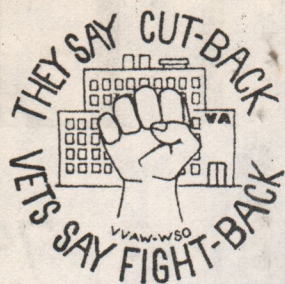


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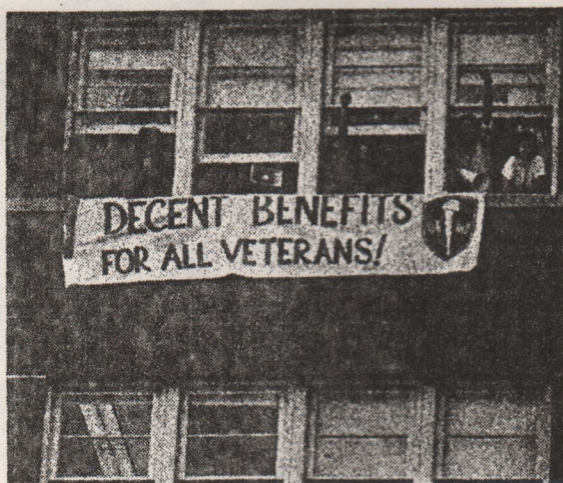
VIETNAM VETS' DAY MARCH 29th - BUILD FIGHTING DEMOS!

As the crisis of the system deepens; as the capitalist economy plummets downward, the threat of another imperialist war looms larger and larger on the horizon. Wars of imperialism have always been necessary as one way to get out of a depression or a stagnated economy. The situation in the world today points toward the realization that the imperialists are preparing for yet another war to take them, temporarily, out of the economic mess of their dying system. It is not too difficult to see that the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, are colluding and contending in the Middle East as Kissinger and Gromyko, their government's mouthpieces, go yo-yoing back and forth in that area. Whoever controls the Middle East controls the economies of Western Europe and Japan, as was evidenced recently when the oil producing countries slashed exports to those nations. The US and the USSR see control of the area as vital in their attempts to gain economic hegemony over one another. While the Pentagon is sending mercenary troops to Saudi Arabia in preparation for a possible war, the liberation struggles in Oman and Dhofar are gaining strength and threatening the Middle East feudal governments and the aims of the superpowers.

In Southeast Asia the puppet regimes in Saigon and Phnom Penh are on the verge of toppling. It is highly possible that the United States will redeploy large numbers of troops to bail them out, or begin another round of direct, massive air strikes. People's liberation struggles are rising in the Philippines and Korea. Everywhere the imperialist countries are suffering defeats by these revolutionary forces, while the superpowers vie desperately for areas of influence and domination as they try to bail out of their economic crises.



Imperialism is a two-headed monster, as Ho Chi Minh said. We should raise the threat of imperialist war at the same time that we talk about how that monster is trying to suck the blood of the American people. On March 29, chapters around the country will be demonstrating on Vietnam Veterans Day. This day is an important one for our ongoing program to build a fighting vets movement and one that offers a perfect way in which we can expand our demands and expose and fight against the threat of war between the superpowers. After all, it was the veterans who fought in Indochina and it is the present day GIs and potential draftees who will be fighting the imperialist wars in the future. This is really a key point to raise in tying in decent benefits with the threat of war.



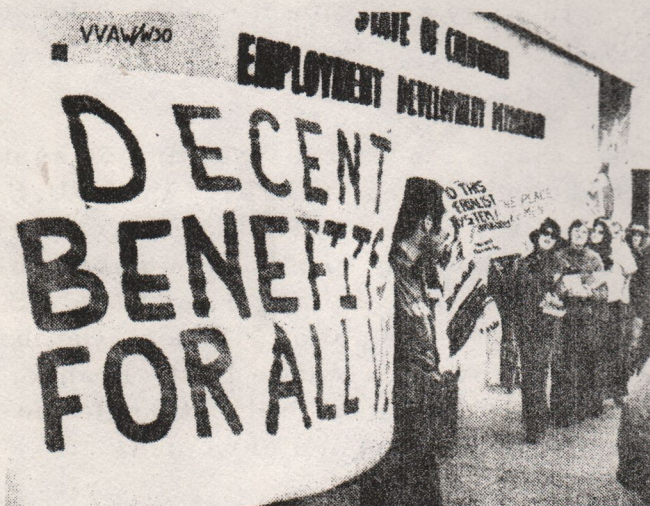
Vietnam Veterans Day was begun by the system as a way to try and pacify vets who fought in Indochina. As we can see from our practice as the crisis of imperialism deepens, the attacks on the American people increase and survival gets tougher and tougher. Soaring unemployment, the rising cost of living and spiralling inflation are what the system tries to force on our backs. But the American people aren't taking this lightly and are fighting back against the system. As our national program is aimed at building a fighting movement of vets and GIs, we can see that veterans are particularly hard hit by unemployment and as things get worse the conditions in the VAs make it more difficult for vets to get decent medical care, housing, loans or school tuitions and living expenses; things that vets and the American people have fought to win for many years. As working people are organizing to fight the system, we should boldly take our War on the VA to the masses of veterans and other working people. On Vietnam Veterans Day we should organize militant, fighting demonstrations pointing out how the system is screwing vets while we raise the slogan warning of the potential of imperialist war.

In raising these two demands, we should not forget that the liberation struggles going on around the world are a key part of the international movement to defeat imperialism. We should, for instance, talk about the heroic struggles of the Cambodian or Palestinian peoples; but we should guard against the error of either negating the vets demands, (which the other slogans should unfold around), or negating the real threat of fighting breaking out in the Middle East or renewed fighting in Southeast Asia, (or wherever else the imperialists try to worm their way out of their crisis.)

The date, March 29th, was picked because that is the day set aside as Vietnam Veterans Day. This year the 29th falls on Holy Saturday, which to many Christians is a religious holiday. We feel that if, in fact, your city is going to hold a VVD event it will probably not be on that day. Instead of rigidly holding on to the 29th, in a case like this, we think it would be better to have the demonstrations on the date and site that your city chooses. You should find out about this as soon as possible. If your city is not observing the VVD, then you should choose either the 29th, understanding that it is a religious day, or choose a date close to it.

In building for the demonstrations we think that it would be a good idea if chapters try to get other organizations to help build it. Recently, we held a meeting with the National Office of the Revolutionary Student Brigade and discussed the March 29th demonstration. They said that they would encourage all of their chapters to work with us around the VVD to build the demonstrations. We think that this would be excellent, and that chapters should contact the local RSB and include them in the planning of the demonstrations.

All in all, we believe that the Vietnam Veterans Day actions should be strong, militant and fighting demonstrations that would raise the demands of veterans and link these struggles with the threat of imperialist war, including the threat of war between the two superpowers as they try to gain hegemony of the world's economies. In doing this, we think that the organization's program will take a giant leap forward in our struggle to build a fighting vets movement, and at the same time will build the general anti-imperialist movement as the demonstrations successfully raise the point that it is the system we are fighting to smash!



**DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS!
WE WON'T FIGHT YOUR IMPERIALIST WARS!**

General Information

International Women's Day -- March 8th

International Women's Day is just around the corner and there will be celebrations of IWD in cities around the country. We feel it is important for VVAW/WSO chapters to be participating in these celebrations wherever possible. We have already heard from a number of chapters who are working in IWD coalitions and this is an important aspect of our work. IWD is a day to celebrate and honor the role women have played in the struggle against oppression and exploitation, both in this country and around the world; and it is also a day which symbolizes taking up the fight against the oppression of women. VVAW/WSO must be involved in this fight -- not only on International Women's Day, but in all aspects of our daily work.

International Women's Day originated in honor of two all-women strikes which took place in New York City. On March 8, 1857, garment workers went on strike, marched and picketed for better working conditions, equal rights for women, and a 10-hour work day. This strike was brutally broken by New York police. Years later, on March 9, 1908, women in New York's needle trades marched in honor of the 1857 strike, demanding an end to sweatshops and child labor, and the right to vote. This march was joined by women from other factories, women living in slum tenements, and the wealthier women fighting for women's suffrage. These women came together in this first Women's Day event to raise their voices for better working and living conditions. Again, police broke the ranks of women with force and violence. Two years later, in 1910, Clara Zetkin, a communist leader of the German working class, proposed that the Second International Socialist Congress declare March 8th as IWD. This was done and since then, millions of people around the world have taken this day as a time for celebration and honor of the role of women in the struggle.

IWD is one of the world-wide holidays that belongs to the working class everywhere. In recent years, IWD has begun to be celebrated again here in the U. S. Last year, thousands of people around the country were involved in IWD celebrations -- programs, marches, forums, etc -- and we can expect the numbers of people to be involved in this year's celebrations to be even larger. VVAW/WSO should be a part of the celebrations, joining with the people of Vietnam, Cambodia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, Laos, China, the Middle East, France, Italy (to name a few) on this day to honor the role of women in the struggle the world over and to continue in the fight against the oppression of women.

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY!
BUILD THE UNITY OF WORKING PEOPLE EVERYWHERE!

Criticism of VVAW/WSO's Lawton Defense Work

During the sum-up of VVAW/WSO's work around the defense of Gary Lawton at the St Louis NSCM, both the RPPDC and the National Office voiced strong criticism of the organization. While a number of specific chapters around the country had in fact been working around Gary's case on a regular basis, the majority of the organization had been doing little, if any, real consistent work. This criticism was overwhelmingly accepted by the NSC as being valid. Based on this self-criticism and the fact that the Lawton trial is VVAW/WSO's only national project, a proposal for coordinating VVAW/WSO's Lawton work and pushing it forward on a national level was unanimously adopted. The proposal contained 4 basic points.

1. That every member of VVAW/WSO would get at least one Lawton petition filled out.
2. That at rallies and demonstrations around racism and political repression, chapters would raise signs and banners demanding the freeing of Gary Lawton (this was to include speaking about the case wherever possible).
3. That leafletting would take place at these demonstrations and in the community around Gary's case.
4. That picketing would take place on or around Feb 1st to support Gary's case. (Places suggested for the pickets included Federal Buildings, DA's offices, etc). Every chapter in the organization would organize something around these picket-lines.

The point of the proposal was to see it as a minimum program of work, as a guide to conducting on-going mass work around Gary Lawton that could be linked up to the day-to-day struggles at the individual community level.

As was pointed out in the article on Lawton defense work in the March Winter Soldier a number of chapters have really begun to move on the spirit of this proposal: understanding that the task is to build a mass movement around Gary's case, linking it up with the broader struggle of other political prisoners around the country and avoiding the hit-or-miss approach of doing sporadic work around Lawton in isolation from every thing else. While this understanding is only now beginning to be put into practice (and certainly has a long ways to go before it is accomplished) chapters such as Milwaukee and Chicago have begun moving on it. Their Lawton work is being planned on a much more systematic, ongoing basis in the community and is being linked up with the struggle's of other political prisoners--Antowyn Cauley in Chicago, or the Committee to Fight Police Repression in Milwaukee. The NO sees this type of approach to our Lawton work as a real leap forward in building a real peoples movement against political repression.

Unfortunately, despite all the chest-beating and heart-felt committments made to rectify the organization's poor past practice around Gary's case, we have to report that the majority of chapters have not made any real efforts toward changing things. Although every VVAW/WSO member is supposed to get at least one Lawton petition filled out, the RPPDC has so far only received a few. Although all chapters are supposed to be leafletting and raising banners and signs around Gary's case at local rallies or demonstrations on political repression, to the best of our knowledge, only a handful of chapters have actually done so.

Perhaps the most glaring example of this continuing failure to seriously take up Lawton work was the dismal showing the organization made with the demos and picket lines that were supposed to have occurred around Feb 1st. With the notable exceptions of a few chapters such as Columbus, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Oakland and

Riverside, the rest of the organization did absolutely nothing at all around this. Admittedly there were errors made by the NSC in selecting the Feb 1st date for the actions. In many cities Federal Buildings or DA offices were not open among other things. However, problems like this could have been overcome and some sort of action could have been held by nearly all chapters on a date near the 1st of Feb. There is no escaping the point that the vast majority of the chapters simply didn't even try to pull anything together around the picket lines, no matter how small it might have been. In a few cases we feel that chapters were justified in not holding actions--those are the chapters that were seriously trying to build a mass movement around political repression and that felt that they needed more time to pull together a more coordinated effort in the near future. This was not the case with 99% of the organization however. People simply didn't bother to try and get anything together at all.

The NO feels that this is an extremely serious failure on the part of the organization. The Lawton case is our only national project and clearly a political trial of an unusually important nature. Moreover, as the 3rd trial is now actually underway, this is a particularly crucial time to be doing mass work around Gary Lawton. The miserable showing VVAW/WSO has made overall since St Louis cannot be allowed to slide any further. We are not saying that the trial of Gary Lawton should be raised in isolation from everything a chapter is doing on a local level, that on the third Thursday of every month all other work ceases while people pull out a "free Lawton" banner and dutifully march on the Federal Building. Far from it. This is precisely the approach to Lawton work that we must put an end to if we really want to move it forward. Rather, all chapters that are doing work around political



repression on a local level should be linking up the case of Gary Lawton with that work and with the broader issue of political repression, and with the thousands of other political prisoners in the US. We understand the importance of this task and we organizationally have the capability of carrying it out. When we go to the next NSCM this July in Ohio, we don't need to turn the meeting into a confessional booth where everyone repeats a series of mea culpas about how bad their Lawton work has been for the past 6 months. This doesn't help Gary Lawton, VVAW/WSO, or the anti-imperialist movement. The point is to get it together now and actually begin doing the work around Gary's case that we should be.

***Enclosed with this mailing is an updated press release on the trial (which has begun, finally) and a leaflet which lays out a number of activities around Gary's case that chapters can begin moving on. Also, a sample letter is contained that can be reproduced and used in initiating and building a letter-writing campaign around the case. The NO particularly urges chapters to get as many of these letters sent to the judge in Riverside as possible. Be sure to let the RPPDC know about all letters sent to the Judge.

FREE GARY LAWTON. FREEDOM FOR ONE IS NOT ENOUGH; FREE US ALL. SAY ON!!!



MONEY!

THE LAWTON DEFENSE DESPERATELY NEEDS MONEY! The expense of running a solid political defense is staggering and the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee (RPPDC) is flat broke. Any contributions you can send to help them continue their work are desperately needed. Send contributions to the RPPDC, P.O. Box 244, Riverside, California 92502.



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Raise the Leavenworth Brothers From the "Hole"!

Enclosed with this newsletter is a two-sided leaflet on Gary Lawton and the Leavenworth Brothers. With this leaflet, we are initiating a letter-writing campaign around the Leavenworth Brothers. At the Milwaukee NSCM in April, 1974, VVAW/WSO voted to give the struggle of the Leavenworth Brothers a National Endorsement -- meaning that we see this struggle as important and needing our support. That endorsement still stands. Though the trials of the Brothers are over, they still are in desperate need of our help.

As stated in the leaflet, the Bureau of Prisons has designated the four brothers who were convicted of assault and inciting to riot charges for "Long Term Segregation." This means that wherever they are sent within the prison system, they are immediately being thrown into isolation units (the hole) and separated from other prisoners. It is clear that this is being done as further repressive

measures against the brothers, and it is the prison system's way of taking further reprisals against the July, 1973 Leavenworth rebellion. Generally, people in the segregation units of prisons are there because they have broken some "rule" of the prison while they were in the general population. Since the Leavenworth Brothers have not been in general population at all, they have been "sentenced" to solitary for no "official" reason.

VVAW/WSO must struggle to see that these brothers are released from segregation, and the only way this will come about is through mass pressure on the prison system. For this reason, we ask that all chapters (and preferably all chapter members) write letters to the Bureau of Prisons demanding that Odell Bennett, Jessie Evans, Alf Hill and Alfred Jasper be released from this long term segregation immediately and placed in the general population of their respective prisons. The address to write to is: Norman A. Carlson, Bureau of Prisons, 101 Indiana Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20534. Also, we ask that chapters spread the word on this struggle by doing things as having friends and neighbors write letters to the Bureau, put requests for letters in chapter/regional newsletters, contact other organizations in your community, etc. By doing this, we can hopefully flood the Bureau with letters demanding the release of these brothers.



It would also be good if people could write to the individual wardens of the respective prisons. Following are the addresses of the prisons the brothers are in and the names of the wardens: Jessie Evans -- US Penitentiary, Box PMB, Atlanta, GA 30315 (Marvin Hogan-warden); Alf Hill -- USP, Box 1000, Marion, IL 62959 (Ralph Aaron-warden); Alfred Jasper -- USP, Box 1000, Lewisburg, PA 17837 (Floyd Arnold-warden); Odell Bennett is currently out of federal prison for court appearances so there is no warden to write to regarding him, though he has been designated for long term segregation by the Bureau of Prisons and is to be included in letters to Norman Carlson.

It is essential that the organization take up this struggle. It will not take a great deal of time, but requires writing only a few letters and spreading the word among other people and asking them for support. However, those letters are critically needed and may save the lives of these brothers. So, begin spreading the word and write your letters today!

SUPPORT THE LEAVENWORTH BROTHERS!

Prairie Fire, A Revolutionary Singing Group, On Tour -

Prairie Fire, a revolutionary singing group is about to begin a nationwide tour, singing at campuses across the country. The group has been well known in the Bay Area in California for several years. They have performed at benefit concerts, rallies and picketlines. Some people may have heard them before with songs that they have made such as "Boycott Gallo Wine" and "Out of Gas". The tour is being set up by the Revolutionary Student Brigade and we urge all chapters to contact the local RSB chapter to find out when they will be in your town. We are sure that you will not only enjoy the music, but will also like to help build their tour.

They will be in the following cities, (so far):

Feb. 26 - Norman, Oklahoma, Feb. 27 - Lawrence Kansas, Mar. 1 - St. Louis, Mar. 5 - Iowa City, Iowa, Mar. 8 - Milwaukee, Wisc, Mar. 11 - Chicago, IL, Mar. 13 - Madison, Wisc, Mar. 15 - Chicago, Mar. 22 - Birmingham, Ala, Mar 23 or 24 - Atlanta, GA, Mar. 26 - Gainesville, FL, Mar. 27-28 - Pennsylvania, Mar. 30 to Apr. 3 - Baltimore/DC area, Apr. 4-7 - NY/NJ area. Apr. 8-9 - Connecticut, Apr. 10-15 - New England area, Apr. 16-20 - Upstate NY, Apr. 21 - Cleveland, Apr. 25 - Kent, OH, Apr. 26-29 - Detroit, Apr. 31 - Dayton, May 1-3 - Cincinnati, May 4 - Chicago.

For confirmation or for more information contact the local RSB chapter.

Prairie Fire

On Tour:



McAlester

The situation at the Oklahoma State Prison at McAlester was described in the last issue of Winter Soldier; a rebellion at the prison in July, 1973, was followed by increased repression. Prisoners fought that repression; their legal struggles won them a victory in Mar, 1974 when a federal judge required the prison to cease a number of its most repressive practices. In July, however, one prisoner died of gas after a particularly brutal gas attack by the guards on people confined in the isolation unit, The Rock. In October, the Rock was burned to the ground. Ten prisoners were charged with "second-degree arson" as a result; their pre-trial hearing took place on January 24th and after; what follows is the report from one of the McAlester prisoners.

"The trial started on January 24th and opened to a Kourtroom of about 120 irate highly vocal partisan supporters. On the first day there was much foot-stomping and hand-clapping; rhetoric flew thick and fast. The state's case deteriorated after their chief prosecution witness, Butch Baker, a turncoat snitch, spent eight grueling hours under cross examination. By the fourth day the state was forced to dismiss indictments against four of the brothers. By February 3rd the state's case was in shambles when it was discovered that nobody bothered to determine the cause of the fire on the Rock. The hostage guards saw mattresses being dragged somewhere and shortly thereafter the Rock was on fire but nobody was seen striking a match. Perhaps it was spontaneous combustion? Charging a man with arson without determining the cause of the fire is not unlike finding a dead body and charging a man with murder without first determining the cause of death. The prosekktor was visibly shaken when one of the hostage guards was asked to name defendants and he put the wrong names on the defendants (all blacks look alike to him), and then it was revealed that the defendants were pointed out to the witness by other guards (the adminstration actually decided who the 10 would be)."

At last report, the judge was making his decision as to how many of the remaining six defendants would be bound over for trial.

The brothers in McAlester, however, are not just involved in defensive legal maneuvers. As a result of suits brought by the prisoners, a federal grand jury, on January 29th handed down indictments of ten former and present guards in the gassing of prisoner Bobby Forsythe. Eight guards are charged with conspiracy, seven with carrying out the conspiracy to deprive inmates of their constitutional guarantees against cruel and unusual punishment. One ex-guard was charged with assaulting two prisoners, a lieutenant was charged with perjury, and five guards were charged with another gas attack. According to the warden, a retired military officer, "It's a sad day." Three of the guards are still working at McAlester, and Warden Crisp will not fire them; they are "fine correctional officers," he said. He stands "100% behind them, all of them. It's a precarious position and is hard to swallow but it is only an indictment and not an announcement of guilt." The same strict interpretation of the law is not often afforded to prisoners.

Repression inside McAlester continues; the same brutality and inhumane conditions that caused the first rebellion remain. And the resistance and spirit of the prisoners is growing daily in the face of that repression.

Cambodia--to Final Victory

As this newsletter is being written, the Cambodian people have not yet won their final victory against US imperialism--but they may well have done so by the time this newsletter gets to you. Every day brings another item of news which shows the Liberation Forces moving closer and closer to liberating Phnom Penh, the last stronghold of the Lon Nol regime.

It's clear that the US government has only two choices--to cut and run (and hope to hold on to Vietnam and Thieu), or to re-enter the war through massive bombing. From the statements of various government functionaries, even they don't believe that a supplemental aid request, and its accompanying airlift to supply the city of Phnom Penh will do any long range good. There is some government jockeying going on, with the Ford administration trying to make it look like Congress is to blame for the final "defeat" in Cambodia--it is our job to point out what total garbage this tactic is.

In a series of articles in Winter Soldier, we have been pointing out the differences between life in the liberated zones of Cambodia and the suffering of the people in the areas controlled by Lon Nol; in the long run, we believe this is one of the points which we have to continue to emphasize--that the GRUNC forces have constantly worked for the good of the people while Lon Nol has operated in the interests of US imperialism (and, of course, in his own interests).



The final destruction of the Lon Nol government is not going to be the result of the US Congress; it will be simply, the victory of the Cambodian people who have been carrying forward their armed struggle for years. And it is the struggle of the people of the US which has made it more and more difficult for the government to continue aid to Lon Nol. As of this writing, it seems to us that there is little likelihood of US re-intervention; however, the crisis of imperialism, the economic disaster which we face in the US, could prompt the government to use Cambodia as a way out. VVAW/WSO should be prepared to take mass direct action should the government begin bombing--or if that course of action seems imminent.

In the more likely event that the government decides to accept the inevitable defeat in Cambodia, we should be prepared for victory celebrations around the country. As part of these celebrations we should be exposing the role of imperialism and pointing toward the strength of the liberation struggles even when faced by the US military and economic forces. Including the victory celebration in the March 29th actions should be considered, if the liberation forces have taken Phnom Penh by that time.

The Royal Government of National Union has issued the following statement on the eve of its final victory:

"The national and people of Cambodia wholeheartedly thank all the peace and justice-loving peoples the world over, including the American people, all the American people and friends, near or far, loving peace, who have actively support and assisted the Cambodian people in their just struggle. We ask them to use every possible means to immediately stop all the criminal acts of interference, aggression and intervention of all kinds of the US imperialists against Cambodia."

NO U. S. RE-INTERVENTION IN CAMBODIA

★ ★ ★ CELEBRATE THE VICTORY OF THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE ★ ★ ★

FBI Agent Reveals Further Attacks on VVAW/WSO

A paid agent of the FBI, Joseph A Burton, recently revealed a series of disruptive activities carried out by the FBI inside numerous left organization in the US, including VVAW/WSO. Burton, from Tampa, Florida, formed a phoney "Maoist" front group at the direction of the FBI. Started in 1972 in Tampa, it was called the "Red Star Cadre." Using Red Star as a cover, Burton then attempted to promote splits, distrust and confusion among left organizations. Despite laws prohibiting FBI activity outside the USA, Burton revealed his participation in numerous covert FBI operations outside the US.

Interestingly enough, Burton stated that his first out-of-town assignment was to "cover" the 1972 Republican National Convention in Miami Beach. Participating largely in actions organized by VVAW/WSO, Burton tried on a few occasions to get people to trash taxicabs and overturn and burn busses.

Burton says he was approached by the leader of the Tampa chapter of VVAW/WSO, Carl Brown, who wanted to merge Red Star Cadre with VVAW/WSO and to share expenses on a headquarters office. According to an article in the Feb 24th NYT, Burton said, "I called the bureau and they said 'Yeah, go ahead, we'll give you the money.'" Although Burton said Tampa VVAW/WSO and Red Star never formally merged, he and two other (as yet unnamed) FBI agent did join Tampa VVAW/WSO at the FBI's direction. Once the VVAW/WSO chapter moved into the office provided by Burton, the FBI began giving him \$50 a month to pay half of the office rent for the "joint" operation.

According to the Times article, "He said that at first he took his assignment seriously and began helping the veterans' Tampa chapter to recruit new members, but was told by his FBI superiors ... to lay off." Burton said that his FBI bosses told him, "We don't want to do that, we're trying to kill them (VVAW/WSO) in Florida."

Burton said he then reversed his course of action and began to promote an inter-nicine dispute between Tampa VVAW/WSO and the National Office of VVAW/WSO. Given all the activities of the Tampa chapter and the divisive actions of two of its primary leaders, Carl Brown and Ed Cooper, both the Tampa chapter and Carl Brown and Ed Cooper were expelled from VVAW/WSO at the 1974 Buffalo NSCM.

In addition to the series of FBI activities conducted by the FBI against VVAW/WSO in Tampa, Burton's testimony revealed two other agents that had participated in covert activities involving VVAW/WSO. The two, Gi and Jill Shaffer were from New Orleans. They worked extensively on the 1972 Miami Conventions for the FBI and then later were involved with disruptive actions during the siege of Wounded Knee. On both occasions Jill and Gi Shaffer had extensive contact with VVAW/WSO.

Burton's testimony is just another chapter in the ongoing attacks the FBI and other police agencies have waged against VVAW/WSO. The lessons we must draw from the experiences are clear: As the FBI stated in their own words, they are trying to kill VVAW/WSO. Under no circumstances may we ever forget this fact of life and neglect to exercise sound judgement in security matters. Given the extreme divisiveness caused the national organization by the Tampa chapter of VVAW/WSO and the utter shambles the Florida region has been in for well over two years, it's clear that the FBI means just what they say. Secondly, we must always be aware of the security danger presented in the our internal organizational disputes and struggle. While we can never expect the organization to move ahead without struggle--and sharp struggle at times--we must always realize that this is exactly the type of opportunity an agent will seek out to try and wreck the organization. The best way we have of combatting this sort of thing is to always keep our internal affairs and struggle principled and aboveboard. The minute it begins to be carried out in secretive, behind-closed-door fashion, the opportunity is tailor-made for an agent to begin dividing and splitting the organization. When members of VVAW/WSO regularly put forth positions that will objectively promote dissention and disunity in the organization, the possibility of covert police activity must never be discounted: the old saying about it being easier to attack a fortress from within than from without has clearly not been forgotten by our enemies in the FBI and other police agencies. But by continually forcing struggle to be conducted in the open in a principled manner, it makes it extremely difficult for police agents to successfully divide the organization and promote disunity.



Anyone having further information on the activities of the Red Star Cadre, Joe Burton or Gi and Jill Shaffer should contact the NO immediately.

UNITY**STRUGGLE**VICTORY***



The New York Times
Joseph A. Burton

Cut Off Benefits to Future Veterans, says Ford

The following article is reprinted from the New York Times, February 14, 1975. Caught in the midst of an insoluble crisis, Ford and his administration are looking for more ways to push the economic slump on to working and poor people. Elimination of the benefits which vets now are supposed to receive is one way to do just that.

"White House officials are proposing an elimination of GI education benefits for future veterans and are asking the Pentagon what impact this would have on enlistments and military education.

Odell W. Vaughn, deputy administrator of the Veterans Administration, said yesterday that the White House proposal had been made in connection with a VA request that President Ford declare an end to the Vietnam wartime period.

A Presidential declaration would immediately cut off such benefits as pensions and burial allowances, for which only wartime veterans are eligible. Limiting education benefits for peacetime veterans would be similar to action taken after World War II and the Korean War. However, when the Vietnam-era GI education bill was enacted it was made retroactive to provide benefits for those peacetime veterans who served between Korea and Vietnam. Any cutoff of education benefits would not affect anyone now eligible, veterans or those on active duty. It would affect only people joining the military after the cutoff date.

William K. Brehm, Pentagon manpower chief, was quoted by Army Times, the weekly newspaper, this week as saying that the Defense Department supported issuance of a Presidential proclamation to end burial and pension benefits for future veterans. He was quoted as saying that the Defense Department also supported cuts in the GI bill but opposed outright abolition of the program. Instead, he suggested that the Administration seek legislation to provide educational benefits only to those people who enlist in skills needed by the armed forces. "

Earned Re-entry Extended While Gerry Condon Continues Tour -

The earned re-entry program has been extended once again for another thirty days. This is the second time that the bankrupt program has been extended. President Ford stated on Friday, that he was announcing the extension because he felt that too many resisters were just now finding out about the program. He cited that the clemency board had signed up 6,962 people, the Pentagon 4,584 and the Justice Department 351, all told approximately 12,000 out of the number 120,000 that the government says is eligible for the program. With all the government apparatus for getting the word out about their program, it sure seems that it is more than people not knowing about it. The fact is that the thousands of war resisters who have not signed up are clear that the clemency program is not in their interests. Aside from the fact that the program does not include all who should be included, those who are not signing up are about 90% of who the government says is eligible. Only a universal and unconditional amnesty will result in all war resisters paying any attention to the government's program.

As part of the boycott of the Ford plan, Gerry Condon and Sandy Rutherford have been travelling around the country talking about the bankrupt clemency and about the continuing war in Indochina. Their tour began at the beginning of February and to date they have travelled across the country speaking on behalf of the exiles who announced the boycott in September. It is our understanding that Gerry and Sandy will continue travelling around the country as people continue to invite them to speak in their cities. If any chapter would like to have them come speak, you should contact the NCUUA office in New York -- phone number (212) 228-1500. Gerry who is a former Green beret, refused orders to go to Vietnam and as a result was sentenced to two years at hard labor and given a bad discharge. It is possible that the military will arrest him while he is speaking, although the thought is that they won't. If in the event that they do, his wife, Sandy will continue to travel around the country.

Gerry and Sandy have spoken in several cities at the invitation of the chapters, and we would think it a good idea if other chapters had them come speak.

Navaho Takeover of Fairchild Plant near Shiprock, New Mexico

At 2:15 AM on the morning of February 24th armed members of the Navaho Warriors Society and the American Indian Movement took over and occupied the Fairchild Electronics Plant on the Navaho Reservation near Shiprock, New Mexico, to protest the recent large lay-offs of Navahos and general working conditions at the Fairchild plant.

A spokesman for the Navaho Warrior Society stated that negotiations around the 10 major demands had begun on February 26th. The demands included:

1. Regular paychecks for all employees of Fairchild during the occupation.
2. Reinstatement of employees recently laid-off or fired by Fairchild Electronics.
3. Complete review of promotions, hiring, seniority and fringe benefits at Fairchild and other industries in the area that employ Navahos.
4. Grievances against the Public Health Service including reinstatement of two nurses recently fired, demanding the firing of two PHS doctors, and an establishment of a trust fund for the reservation's PHS hospital by Fairchild.
5. Demands around the Four Corners Power Plant including preference in hiring for Navahos as well as promotion, etc; protection of Navaho water rights and water, strict pollution control, and a re-negotiation of the power plant's lease with the Navaho people.
6. Respect for the Navaho people's culture and quality education on the reservation.
7. Respect for the AIM perimeter around the plant during the course of the negotiations.
8. That Navaho Reservation Police not attack their own people.
9. That Fred Johnson, Shiprock councilman, be given free access to the plant for purposes of information and to carry on negotiations.
10. That the plant's utilities be kept on or the negotiations were off.

This is a brief summary of the large list of demands by the Warrior Society and AIM, given us by phone from Shiprock. If people require the full list of demands please contact the NO for more information.

Regional Reports

January 27th Demonstrations

Following is a run-down of Jan. 27th actions that occurred around the country commemorating the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement and pointing to the fact that the war in Indochina is still raging. We are giving this kind of run-down so that chapters will know what went on in other parts of the country and so that we can all learn from the experiences of other chapters. The reports on these actions generally come from letters/sum-ups we have received from the individual chapters with regard to their work around Jan. 27th. We feel that some actions were more successful than others and that the size of the demonstration does not necessarily mean that one action was more successful than another. This is because we have seen that some of the Jan. 27th actions really did a great deal to push forward the work of VVAW/WSO and build the local chapters, whereas other actions were not as successfully tied into the work of the organization and our national program. We feel that some of the most successful actions were those that either had broad demands, or raised Indochina demands in such a way as to tie in the struggle going on in Indochina with the struggle that is going on here in the US. It is important for us always to understand that imperialism does not only exist abroad or "imperialism is over there," but affects the daily lives of all people living here in the US. When we speak about Indochina or the danger of war in other parts of the world, we must constantly keep this in the forefront and show people how wars of imperialist aggression are an extension of the crisis the system is currently undergoing. There are many lessons to be learned from these demo sum-ups and we hope that chapters can learn from the practice of others.

* Riverside: Approximately 60 people attended a rally at Fairmont Park in Riverside. The action was sponsored by the Inland Empire chapter of VVAW/WSO and the demands of the rally were: Implement the Agreements -- End All Aid to Thieu and Lon Nol; and Free Gary Lawton. Speakers at the action included a chapter member, Brian Adams from the NO and Chukia Lawton. Also, a G.I. rock band played at the end of the rally. Though large numbers of "non-movement" people did not attend the rally, good community leafletting was done around the action and there was massive leafletting at a nearby steel mill. Also, there were many people in the park that day, including some GIs, who did listen to the rally and expressed interest in what was going on. The speakers did a good job of tying in the struggle of the Indochinese people with the struggles that are going on here in the U.S., including the struggle of Gary Lawton. The action was considered to be a success and contained a great deal of spirit.

* San Diego: A run-down of the San Diego action is contained in this month's issue of WS. The other news we have regarding the San Diego action is that at the chapter meeting following the Jan. 27th action, approximately 6-8 new people attended and the majority of them have expressed a desire to do on-going work with VVAW/WSO.

* Oakland: A brief run-down of the action is contained in this month's issue of W.S., but since the article was written, we have received more information on the Jan. 27th demonstration.

* San Francisco: A brief run-down of the San Francisco action is contained in this month's issue of W.S., but since the article was written, we have received more information on the Jan. 27th demonstration. The demands of the action were: Implement the Peace Agreement; End All Aid to Thieu and Lon Nol; Universal and Unconditional Amnesty; and Stop the Deportation of Vietnamese Students. Other organizational demands were raised by having large banners. Approximately 800 people attended the demonstration at Union Square in San Francisco where people from VVAW/WSO and the Union of Vietnamese spoke and Prairie Fire sang. At the end of the rally, the demonstrators marched to the Saigon Consulate where 15 people had taken over the Saigon Consulate office. There was a minor skirmish when they entered the office and a member of the Consulate staff broke a window in an attempt to re-enter the office -- flying glass caused a few minor injuries. As the paddy wagons arrived to take people to jail, the crowd outside the Consulate moved to the back of the building where those who had occupied the office were coming out. People surrounded the police (the SF Tac Squad) and chanted, "The whole world is watching." At this point, the Tac Squad charged the crowd, but the people consistently re-grouped around the lines of the cops. A number of people were injured, including a 79-year-old man who was thrown through a glass window by the cops. Several members of the press were also beaten and shoved aside. There were 3 more arrests made in the streets, which was an indication that the Tac Squad was not really interested in arresting people but more interested in clubbing people and threatening them. The people received a variety of injuries, mostly bruises and cuts, and also a fractured arm and some battered knees. All of the people injured are suing the SF Police Dept.

The action was well covered by the media, partially because media people were also attacked by the cops. However, most of the reports centered on the "re-birth of the anti-war movement" theme, and the police riot.

The demonstration was sponsored by VVAW/WSO in northern California. The chapters were given concrete aid in building for the action by the Prairie Fire Distributing Committee, Berkely Young People's Liberation Front, the Union of Vietnamese, Women for Peace, Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union, the October League, the Revolutionary Student Brigade, KDP, Peoples' Press, the NLG and US-China People's Friendship Association. The demo was summed up as being very successful. The spirit of the people was very high, there was an understanding of the need to be militant and visible, and there was a strong commitment by the people to the freedom of Vietnam. The combination of the rally and the occupation was good -- the picket line wasn't just a picket line but people had a sense of being in solidarity with the action on the inside. The range of people who attended the demonstration was broad -- older anti-war movement people, people who work downtown who stopped by and stayed, and those who responded to the leafletting in that area during the hours the occupation was going on. In total, 18 people were arrested, with 15 of them being charged with trespassing. The others arrested were charged with inciting to riot, battery on a police officer and failure to disperse. They will be arraigned on Feb. 13th and VVAW/WSO will be helping on the defense around these people (13 of those arrested were members of the San Jose and Santa Cruz VVAW/WSO chapters).

* San Jose: On Jan. 26th, the San Jose chapter of VVAW/WSO participated in a coalition which had a march and rally to celebrate the signing of the Peace Agreements. About 150 people marched through the community to a park where the rally was held. The action consisted primarily of "movement" people with the majority of people attending from the RU, RSB and VVAW/WSO. There were speakers from VVAW/WSO, RU, AIM, CASA and the Union of Vietnamese. Also, Prairie Fire and other singers participated in the action. At a sum-up meeting, it was decided that the major criticism of the demonstration was a lack of spirit which resulted from the crowd's lack of political understanding of the importance of the struggle in Vietnam and the lack of consistent work in the community around Indochina.

* Seattle: Over 200 people attended a demonstration organized by VVAW/WSO in Tacoma and Seattle and the Revolutionary Student Brigade. Other sponsoring organizations were the Organization of Arab Students, the Revolutionary Union and the National Lawyers Guild. The demands of the demonstration were: Implement the Agreement - End All Aid to Thieu and Lon Nol, Universal, Unconditional Amnesty, and No US Intervention in the Middle East. After gathering at a local park and listening to speakers from RSB, OAS and the Vancouver American Exiles Association, the demonstration took to the streets and marched through the University district. A number of people along the way raised clenched fists and several joined in the march. At the University, a speaker from VVAW/WSO and the Union of Vietnamese addressed the crowd. After a militant speech by a VVAW/WSO member, the demonstration was led by VVAW/WSO and RSB banners on another short march to an intersection where an effigy of US imperialism with its puppets, Thieu and Lon Nol dangling from its fingers were burned (see photo in WS). Overall, the demonstration was characterized by a great deal of spirit and militancy as the people of the area took their demands to the community. The demo was well received by people along the route and contacts were made by the chapter with people in the community who expressed interest in VVAW/WSO. It was a very successful action and further helped to build the organization in Washington.



Elsewhere in Washington, a coalition was formed to build for a Jan. 27th demonstration in Olympia. This coalition included a group called the Evergreen Political Information Center (an anti-imperialist campus organization) and the Committee for Alternative Action (a group with several CPUSA members in it) who built the demo around the same demands that were put forward in Seattle. Though the demo was built by this coalition, Tacoma VVAW/WSO was kept informed and VVAW/WSO had a speaker at the action. The demo was attended by about 100 people and although there were some problems with reformism (especially in the CAA speech) the demo was very good. It was the first demo in the Olympia area for a long time, and in fact, it may be the first ever. Contact was made with people who were interested in VVAW/WSO and Gary Lawton petitions were filled out at the action.

As mentioned, there were some problems with reformism. This was very clear in the goal of the demo, which was to present a memorial to the state legislature. The memorial asked the government of the US to implement the peace agreements. Fortunately, they were unable to find any state legislators who would accept the memorial. If they had, he/she probably would have stolen the show. The demo ended on a good note, though, since the VVAW/WSO speaker was last. He united with the good intentions of the people who wanted to get the memorial through the legislature, but also said that it was important to see that the only way to end the war and other imperialist wars once and for all is to smash the system of imperialism. The VVAW/WSO speech was met very enthusiastically by the crowd.

* Eugene: The Eugene chapter of VVAW/WSO sponsored a week of events which included forums, speakers, films, a dinner and a demonstration on Feb. 1. The chapter worked with a coalition of groups; they had hoped to work with some "liberal" groups, but were unsuccessful in that. Therefore, most of the groups in the Jan 27th Coalition were other anti-imperialist organizations. The demands of the week of events were: End all Aid to Thieu and Lon Nol; Implement the Paris Peace Agreements; Universal and Unconditional Amnesty; End all Deportations of Vietnamese Students; and Free Saigon's and Phnom Penh's Political Prisoners. The demands were kept broad so as to unite as many people as possible. Attendance at the events ranged between 75-100 people, but the chapter was encouraged to see that many of the people were new, and different people came to each event. The rally in Eugene on Feb. 1st was small -- about 75 people, but quite militant. After the rally, a march was held going to a downtown mall, raising chants such as "The People United Will Never Be Defeated" and "Vietnam to Palestine, One Struggle Many Fronts." A weakness in the march was that a speaker wasn't put forward at the mall, and this meant that the struggle in Vietnam was not sufficiently linked to the current domestic situation. This meant that some people were probably confused by the militancy of the demonstration. In building for the week of events, the chapter distributed thousands of leaflets, and also produced a poster which was wheatpasted all over town. The posters will serve as a reminder of Jan. 27th for months to come.

Elsewhere in Oregon, the RSB in Portland built a Jan. 27th week of events similar to those that took place in Eugene. RSB in Portland was also able to build a coalition around Jan. 27th and they were more successful than Eugene in involving more liberal groups. The leaflets and posters drawn up by the Eugene coalition were reproduced in Portland (with substitutions of the times and places of their events). VVAW/WSO in Eugene was able to send speakers to the two major events

in Portland -- a panel and the Feb. 1st demonstration. Approximately 50 people came to hear the panel on Jan. 27th at the Portland State University. About 100 people attended the Feb. 1st demonstration. The demonstrators gathered in downtown Portland where they held a picket line and heard speeches from VVAW/WSO, RSB and a member of the Union of Vietnamese. The VVAW/WSO speaker spoke about the lessons that GIs and vets learned as a result of their participation in the Indochina war and summed up that the enemy is not the Vietnamese people but the ruling class of this country. After the picket line was over, the group marched to the Army recruiting office where they burned a red, white and blue effigy of an imperialist pig. All in all, Jan. 27th actions in Oregon were very successful and many new people were involved in the struggle.

* Mountain Home, Idaho: Though we have not received a final report from Mtn. Home VVAW/WSO on their Jan. 27th actions, we do know that the chapter united with the Covered Wagon GI Organizing project and prepared a leaflet which talked about the Paris Peace Agreement. The leaflet was distributed, along with copies of WS at the barracks of Mtn. Home Air Force Base.

*Twin Cities Chapter: The following description and analysis centers on the actions on the 27th; these actions followed several days of activities around IndoChina. "On the 27th the United Campaign sponsored a picket line at noon at the Federal Building. At the same time some members of NAM, FASC, and the Women's Union held a sit-in in the office of Humphrey to focus on his reactionary stand concerning aid to S. E. Asia. Although VVAW/WSO had been invited to the sit-in no members chose to join it. We had called for a Veterans rally as part of the picket, using the demands of our organization. About 75 people came to the picket, including a small number from the college where we have done consistent work. The picket was followed by a spirited march down the Mall through the business district, where thousands of people were brought the issue of the war and implementing the peace agreements.

Criticism: The sit-in occurring at the same time resulted in the press covering it with greater emphasis and sometimes completely ignoring the picket. Because VVAW/WSO came well prepared for the event, we ran it, leading the chants and organizing the picket. This lent it a strong anti-imperialist strain. This also meant that the leadership (including the 2 NAM members) was male although there were many women in the Coalition. We see a need to recruit women to our organization but we see that the Coalition's lack of planning as responsible for this instance. The march at the end of the rally was good, although many people had already left. It was spirited and unified us as an organization. In retrospect we also should have been better prepared security-wise for marching through downtown. We received no hassles from the police, largely because it was planned at the last minute. But taking our cue from our Milwaukee comrades, we see a need to be prepared to protect ourselves."

*Buffalo: "For the 27th we had a picketline with about 50 people chanting and carrying signs. What was good about it was that we got people who received mailings, and joined us, who haven't been out for many other actions, and people joined from the street. We passed out about 4,000 leaflets during the week prior to the picket and during the picket. Unfortunately, it wasn't very spirited. After picketing leafletting, and chanting downtown, we marched to the Federal Attorney's office to once again demand universal, unconditional amnesty. We did get good coverage from two TV stations, radio stations, and one of the two major newspapers."

*Burlington, Vermont: (This sum-up comes from the Burlington chapter):
"The Burlington and Norton chapters combined their efforts and held a rally and picket line at the Federal Building in Burlington during noontime on the 27th. About 70 people turned out. Primary demands were around the Peace Agreements and amnesty, though all VVAW/WSO slogans were incorporated into the action. In addition to the picket line and rally, a delegation of about 20 people went to the offices of Vermont's "representatives" to expose them as agents of the system and, not to lobby for, but demand that our demands be immediately implemented.

"We felt the action was a good success, especially since there was almost no pre-demo publicity in the media at all... the action was built primarily through out contacts and friends. The action was preceded by a week of film showings, speaking gigs and table work. Success is also attributable to extensive leafletting (3000 leaflets) and postering.

"On the negative side, the action was actively built by only a few members and some of "our people" didn't even make the demo. We see this as being very bad and something that must be dealt with both through criticism and the development of discipline. While we have enjoyed fairly good relations with the media in the past, we just didn't get much from them at all this time, against pointing out the fact that we must rely on ourselves and the people, and not either liberals or the straight press. I should say that TV coverage (3 stations) was very good and we did get two radio talk shows but aside from that, zilch. No one came to our press conference and with a few exceptions, our releases announcing the demo were never published or broadcast. Despite a real effort to bring out the university population, we didn't doo too well. But we were successful in getting out a good percentage of poor, unemployed, workers, "housewives" etc--it was well balanced."



January 27th Actions In Burlington, Vermont

*Dayton: There was approximately a week of coalition activities in Dayton, including counter-recruitment, a vigil (sponsored by AFSC), the Winter Soldier radio show, and organizing of people to participate in the demo in Washington DC. "Overall, the activities accomplished the main goals we were seeking; those of beginning the process of building a larger sense of unity among the Dayton community, and, in getting the word out that there was still very much life left in the movement here, particularly around Indochina."

"Saturday night had originally been planned as a cultural/media event, but went through some major transformation as a result of problems that we ran into. We tried to get five different films... Everywhere we turned we ran into hassles. This was starting out three weeks before! Eventually what was decided was to sponsor an "Anti-War Coffeehouse" (by NAM and VVAW/WSO) and to have local musicians poets, films and speakers. This event was the best of the week.

During the course of the evening there were anywhere from 125-150 people who came by for a few minutes or even stayed longer. The musicians were really good... I'd have to say that in terms of a sense of solidarity that this evening was a resounding success. As was mentioned earlier, we felt that one of the most important tasks we face is building as much unity as is possible in our community. By utilizing "cultural events" such as the anti-war coffeehouse, concrete steps in this direction were taken...

"Monday was the scheduled demonstration at Wright-Patterson Airforce Base. 15-20 people came out for this. The action did not come off nearly as we would have liked for a number of reasons, the major one being the "demonstrations don't fall out of the sky." There was no specific leaflet prepared around the demonstration itself and the actual building for it went on at a lower level than the efforts put into the rest of the week's activities. We ended up with a vigil type demo. One positive thing that can be said is that we did get good coverage on TV. What was on the tube included all the demands and they talked about why we were there (as concerns the peace agreements). Had Saturday not turned out so well this would be more of a depressing situation than it is. In perspective with the week it isn't as bad. Certainly we need to tighten up our work in this area and deal with the mistakes that were made around the demo."

*Houston: A sum-up and run-down of the Houston chapter's action is contained in this month's issue of WS. As many people may know, the Houston chapter has recently been re-building after a period of little activity and the chapter summed up this action as being extremely positive and successful, partially because the action really helped to weld the growing chapter together and it was the first time



Houston VVAW/WSO January 27th Demo

in a long time that people have collectively worked to build for a demonstration. As a result of the Jan 27th action, VVAW/WSO in Houston is moving forward and expanding their work.

* Washington, DC: VVAW/WSO chapters in Washington, DC and Maryland sponsored a demonstration on Jan. 25th which was summed-up as being an overall success. About 150-175 people turned out in the rain to march through the streets of two of DC's communities. The demonstrators were denied permission to march to the Saigon embassy and leadership made a tactical decision not to risk a confrontation over trying to get to the embassy. This decision was made because the chapter was working with a coalition of groups which they felt would not fight back if attacked by police. So, instead, they marched as close as they could get and then they held a rally. After the rally, they marched to the Saigon Information office, (Someone was stationed on the roof of the information office and was supposed to drop a banner over the building, but the rope broke and the banner dropped onto the balcony of the office). The march was led by a banner with the demands of Implement the Agreements/End All Aid to Thieu and Lon Nol. Following the banner, people carried the four flags of the countries of Indochina. The demonstration was militant and spirited and people along the route joined in the march. Major chants of the demonstration included: "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, Take Saigon & Washington," "Thieu Gets Billions, Vets Get Crumbs, Organize to Fight the Bums," and "People In the Streets, Can't You Hear the Call, A Victory for One is a Victory for All."

Criticisms of the action were that tactical leadership made some mistakes at the Saigon Information office by not standing fast, which meant that the demonstrators were forced to leave the area sooner than they really wanted to. Also, the coalition that the chapter pulled together was begun too late and this led to the Jan. 25th demonstration being over-shadowed by the IPC Assembly to Save the Peace Agreement. If VVAW/WSO had started organizing sooner, they could have built a stronger coalition and the action would have been larger and more successful. VVAW/WSO also summed up that they need to start working in a more principled manner with other groups. For this demo, VVAW/WSO united groups just before the demo, whereas in the future, the chapters have summed up that they need to work in a more on-going manner with other groups and support their activities. By doing this, we will be able to get stronger support from these groups for our actions. However, in building for the Jan. 25th demo, VVAW/WSO did make contact with an anti-imperialist committee consisting of the Ethiopian Students, Eritrean Students and the Iranian Students Association.

* St. Louis: The St. Louis VVAW/WSO chapter worked with a coalition of groups to hold "A Public Meeting" on Jan. 26th. The coalition included groups such as AFSC, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the Committee to Free Bob Williams, Congress of African People, the Communist Party, the Revolutionary Student Brigade, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. This coalition showed a movie and held a discussion on subjects such as the present situation in Vietnam, amnesty, and the state of the economy. Approximately 80 people attended the action and many of them were new people who have never been seen at these kinds of activities in the past.





Unemployment Demonstration in Detroit

The newly established and growing Detroit chapter of VVAW/WSO built a veterans contingent for a February 21 march sponsored by the Unemployed Workers' Organizing Committee. The central demand for the march was: Unite to Fight--Jobs or Income Now. According to one of the VVAW/WSO organizers in Detroit, the vets contingent was small, but spirited.

As part of the building for the demo, the chapter put forward the position that "the rich who run this country would like nothing better than for us to sit back, 'bite the bullet,' and to look out only for 'Number One.' We know that there's nothing they fear more than people uniting to fight back. This march will be a powerful blow (with many more to come) that will show them that vets and all working people aren't going to starve to help prolong their broken-down system that's never going to work anyhow."

Providence chapter work with VEVA

The following information and analysis of work comes from the Providence chapter which has, for some months, been working with VEVA around a proposed Vietnam veteran bonus for Rhode Island vets. "For the past period we've been working with VEVA and have established a good working relationship with them. We have raised the line of VVAW/WSO and have had mixed reaction from the rank and file, but our honesty in building for demos and future work has helped greatly.

Some strengths of the work with VEVA and the upcoming demo: 1) the fact that people there see the need to get out on the streets to win the bonus (versus the back room politicking, pushed by the VEVA leadership; 2) dates of eligibility for proposed bonus--from Jan 1st 1961 to June 30, 1973; 3) the demand that all Viet vets should receive bonus and all should get the same amount; and 4) honesty, as far as VVAW/WSO, in bringing criticism to VEVA leadership, then to the rank and file.

Some weaknesses: 1) narrow outlook of VEVA--strong vets' chauvinism pushed; 2) caution on the part of VEVA leadership; 3) some confusion around the need for us having an independent anti-imperialist line."

As we see this analysis, several main points stand out--that work with any of these vets groups depends on building support with the rank and file of these groups, and, more important, that this support comes from a period of principled work. There are opportunities for principled programmatic unity with a number of these groups and organizations; through such programmatic unity we have the chance to let our politics--an independent anti-imperialist line--and our practice expose the reformist and often opportunist leadership of these groups.

Cincinnati Sum-up of work on UWOC Demo

The Winter Soldier story about the Unemployment demonstration in Cincinnati indicates that the demo was a success. From the Cincinnati chapter of VVAW/WSO come some additional comments on how the vets contingent was organized, and their sum-up of the work around that demo.

The leaflet used had one side (done by UWOC) which put forth their demands and the basic information about the demonstration; the other side of the leaflet, written by VVAW/WSO, talked about the unemployment problems which particularly affect vets, the problems of bad discharges, loss of seniority, and the reasons why vets should join with other working people--employed and unemployed--to fight back. This leaflet was handed out and the unemployment office, the VA hospital, the postoffice annex (where there are a number of vets working); the best responses came from the unemployment office and the VA, especially the first.



The vets contingent in the march had a large banner--Veterans Demand Jobs And Income for all Working People. This, plus the fact that the march went through a real working class neighborhood, led to a number of people joining the contingent (and the march as a whole) during the action. A rally before the march drew some people, and those who joined the march heard the reasons for the march and the plans for the future during a rally following the action.

The fact that three people who had joined the march came to the next VVAW/WSO chapter meeting was just one reason why the chapter summed up their participation as a success. The march itself was good; people along the march route related really well to what was going on, even those who did not join in. In the words of one of the chapter members, "People left the rally with a feeling of unity and strength, determined to build an even stronger and bigger movement against the attacks by the ruling class." The chapter decided, overwhelmingly, to continue and build their work with UWOC and the demand, Jobs or Income For All.

VA Work in Baltimore and Washington, DC

Work around the VA is moving forward within the Baltimore and Washington, DC VVAW/WSO chapters. In December, the Baltimore chapter began holding weekly picket lines at a local VA office, selling newspapers at the VA and getting petitions signed. These picket lines have continued every Wednesday, though the chapter has summed-up that the VA office may not be the best target. They have come to the realization that although they are selling newspaper, they are not making that much contact with vets. This is because the VA office is located in a large federal building and only a small percentage of the people they see are vets -- a large percentage are government bureaucrats. Many do buy the paper and sign petitions, but few seem interested in the organization. Because of these problems, the chapter has decided that the VA hospital may be a much better place to make contact with vets who are really interested in fighting back. The chapter has found that petitions are a good way to get to talk with the vets and that they provide a means by which to get the names and address of people who can later be contacted about the work of the organization. However, the follow-up of the chapter has not been as good as it should be and they are working to remedy this situation.

In Washington, DC, the chapter has also initiated weekly picket lines at the VA. The DC chapter has also run into problems with their picket lines, particularly because the pickets have not been very militant and they have had problems in getting more than 3-4 people to show up at one time. Also, the DC chapter has had similar problems with their follow-up work, though they are also using petitions. The DC chapter is also talking about moving the weekly picket lines to a VA hospital where they will meet a larger concentration of vets.

Both chapters have also summed-up that they need to develop more activity during the week to build for the picket lines: i. e. leafletting unemployment lines, leafletting other VA facilities, schools, and job places announcing the picket line at the VA hospital. Both chapters have found the weekly picket lines to be helpful in their work around the VA, and have begun to sum-up the work they have been doing around these pickets, i. e. that hospitals are probably a better place to make contact with vets than are offices, that follow-up is crucial for bringing people into the work of the organization, and that petitions are helpful for making personal contact with vets. If other chapters have similar lessons that would be of help to other chapters who are doing work around the VA, please let us know so that we can get the info out to people.

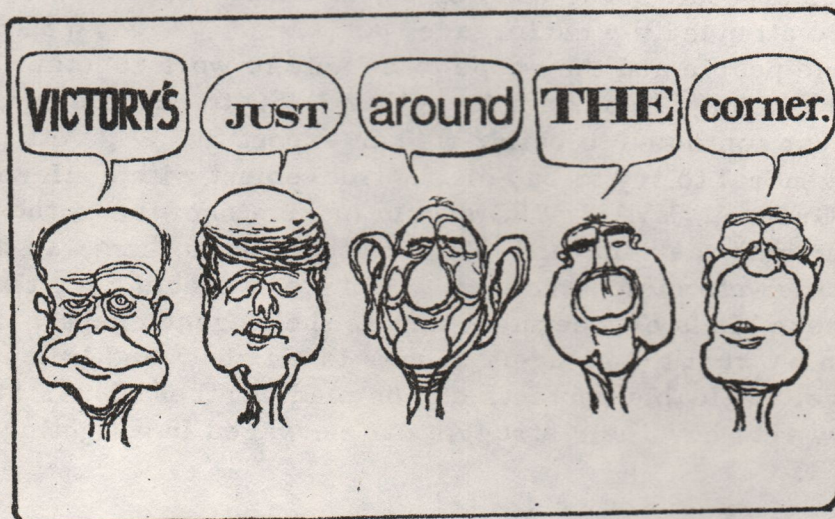
Buffalo Chapter Fund-raising paper

The Buffalo chapter has done a paper on its fund-raising activities over the past several years, and the politics which lie behind political fund-raising. The chapter has offered to send enough copies to the NO so that it will be distributed in our next third class mailing to all the chapters in the organization. People who want copies before then (the next third class mailing will probably not go out until mid-late March) should write to the Buffalo chapter (P. O. Box 902, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, New York 14205).

Agent Provocateur Uncovered in the Chicago Chapter

The Chicago Chapter of VVAW/WSO recently expelled a chapter member as an agent provocateur. Based on his dangerous and provocative actions in VVAW/WSO, Richard Joel (Rex) Seese--age 29/30--was expelled from the organization in mid-February. The continued presence of Seese in VVAW/WSO constituted a danger both to the chapter and to the national organization. Seese had been in the Chicago chapter since August 1973 and attended the 1973 St Louis NSCM, the 1973 Yellow Springs NSCM, the 1974 Milwaukee NSCM, the September 9th Attica Demonstration in Buffalo, the July 1974 Demonstration in Washington DC, and the October 1974 NCUUA Conference in Louisville, KY.

All chapters should be aware of Seese and advise the NO should he make any contact with people in your area. A photo of Seese taken in 1974 is enclosed with this mailing.



Mike Peters, Dayton Daily News

Oakland Chapter Demonstrates at Bird Air

Bird Air is the corporation which is currently flying the supply air-lifts into Phnom Penh. Bird Air utilizes USAF C-130 transports with their insignias painted over and USAF pilots recently returned to the area as "civilians." Bird Air offices are located in Oakland inside the Leamington Hotel (which is owned by the same person who owns the airline). On Feb. 24th, approximately 200 people demonstrated outside this hotel. The action was called by a coalition of groups, including VVAW/WSO. Chants such as "Bird Air earns its pay -- Hired gun for the CIA" and "Decent jobs -- yes! Mercenaries -- no!" were heard as people picketed outside the hotel. Following the picket, the demonstrators entered the Leamington in an attempt to carry their message to Mr. Bird to end the airlift in Cambodia. They were stopped by Oakland police. The demo was quite militant and spirited and was summed-up as a success. VVAW/WSO in Oakland is planning to return to the hotel in the near future with further demonstrations around the Cambodian airlift.

Eugene VVAW/WSO Members Attend Statewide Vets Conference

In early February, the state of Oregon sponsored a statewide veterans conference in Corvallis for the purpose of starting a student veterans organization which would lobby for a few more crumbs, etc. According to VVAW/WSO members who attended the conference, the VA seemed to be holding the reins through the use of some veteran pimps from various vets clubs around the state. The conference was most definitely in the hands of the reformists and pimps, but Eugene VVAW/WSO drew up a leaflet called "How we see the fight for reforms" and distributed it to the rank-and-file vets who attended the conference. The leaflet talks about the struggles of vets, their day-to-day needs and how vets are getting screwed around. But it also talks about how the struggle of vets is not isolated from the struggles of all people and how the cut-backs coming down on vets are facing all poor and working people as well. The leaflet puts forward who the real enemy is, the system of imperialism, and how that system must be fought through the unity of all people. As a result of the chapter's leafletting, contact with several rank-and-file vets who attended the conference was made. VVAW/WSO is maintaining contact with these people and they hope to be able to work together in the future. This kind of work is very important for VVAW/WSO to become involved in. As the vets movement continues to build, we can expect the VA, vets pimps, and the ruling class in general to try to buy off that movement with conferences such as the one held in Oregon. VVAW/WSO should make a showing at these conferences and try to link up with the rank-and-file vets that attend them, as well as trying to find out what the vets pimps are up to. Chapters should keep their eyes and ears open for these kinds of meetings, and as the Eugene chapter did, go to them with information on what the struggle of vets is all about and link up with the vets who will be there. Valuable contacts can be made at these kinds of things and we can further show vets how their struggle can be waged in a fighting, revolutionary way.

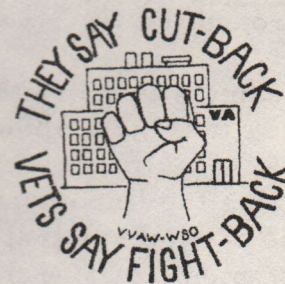
National Office Reports

Money-Money-Money

We have been pleased by the number of chapters who have been paying dues and paying for copies of WINTER SOLDIER during the past month. Though only a small percentage of chapter/regions are paying for the papers and sending in dues, it still is an improvement over past months. We still have a long way to go within the organization with regard to chapters supporting the National Office and the newspaper, but we do think that things are looking up. If the month of February is any indication, we see that people are beginning to understand the importance of financially helping keep the NO running and seeing their responsibility in this process. We thank those chapters who have paid and hope that this will continue in the future. Again, we ask that when you do send in dues and payment for newspapers that you let us know which months you are paying for. That is the only way we can keep our records straight.

We realize that many chapters are having financial difficulties also, and the key to alleviating those problems is through fund-raising on the local level. We realize that in some chapters, the reason why dues and payment for WS have not been sent in is that the chapter itself doesn't have any money. We hope that these chapters will begin local fund-raising on a regular basis so that debts to the national organization can soon be paid and kept in order.

We also have many debts here in this office which are going to have to be paid in the near future. In fact, within the next few weeks, we are faced with the position of paying off debts of putting out the newspaper. Because of the nature of the debts, unless we can raise the money, the newspaper will be sacrificed in the near future. If chapters will pay their dues and pay for the newspaper they receive, it may be possible to avoid this situation of having to make a choice. Also, we are in the process of writing pamphlets and we hope to have the pamphlet discussing the national program and our VA work, as well as the re-written "What Is VVAW/WSO" pamphlet ready to go to press within the next month. Though we hope to have them ready to go to press, that does not necessarily mean that they will get printed. As always, the problem is money. If chapters can help out with the printing expenses of getting these pamphlets done, we will be extremely grateful. Also, the Milwaukee chapter has developed a button design (shown below) and we want to reproduce the buttons for the national organization. We think the buttons, which say "They Say Cut-Back, Vets Say Fight Back;" would be useful in terms of pushing our work forward. We would hope to be able to get them printed in the near future. We feel it is crucial to have good materials of all kinds for the national organization to use and things such as the button and pamphlets are needed by the chapters. If your chapter wants to order some of these materials and can pay in advance for them, and if enough chapters do this, we can get the materials produced and out much quicker.



Pictures

Thanks from the NO to all those chapters which sent in photos of the January 27th actions; we had the unusual situation of having to choose between a number of good photos. The quality of the newspaper is substantially improved because we can illustrate the numerous stories about VVAW/WSO activities around the country with good photos. Again, our thanks and keep the pictures coming--next month is another issue.

Political Defense Manual

People with sections of the Political Defense Manual should get them in to the NO as soon as possible. Typing of the various sections will begin shortly; we will send out whatever is finished as soon as it is typed and run off. Each regional office will be receiving a copy; chapters which want copies should send \$5 for copies--the PDM (just the sections which are already completed) will be around 120 mimeographed pages.

Name Change for GI NEWS?

Recently, some of VVAW/WSO's GI organizing projects have suggested that the name of GI NEWS should be changed due to an unfavorable response from GIs. We are asking chapters doing GI work to evaluate the present name and find out if our GI organizing work could be better served if the name was changed. One question that must be asked is how much name recognition does GI NEWS now have with GIs at military installations where GI work is being done? Would a name change help or hinder your work?

If people have suggestions for a new name please submit them to the NO as soon as possible. If a new name is decided on and selected, prizes will be a free, no-expense paid trip to the military installation of your choice to sell the paper.

No March Issue of GI NEWS

GI NEWS will not be published this month due to a couple of reasons. By trying to attain a balance of articles, including a general range of anti-imperialist issues as well as GI news from around the world, we found the paper this month to be lacking stories of on-going GI struggles; both VVAW/WSO and GI struggles outside the organization. We feel this is partly due to a lack of reports and sum-ups of activities coming from the VVAW/WSO GI projects in this country as well as abroad.

Rather than publishing an issue of GI NEWS that would appear to be a junior Winter Soldier, we have decided to publish a March-April issue that will be distributed around the first week of April.

Publishing a two-month issue for March and April will also function as a partial economizing measure, though this was not a primary consideration for not printing.

Realizing the importance of GI NEWS as an organizing and outreach tool, we suggest those chapters that depend on GI NEWS develop their own materials (leaflets, etc) for the month of March. After this month, GI NEWS will be back on its regular schedule of coming out in the first week of each month.

Once again, chapters doing GI work must put an emphasis on sending in regular reports of activities and regular sum-ups of on-going struggles, including photos, as a matter of practice.

Third Class Mailing

A third class mailing will be going to all chapters in the first week of March. In it will be the latest issue of GI NEWS, the latest issue of "Inside/Out," a copy of Attica News, and a paper written by experienced organizers in the Reserves and National Guard organizing, summing up their practice in those areas, and giving some basic guidelines and suggestions for chapters who are planning to go into Reserve and Guard organizing.

Information Requests

Cartoons

Looking through regional newsletters, we often see excellent homemade cartoons or drawings which could be extremely useful to other chapters in the organization; chapter leaflets also often have unusual and pointed drawings or cartoons. If people will send us reproducible copies, we will try to run them in the newsletter or, some of them, in Winter Soldier so that other members of the organization can make use of them.

Address Changes

In the next newsletter we hope to print an up-to-date chapter list with addresses and phone numbers. Usually, this means that a number of chapters will let us know immediately afterwards that their addresses have changed. It will save all of us much trouble and aggravation if you will let us know ahead of time; if the address to which this newsletter is being mailed is incorrect (and the newsletter is still getting to you), please let us know as soon as possible. Regional coordinators, who have not sent updated lists of chapters recently, should also let us know if there are new chapters, if old chapters have disappeared--whatever you feel is needed to bring the chapter list up-to-date.

Movies

Share your information. There are a number of good movies around, and there are new ones coming out frequently. Often we do not know about them--chapters and members of chapters should let the NO know when they see such movies so we can get the information to the rest of the organization. Most immediately, there is a need for good movies around the struggles of GIs--any information about such movies should be sent to the NO.

