



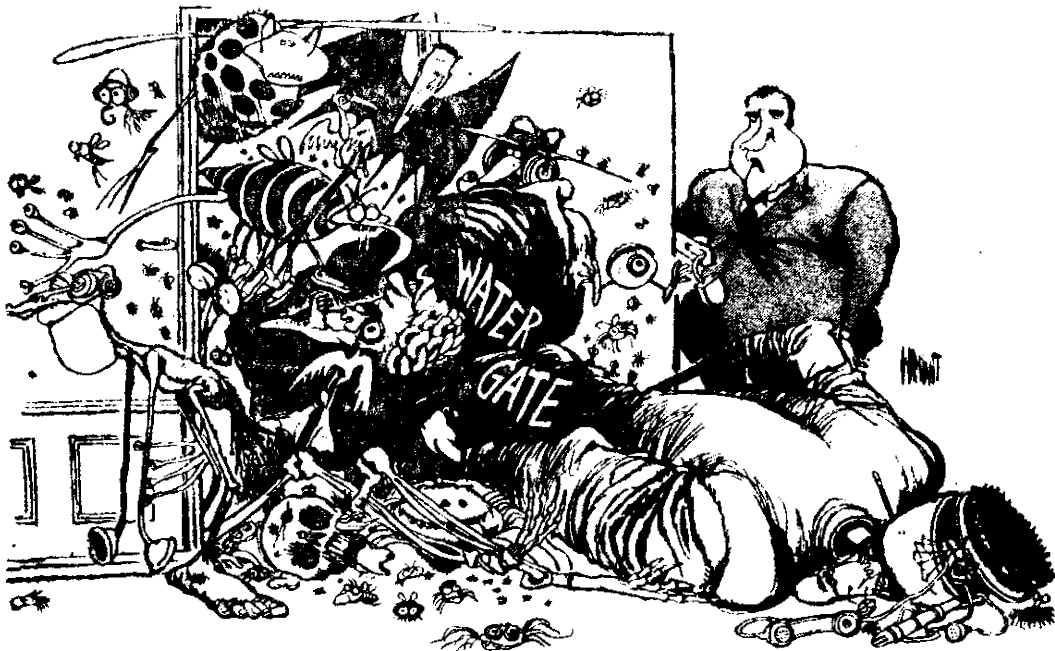
VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR WINTER SOLDIER ORGANIZATION

NEWSLETTER

No. 6

MAY

General Information



"We may have stumbled onto something."

WATERGATE

On Friday, the Senate's investigation into the Watergate scandal dealt with the testimony of James McCord. During his testimony, he mentioned that VVAW/WSO was planning violence at the conventions in Miami and that this was one reason why he joined in the spy ring operations set up by The Committee to Re-elect the President, (CREEP). He also stated that VVAW/WSO was working in conjunction with the Democratic Party and that we had an office in their national headquarters at the Watergate. It is now obvious that the entire espionage tactic was to discredit both the demonstrators and the Democratic Party by making it appear that we were working together and that together we presented a threat to the safety of President Nixon. These charges are pure lies as VVAW/WSO did not endorse the Democratic Candidate and that we were at no time planning violence at either convention. To counter these false charges, Bart Savage, one of the National Coordinators and Jan Crumb, founder of VVAW/WSO held a press conference in Washington DC today, Monday, May 20th. The text of their statement follows. It is interesting to note that all the major newspapers and television networks were present.

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PAGE ONE

Last Friday, James McCord, in testimony before the Senate Select Committee made certain fraudulent allegations regarding VVAW/WSO.

We are charging that James McCord and the Committee to Re-elect the President's intelligence gathering agencies, Mitchell's Justice Department, Gray's FBI, and various individuals associated with those organizations are guilty of conspiracy to deprive the civil liberties of VVAW/WSO and its members.

Included in this conspiracy were the indictments handed down against 7 members of VVAW/WSO in Florida. These indictments are nothing more than an attempt to cover-up the Watergate break-in and the overall activities of CREEP's political sabotage unit. The subsequent infiltration of VVAW/WSO by political saboteurs, such as Alfred Baldwin, assistant to James McCord, was for the purpose of provoking violence at the Republican National Convention in Miami in the name of VVAW/WSO, in order to justify the Watergate break-in. These attempts to portray VVAW/WSO as a violent organization were not left strictly to CREEP underlings.

On January 18, 1973, Jeb Magruder, deputy director of CREEP, called VVAW/WSO on CBS News, a violent organization. Magruder said "these people have historically turned these demonstrations into violent demonstrations. . . they were down at our convention; they were at the Democratic convention. They're basically the hard core that have been here at many of the demonstrations and -- have actually promulgated violence in each case."

We further charge that, based on McCord's testimony on Friday, John Mitchell perjured himself on April 25, in court testimony at pre-trial hearings held in Pensacola, Florida for the VVAW/WSO Gainesville 8. Mitchell testified that McCord was "not part of an intelligence group."

VVAW/WSO demands that James McCord and the Committee to Re-elect the President release all memorandums and information illegally gathered on VVAW/WSO, or any of its members, from the inception of CREEP to the present date.

Posters

We haven't exactly been swamped with orders for the poster reprinted from the 1st issue of Winter Soldier, (The People of Vietnam Have Been Victorious on the Battlefield). Since that means that we still have about 1,500 of them, we'd like to remind people that they can still be ordered. The price asked is 4 for \$1.00, which is down from 3 for \$1.00, and that in itself proves that you can't possibly go wrong by buying a few: Let's all do our little bit to combat inflation and the rising cost of living! Seriously, the poster can easily be sold for 50¢ or \$1.00 and should be a good fund raising item. Besides, we want to reproduce a number of other posters but have to wait until the 1st one at least pays its own printing costs. When nobody seems too interested in the one VVAW/WSO poster we do have, it's kind of questionable whether or not it's worth it to print a second. If people will support the project by trying to distribute at least a few of the posters however, we should be able to have a new poster coming out fairly regularly.

Amnesty Conference - Washington DC

On May 4 and 5 a national conference on amnesty was held in Washington DC at the Quality Inn, near the Capitol Building. This conference was attended by representatives of many national and local groups and marked the first time that such a diverse representation gathered to discuss a question that affects so many Americans. Representatives of exile groups from Canada, England and Sweden were also in attendance as were members of VVAW/WSO, GI projects and representatives of resisters in the United States.

On the first day of the conference, speakers from various groups that organized the conference presented their positions. Among those speaking were Henry Schwarzchild of ACLU Project on Amnesty and Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General of the United States. The nighttime session presented a group of people that were directly involved in the struggle for universal and unconditional amnesty. Speakers included: Carl Arnold of the Union of American Exiles in Britain, Virginia Collins of Southern Conference Emergency Fund, whose son Walter is a Black draft resister, Sandy Rutherford of Vancouver American Exiles Union, Louise Ransom, whose son was killed in Vietnam and Ed Damato of VVAW/WSO.

The second day of the conference began with various workshops that dealt with such topics as defining just what amnesty means, community organizing, the psychological implications of amnesty and legislative action. Each of these workshops presented their reports to the main body in the afternoon. The conference closed on Saturday afternoon with key addresses by Brian Adams of VVAW/WSO and William Sloane Coffin of Yale University.

The major objective of this conference was to focus public attention to the need for realizing the importance of amnesty so that we can begin to face the implications of just how the war in Southeast Asia has affected this country. To this end the conference failed. Media interest was minimal to the point where there was no mention of it even in the Washington papers. What was significantly important was the availability of those groups that represent the people who will be directly involved in the final resolution of amnesty. We were able to make contact with each other, in some cases for the first time. It also enabled us to take the initial steps in forging a coalition of these groups so that we can more easily facilitate a national, unified position and more importantly begin a concerted effort that will carry the issues raised in an amnesty campaign directly to the working class communities that are in the final analysis the recipients of a total universal and unconditional amnesty.

To this end AMEX-Canada announced a conference to be held in Toronto, Canada that would finalize a coalition of groups under the name National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty (NCUUA). This conference will be held this weekend, May 25, 26 and 27. Regions were responsible to submit a list of names of members wanting to attend to the National Office. This has been done only in two regions, California and New England. As soon as possible call the N.O. with this information. We will give you directions and information about housing and the conference. It is vitally important that all sections of the country be represented in Toronto as VVAW/WSO is one of the main forces in this amnesty campaign.



Cambodia: The War Continues

On Sunday, the United States government bombed Cambodia for the 75th consecutive day. In spite of this massive bombing, the Khmer forces are close to winning in their struggle against the US government and the regime of Lon Nol. The bombing is ineffectual in terms of stopping the people of Cambodia from continuing to free their country.

Last week the House of Representatives voted by a wide margin of 219-188 to refuse to allow the Pentagon to pay for continued bombing of Cambodia that had been previously allocated for other military expenses. Then with another vote of 224-172 they voted that the Pentagon could not use any money in the \$2.9 billion supplemental appropriation bill to bomb Cambodia or for any other action "in, over or from offshore Cambodia." This marked the first time that the House has ever done anything in terms of cutting off funds for the war in Southeast Asia. They have been historically conservative and have to accept responsibility for the death and destruction of Southeast Asia as much as both Presidents Johnson and Nixon.

This week the Senate is to vote on the bill. They have in the past been a bit more responsive to the pressure of the American public and have accordingly tacked on to this bill the illegal usage of any money allocated for defense for use in Laos as well. They had better vote for it.

The partial explanation of why the Congress is finally doing this can be attributed to the decline of power that has befallen President Nixon since the Watergate disclosures. The Congress sees a chance to re-instate some of the power that Nixon has taken from them. It represents a flex of their muscle and should be accepted as that.

But we cannot allow ourselves to fall in the trap of believing that with this action the war will stop in Indochina. The mines have still not been cleared in Haiphong, etc. The bombing of Laos has not stopped, etc. Ron Ziegler, Nixon's Press Secretary stated that whatever the outcome of the Congressional votes, that the Administration will continue to do 'the right policy'. This means that the war will continue.

House Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield, stated, "If the will of the Congress and the intention of the Congress are not adhered to, then we will face a true Constitutional crisis. One thing this country cannot afford at this time is a Constitutional crisis." Let them fight it out.

It seems apparant from recent history that the bombing of Cambodia will continue. Maybe all of our national 'leaders' should heed the words of Prince Norodom Sihanouk who said "I am no longer interested in meeting with Kissinger... We are prepared to go on until 1976 because we hope that after President Nixon, the new President will decide to stop the US intervention in Cambodia. But if the new President chooses to continue, we are ready to go on independently until 1980. We have enough courage to do that."

VVAW Buttons

We have finally got them back from the printer and can send either one of them to you for 6¢ each, plus shipping costs. Since that's exactly what they cost your friendly National Office, you can see that there is zero markup involved! For the record, as soon as we distribute all the buttons we now have on hand we will be ordering a new VVAW/WSO button. Until then you'll need a small magic marker and a steady hand.

Regional

Cairo Convoy

On April 7, the Kansas-Western Missouri and Southern Illinois-Eastern Missouri regions of VVAW/WSO convoyed to Cairo, Illinois bringing three carloads of food, clothing, books and some medical supplies. Although transportation was a problem, and some of the supplies had to be left behind, the people of Cairo expressed their gratitude for bringing these items. Food was sorely needed because of the rampaging Ohio and Mississippi Rivers that had flooded the area. The situation in Cairo was grim, but the spirit was high. On June 16, Cairo will celebrate their 4th Annual Solidarity Day. These regions will be returning at that time, with another convoy of supplies and will join in the activities of the day. For more information contact either:

St. Louis VVAW/WSO
1023 Allen Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63104
(314) 621-5860

Kansas City VVAW/WSO
306 West 39 Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
(816) 753-1619

Changes in Regional Offices

The following regional offices have changed and are not yet included in the latest Winter Soldier:

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana
Pete Zastrow
PO Box 19302
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219
(606) 441-3811

Connecticut-Rhode Island
VVAW/WSO
53 Wall Street
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 777-3051

Colorado-Utah-Wyoming
VVAW/WSO
PO Box 18591
Denver, Colo. 80218
(303) 572-1543

Armed Farces Day Demonstration

"We are struggling for our best birthright and inheritance, which, being infringed, renders all our blessings precarious in their enjoyments and consequently trifling in their values. Let us disappoint the men who are raising themselves on the ruins of this country."

- Samuel Adams, 1722

With these words in mind and in accordance with the Workshop on the War at the Placitas NSCM, the region of Connecticut-Rhode Island organized and participated in demonstrations in Stamford, Newtown, Naugatuck, New Britain, New Haven, Branford, Hartford and several other cities and towns. The demonstrations focused on the following demands: Support efforts to cut funds for the bombing of Cambodia and Laos; Adherence to the Paris agreements; Freeing political prisoners in South Vietnam and in the United States; Unconditional amnesty for war resisters and vets with less than honorable discharges; Focus on U.S. aims in Latin America, Rebuild America with money now being spent on defense; and Support for the Gainesville 8.

Rochester, New York Chapter Report

Things are really moving in the chapter now; people are really starting to get it on. We have formed committees: political education, fund-raising, veteran's affairs and several others. It looks as if we may possibly have the money in the not-to-far future to set up a storefront, and if we do that should really provide the base we need to reach out to the community.

Next month, there isn't a week that doesn't include a benefit or some other chapter activity. We have an hour-long phone-in program on TV. The station is trying to get some 'opposition' such as the AL or VFW, to appear with us, to put a focus on amnesty. So far they haven't been able to get anyone to oppose us!! If they do come up with someone, we really think that we will make them look like the non-thinkers an anti-amnesty position requires.

As far as sentiment about the name change goes, we are following the lead of the Buffalo and New York chapters in promoting VVAW/WSO. Things are still somewhat divided in the chapter, but for the most part we agree that the name VVAW presents certain mechanical or semantic hassles, and has in some degree outlived its effectiveness. But at the same time, we think that in specifics, such as amnesty, the name is really useful. At any rate, we are putting out Winter Soldier/VVAW as much as possible in our media gigs, etc.

We are trying to get into a counter-military program in the high schools, but it's going awfully slow. Contacts are hard to make, but then we are just starting. Maybe in the fall we can get something effective started. In the meantime we will be trying to get together some films, slides and other visuals to use in conjunction with the talks. There is at present a bill in the State Assembly that, if passed, will permit Junior ROTC in the high schools. It would be 'voluntary' for students 14 or older (parental permission) and will allow the drilling and military instruction during school hours. We are only one of several groups keeping an eye out for it and trying to promote opposition to it.

Our relationship to other groups in the area is very good. We have been working with, among others, Rochester Area Women for Peace, and shared a couple of booths in local shopping malls with them. We sold some Winter Soldier and some of Buffalo's Column Left and made \$15.00.

We are very optimistic.

NATIONAL OFFICE REPORTS

Build for Gainesville Action This July!!

As the trial date has officially been set for July 17th, we have a clear goal to shoot for in building our national action. Even though it's only May, the amount of work necessary to put together a successful national action of this size doesn't leave us any time to spare at all. Regions should have already been talking with their people about how they can best organize community support for the Gainesville 8 and begun building their contingents to actually go to Gainesville for the July action. We still need suggestions, ideas or whatever about the action and more input about what action has already been taken or is planned. Brian Adams of the National Collective will be going to Gainesville the first week of June to begin work with the Gainesville people for the demonstration.

The trial is set for Gainesville although Judge Arnow could change his mind and move it to the more militarized environment of Pensacola. In any case, we are covered with campsites for the action in both locations. Given the increasing weight of evidence linking the Gainesville indictments with an attempt to cover-up the Watergate affair, it's increasingly likely that there will be a lot of national attention focused on the Gainesville 8 trial once it actually gets underway. Perhaps it can be tried concurrently with Nixon's impeachment proceedings and Mitchell's perjury trial?

If you don't read anything else please pay attention to this: The Gainesville 8's financial situation is desperate. They need help \$\$\$\$. Without the money needed to pay for all the various expenses a trial of this nature incurs, there is no way in hell we can expect to adequately defend the "Eight" or the organization. In case there is any problems about what to do with any money you might come up with, the address is:

The Gainesville Defense Fund
Box 13179
Gainesville, Florida 32601