



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR WINTER SOLDIER ORGANIZATION

NEWSLETTER

827 West Newport, Chicago, Illinois, 60657; (312) 935-2129

No. 8

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COME TO GAINESVILLE !! SUPPORT THE GAINESVILLE 8 and VVAW/WSO !!

As you know, the Gainesville 8 are going on trial on July 17th for allegedly conspiring to violently disrupt the Republican National Convention last summer. There is a national VVAW/WSO demonstration being planned in Gainesville beginning on July 17th and lasting through the 21st. The demonstration will include marches, rallies, leafletting, guerilla theater and courthouse watches. At this time the final scenario is being drawn up and will be sent to you as soon as it is finished.

In the meantime many chapters are doing preliminary work in building for the demonstration. Support demonstrations have occurred in several chapters in the past several weeks. Other chapters are offering various organizing tools. Bumper Stickers are being sold by Dayton VVAW/WSO, PO Box 1625, Dayton, Ohio 45401; Posters are being sold by Berks County VVAW/WSO, Box 4114, Mt. Penn, PA 19606. The National Office will soon have available 4 page paper sized handouts, including a centerfold poster. Chapters should make use of these materials in addition to making up their own.

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The importance of the demonstration in Gainesville is obvious in light of the Watergate proceedings in the Senate. For a successful demonstration it will take cooperation of all chapters of VVAW/WSO. The attack on Gainesville is an attack on the entire national organization and must be countered with a strong show of solidarity by all of us. Several regions including New York and Wisconsin are organizing car convoys similar to those led by VVAW/WSO last year. For more information on these convoys contact: VVAW/WSO, 2439 N. Fratney, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212 or Ray Winters, 135 Fayette Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14223.

Brian Adams of the National Collective is in Gainesville now and will be sending out more information soon. The address of the Gainesville Conspiracy Defense Committee is GCDC, PO Box 14078, Gainesville, Florida 32604. (*Note: This is a new address.) You can also obtain more information about the Gainesville demonstration and the 4 page handouts from the National Office: VVAW/WSO, 827 W. Newport, Chicago, Illinois 60657 or call (312) 935-2129.

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The FBI Is At It Again !!

In the past week or two, several members of VVAW/WSO have been approached by the FEDS. Fortunately, those contacted told the FBI that they had nothing to say to them and that if they wanted to talk to them they would have to contact their lawyers. Again, we remind everyone that the FBI remains our enemy. They are only concerned with extracting information that can be used against us collectively or individually. Don't talk to the FBI and if they approach you please contact this office.

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National Lawyer's Guild Discusses Watergate !!

The National Lawyer's Guild had their national meeting this past weekend in Chicago. One of the main issues discussed was Watergate. The NLG has decided to file suit, (in at least Washington DC, and possibly every other federal district court) to have the 1972 Federal elections declared invalid and possibly to have the elected officials enjoined from carrying out the duties of whatever office they hold. The suit has organizing potential and will also help to point out the contradictions to what it is supposed to be.

The NLG also decided to find out the feasibility of a national coalition/campaign on Watergate. The local NLG chapters are going to initiate meetings with other local groups, including VVAW/WSO, for feedback on this idea in addition to kicking around ideas of different actions the campaign should focus on. Following this will be a general call to other groups to participate in a national planning meeting to set in motion the national coalition.

Excitement and enthusiasm is very high in the NLG. We are asking every chapter to get in contact with local NLG chapters, (if there is one in your town), and other organizations to discuss this. Also, chapters should send feedback on this to the National Office, both on how your chapter feels about it and how other groups that you meet with feel about it.

A couple of things to remember: There is a real split and intense struggle going on right now within the ruling class. The movement has been under attack from them for a long time now. With this struggle going on, the ruling class can't devote as much energy against us as they have in the past. Now is the time for the movement to go on the offensive against them by educating people to their real nature and concerns. When they were unified they were able to split the movement. Now they are split and we have to exploit this weakness to the fullest by unified action and solidarity of the movement. We have a golden opportunity to SEIZE THE TIME!!!



The Great Plains Region -

The Great Plains Region, (Kansas, E. Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota), had their regional meeting and camp-out on the weekend of June 8-10. The weekend was devoted to both relaxing and having fun together and with dealing with business. Most of the discussion centered around amnesty and how the region could best relate to it. The campout also discussed problems within the region and began to evaluate the work of the chapters in order to deal with them. These discussion will continue at the next regional meeting which will be held in Joplin, Missouri on July 7th 8th.

Chicago Chapter Plans Forum

On June 30th, the Chicago Chapter of VVAW/WSO will hold a forum at the Grace Lutheran Church that will deal with amnesty, GI organizing and racism. The forum will be conducted by members of the chapter. Other organizations that the chapter works with will be invited to participate. The purpose of this forum will be to develop ongoing projects that will continue the work of the chapter in a more programmatic way.

Wisconsin Chapter Plans Support of Rock Festival

The Menominee Indians have asked the Wisconsin Chapter of VVAW/WSO to help them in putting together a rock festival set for June 30 - July 2. The purpose of this festival is to raise some money and some consciousness for the work of our Native Americans. Anyone interested in more information and could possibly help out should contact: VVAW/WSO, 2439 N. Fratney St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212 or call (414) 562-9371.

Demonstrations Held !!

Washington DC - About 2,500 people demonstrated at the Watergate demanding an end to the bombing of Cambodia, an end to support of the Thieu regime, justice for Indians, restoring budget cuts and universal, unconditional amnesty. Many members of VVAW/WSO from the East Coast participated in the demonstration.

New York City - 30 members of VVAW/WSO demonstrated outside the home of John and Martha Mitchell on Fifth Avenue demanding that Mitchell renounce President Nixon and tell the truth about Watergate. This action was part of a campaign to build support for the Gainesville Trial which begins on July 17th.

Tampa - Approximately 100 people, including many from the VVAW/WSO chapter, greeted President Nixon on his arrival to speak in Tampa. The people demanded that Nixon end the war in Cambodia and tell the American people the truth about Watergate.

Chicago - On July 16th, approximately 250 people marched and rallied in pouring rain demanding an end to the war in Southeast Asia and protesting the lies of Watergate. Many members of VVAW/WSO participated.



REPORT ON WOMEN'S NATIONAL MEETING

The women's national meetings were held on June 9-10, and the participation in the meetings was something less than encouraging. Four women from California traveled to meet with the Denver sisters, and two women from Chicago met with the Milwaukee women. Because of the poor turn-out, the first item of business in Milwaukee was to discuss why women did not attend. Aside from the problems arising from a lack of funds and transportation, we discussed the possibility that women did not feel that this meeting was of enough importance to do some traveling and make a few sacrifices. The women who did attend the meetings would like to dispute this idea by saying that the meeting was definitely a worthwhile experience. The meeting was an ideal time for getting together outside of a steering committee meeting structure and apart from the men of VVAW/WSO. Many problems were discussed which would have been impossible under different circumstances. We discussed the role of women within VVAW/WSO and how we may better exert our skills in positions of leadership. We also discussed the variety of problems which result in day-to-day relations with veterans and how these problems might be approached and dealt with. Another topic of concern was the way that we may better work with wives of veterans within the organization. It is a common problem that wives who are not involved in VVAW/WSO are often jealous of the time spent by the husband working with the organization. It is also true that wives tend to resent the women in VVAW/WSO who are working with these husbands. We feel that one way that this problem might be alleviated would be for the wives of VVAW/WSO members to be invited to social actions of the chapters for the purpose of getting acquainted with the people that the husband is working with.

The above topics of discussion are questions and problems which can not be easily resolved. We have no easy solution for relating to our brothers within the organization, but at least we have gotten the problem out in the open and tried to begin dealing with it. The women in Denver have written a resolution concerning the insight they gained at their meeting, and this resolution should be sent to the chapters soon.

Moreso than the women in Denver, the women meeting in Milwaukee spent a good deal of their time discussing issues which women in VVAW/WSO might focus on. A woman labor organizer spent part of Saturday afternoon talking with us about the problems facing working women. We discussed the Equal Rights Amendment and the reasons why we cannot support this issue. We feel that the E.R.A. is a class-oriented issue because the results gained by this amendment will benefit working women of the middle class, and possibly worsen the conditions that working class women are forced to work under. If the E.R.A. is passed, many of the benefits which have already been fought for and gained will become obsolete.

The two other issues which were discussed in Milwaukee were women in prisons and anti-recruitment. We were presented with the disgusting fact that 70% of the money used for recruitment in high schools is being focused on young women. The recruitment is presented in a "women's liberation" fashion, stressing that women are equal to men and therefore, should be part of the military machine. The Milwaukee chapter is putting together an anti-recruitment slide show which is geared toward high school students. The show exposes sexism within the military and could be a good warning to young women who are being rushed by Uncle Sam. The slide show will soon be available to chapters for cost.

Women in prisons is an issue which the women in VVAW/WSO might want to mobilize around. Women prisoners are obviously highly isolated from the movements which are going on in our society. Their oppression is very special and women in prisons are in desperate need of support and reinforcement. One example of the oppression which faces women in prisons is the fact that they are allowed to have only one man at a time on their mailing or visiting list. We feel that such a rule is absurd and should be confronted. One way of attacking this problem is to try to organize the women within the prisons. This will be difficult, but there are channels of communication open to us. We would suggest that women begin working with a prison near them and try to make contact with the inside. There are three major ways to reach women in prisons: 1. probation and parole officers who are sympathetic to the prisoners, 2. the Lawyer's Guild, and 3. staff members within the prison. Issues which relate to specific prison problems should be discovered and focused on. One issue which affects many prisoners is behavior modification. It is known that behavior modification testing is common in prison communities, and we have reason to believe that the testing is more frequent in women's prisons. This is related to a woman's social conditioning to being the more passive sex. Women in prisons are less likely to resist testing than are men.

Perhaps the most accessible means of reaching the prison community is with the help of the Lawyer's Guild. The Guild's magazine, The Midnight Special, gets into most prisons and the Guild has offered to print open letters to specific prisons. Women should use this means to begin communicating with women prisoners. Letters should deal with specific issues facing a specific prison. Inform the Guild as to how many copies of the magazine you want sent to which prison and your open letter will be gotten into that prison. The address of The Midnight Special is: 23 Cornelia St., New York, New York.

The women who attended the meetings are sorry that more women did not [redacted] Because of the poor turn-out, we are hoping to have some time during the [redacted] in Gainesville to get together with a broader segment of women in [redacted] to discuss the things which came out of the 9th meeting. It is vital that we begin to understand ourselves and our brothers. Unity is the key to our struggle and will be gained only if we work together.

PAT CHENOWETH TRIAL ENDS WITH FREEDOM

Pat Chenoweth was freed on June 12th by a court-martial board of three enlisted men and two officers. The charge that Pat was accused of was sabotage "in a time of war" on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Ranger. This was the first trial of wartime sabotage since World War II and Pat faced a possible sentence of 30 years in prison if convicted.

The court-martial board sat at Treasure Island Naval Station and deliberated three hours before returning the verdict, following a six-day trial. After the verdict of not guilty was announced, Pat read the following statement: "Today I feel we have won a great victory against the most dehumanizing machine in the world. At a time in history when the United States military is the major genocidal force around the globe, it is particularly gratifying not only to be free, but to have beaten the Navy in its attempt to frame me."

Pat still has 13 months remaining of his four-year tour of duty in the Navy, but he is trying to gain an immediate honorable discharge. The Navy has announced that such a special release will receive serious consideration. We hope that Pat receives his discharge soon and his freedom becomes complete.

!PAT CHENOWETH IS FREE -- FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

INFORMATION REQUESTS

1. We are going to update the Chapter List shortly. Some of the chapter mailings have been returned because the chapter is no longer at that address. If your chapter would like to continue receiving the mailings please comply with this request. We also ask all regional coordinators to help us with this task.
2. Enclosed is a copy of the July issue of Winter Soldier, our national newspaper. We have asked that all chapters or regional offices send us the amount of papers desired. Up to this point we have received about 15 orders; hardly a majority of the chapters. Could you please let us know ASAP so that the members of your chapter could have the chance of seeing the paper also.
3. We request that this office be included on your mailing list. We haven't been receiving too much written communications with many of the chapters. If there is a special problem (i. e. money) and you can't send mailings, we would appreciate hearing from you by personal letter.

UNITY - STRUGGLE - VICTORY UNITY - STRUGGLE - VICTORY

(This anonymous poem is dedicated to Col. Theodore Guy)

A VET RAPS TO A POW

I didn't sit out the war
being protected many years by so-called "gooks"
who, somehow, managed to give me
bowls of their rice, bits of bread
and sometimes morsels of meat and slivers of fish,
wash and treat my wounds
garb me in their garments
and forgive the waste of their land,
their lives, their culture, their sovereignty.

No, I didn't ride high in encased metal
and glass and white clouds,
and propelled by racism, derring-do,
push button fame and flight pay,
Yes, I slugged it out with the so-called "gooks" face to face
Your blundering B-52s often dropped bombs
on my barracks and there were booby traps in my bed.
On orders, I flamed the hootches of the so-called "gooks"
and I saw them flee in terror
and I heard their wails and screams
piercing my tattered conscience.

I saw their faces and bodies
guttled and made ghastly by napalm.
I scratched the cake blood
from my buddy's face and flipped a tear from my face
as I placed his broken body in a plastic bag.
The war was under my feet, over my head,
stabbing my eyes, raping my ears, choking my throat
and ripping my stomach -
but when I returned, nobody rolled out
a red carpet for me
and no bubble-bellied, war-waxed general
kissed me anywhere.
No horde of prompted and primed cheerleaders
panted in heat for me at the airport.
Nobody offered me a house or car
or suits of clothes or spots on TV shows -
not even a job with my number-coded discharge.

Now, you can find me languishing,
ashamedly and angrily in those long VA welfare
lines that America's darling POW
is not likely to know as you bank your bags of blood money.
But if I have nothing else, I still have
some army trained skills that I'm holding in reserve
and I warn you, precious and proud POW brother,
that you, in your free Madison Avenue suit and
stuffed briefcase may soon be mugged
gently but expertly by a tough dude with tarnished dog tags.