



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR WINTER SOLDIER ORGANIZATION

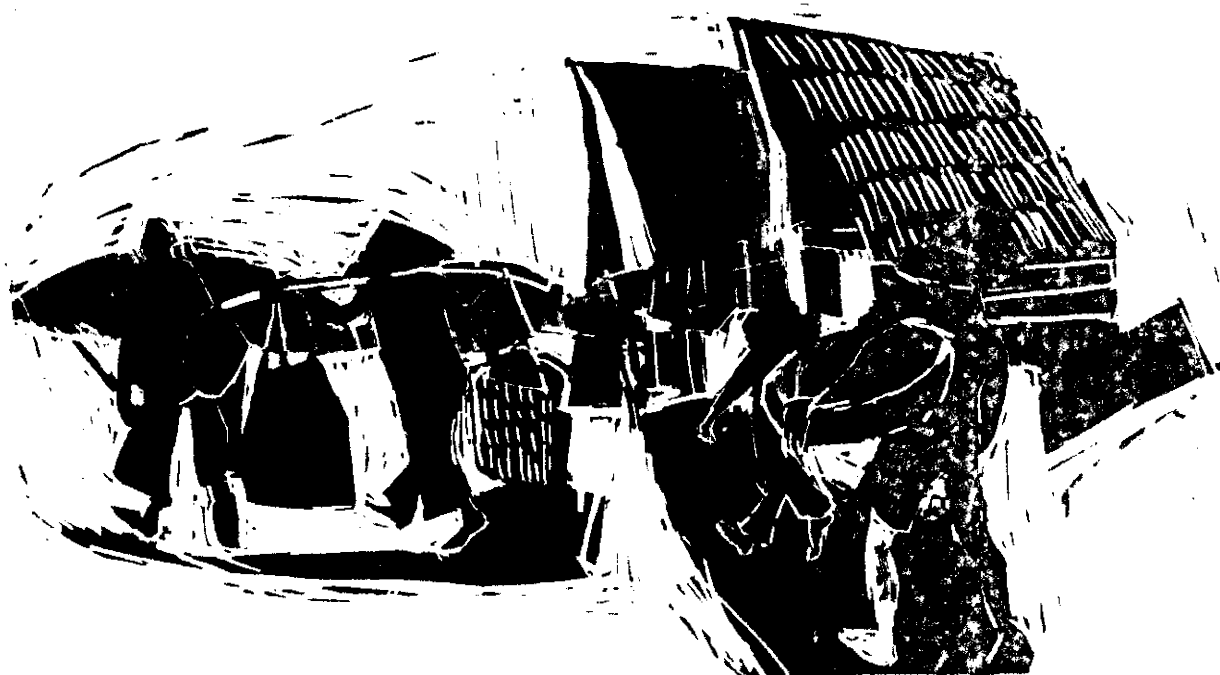
NEWSLETTER

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

No. 11

Sept 17

General Information



INDOCHINA SOLIDARITY WEEK: OCTOBER 1-8

VVAW/WSO's national action in support of the Indochinese peoples will begin in a little over a week. When this action was voted on by the St. Louis NSCM, it was passed unanimously with the understanding that no region would vote for the action unless it actually intended to work on it. The proposal for INDOCHINA SOLIDARITY WEEK was drawn up with the realization that individual region's capabilities and resources vary a good deal. Thus the action has been structured so that every region can participate in it according to their individual capabilities.

The one action decided on that all regions would carry out as a primary focus of activity was putting up the national VVAW/WSO poster to be made for the week's actions. The poster, stressing the need for solidarity with the Indochinese people and the fact that the war is not over, is now completed and has been distributed to all those regional offices telling us how many they wanted, (we are still waiting for a few to tell us). If you still haven't received your shipment, or if you need more, let the National Collective know and we will send them to you. Given the small amount of time left before the 1st of October, it would be good to notify us as soon as possible.

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The other activities suggested were all directed along the lines of a mass outreach program that should urge the American people to actively work to end the war and to encourage the concept that we all are, or should be, "Winter Soldiers" in this time of struggle. The suggested activities the NSCM discussed were:

- a. house-to-house canvassing to end the war
- b. leafletting at stores, factories, military installations, etc.
- c. doing speaking gigs
- d. recruiting for VVAW/WSO
- e. political education through media displays, (slide shows, movies, etc.)
- f. guerrilla theater
- g. demonstrations or other forms of direct action

It is asked that any plans for other actions besides the postering campaign be relayed to the National collective so that we can try to coordinate similar actions in other regions and advise the media of what we are doing. PLEASE try to send us pictures of any demonstrations, leafletting, guerrilla theater, etc. that goes on in your area so we can adequately cover the action for Winter Soldier.

For INDOCHINA SOLIDARITY WEEK to be a success, it's going to require the support of every possible region, chapter and individual member---even if that support is only putting in an hour or so each night postering. Let's get it on!

P.S. There is nothing on this green earth that makes posters stay up on walls, neighbor's picture windows, hoods of new Caddies, etc. as a can of plain old PET milk. A good coat of PET milk on the front and back of a poster will keep it up longer than most of us were in the service! And that's a fact.

Spiro Who?

Vice President Spiro Agnew is under investigation by a Federal Grand Jury in Baltimore for 'alleged' bribery, extortion and tax law violations. Attorney General Elliott Richardson is reported to have decided to allow evidence against Agnew to be presented to the Grand Jury. Agnew's lawyers are contemplating a federal court suit asking that all evidence against him be handed over to the House of Representatives, which would thus block a grand jury investigation. Their reasoning being that Agnew is immune from prosecution while in office; contending that this right is guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. If evidence was presented to the House, it would then be up to that body to decide whether to follow it up or let the whole thing drop.

On September 18, the Washington Post quoted "a Republican Party leader" as saying he was "99 1/2 per cent certain he will resign - and probably this week". Whatever the outcome of this situation it is important that we respond to events as they occur. Vice President Agnew, the spokesman and hatchet man for Nixon has continually acted on behalf of the right-wing and has in that capacity espoused law and order for over four years. For Agnew to be indicted for criminal actions, is a point that is very important for us to follow up on. Letters to the editor, telegrams to Congress, rallies, leafletting, etc are in order. This is an opportunity that has never existed in this country before. We should not let it pass by.

Indochina Peace Campaign Tour

The Indochina Peace Campaign will be sponsoring a tour of Jane Fonda, Tom Hayden, Jean-Pierre (formerly a political prisoner held by Thieu), and Holly Near (singer) during the latter part of September and October. The tour will be stopping in most of the major cities across the country. IPC has requested the help of VVAW/WSO in setting up speaking gigs for the show, and many chapters have already been contacted by IPC in their city. If VVAW/WSO chapters decide to help sponsor one of the shows, the chapter will receive a percentage of the profit. If you are interested in working with IPC on this tour and wish to find out if the tour is scheduled for your city, contact this office, or IPC -- either in your own community or at: 181 Pier, Santa Monica, California 90405. The phone for IPC is (213) 392-3942. IPC did a lot of publicity work around the Gainesville trial, so we hope that chapters will be able to work with making this tour a success wherever possible.

People's Lawsuit: The Committee to Set Aside the 1972 Election

VVAW/WSO is now legally listed as one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit being organized by the National Lawyers Guild to set aside the 1972 Presidential election. The suit is demanding that the American people be given the free and honest elections they are guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. If, after listening to 5 minutes of Watergate hearings, someone remains convinced that the people got anything less than outright electoral fraud in the '72 election, then that person must be hard of hearing of a very strong Republican. What the courts will decide in this matter remains to be seen, but if what seems to be happening to Spiro is true, well you just never know. Maybe Dick will be back in San Clemente sooner than he plans.

FBI STILL AT IT!

The National Collective is still getting reports from around the country of attempts by the FBI to infiltrate VVAW/WSO. Just because the Gainesville 8 trial is over doesn't mean the feebies are no longer interested in us. On the contrary, if anything, they are going to be more determined than ever to try and discredit or destroy the organization. They wound up with a whole lot of egg on their clean shaven little faces down there in Gainesville and, just might have some problems forgetting about us so soon; right Mr. Romans?

In any case, we've had one dude babbling something about how VVAW/WSO should pick up the gun and another that told us he was approached and asked to join a chapter and act as an informer... all within the past two weeks or so. Maybe the FBI has established a new quota system for its agents out in the field: recruit a punk-of-the-month to infiltrate a VVAW/WSO chapter, or get transferred to Point Barrow, Alaska to monitor over flights of seagulls around radar sites. In any case, we have had a number of very recent reports of FBI activity around our organization that all regions and chapters should be aware of. You might particularly keep a eye out for people wanting to join that have a fondness for knee-high boots, red capes and bullwhips.

Just an afterthought: could this have anything to do with the fact that Kansas City VVAW/WSO has recently initiated a class action suit against FBI director Clarence Kelly? Seems Clarence had a habit of breaking a lot of laws around the surveillance issue when he was chief of police back in K. C.

IF CONTACTED BY THE FBI, DON'T SAY ANYTHING!
CALL A LAWYER AND ALSO CALL YOUR FRIENDLY NATIONAL COLLECTIVE!

Regional Reports



Starke, Florida -

We have received word from Starke Prison in Florida as to what the climate was during and before the rebellion on August 5, 1973. (for information on this see Winter Soldier - September issue). The following are excerpts from a letter received September 4th. It is important to note that none of the mail we send to the prison is being given to the inmates, including the Winter Soldier.

"I have seen no newspapers concerning the Fascism that has engulfed us. Whatever was said, I know Louie (Prison Director) distorted the facts. Let me give you a general idea as to the 'what's going on.' Next door to me the cell is vacant. Toilet fixtures have been ripped off by an inmate the buzzards have successfully frustrated into insanity! There are many such cells in the maximum security area that breed disease and constantly exude the vile fragrance of stale excrement....

"...the racist prison officials have openly conspired with the racist inmates to create racial unrest so they can cry for ...money at the cost of our humanity. Prison officials openly and boldly attacked black inmates.

On August 5, 1973 a few more racists sneaked up on a real popular and likable young brother and cut him while he was taking a shower. Both black and white brothers liked the victim. Another brother was severely burned back here in isolation on the same day. That evening they found one of the racists dead and three or four more in critical condition who had cowardly cut up the brother in the shower. Immediately extra guards were called in and the population was sealed off.

"In a word, the mess was simply an intimidation campaign of the Fuhrer. The brothers here are trying to organize to demand a little more humanity. . . . We are the ones who are living in constant fear. We don't know when our lives will be exterminated or when we shall be attacked. They point to a guard being crippled on April 30, 1971. How quickly the public forgets how when prisoners assembled peacefully and unarmed on February 21, 1971, they were shot, maimed, eyes put out Should we die as hogs or men?"



NOSCAM Requests !!

NOSCAM would again like to remind people that the chapters in Japan would really appreciate hearing from any chapters or regions that care to communicate with them. If every chapter put the Japan chapters on their mailing list, they would get a good idea of what is being done here in this country so that when the GIs return home, they will have an idea what is going on in VVAW/WSO. The addresses of the chapters are:

VVAW/WSO
PO Box 26
Yokosuka, Japan

VVAW/WSO
PO Box 49
Iwakuni-Shi
Yamaguchi-ken
Japan 740

VVAW/WSO
PO Box 447
Koza, Okinawa

NOSCAM has also in the past months been sending the names of GIs here in the States to Regional Coordinators, in order that the home regions of the GIs could begin to contact them while they are still in the service, so that when they ETS, they will be familiar with the work of VVAW/WSO in their state. If regions would like a list of GIs in their area, write to

NOSCAM
PO Box 1625
Dayton, Ohio 45401



National Reports

GAINESVILLE REPORTS

We have been delayed in getting the analysis of the Gainesville 8 Support Action and the last trial reports together, (Trial Report #3), but will be doing so in the near future. They will be run-off and sent out as soon as we can get caught up on the backlog of work we collected during the trial and the NSCM.

For the record, the Gainesville 8 Newsbureau is now officially closed and all further correspondence to it should be sent to the National Collective. The house will be taken over by the Gainesville chapter of VVAW/WSO.

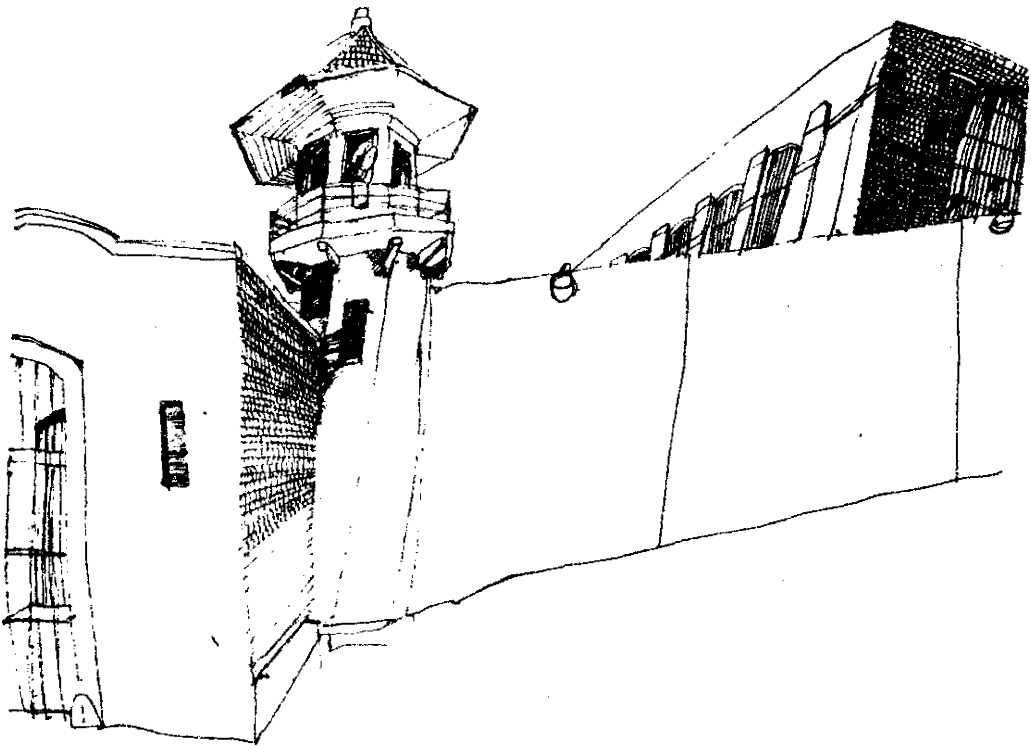
Camp Allen Trials Over

On August 11, the longest single Norfolk court-martial in recent history came to an end. After the fourteenth day of trial, Airman Apprentice A. Q. Johnson was sentenced to 18 months confinement at hard labor, bust in rank to pay grade E-1, loss of all pay and allowances, and a Bad Conduct discharge. 20-year old Johnson had been singled out by the Navy brass in Norfolk as the "ringleader" of the November 26th rebellion in the Camp Allen Brig. On that day, black prisoners, originally assisted by some of the white confinees, reacted to months and months of racial discrimination and general harassment, and took over a dormitory, a cell-block area, and the Control Office. A number of guards were beaten and thousands of dollars of damage was done to the facility. As a result of that incident, 13 black sailors were charged, tried, convicted, and sentenced on charges ranging from disrespect to attempted murder.

A. Q. Johnson was the last of these Camp Allen Brothers to be brought to trial, and was facing 8 charges with 23 specifications, and a possible sentence of well over 100 years and a Dishonorable discharge. He was finally convicted of only 5 of ten specifications: disobeying a noncommissioned officer, willful destruction of government property, riot, use of provoking speech or gestures, and assault. He was found not guilty on two charges of soliciting to mutiny, the charges the brass was using to try and lay the blame for the rebellion on him.

After Johnson was convicted, the defense was given a chance to offer testimony as "mitigation" -- that is, to offer excuses as to why the accused may have committed the "crimes" in question. The defense team told of the situation in the brig prior to November 26, and cited the following factors as causes of the disturbances: continual harassment of confinees by some of the brig guards (for instance, sticking tooth-picks in the food delivered to the confinees in their cells); written requests not being delivered to the proper authorities as required by law; racial prejudice in the medical department; and a disproportionate amount of discipline being directed against black prisoners.

By and large, this situation of harassment and discrimination in the brig still has not changed, and will likely remain so long as the brig command holds the completely arbitrary power to order and reorder prisoners' lives as it sees fit. There is no effective means of complaint, protest, or redress of grievance for the confinees. The only reason why the present situation has come to light is because there was an act of collective violence. The Navy brass has set up a pressure-cooker situation and, with these Camp Allen Brothers' courts-martial, have turned up the heat. The result can only be a new explosion, and the brass will again be the ones to blame.



Prisons and a National VVAW/WSO Prison Project

The prisoners presently incarcerated within this country's fine prison system are definitely ready for action. During the past few months, we have witnessed uprising at McAlester, Okla.; Leavenworth, Kansas; Starke, Florida; Michigan City, Indiana; and Jollier, Illinois. All of these uprisings were sparked by the prisoners' demands for basic human rights. As was discussed at the St. Louis NSCM, we feel that it is now time that VVAW/WSO begin to plug into prisoner's struggle and join the fight against repression that prisoners are now waging.

In St. Louis, the steering committee decided that the national collective is to research the feasibility of establishing a National Prison Project. Progress on this idea has been made and the response that we have received from inside the prisons has been overwhelming. Groundwork has been laid as far as researching other groups that are working for prisoner's rights and the information on the conditions in prisons and what can be done about these conditions should be rolling in soon. Also, many of the regions have responded by sending in names of prisoners who wish to join VVAW/WSO or receive Winter Soldier. It is incredible that if one Winter Soldier gets inside a prison, we soon have many subscriptions from that same prison -- so the paper is very popular and is getting around on the inside.

We would like for all chapters and regions to send in more names of prisoners that they know of so that we can begin sending them newspapers. Also, regions will soon begin receiving the names of the prisoners that are being held in the regions. When the name of a prisoner is received, the region or chapter should immediately make contact with that prisoner. About all that we can now do is offer support to people, but at the same time, we should be educating the prisoner as to why he/she is where he/she is and what can be done about the conditions that prisoners are forced to live under. Contact must first be made by letter. Most prisons will let anyone write to a prisoner, and from there, the prisoner must have that individual placed on his/her mailing list so that mail can be sent out. It will also be important that VVAW/WSO members try to be placed on the prisoner's visiting list (personal contact is very important). When writing letters, it is best that VVAW/WSO is not on the return address. Individual names should be listed and use either a home address or VVAW/WSO office address. Most prisoners are starved for information and contact with people on the outside, so you should have no problems determining what to write or talk about. It is especially important to inform the prisoners about VVAW/WSO and the type of work that we are doing. Also, the prisoner should be told about the possibility of us establishing a prison project. Most of them will have a lot of feedback to offer on such a project. If regions do receive feedback from prisoners with regard to setting up such a project, that information should be sent to the national collective.

The contact with prisoners definitely pays off. Already, we have over 100 names of brothers and sisters in prison and we have chapters inside prisons: Waupon, Wisconsin, Starke, Florida, and now Leavenworth, Kansas. The chapter in Leavenworth just recently officially formed and we received a list of the names of the 31 new members. The chapter is run by a steering committee and the members of this committee are those individuals that are expecting to be indicted for the "incident" that occurred on July 31st. At the bottom of the letter is a note saying: "We expect to be 500 strong in a few days!" This sort of organizing is very important, both for building VVAW/WSO and for abolishing the prison system that now exists. We hope that the chapters will be able to pick up on this and not let down those brothers and sisters that so desperately need us. If there are any questions about procedure, etc., contact the national office.

ALL PRISONERS ARE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Indochina Solidarity Buttons-

The enclosed buttons can be ordered from the Indochina Solidarity Committee, Box C, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10012. The buttons cost 11¢ each and would be a good item to utilize during Indochina Solidarity Week, Oct 1 - 8. To facilitate things, send money in advance.



WINTER SOLDIER: PICK-UP YOUR PAPERS!

Greyhound and REA have been returning some of our shipments of Winter Soldier as unclaimed. Besides the fact that this is a bit more than discouraging to those of us shipping the papers, it is very expensive! This past week alone, we've had to pay around \$50 for papers returned as unclaimed by some regions. When we ship a box of papers from Chicago to a region or a chapter that doesn't pick it up, we not only have to pay for the shipment out, but the shipment back as well. Such a lack of responsibility is rather hard to understand. But whatever the reasons for this situation, the National Office simply cannot afford it. Trying to absorb unnecessary costs, such as this, is impossible given our very limited financial resources. Should a shipment come back to us as unclaimed we will be unable to make any further shipments to that region or chapter until we can get things straightened out. Hopefully we won't have to mention this problem again.

A reminder on W.S. subscriptions from libraries or other institutions: to date we've received a total of one. Given the thousands of libraries around the country that's not a particularly good track record. With a little effort there are many public or school libraries that might be willing to open up a subscription with us... At \$15 @ it would really help defray the costs of W.S. As far as that goes, any subscriptions we can get would be a big help.

Information Requests

Chapter Lists -

Enclosed in this mailing you will find the newest, most up-to-date chapter list of VVAW/WSO. You will also find a correction sheet with changes made during the week it was waiting to be sent out. This is a common occurrence. If everyone would kindly send us their new address or phone number now, we will make one more correction sheet which should make the chapter list up-to-date-again. When mail is returned from a chapter, and we haven't heard from you in awhile, we assume that the chapter has folded and remove it from the mailing list. To avoid this, please let us here from you. Regional Coordinators are responsible for sending chapter updates to us. If your chapter is listed incorrectly, call your regional office or us.

Photos -

In the November issue of the Winter Soldier we will have a story on Indochina Solidarity Week. If you take black and white photos (8X10) of your activities that week, please send them in IMMEDIATELY to us. The pictures can be of rallies, leafletters, poster sticker-uppers, etc. Use your imagination.

Press Clippings -

We have a press clippings file, which contains among other things, stories on VVAW/WSO activities. Unfortunately the Chicago papers and the NY Times carry little about us. If your local paper runs articles on you, please send us a copy..

MONEY!! MONEY!! MONEY!! MONEY!! MONEY!! MONEY!!!!!!!

Due to situations beyond our control (i. e. the Gainesville demonstration), the national collective finds itself with literally no money. We have cut down on the money we spend on food and a lot of office supplies to keep the office at a survival level until our funding program gets underway next month. We would ask any of you rich folks out there to lend us a hand and send in some money. Thanks from Poverty Row. Make all large checks payable to: VVAW!!

SATISFACTION

The most beautiful
for those who have fought a whole life,
is to come to the end and say:
we believed in man and in life
and life and man
never let us down.

And so they are won for the people.
And so the infinite example is born.

Not because they fought a part of their lives
but because they fought all the days of all their lives.

Only this way do men become men:
fighting day and night to be men.

Then the people open their deepest rivers
and they enter those waters forever.

And so they are, distant fires,
living, creating the heart
of example.

The above poem was written by Otto Rene Castillo and appeared in his book, Let's get going, Country! Castillo dedicated his life to building the revolution in Guatemala. He was exiled from his country many times, but returned in 1966 to fight with the Revolutionary Armed Forces. On March 19, 1967, Castillo was captured in an ambush, tortured for four days and finally burned alive.