

Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Winter Soldier Organization

NEWSLETTER

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general information

Police Attack N. Calif. Sub-Regional Coordinator -

On the night of February 6th, Bob Hood, sub-regional coordinator of N. Calif. VVAW/WSO was attacked and brutally beaten by Oakland police officers. Bob had stopped his truck to act as a witness for a friend who was being harassed by police only to have them turn on him instead. One officer proceeded to point a .38 at Bob and ordered him to put his hands up. When Bob complied, the cop suddenly knocked him to the ground and began choking and beating him. Nearly beaten unconscious, the two officers handcuffed Bob and threw him into a squad car. When they searched him they found a Swiss Army knife in his pocket. Saying something like "ahah a weapon", the cops began making jokes about how Bob had attacked with a knife. After a huddle to get their story straight, Oakland's finest then took Bob down to city jail and booked him for 'assault with a deadly weapon against a police officer.'

An escalating wave of repression has been going on with in Oakland ever since the actions of the 'Symbonese Liberation Army' came to light. Police had already failed in one bogus attempt in mid-January to link VVAW/WSO up with the SLA and the Marcus Foster slaying (see newsletter #18). Since then, Bob's house and office have been searched and members of the East Bay chapter have been under extensive surveillance.

The same night Bob was arrested, police stopped and interrogated a number of members of the East Bay chapter, asking them specifically if they were in VVAW/WSO. With SLA activities in Oakland and the current pressure they are under to solve the Hearst kidnapping the Oakland PD has responded with a wave of near hysteria. But perhaps more importantly, the situation has provided police with an excellent excuse for terrorizing movement people and intensifying their spying on movement organizations.

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Reactions to the attack on Bob by the Oakland PD indicates that they may have made a bad mistake. The \$5,000 bail needed for Bob's release from jail was quickly raised. A number of groups such as Women for Peace and the Indochina Solidarity Committee showed their solidarity by filling the courtroom for his arraignment the following day. In addition, numerous individuals, groups and even a union local immediately began filing complaints with the DA's office and the community relations board of the police department.

This contemptible and outrageous frame-up will not be allowed... In Bob's words, "We are not worried because we have the truth on our side and all we have to do is lay out the facts so that 12 people from the community can see through the police lies."

FREE BOB HOOD! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!!

Charges Against San Quentin Six Dismissed

Six black and Chicano defendants, charged with the murder of three white guards and two white prisoners in San Quentin prison in 1971, have all had the charges against them dismissed by Superior Court Judge Vernon Stoll. Judge Stoll announced his decision on January 17th, stating that the indictments were unconstitutional. Stoll ruled that blacks, Chicanos, youth and low-incomes workers had been systematically excluded from the grand jury which handed down the indictments. The government prosecution intends to appeal the judge's decision.

The San Quentin Six were charged after the shooting of August 21, 1971, which killed George Jackson, two other prisoners and three guards. The six were also charged with conspiring to escape from the "adjustment center" in San Quentin prison.

Lawyers are now planning to go to federal court to get the six transferred out of the San Quentin "adjustment center" into the main part of the prison. The men have been in maximum security units for the past four to seven years.

Vietnam-Era Women -- A New Organization

Three weeks ago in Chicago, a meeting was held to form a new organization of women -- Vietnam-Era Women. The purpose of this group is to unite women who are "relating" to veterans. This group is being funded and organized by the National Council of Churches, and is, in essence, the "ladies auxilliary" of the National Veterans Resource Project. The National Office was never notified of this Chicago meeting, nor have we received any contact from the NCC regarding this new group. If people are contacted by Vietnam-Era Women or have any information on the group's activities, information should be sent to the N. O.

New Indictments for Leavenworth Brothers

On February 7, a Kansas City, Kansas grand jury returned major indictments against brothers in the Leavenworth Federal Prison. The indictments relate to the July 31st uprising which took place in the prison. During the rebellion, four guards were taken hostage and one guard was killed. These new indictments are separate from the indictments which were handed down a few months ago charging Odell Bennett, Alf Hill and Alfred Jasper with inciting a mutiny and assaulting federal officers.

The charges and people involved in what may be considered the beginning of the grand jury indictments include: Odell Bennett, Jessie Lee Evans, Alf Hill and Alfred Jasper charged with murder, assault, and kidnapping. Also, William Hurst, Jesse Lopez and Armando Miramon were charged with kidnapping and assault. All of these brothers are members of the Leavenworth chapter of VVAW/WSO. If these people are convicted in the Leavenworth trials, they will have nothing to look forward to other than life imprisonment.

The grand jury also indicted two other brothers on charges unrelated to the July 31st rebellion. Eli Fiaaler was indicted for assault with intent to kill and LaCount Bly was charged with assault after escape. To the best of our knowledge the grand jury is still deliberating and further, less severe indictments relating to July 31st are highly probable.

The Leavenworth Brothers Offense/Defense Committee is planning an action for February 18th called Operation Leavenworth. This action is to be a convoy led by Phillip Berrigan to Leavenworth where a demonstration and vigil is to be held. Car caravans from all over the states of Missouri and Kansas are expected to participate. Some problems have arisen in that Father Berrigan was prohibited by the Federal Parole Board from leading the march and vigil. He has assured the defense committee, however, that he will be participating in the action and providing his full support. The demonstration will put forward three demands to the Bureau of Prisons: 1. Comply with the July 31st negotiations of "no reprisals," and release all "Leavenworth Brothers" from the hole; 2. Drop the frame-up charges against brothers Odell Bennett, Alf Hill, and Alfred Jasper; and 3. Comply with the July 31st "13 grievances." More information about this action can be obtained from the defense committee.

The Leavenworth Brothers Offense/Defense Committee has a major request to make of regions and chapters. They need news clippings about the 31st uprising very badly in order to put together the press packet for the trials. If chapters find such clippings and as future clippings appear in your newspapers, they should be sent to: Leavenworth Brothers Offense/Defense Committee, P. O. Box 5818, Kansas City, Missouri 64111. Further information regarding the indictments and trials may also be obtained from this address.

Films for Fundraising and Political Discussion

(The following is a condensed version of a review which appeared in the Jan. 16th Guardian.)

"When the People Awake," made by anonymous Chilean filmmakers and the Tricontinental Film Center in New York, is a first-rate political documentary that offers a social history of Chile. The 60-minute color film traces the development of imperialism (first British, later U.S.) in Chile and then focuses on the first two-and-a-half years of the Allende Popular Unity government.

"When the People Awake" is a propaganda film in the best sense of the word. It educates and informs, creatively using historical photographs, newsreel clips and interviews, making its points with strong visual images as well as the spoken word. Particularly effective is an interview - broken up and used as an on-going contrast - with an upper-class woman representing the views of the Chilean right-wing parties. Likewise telling are shots of the "housewives" protest march in which it is clear that the bearers of the pots and pans are not on intimate terms with the daily realities that confronted Chile's working-class and peasant women. This is an important film, uncompromisingly anti-imperialist but equally uncompromising in its refusal to bow to the political cant of those who would weep for Chile while denying its self-evident political lessons.

Tricontental is also distributing a Swedish-made documentary on the Uruguayan "Tupamaros." Filmed clandestinely in Uruguay, "Tupamaros" includes unique footage of the urban guerrilla group's famed "People's Prison" and some of its most illustrious guests - among them British Ambassador Geoffrey Jackson and U.S. police agent Dan Mitrione (the subject of "State of Siege"). Like the Tupamaros themselves, the film is action-oriented. Its "theoretical" theses concentrate on the group's strategy for developing "parallel power" in Uruguay in order to offer the masses a believable revolutionary alternative. Both films are distributed by: Tricontinental Film Center, 244 West 27th St., New York, NY 10001.

regional report

March 29th -- Vietnam Veterans Day!

Our beloved President has recently declared that March 29th is to be set aside as Vietnam Veterans Day. There is to be a large parade in Washington, D. C. on that day and the D. C. VVAW/WSO chapter is already planning to participate in the action. Other chapters should check to see if similar activities are being planned in their regions and do whatever possible to plug into parades, etc. We should definitely make an effort to be visible on Vietnam Veterans Day and regions should notify the National Office of any action they plan to participate in on the 29th.

January 27th Demonstrations -

Many chapters around the country held demonstrations around the three demands of implementing the agreements, ending all aid to Thieu and Lon Nol; universal and unconditional amnesty for all war resisters; and kick Nixon Out!! There will be an article in the next issue of the Winter Soldier which will go into the details of where and when they occurred.

One demonstration that occurred was not covered in the news and we feel that we should explain what happened here. Six veterans, members of the VVAW/WSO chapter in Washington DC took over the Saigon Information Office of Psy/War Ministry. They planned to stay until the United States recognized its responsibility in implementing the agreements signed in Paris on January 27th of 1973. The vets went into the building at 12:30 on January 25th and stayed there for one hour when at such time the Executive Protection Service entered the building and arrested them. They are being charged with interference of a diplomatic mission. The trial date is March 6th in the US Superior Court in Washington DC. The members will present as their defense the entire question about the legality of the Thieu government in Saigon and the reasons for a continued office of psy/war in Washington DC. For more information write: VVAW/WSO, 2028 P Street NW, Washington DC 20036.

Other chapters that had demonstrations include: Miami, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Denver, Colorado; San Francisco, California; Kansas City, Missouri; Rochester, Buffalo, New York City, New York; and Columbus, Ohio. If you had a demonstration let us know soon and send pictures and reports of the actions.

Film Showings -

The Columbus, Ohio chapter of VVAW/WSO recently held a fundraising film showing of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. About 1,600 people showed up and the chapter made about \$1,100 in receipts, literature sales and donations. Before the film showing they passed out copies of the amnesty booklet and are now getting some feedback from those who read it, (good feedback). The chapter is preparing a pamphlet on how to set up such film showings and any chapter that would like to do the same should write to VVAW/WSO, PO Box 10116, Columbus, Ohio 43201 for a copy. They are holding another film showing this week of MASH and expect to do even better.



Work Around Gary Lawton/Zurebu Gardner

Since the NSCM in Yellow Springs, several regions have increased their level of activity in doing PE work around the Lawton/Gardner trial. Colorado is doing leafletting in their chapter communities around the trial and the Maryland/Virginia/Washington, D. C. region is in the process of having petitions signed which demand the release of Lawton and Gardner and the dropping of all charges. If other similar activity is going on, copies of leaflets, etc. should be sent to the National Office.

In Ohio, the region has gotten two colleges to pay for Gary coming, and he will be doing a speaking tour of the region at the end of this month. If people are interested in attending and seeing Gary, he will be in Akron and Cleveland on Feb. 25th; Mansfield and Columbus on the 26th; Cincinnati on the 27th; and in Dayton on the 28th. Other regions should consider this idea and see if there is a possibility of getting honorariums for Gary to do speaking. This will be a big boost in educating people and building support around the trial on a nationwide basis and it will also draw in money for the defense. California is also in the process of planning a state-wide speaking tour for Gary or Chukia and more will be said about this later.

On the 12th, we will have available a four-page, newsprint handout on the Lawton/Gardner trial. These will be available for the regions and are to be ordered from this office. (The handouts are very similar to the ones that were produced for the Gainesville trial and demonstrations). We have only ordered 5,000 copies of the handouts because of financial problems, but if people would pay for the handouts that are ordered, we could order another run in the near future. Let us know how many you will need and please keep your orders reasonable so that we will not run out of the handouts in the immediate future.



St. Louis Chapter Art Sale

From February 17-24, the St. Louis chapter of VVAW/WSO will be involved in a benefit art sale. The purpose of the sale is to raise money for the chapter project, the Chestnut Tree Coffeeshouse and to familiarize the community with the existence of this project. The chapter will be selling art work by local St. Louis-area artists and an exhibit of authentic engravings by the 18th century British satirist, William Hogarth, will also be shown. All proceeds from the sale will go to the coffeeshouse which is making slow, but sure progress. To date, the building which houses the coffeeshouse has been purchased from the city by the chapter. The restaurant is on the verge of opening and one five-room apartment unit has been fully renovated and is presently occupied. If people are interested in the coffeeshouse project and its progress, or in how the art sale was arranged, contact the St. Louis chapter at 1023 Allen, St. Louis, Missouri 63104.

national report

National Defense Committee Meeting

At the Defense Committee Workshop in Yellow Springs, it was decided that a meeting would be held in Chicago from February 23-25. Participating in this meeting will be people in VVAW/WSO who have had experience working with defense committees in the past. The purpose of the meeting is to define a way in which we can build a unified defense effort by preparing an analysis of past and current trials involving VVAW/WSO. Out of this, criteria for future involvement in political defense efforts will be outlined. Also, a training manual for defense workers is to be put together, so that people can be taught the political and mechanical processes of establishing defense efforts.

The Chicago and Milwaukee chapters are responsible for preparing the agenda and making preparations for the meeting. If chapters have suggestions for the meeting's agenda, items should be sent to the National Office (who will forward them to the chapters). Also, regions should notify N. O. as to how many people will be attending. Further information on this meeting and its results will be carried in the National Newsletter.

Operation County Fair

Enclosed is the February OCF Newsletter. In addition to our Chapters, the Newsletter was mailed to the 300 people on the OCF mailing list. If you know of doctors, nurses or anyone else who may be interested in receiving the Newsletter, let us know.

The clothing drive was very successful. In the process of delivering the clothes to the new Mall, the truck got stuck in the mud up to the axle. A lot of community members came over to help get the truck out; the excitement led to an enthusiastic community gathering. Thanks to the Friends of the United Front and all of our Chapters which helped make this project a success.

Linda Regnier and George Brazeau are now the only two VVAW/WSO people in Bogue Chitto. Diane Schmidt has taken an indefinite leave of absence, and Rich Craven has returned to St. Louis. They are desperately in need of some people who are willing to come down for two or three weeks to help with the physical labor at their house. They have no plumbing or out house, and they could really use a plumber to help them get their house together.

Three VVAW/WSO members from St. Louis, two registered nurses and one former hospital corpsman, will be moving to Bogue Chitto in early March to stay for about 4 months to help with organizing the health program in the community. Chapters should start looking for a dedicated person in their ranks that they could send down to Bogue Chitto in June (or earlier) to keep up the momentum after the St. Louis people leave.

National Coordinator Nominations -

At the Antioch National Steering Committee five people were nominated for the two positions of National Coordinator that will expire in April. Thus far two of the five have declined the nomination; Jeannie Dolly of Oakland, California and Barry Romo of the National Office. The following are their letters of declination.

* * *

January 30th, 1974

I wish to decline my nomination at the Yellow Springs NSCM for National office. I accepted the nomination on the floor of the meeting so that I could express to the entire organization why I feel that my nomination was incorrect and reflects a lack of seriousness in the way that some of us view the selection of leadership.

First, I assume that my nomination and second came from a favorable impression of my practice in the plenary sessions and workshops of the NSCM, the first and only one that I have attended. Except for two members of the California delegation, no one has any day to day practice with me. I am fully aware that I am articulate and give a strong impression in meetings. This quality, however is no basis on which to judge the quality of my daily work, nor my abilities to lead a national organization to which I have belonged for less than a year.

As we move more in the direction of the Winter Soldier concept, the organization as a whole appears to be accepting and strengthening the role of women in VVAW/WSO. I feel that the support that I have received from my nomination from members of the NSC is primarily because I am a woman. This points out two errors in thinking. I may well be one of the most qualified women in the organization to be in National Office. This does not mean that I am one of the most qualified people in the organization. Secondly, women do not develop leadership by being thrust into positions they are not prepared to fill. This way of developing woman's leadership is damaging to the organization and moreover to the woman herself. I have been in this position in other organizations and do not want to see VVAW/WSO repeat a clearly mistaken pattern.

I think that I am qualified in many respects to be in the National Office, but am not prepared to fill the position at this time due to the shortness of time that I have been in VVAW/WSO. I consider it an honor to be considered for a position of this responsibility, and thank those who have expressed their support for me.

Jeannie Dolly

* * *



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For the past two years I have had the privilege of serving in the National Office. From this position I have been able to watch the organization grow and mature on a national and international level; weather the storms of government oppression without turning reformist or disintergrating; solidify its anti-imperialist stand and move forward to the point where we can all say, VVAW/WSO is one of the best mass organizations in the country.

It is therefore hard to decline the nomination for a third term. But the time has come for me to return to California to do work specifically around the Lawton/Gardner trial and help in building the local and regional organization, the real backbone and power of VVAW/WSO.

In April, 1972, when I was first elected to the National Office we were told to make the office into a collective. The next year and a half saw the struggle to build one. Some of the people elected saw themselves elected to serve themselves and not the organization. At the same time 'collective' to them meant going along with decisions they agreed with and disregarding decisions when they were in the minority. The resulting struggles in the collective and in the organization as a whole saw these people leave not only the national office, but VVAW/WSO to other organizations where they could be 'heavies'.

These struggles and the resulting experience have led me to some conclusions about service in the national office and the people elected to come here.

When electing people it is imperative to pick the most competent and experienced people available. People that have already proven their ability to struggle and work collectively in their respective regions and chapters. It is not enough to advocate people because of 'potential' and then hope that the person grows into the position. Not only must the person live and work in the pressure cooker atmosphere of the national office, but represent VVAW/WSO to national and international groups. He/she must be able to adapt to changing situations, accept criticisms and criticize without individualistic ego involvement. To do any less would be a disservice to the national collective, to the entire organization and to the people looking to VVAW/WSO for direction.

With this in mind and also my deep concern in seeing the national organization continue to grow, I now take the point of personal privilege in recommending two people to fill the two positions open at this time. The first being Sam Schorr and the other being Peter Zastrow.

I have worked with Sam for the last year in the collective and know from practice his ability for principled struggle and following collective decisions. Also the work he is doing in the office at this time is invaluable and must be completed.

I've known Pete for two years and have seen his excellent work at both the chapter and regional level. I have also attended national and international conferences with Pete and he has always represented the organization and not himself. He has consistently been receptive to struggle excepting criticisms without becoming defensive and offering criticism without ego involvement. This observed practice makes him the best possible person for national office at this time.

I can only close by reaffirming my faith and dedication to the organization and to its direction, and to say that I am only leaving the day to day work of the national office for the day to day work of local. Build VVAW/WSO.

Dare to Struggle,

Barry Romo



Veterans

Included in this mailing is a list of resources on veterans for those working with veterans or interested in learning more about veterans. Keep in mind that this is a resource list; we are not endorsing anything put out by the organizations listed. If anyone has resource items that they feel should be listed, send them in and we will include them in a future update. Special thanks go out the Dayton Chapter for whom much of this material was originally compiled.

FBI/Local Police Contacts? -

As usual, we are still getting a steady stream of reports of infiltration/contacts/harassment/etc. from FBI and local police agencies. As usual, we are again reminding you to either write or phone in these reports to the National Office. Without extremely accurate and consistent reporting of such activities there is absolutely no way of maintaining an overall view of what's going on around the organization. The only people that will have such an overview will be the feds. Given the experience of Gainesville, it is definitely to our advantage to be as much on top of this situation as possible. While we have been getting reports with much greater consistency in the past few months, we could still tighten things up considerably.

Lawyers Military Defense Committee and Discharge Upgrading

The LMDC has been involved in helping many of our chapter DUPs with representing clients before the Discharge Review Board. We received the following letter from the LMDC which should be carefully noted by all chapters doing discharge upgrading.

To: Groups doing discharge work

From: David Addlestone, Susan Hewman, Jean Hanmer

Our new address is: Lawyers Military Defense Committee, 1346 Connecticut Ave., Suite 604, Washington, D. C. 20036. (202) 659-1138.

Anyone desiring LMDC to represent their clients before the Discharge Review Boards must supply us with the following information before the application is submitted:

1. A signed application. We will complete it and file it.
2. Complete service records.
3. Supporting documents.
4. Brief of the case to be submitted with the application.
5. Our questionnaire and retainer completed.
6. If applicant will appear, a detailed statement of his version of the case.
7. If he will not appear, a detailed affidavit of his version of the facts and an explanation in detail why he cannot appear.

We have 200 cases of our own and can only handle your hearings if you work the case up. We are not superhuman.

Do not just put down our name as counsel and file an application without contacting us.



Chapter List Update -

Enclosed with this mailing you will find the latest up-to-date listing of the chapters. On the last page you will notice the additions that came in during the time that it was being typed up. If your chapter is incorrectly listed, please let us know.

Unity-Struggle-Victory

information requests

Winter Soldier Subscriptions

During the past month or so, we have been receiving subscriptions for Winter Soldier from libraries. Since we received very few in the past, we must assume that people are hustling libraries for subs. Though we have not been overwhelmed by library subs, the number is increasing and the money is great. We wish to thank all those people who have been approaching libraries for subscriptions and we encourage others to do the same. Somebody out there is doing some hustling and your efforts are much appreciated.

Photos Needed! -

Once again we ask that chapters send us pictures of their local activities, including the demonstrations around the January 27th weekend. We can always use these pictures even if they do not appear in the newspaper. So, everytime you have a local activity, if someone could take black and white photos and send them in with a description of the event, it would be very helpful.

News Media

We would like chapters and regional offices to send in the names and addresses of local news media. This will allow us to more effectively publicize our positions on a national scale. It will be especially useful as the day approaches when we have our demonstration in Washington this summer, as well as during the demonstration itself.

Build VVAW-WSO
