

Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Winter Soldier Organization

NEWSLETTER

NO.22



Mar. 26, 74

general information

Flash: Police Attack Lawton-Gardner Offense/Defense Committee Members!

Riverside police attacked members of the LGODC as they waited in the Riverside Courthouse for the trial of William Palmer. Palmer, a member of the comm., was being tried on a phoney charge of supposedly 'assaulting a police officer with a rusty hubcap.' Palmer was set up on this because of his relationship to the Lawton-Gardner trial. Amid a series of community struggles around police brutality, Palmer had been shot in the back by RPD officers shortly before the 1971 murder of two RPD officers that Lawton and Gardner are now charged with.

A picket line protesting the continuing police harrassment of both Palmer and Zurebu Gardner had been set up in front of RPD headquarters on March 22nd. The picket was very successful and had done a lot to expose the incredible police repression surrounding the Lawton-Gardner trial. A leaflet distributed at this picket asked people to attend Palmer's trial on March 25th. Apparently, police officials decided that this would be a good opportunity to provoke an incident to try and stop future protest of their racist repression.

While members of the LGODC waited in the hall outside the courtroom, an RPD detective arrested Palmer's 14 year-old son on a 'burglary' charge. This prompted Palmer, Gardner, Chukia Lawton and Beverly Ruelle of the committee to demand to see the warrant for the arrest. Instead of producing one, the detective began striking Zurebu in the face and yelling for reinforcements. With cops swarming all over the place, Palmer was thrown on the floor, and Zurebu and Chukia viciously beaten. Chukia was choked unconscious and seriously injured on the arm and neck.

Palmer, Gardner, Ruelle, and Chukia Lawton were then arrested and hauled off to jail. Palmer and Gardner were charged with intent to do great bodily harm to a police officer, battery on a police officer and felonious resisting of arrest. Chukia and Beverly were only charged with the last two counts. Beverly was later released on an OR bond and Chukia was released, after a great deal of harrassment, on posting \$1,500 of a \$5,000 bond. Palmer is currently in jail under a \$25,000 bail and Zurebu under \$10,000. Newsreleases updating this will be sent out ASAP.

HELP-SEND MONEY\$\$\$-Palmer and Zurebu are still in jail. They need your help if they are going to be bailed out. If any money can be raised, send it to:
The Lawton-Gardner Offense/Defense Committee, PO Box 244, Riverside, Ca. 92502

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Lawton-Gardner Trial Bulletin

Enclosed with this mailing is a copy of the first trial bulletin put out by the Lawton-Gardner Offense/Defense Committee. Hopefully, similar bulletins will be coming out on a regular basis, and they will then be sent to all chapters via the national newsletter. We felt it important to let all the chapters know what is going on with the trial and the defense committee, so we hope to be sending out as much information as is available.

Gary has been doing more speaking tours in the past few weeks and more are scheduled for the future. During the week of March 18th, Gary was in northern California doing speaking gigs at various colleges and community gatherings. People should be aware that a party was held for Gary while he was in Oakland and donations were taken at that party. Gary turned around and donated the money raised at the party to the VVAW/WSO Legal Defense Committee which is defending Bob Hood. During April 4-6, Gary will be in Chicago and Milwaukee doing speaking gigs which have been set up by the chapters there. A report on this will come later.

Contrary to the last newsletter, there has been another change in the address for the defense committee. The address which is correct is once again: Lawton-Gardner Offense/Defense Committee, P.O. Box 244, Riverside, California 92502.

Bob Hood Defense Committee Formed

VVAW/WSO in the Oakland and Bay Area has recently formed the VVAW/WSO Legal Defense Committee. The primary purpose of this committee will be to defend Bob Hood against the frame-up charges which have been brought against him by the Oakland Police Dept. The charges of assault on a police officer were brought against Bob after he was brutally beaten by police while trying to insure the rights of a friend who was being harassed. After the beating of Bob, police found a Swiss Army knife in his pocket, and charged him with assault with a deadly weapon. Bob could receive a prison sentence of six months to life if he is found guilty.

This attack and frame-up of Bob Hood (former sub-regional coordinator of California) is just another in the long line of attempts to discredit and destroy VVAW/WSO. With the kidnapping of Patricia Hearst, the Bay Area police have unleashed a reign of terror on the "movement" in northern California. Thus far, Bob has been the most blatant victim of this increased police repression. Bob must be defended because his defense is the defense of VVAW/WSO. The defense committee has made two requests: 1. that chapters not send money for the defense because if money is raised, they would rather see it go to the defense of Gary Lawton and Zurebu Gardner; and 2. that letters protesting the harassment of VVAW/WSO and the frame-up of Bob be sent to the District Attorney and Police Department. These letters should be written immediately and sent to: Lowell Jensen, Alameda County District Attorneys Office, 1225 Fallon, Oakland, California; and to Officer E. Wilson, Internal

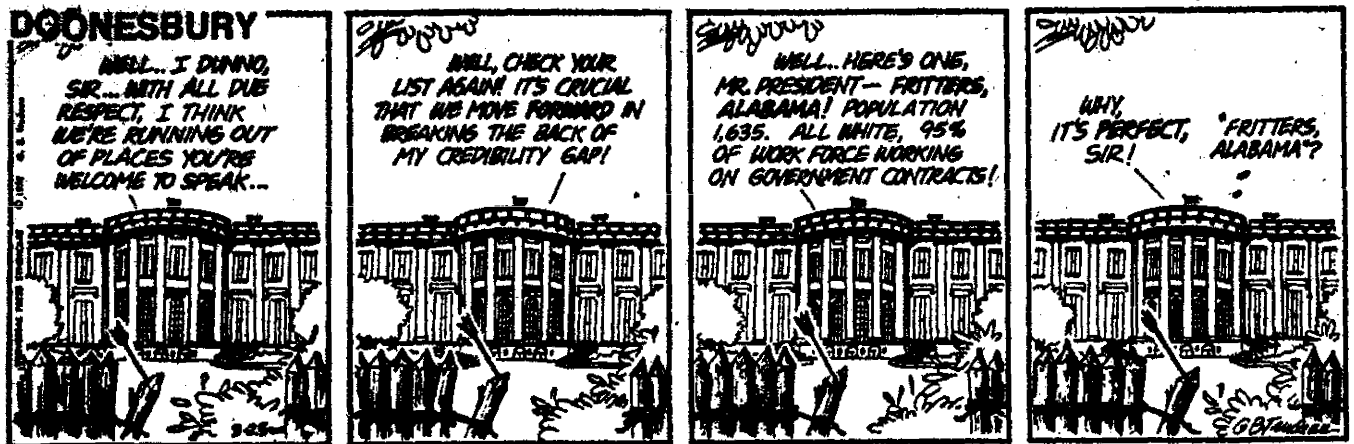
Affairs Division, Oakland Police Dept., 455 7th St., Oakland, California. These letters of protest should be gotten in the mail as soon as possible and copies may be sent to the defense committee. As news develops, it will be gotten out through this newsletter, Winter Soldier, and defense committee mailings. If there are any questions or information is needed, people should contact: VVAW/WSO Legal Defense Committee, 4919 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, California 94609.

Leavenworth Brothers Up-Date

The situation surrounding the Leavenworth Brothers has grown increasingly more absurd during the past week (and increased absurdity is getting hard to imagine). As was reported in this month's issue of Winter Soldier, one of the brothers, William Hurst, has been held separate from the rest of the six indicted brothers. Hurst was transferred to Marion shortly after the July 31st uprising occurred, and has since been sent to the Wyandotte County Jail during the pre-trial proceedings and court hearings. The real reason why Hurst has been separated is not known, though it is strange that as the only white brother who has been charged he is being separated from his black and Chicano brothers now in Leavenworth. On March 20th, an inmate was discovered after having been strangled to death in the County Jail. A few days later, William Hurst was charged with the murder of this prisoner. At about the same time as the body was found, four deputies in the jail were discharged for reasons of brutality, but it is not yet known if the two incidents are tied together. The situation surrounding this inmate's death are still very unclear and not much is being said by jail officials, so more details will be forthcoming.



regional report



Colorado Region Supports Denver Chicano Community

On March 17th, Colorado chapters of VVAW/WSO joined the Chicano community in Denver to support the National and International Day of Solidarity with the Crusade for Justice and the Chicano Movement. A march and rally was held on the 17th in commemoration of events which took place a year ago in which Luis "Junior" Martinez (a member of the Chicano community) was murdered by Denver police. Over 1500 people turned out for the march and rally to demand: solidarity with the Chicano movement, solidarity against political repression, the release of all political prisoners, the ceasing of political frame-ups, and that the memory of Martinez live on. The day was a major political event for the Chicano community and VVAW/WSO was the only predominantly white organization to sponsor the Crusade for Justice activity.

Southern California Slide Show on V. A.

The California sub-regional office and Long Beach chapter have been discussing the idea of putting together a slide show on VA hospitals as a means of exposing the manner in which veterans are treated by the Veterans Administration. If chapters have had experience in confronting the VA, know of horror-stories about the VA, or have photos, etc. they should contact the Long Beach office at: VVAW/WSO, 1810 E. Anahiem, Long Beach, Calif. 90813 and let the people there know what sort of information you have available.

Miami VVAW/WSO Counter Recruitment -

Each year a Youth Fair is held in Dade County, Florida. This year as in the past the US military had displays on the various armed forces in order to recruit the young into the war machine. The Miami chapter of VVAW/WSO went to court in order to be given a booth at the fair to counter the lies of the military. The court ruled in our favor, and a booth was set up on the 10th day of the 11 day fair. During the chapter passed out 6,000 leaflets, sold over 300 copies of Winter Soldier and passed out old copies of the paper and other information. They felt that for the time they were there, a good majority of the people agreed with their point of view.

The booth they were given was in the midst of the recruiting booths; the VVAW/WSO booth just 15 feet from the USMC physical fitness competition platform. The military people were fairly hostile to the VVAW/WSO chapter, but the people at the fair weren't. Counter-recruitment is happening around the country. Now that the volunteer army is in effect, it would be a good idea for chapters to find out more about how to get included in fairs, schools, etc., that allow the military a chance to peddle their wares. For more information on this fair, contact: VVAW/WSO, 2175 NW 26th Street, Miami, Florida 33142.

Buffalo Film Showings -

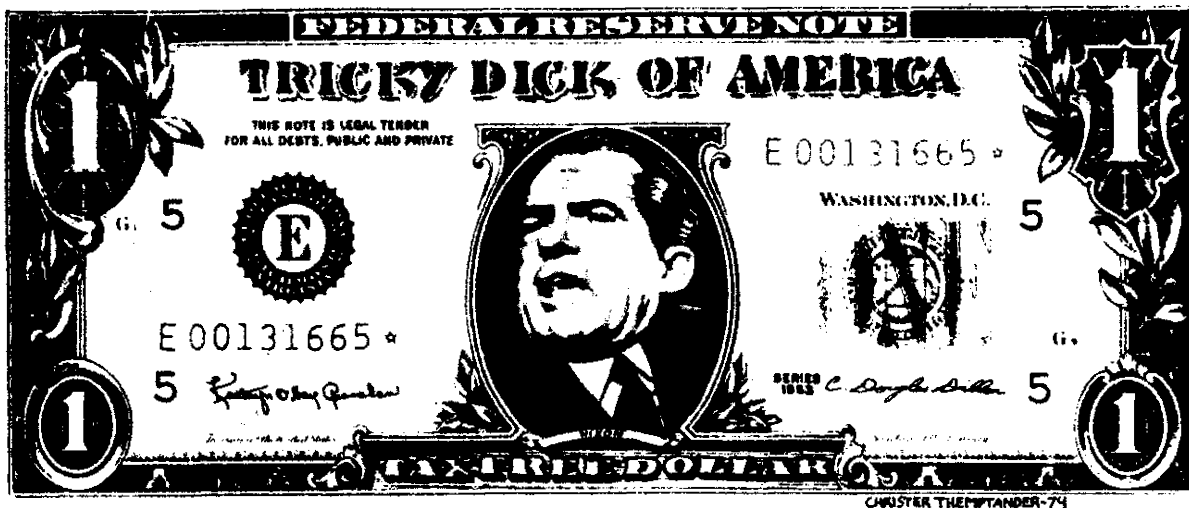
The Buffalo, New York chapter of VVAW/WSO has begun a series of film showings in their storefront. The films vary from The Murder of Fred Hampton to Red Detachment of Women. Other films in the series show the anti-imperialist struggles taking place in Guatemala, Palestine and Mozambique. Several of the films deal with the history of the labor struggles in the US.

The chapter is getting the films from Ohio Newsreel, Tri-continental and New York Newreel. They find that the films do two things: first, they are making this information available to a wide number of people in the Buffalo area and second, they are learning about these struggles themselves. In the near future they will begin using these film showings to raise money for the chapter. In the meantime they suggest that other chapters try the same program. For more information, contact VVAW/WSO, PO Box 902, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, NY 14205 and ask for information on how they set these up.

Columbus Film Showing -

The Columbus, Ohio chapter of VVAW/WSO is presenting the showing of another film, They Shoot Horses, Don't They on April 5th. This is the fourth showing of this type of film. They have made much money to carry on the work of the chapter, and urge other chapters to try the same thing in order to keep the chapter work moving. They have printed up a booklet explaining how to rent the films and put on the showings. Several chapters have sent away for it, and we suggest that others do so to. The Columbus chapter finds that this is the easiest way they have found to raise money. To get the booklet, write to VVAW/WSO PO Box 10116, Columbus, Ohio 43201.

national report



Proposed Objective Changes

Enclosed with this newsletter is a draft copy of the proposed objectives. As decided in Yellow Springs, the national collective was given the task of compiling and re-writing the national objectives based on input from each region. National was then to send out the re-worked objectives to the regions for their discussion prior to the Milwaukee NSCM. The enclosed draft is the result of our efforts. We must point out that only five regions submitted proposals and those regions that did not submit anything should criticize themselves for this failure to act upon Steering Committee decisions.

Before getting into the actual wording of the objectives, the collective decided on several criterion that we used as a basis for discussion. First, was the objective anti-imperialist in nature and did it push forward the anti-imperialist struggle?; second, was it as BROAD as possible without losing its content?; third, was it as concise as possible?; and fourth, was it focused on a major contradiction in the imperialist system. The reason for the first criterion is self-evident; we are an anti-imperialist organization. Secondly, we felt the objectives should be as broad as possible so that they effectively expressed the feelings of members who may differ on the particulars of the contradiction but agree on the nature of the general problem. Thirdly, we felt that the objectives should be as concise as possible to avoid lengthy descriptions that do not have to be included in the objectives. Lastly, we felt that the objectives should focus on major contradictions because these are the points that the majority of people can unite around in the anti-imperialist struggle (though they do not exclude contradictions or struggles related to the same area of discussion). We wanted to avoid spelling out every struggle that exists in the U. S., while providing the basis for work on those struggles which are not specifically mentioned.

It was suggested that the objectives be preceded by Thomas Paine's

quote so that people reading the objectives and the name of the organization would understand where our name comes from. This was to be tied into a preamble to the objectives. We agree that there should be a preamble that provides a broad perspective on VVAW/WSO's work. We also felt that the preamble must be concise, though even a little rhetorical, to convey our understanding that the problem facing us today is the system of imperialism.

Finally, we tried to incorporate all the suggestions submitted and mentioned from the regions. There were many conflicting points of view and on these, we tried to broadly define the problem so that both views were included. Please come to Milwaukee prepared with the outlook that these are national objectives and must apply to the perspectives and work of the entire organization.

UNITY - STRUGGLE - VICTORY

National Steering Committee Meeting -

We received a letter from the Milwaukee chapter about the latest plans for the NSCM to be held from April 11-15. The Milwaukee chapter will be putting out one newsletter with the information enclosed, but they asked us to let you know several things:

1. They need the agenda items by April 1.
2. They need the advance fee of \$7 per person, (in the last newsletter it was \$6, but due to inflation, they are asking for the extra \$)
3. Daycare will be provided on the West side of town.
4. Registration will take place at 2532 N. Holton Street, (414) 562-9371.
5. Round Robin reports should be written in advance (paper sales, etc.)
6. Gas shortages are real in Milwaukee, so be prepared to get gas whenever you see an open station.
7. Delegations from regions are to be limited to 8 people.

Declination of National Coordinator Nomination

Bill Hager has notified the National Office that he is declining his nomination for National Coordinator. We have not yet received his written letter explaining why, but when it arrives, it will appear in a later newsletter. This means that the only two people who have accepted the nominations are Sam Schorr and Pete Zastrow (resumes in newsletter #21).

Operation County Fair

Enclosed is the March issue of the OCF Newsletter. Due to the tidal wave of work in Bogue Chitto and at the National Office, this month's newsletter(OCF) was late in getting out. Please note the NEW PHONE NUMBER of the Bogue Chitto Collective: (205) 996-8286.

Keep in mind that the three people from St. Louis who have just arrived (see OCF Newsletter) will be leaving this summer. That means that other chapters should begin looking for qualified people to take their place. Remember that "National Project" does not mean National Office Project; it means it is a project of the whole organization. We made a committment to the people of Bogue Chitto, and if VVAW/WSO is not going follow in the footsteps of so many "civil rights activists" who left the South along with the TV cameras many years ago, then we are going to have to put in a lot more effort than has been previously forthcoming.

From a recent letter from Bogue Chitto: "We have been working in the house, on the store and the outhouse all day. We have worked out our financial plans for the next four months and our collective will meet each evening after the meal to plan the next day's work. As soon as the living quarters are squared away, heavy planning for the Clinic and chapter and collective work schedule/responsibilities will be done."

PVS Brochure

Enclosed is a brochure entitled "Post-Vietnam Struggle - The Psychological Contradictions of Vietnam Veterans." The brochure was a joint project of the PVS Clearinghouse and the National Office and is intended as a concise analysis of the problem for both members and non-members. This brochure will now give interested people an alternative to buying and reading the lengthy PVS Library if they want to learn about PVS. Interested people will always have the option of investing in the Library. It also allows us to do more mass work in this area now that we have something to handout.

While we're on the subject, please keep in mind that the PVS Clearinghouse relies on conscientious people across the country to take the time to clip articles from newspapers and magazines that concern PVS - either articles analyzing PVS and/or stories on effects, such as a Vietnam vet involved in a shoot-out or suicide. Individually these incidents may bare no relationship to PVS, but collectively they offer important evidence on the effects of the War. Please keep an eye open for articles. Also, people may be interested to know that Penthouse Magazine began a series on the problems facing Vietnam veterans in their March issue.

amnesty

House Judiciary Committee Holds Hearings On Amnesty-VVAW/WSO Barred!

The U.S. House Judiciary Comm. recently held a week of subcommittee hearings on amnesty legislation which barred participation from a number of groups representing people directly affected by the need for an amnesty. Headed by Rep. Kastenmier of Wisconsin, these hearings only took testimony from anti-amnesty groups such as the Pentagon, the VFW and the American Legion and from pro-amnesty groups for the most part representing liberal church organizations. Ed Damato of VVAW/WSO's National Amnesty Clearinghouse was flatly refused permission to read a brief statement on how amnesty affects the more than one half million badly discharged veterans by Rep. Kastenmier who said to him, "how dare you assume to represent veterans!" Other groups similarly refused entry into the committee's hearings included Walter Collins of SCEF, a political prisoner that did nearly 3 years in a federal prison for refusing the draft, and Sandy Rutherford, a wife of an exile in Canada and a representative of the Vancouver American Exiles Association.

Terry Seltzer, Regional Coordinator for the Md. - Washington, D.C. region of VVAW/WSO, had tried for over two weeks to arrange for this testimony from VVAW/WSO and had been led to believe that we and other groups representing people directly affected by amnesty would be allowed to put forward our positions on the issue during the hearings. Instead, the House Judiciary Committee saw fit to refuse all amnesty constituency groups permission to speak on the issue. It is hard to imagine a more reactionary position being taken by them in doing this.

The primary reason VVAW/WSO had attempted to participate in these hearings in the first place was because it was felt that, given all the clouding of the issue by other organizations and the government itself, at least putting forward a clear anti-imperialist perspective on amnesty would have been an important step. The refusal of Congress to even listen to us, however, was not unexpected - we've known all along where they really stood on amnesty and that the only way a real amnesty will be obtained is through a massive grassroots campaign. If nothing else, the D.C. experience utterly confirmed this belief.

Begin Building for the Regional and National Amnesty Demonstrations!

A timely reminder: with only about 45 days left until the May regional amnesty/VA actions and about 90 days to the national action in Washington, we don't have any time to waste. As the April 11-15 Milwaukee SCM is staring us in the face, it should be particularly clear to us all that we really are going to have to get moving on these as soon as possible. After the Milwaukee NSCM,

we will not only have to continue to build a grassroots campaign for amnesty and our DUPs, etc., but have to simultaneously pull together good regional actions, (less than a month after Milwaukee!) and build a massive outreach campaign for the July demonstration in DC. There is one hell of a lot to be done in a very short period of time.

Preliminary discussions with our lawyers and the DC Park's Commission have already begun and things seem to be moving well. While negotiations for a campsite, parade and demonstration permits may, as always, take awhile, they generally look favorable. The DC regional office has been particularly helpful both in obtaining a lawyer and in discussing these permits with the Park's Commission.

It is going to be extremely important to build as much support as possible for the July 4th rally with other groups and coalitions. The more work we do in building this sort of support, the more successful the July 4th demonstration will be. Attempts should naturally be made to get other groups to endorse the actions, but also to get them to actually build for them and to send their people with us when we go to DC in July.

As the proposal for the demonstration in Newsletter #20 for adding the slogan, 'Kick Nixon Out' was accepted, it has now been added to the demonstration's points of unity. People should begin using this in building support for the demos.

This is a national action and should be seen as the primary task of the organization at this time. This is the only way that we will be able to make this action as great a success as it can and will be.

UNITY - STRUGGLE - VICTORY

Pentagon Announces End of SPNs?

On Thursday, March 21, the Pentagon announced that they were dropping the SPN codes from military discharges. These codes appear on all discharges and in many cases, mark a veteran with some perverted stigma for life, regardless of the type of discharge, (honorable, etc.) Some of the more infamous SPN codes include: bedwetting and inadequate personality.

Under the new system to go into effect by the end of June, the code will be abolished and replaced with a written discription of the reason for discharge, available only on the specific request of the veteran. In addition, any veteran with a bad SPN could write to the various services and request one that has no code on it.

The pressure built around the country over the use of such discriminatory codes, proved a victory for us. But we should not be fooled by this reversal in Pentagon policy. For one thing, the SPN codes were always 'secret' and not to be given to the public. In fact, according to Rep. Seiberling of Ohio over 20% of all corporations polled in a survey he took showed that they had, and used the codes in hiring veterans. With this history we can expect the corporations and the Pentagon to work out some special deal, enabling the discrimination to continue.

But the major fact remains that there are hundreds of thousands of veterans who have bad SPNs on their discharge papers. These veterans will still be the victims of this discrimination in spite of the fact that they can write in for a possible new DD-214. With the precedence of the discharge review boards backlog in upgrading of discharges, we can imagine how bogged down the system will become. It would take years for the new discharge papers to be given out.

The battle for a single-type discharge with no punitive codes will intensify. Because of this new system, the Pentagon will say they are doing there best, but we recognize that they are only deceiving the public into believing that the discharge system has improved. Thousands of veterans will continue to lose jobs and chances of decent employment because of the codes and the types of discharge.

information requests

Vietnam Veterans Day -

As we noted in Newsletter #21, President Nixon announced March 29th as Vietnam Veterans Day. Aside from this administration pap and PR, several chapters of the organization have decided to honor the day with demonstrations. By the time you get this newsletter, the day may have past, but if you receive this before, (or even after), we here in the national office would like to receive from you reports and PHOTOS of what you did on that day. We are going to have an article in the next issue of the paper on Vietnam Veterans Day and need your input. If you have photos, please send them in ASAP. And hopefully they will be black and white, 8"X10" glossys. We cannot use color film for the paper. If you have black and white negatives, send those in if you wish.

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SINCE THE
VIETNAM
CEASE
FIRE :



A
MILLION
NEW
REFUGEES.



OVER
100,000
POLITICAL
PRISONERS.



122,000
SOLDIERS
AND
CIVILIANS
KILLED
OR
WOUNDED.



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OF THEM
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