Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Winter Soldier Organization

NEWSLETTER

number 33 Jan. 23, 75

General Information

Gary Lawton Trial & Program of Work Around Trial

As reported on in the Feb. issue of Winter Soldier, Gary Lawton's third trial began on Jan. 8th. The defense committee is speculating that jury selection will take approximately one month, and that the trial will last approximately six months. At this early date, there is not much to report about what's happening in this trial, but we will get up-dates out to people as soon as there is any news about the composition of the jury, etc.

People should also be aware (as stated in the W.S. article) that all charges against Chukia Lawton and Rusty Bronaugh have been dropped. They appeared in court on Jan. 13th for the re-trial of the charges brought against them as a result of the March, 1973 courthouse attack. The judge felt that it would be "in the interest of Justice" not to try this case again, stating that the cost to the tax-payers was not worth such a bogus charge. As with the dropping of the charges against Zurebu Gardner, this is seen as a real victory for the struggle in Riverside.

At the St. Louis NSCM, the organization adopted a minimum program of work around the Gary Lawton trial and the details of that program are contained in the minutes of the meeting (Political Defense Committee/National Alliance workshop report). Enclosed are petitions that all chapter members are to have completed and these petitions are designed for mass work, i.e. getting out to people who are not familiar with the Lawton case, talking to them and getting them to sign petitions. This should be done as soon as possible and the petitions are to be returned to the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee. Also, even though the program of work requires that every member get at least one petition completed, we hope that if you complete one, you will not stop there but go on to get signatures on 2, 3, and 5 more petitions.

Also, people should get ready for the nationwide picket lines which are to be held on January 31st at places such as Federal buildings, DA offices, etc. We are expecting these picket lines demanding the freeing of Gary Lawton to be a big success, and since this is a national action, all chapters should be holding such

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picket lines. Reports on these picket lines should be sent to the National Office as soon as possible so that we have the information for the next issue of the newspaper. Also, the picket lines will provide a good opportunity to get petitions signed, talk about the Lawton case, leaflet, etc. It is critical that this program of work around Gary Lawton be implemented in all regions. The program is not calling for much, and it is our responsibility to get out among people and do mass education and mobilization around this struggle. By implementing this program, we can begin to build a real mass movement which will free Gary Lawton!

Fighting Program for VVAW/WSO

At the St. Louis NSCM, VVAW/WSO adopted a national program of work for building the anti-imperialist veterans movement. This program is not to be taken lightly, but is to be implemented in all chapters of the organization. This program is designed to get VVAW/WSO out among the masses of veterans, and gives ideas as to how to bring these people into the struggle against imperialism. Enclosed is a copy of the new program, along with the report from the program workshop. This should be carefully read, and if there are any questions, let us know and we will try to answer them.

Several suggestions for implementing this program were discussed at the St. Louis meeting and these suggestions should be discussed by the chapters and applied to the conditions in your own communities. This program is not a game to be played with, half-heartedly worked at, or ignored. It is our national program and this is a national organization. Though everyone did not agree that VVAW/WSO should focus its work on veterans and GIs, there were no objections to this program raised at the meeting; thus, we have to assume that people felt it was a good program that would push the work of the organization forward, build VVAW/WSO and the vets movement. This program requires consistent, day-to-day mass work at

places where veterans are at; it cannot be a success if we fear the masses and refuse to go out among them on a regular basis. This program is much more than a few demonstrations now and then, even demonstrations at the VA. The program will not be a success unless our work is consistent and unless we are out implementing this program daily.

We hope that all chapters will keep us informed as to how this program is being implemented in their areas so that we can get that information out to other chapters. This will require regular work reports to be submitted to the NO which talk about the progress being made, the problems encountered, and the successes of our work.

IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM!!!
BUILD THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST VETERANS MOVEMENT!!!

Ruchell Magee Sentenced to Life in Prison

On January 23rd, Ruchell Magee was sentenced to life in prison. This sentence came on the heels of a U.S. Supreme Court decision not to hear Ruchell's motion for plea reversal. In June of 1974, Ruchell plead guilty to the charge of kidnapping which resulted from the "Courthouse Slave Rebellion" in August, 1970. During this rebellion, Ruchell made his bid for freedom and along with a group of other prisoners who were in court, attempted to escape in a van, taking with them the court's presiding judge. Marin County police opened fire on the van and indiscriminately murdered Jonathan Jackson, William Christmas, James McClain and Judge Harold Haley. Following the murder, Ruchell (the only surviving prisoner) was charged with murder, conspiracy to free the Soledad Brothers, and kidnapping. During Ruchell's first trial, it was proved that the gun which killed Judge Haley was fired from one of the cop's weapons, and the jury was hung. The murder charges were then dropped and Ruchell began the long wait for his second trial on charges of kidnapping.

In June of last year, Ruchell plead guilty to these kidnapping charges. This was done after extreme harassment, including pressure from his so-called attorneys. Almost immediately after the plea was entered, Ruchell began the process for getting the plea reversed. The judge who heard the plea wouldn't allow it and was preparing to sentence Ruchell to life in prison on the spot. After a determined struggle, Ruchell appealed this guilty plea and asked that it be removed so he could go through a trial and prove his innocence and the right to rebel.

With the Supreme Court's refusal to hear the appeal for reversal of the plea, Ruchell's struggle to obtain a jury trial was rejected. He was then sentenced to life in prison on the kidnapping charges. It is too early to tell what will happen now and what tactic Ruchell and his supporters will now employ to build the struggle to free Ruchell Magee. We will get details out to people as soon as we receive them.

People should also be aware of Ruchell's denunciation of Angela Davis following his sentencing. Magee called Davis a "pig, snitch, dirty snitching rat." This is quite a contrast to what the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression recently told VVAW/WSO concerning Ruchell's feelings for Angela. All

chapters should have a copy of the Alliance's "Open Letter to VVAW/WSO" and should take note of their quoting of Ruchell. It is a far cry from what was said in the courtroom on Jan. 23rd.

With these recent developments, it is crystal clear that Ruchell Magee is a Black man who has been thoroughly screwed -- both by those people who should have been his comrades and by the state. Ruchell's struggle for freedom began nearly 20 years ago when he first entered prison in Louisiana for "attempted aggravated rape" of a white woman (who failed to identify him in a police line-up) as a result of an all-white jury's racism and the repression existing under imperialism. That struggle for freedom and against injustice continues today. VVAW/WSO must support the right to rebel and continue to demand freedom for Ruchell Magee.

An Up-Date of Organizational Trials

BOB HOOD: As reported in the Feb. issue of Winter Soldier, Bob Hood's trial ended with a hung jury and a mistrial was declared. The defense went back into court during the week of Jan. 20th to find out what is to happen to the charges against Hood. The government has decided to continue these charges and bring Bob to trial again. However, the government also offered Hood a "deal" saying that they would get him on a misdemeanor charge of assault and as a result, he would spend no time in jail and would be on limited probation. The defense took this offer of a deal as a sign that the government is running scared, and have decided to reject this offer and go for another trial.

A pre-trial hearing is scheduled for Feb. 28th, and the defense will present more motions for the dismissal of the charges. The trial itself is tentatively scheduled for March 10th. There are some changes, however. The first trial was heard by a real fascist judge, and the judge appointed to deal with the pre-trial is considered to be one of the more "liberal" judges in Oakland. Also, the judge seems to feel that these charges are not worth trying a second time. It is too early to get our hopes up, but it is not inconceivable that the judge could drop the charges at the Feb. 28th hearing. If that does not happen, the chances for an acquittal look good

in the second trial, partially because the government seems to be backing down. We will continue to keep people posted on further developments.

CINCINNATI 7: The trial of the Cincinnati 7 has been postponed until April 14th. The Cincinnati 7 were attacked and arrested by police as they were picketing the Cincinnati Federal Courthouse last Sept. 17th. The pickets and leafletters were there for the James Hardy Defense Committee, a coalition of groups in Cincinnati built to support a Black community activist on trial for "intimidating a police officer." The seven people (four of whom are VVAW/WSO members) were charged, variously, with assault and battery on a police officer, resisting arrest, and disorderly conduct.

The defense feels that the recent postponement is indicative of the fact that the prosecution's case is bad and they want to weaken the case of the Cincinnati 7 by putting the trial off. Also, it may be that by postponing the trial so that it is seven months after the attack, there will be less of a chance to build a movement around police repression in Cincinnati. But neither of these tactics will work. A movement to fight police repression is building within the community, and the "defense" will not rely on what happens in the courtroom anyway -- but will rest with the movement of the people.

GRUNC 10: On Oct. 29th, 10 people liberated the Cambodian (Lon Nol) Mission to the United Nations in New York City, in support of the struggle of the Cambodian people. Members of VVAW/WSO, Indochina Peace Campaign-NYC, Indochina Solidarity Committee, Revolutionary Student Brigade and White Lightning were involved with this take-over and charged with criminal trespass. (Federal charges of "felonious assault on a foreign diplomat were dropped). The GRUNC 10 are to be tried on January 30th. Since on e of the 10 is not yet 18 years-old, all of them will be tried in juvenile court.

DANNY FRIEDMAN: Danny Friedman, one of the VVAW/WSO members beaten by guards at the Shea Stadium attack which occurred during the "Honor Vietnam Veterans" baseball game, will go to trial on February 10th in New York City. Danny is the only one with charges remaining, and he will face trial on charges of 3rd degree assault.

Clemency Board Conducts Travelling Circus -

Charles Goodell, and other members of The Presidential Clemency Board are packing up and taking the circus on the road. They will be visiting cities across the nation trying to tell draft resisters about how great the clemency is and that there are only a few days left to join in the big show. We think it would be a good idea to have a few local barkers around when they come to your city.

The clemency has been an utter failure! Less than three thousand people have taken it out of approximately 125,000 (these are government figures which seem to be part of a magic sideshow of the circus. The numbers get bigger and smaller all the time). As many organizations have been saying in past few months, the clemency

program is bankrupt and not in the interests of war resisters. When Goodell, the ringmaster, shows up, or one of the others of the Big Top, it would be good to raise the slogan "Universal and Unconditional Amnesty for All War Resisters!"

They are talking about extending the show for another six months, but this time not by popular demand, but rather in an attempt to inflate the figures with those who are in need of a real amnesty. As has been proved, the clemency is not an amnesty and war resisters will not submit themselves to it no matter how many clowns parade around the country. If these side-show freaks show up in your city or town, and you are there to meet please take pictures and let us know what happens.

Winter Soldier Investigations Revisited

The following item appeared in a Dayton, Ohio, newspaper: "Kenneth Anger, Filmmaker and author, is working on a bood about the process by which young American boys were programmed into becoming torturers in Vietnam. He'll pay $10 an hour for interviews with veterans willing to talk about applied cruelty. Write to him at Straight Arrow Press, 625 3rd St, San Francisco, CA. Confidentiality is promised."

Death of Prisoner Sparks Protest -- Demand Investigation

On Jan. 6th, William Lowe died in the hospital within the Federal Penitentiary located at Terre Haute, Indiana. Three days preceeding his death, Lowe tried to be admitted to the prison hospital; he was refused. Two days before his death, six prisoners living in Lowe's housing unit protested vehemently with the guard on duty to call the hospital and demand Lowe be admitted. The guard finally consented; but the guard in the hospital said no one would be admitted to the hospital unless he was on his "death-bed." Later that day, Lowe was admitted to the hospital. His case was diagnosed as pneumonia by the medical training assistant -- there is no doctor at the prison from 4 pm on Friday to 8 am on Monday, nor is there any competent medical staff.

Even though Lowe's condition was diagnosed as pneumonia early enough in the week where his life could have been saved with proper medical care, there was never any attempt to have him taken to a hospital in the community; and the hospital staff knew that the prison hospital lacked adequate facilities to deal with Lowe's illness.

The following day after his death, more than 900 prisoners (out of a population of 1100) participated in a peaceful work stoppage. The prisoners protested for two reasons: 1) To form the Prisoner's Council, a liaison group composed of prisoners to air grievances with prison officials; and 2) For better medical treatment, a doctor seven days a week during the day, and a competent medical staff at night; free and timely access to the hospital for all prisoners, including those prisoners working in the prison factory; and use of community hospital facilities for those prisoners whose illnesses necessitate such facilities -- or up-date the hospital inside the prison, replace obsolete equipment and expand its facilities so it can adequately provide full medical attention for the 1100 men imprisoned at Terre Haute.

The situation at Terre Haute is tight. There have been over 70 prisoners locked up in segregation or transferred as a result of the peaceful protest. More lock-ups and transfers are impending -- all of which will be an attempt by prison officials to suppress the rage -- and the facts -- of Lowe's death.

The brothers at Terre Haute are demanding an investigation of Lowe's death, the lock-ups and the hospital facilities. We would urge all chapters and regions to write to the following people, demanding this investigation and protesting the recent acts of brutality against the prisoners at Terre Haute. It is important that acts such as these do not go unnoticed by the people of this country and that we let the administrators know that someone is watching them. Letters should be sent to: Surgeon General of the United States, Office of the Surgeon General, Washington, DC; Norman Carlson, Director, U.S. Bureau of Prisons, HOLC Building, 101 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC; and Warden C.L. Benson, Box 33, Terre Haute, Indiana 47808. Mass pressure is badly needed so have your chapter members write letters as soon as possible.

A Primer in Revolutionary Photo-taking -

We all know that a photograph can add immensely to a story, particularly in WINTER SOLDIER and GI NEWS. We would like to give some tips; things we have learned from our own experience and from the experience of looking at some of the pictures we have been sent over the years.

The first important thing to be on the lookout for is to make sure that there is film in the camera. Many good pictures have been lost forever, because someone took a camera and didn't check to see if there was film in it. The second important thing is to make sure that someone knows how to use the camera before they are assigned the task of taking pictures. We've seen people struggle over a camera at demonstrations, knowing that they are unfamiliar with the workings of it. Good pictures can be taken with a Nikon or with an instamatic. It all depends on what you set your sights on while taking pictures.

A photographer at a demonstration is an essential person. If a chapter wants to have someone take pictures, then that person should ONLY take pictures, and have no other responsibilities. A good photographer should be able to move around always keeping an eye on the events that are taking place. It would also be beneficial to have someone work with the photographer. This person would have two tasks: one would be to watch out for pigs who may want to take a poke at the camera, and second to hold the used film so that the photographer doesn't get popped and have the film confiscated.

When taking pictures, the photographer should be able to judge what kind of story he/she wants the picture to take. Photographing a march, for example, seems easy but there are some recurrent problems that we see often. Many times the photographer sees only the banners, and the result is a picture that has in its center, a banner, with some partially cut out faces on the bottom, and a lot of empty buildings on top. In a case like this it would be better to photograph the banners at the top of the photo, with the people in the lower half. This is but one example; there are many more. It is always important to have people in pictures. This should be the main thing to look for when taking photographs.

The photographer should not be afraid to take five or six pictures of the same scene. You'll be lucky if one comes out really good. This may sound quite expensive but it isn't. We can only use black and white photos; the cost ranging somewhere between 90¢ and $1.25, depending on where you get the film. If you send us the film, we can develop it, or you can send us the negatives and we can develop the prints. As important as picture taking is, two or three dollars doesn't amount to that much.

Many chapters have people that regularly take pictures. This is really good and should continue, although if others would like to try they should be encouraged. Although this short primer in photo-taking is incomplete, we hope that chapters will be able to have some discussion around the importance of picture taking and we hope that the result will be that chapters will take pictures more seriously and more steadily. In this way, all of us will be able to benefit from your work.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS !!

Regional Reports

January 27th Demonstrations

From what we can see, there is a good deal of energy around building for the January 27th actions. We've received very few concrete reports as to what is being planned for the anniversary of the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, but almost every region will be doing something -- holding marches and rallies, forums, film showings, leafletting, etc.

We will be doing a sum-up of these activities for the next issue of Winter Soldier and in order to do this, we will need information in the actions in all the chapters. The next issue of the newspaper will go to press about the middle of February, and this means that we will need the reports as soon after the actions are completed as possible. We will also need photos. So, be sure to get your reports on your Jan. 27th activities in to the NO right away. These reports should include what happened, how the action was built for (i.e. did you leaflet at the VA, at colleges, in communities, etc), and how successful was the action (i.e. was good educational work done, were new members brought into the organization, etc). We hope the Jan. 27th activities are a great success!

Work Reports

During the NSCM in St Louis, there was a good deal of discussion of the need for work reports--there is a need for chapters and regions to sum up their activities, and to get that information in to the National Office.

Probably the greatest value of the work reports is that the chapters do have to discuss their work, its strengths and its weaknesses, before such a report can be done. This means not only the major actions that the chapter puts on or takes part in, but also the day-to-day work--what are good ways to sell or otherwise use the Winter Soldier paper? How is coalition work progressing--are there useful lessons which can be learned from the way in which coalitions are put together? What are effective ways of drawing new people into the meetings of the organization? And on and on--all of this is information which we should be sharing.

The second aspect of the work reports is the need for the NO to see these reports in order to pass along the information to other chapters, and to have a basis for the positions we are putting forward. For instance, there have been several calls for definite information on the January 27th actions being planned by the organization, but, for the most part, we have only a vague idea of what is going on (though we do know from the NSCM that most chapters or regions are planning some kind of actions). Very few chapters now get us the information that we need in order to do the best possible job for all of us and the organization as a whole; while people accepted the obligation to summarize their work and get us the reports during the NSCM, we have seen very little since then. So, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

International Week of Concern in London

The London Chapter of VVAW/WSO was one of the groups sponsoring a Vietnam Vigil during the International Week of Concern in front of the American Embassy in London; the Week of Concern was held late in England because of the election campaign which was going on during the earlier date. Universal, unconditional amnesty for all war resisters was one of the demands put forward.

During that same week, a group of 30 US Senators and Congressmen were in London attending the 20th annual session of the North Atlantic Assembly. Letters

were hand delivered to six of those in attendance, offering them the opportunity to discuss amnesty with exiles first-hand. There was zero response.

The following week, the Democratic Party in the United Kingdom had an annual meeting, followed by a cocktail-party reception for visiting Senators Humphrey and McGovern. Fritz Efaw (from whom this information comes) attended the reception in order to raise the amnesty issue with the senators personally. "Both senators were non-commital on the subject, insisting that amnesty was an executive issue, and not something to be dealt with by Congress. My encounter with Sen Humphrey was very brief, and although I spoke with Sen McGovern for several minutes, asking his advice, he offered none, and seemed to me to be rather ill-at-ease by the imposition of having to talk to a draft dodger."

(A parenthetical note followed, also from Fritz: "A couple of right schmucks they are, too, and the same in spades for all their dhampagne swilling friends from Hampstead and Belgravia.")

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Follow-up Work with Perspective VVAW/WSO Members

We have received a number of suggestions from chapters that we include some of the basic tactics used in outreach and recruiting--concrete suggestions which have worked in particular chapters. In order to do so, we obviously need your input. What follows is a brief description of the methods used by the Chicago chapter for follow-up on those people who express an interest in the organization.

The chapter does most of its work at the VA Hospital, which also serves as the regional VA office; people are there with Winter Soldiers at least three days a week, often more. Because they have been doing this work consistently over the past four or five months, the people going in and out of the hospital have come to know the chapter members. Both employees and patients are interested in the work that the organization is doing, and there are a number of good discussions which go on with the people selling the paper.

The chapter has developed a two-part form, one part to be given to the people they talk with (with the name, address, and phone number of the chapter, plus the time and address of meetings); the other section is filled out by the chapter member and includes name, address, phone number, place where the person was met, and a section for comments. These forms are then given to one person, evaluated as to which people are most interested; everyone is called and/or visited at their homes where there is more discussion about what the organization is doing and about the particular problems the individual is having with the VA. All chapter members are involved in this process; because of the number of people the chapter talks to in any given week, it is not possible to visit them all (that's the point of the evaluation by the chapter steering committee).

As part of the program, the chapter has divided its meetings into business meetings (which take care of the chapter activities and plans), and more general political discussion meetings (for instance, discussion of a couple of articles in the paper); new people are encouraged to come to the general meetings (so as not to be scared off by the details of the chapter work) and then, when they decide to get involved in the work of the chapter, brought into the chapter business meetings.

The success of the program is based on at least two lessons--first, that the direct contact with people came over a period of time at the VA, of consistent, day-to-day work. Second, that follow-up is at least as important as the initial contact, and that the phone calls and visits also require consistent, day-to-day efforts.

National Office Reports

"Trial of Billy Jack"

At the St. Louis NSCM, the National Office was criticized for not having reviewed the movie, "Trial of Billy Jack" as it had been offered to a limited number of chapters for fundraising purposes. We accepted that criticism, and since the meeting, two members of the NO have seen the film. Before presenting their analysis, it should be pointed out that we feel that fundraising (and film showing) is political, and how it is done and what politics are put forward is important. It is not easy to get good films that reflect anti-imperialist politics all the time, and sometimes we must settle for films that do not point out the nature of the system of imperialism, but do in fact expose certain aspects of oppression and exploitation of the system.

In this light, we must say that the "Trial of Billy Jack" does little to expose the system or even aspects of it. Even when the film does take up how the system has and is exploiting and killing masses of people, it turns our anger at the system away from attacking the real enemy and instead, attacks the broad masses of the American people, particularly working people. The very first scenes expose the true nature of this movie. Here, Billy Jack is testifying on the witness stand at his trial about how he became disillusioned with America. He says it was not

the slaughter at My Lai which turned him off, but the supposed fact that the American people made a "hero" out of Lt. Calley. And this kind of theme runs throughout the movie. It is the masses of people, imperialists and workers alike (especially white workers) who are the enemy. It is the "animal in them," a concept which totally negates that there are armed struggles that are just and correct, a concept which characterizes peoples' war as fruitless and bestial, while praising the mystical. There is nothing in the film about the outrage and massive movement of the American people to end the war and have the real war criminals punished.

The film continues to distort reality as it goes along. As we cheer Billy Jack's karate attacks on the reactionaries of the community (which is just about every white person in the town), the producers sent the clear message that fighting back against oppression is the real cause of humanities' problems, that any kind of struggle, be it armed or just militant, is the result of evil. Every time Billy kicks the shit out of some bad guy, the local guru figure comes forward with pious nonsense about how Billy is now an animal and has fallen from the "true path" of peace. Jean, as this person is called in the film, ' constantly tries to get Billy to renounce armed struggle, even struggle itself, and she is passed off as having attained the highest level of human behavior -- perfect pacifism.

Billy is told that he must purge the "white man" in him. This insidious idea, that everything evil is inherently white or vice versa, is done under the guise of following the teachings of Native Americans and their "supposed" philosophy of life. We found this to be one of the more outrageous distortions of the move. The Native American people have a proud history of armed resistance to the encroachments of capitalism and imperialism. Hundreds of thousands of Indian people have died defending their homeland, and now this film belittles and drags this history in the dirt. Is it the "white man" in Black people that makes them rebel against the conditions they live under in this country? That's what the film would have us believe.

The movie pits everyone against each other; while never showing the people uniting against the system. Young are against the old, students against workers, whites are against non-whites; and only the ruling class is presented as united. It is not the unity of the people nor their understanding of the system and the struggle against it that will win the day, but some neato exposés done by the hotshot reporters that work at Jean's Freedom school. The film says that making politicians honest and having some puny reforms made will make everything nice. But if these "Ralph Nader" tactics could bring down the system, we must ask why Nader is still alive. The system did not hesitate to murder Malcolm X or Fred Hampton when they began to identify the real enemy and organized people to fight back. And the system will not hesitate to murder or suppress any person or movement that effectively organizes against it.

Basically, while identifying real problems that the people face, the film turns the lessons that the masses have learned through struggle upside down. That is its danger and why we feel that it is not very good for our organization, even for fundraising. If it was just reform in nature, we would not be so reticent, but it does not push even reforms. It pushes individualism and mysticism, ideas the ruling class has no problem with. Although the makes of the film did not conscious-

ly set out to bolster the oppression and exploitation that exist under imperialism, objectively, that is what they end up doing in the "Trial of Billy Jack."

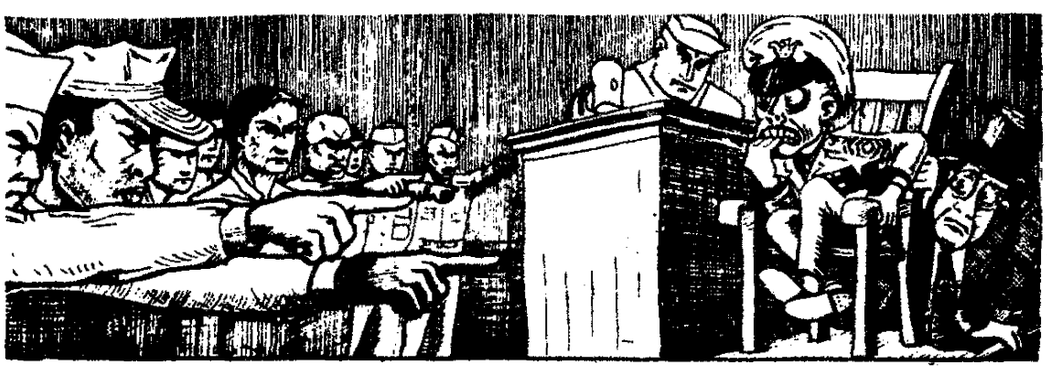
We seriously hope that this will be the last of the Billy Jack series. The vision of sitting through "Conquest of the Planet of Billy Jack" is enough to cause serious heart trouble.

G.I. Organizing -- Draft Program

The G.I. Draft Program, accepted by the National Steering Committee in St. Louis, has recently been mailed to chapters. The paper has two basic sections: (1) Parts I-V are the portion of the paper for discussion. This was not designed to be voted upon, but included to promote discussion within the chapters on G.I. work; (2) Parts VI-VII are the actual program and campaign proposal adopted by the NSCM for the GI work of VVAW/WSO during the next six months.

Chapters that are in the process of implementing the program, or plan to do so soon, should send in regular summations of their work to the National Office so that this information can be disseminated to all of the other GI projects.

In addition, it would be helpful to the NO in preparing GI News to have full details on struggles going on within the military as soon as possible. Also, we need decent graphics and photos to accompany these articles. GI News is for the organization and the organization has to support it with materials and information.



Guidelines on Reserve and National Guard Work

The much needed and requested guidelines and suggestions for doing Reserve and Guard work is nearing completion. All that is now needed is in-put from those chapters who have recently begun to work in these areas. While we realize that an in-depth analysis of that work isn't possible in most cases due to limited experience, any suggestions or experiences may significantly add to some areas we have missed. ANY REPORTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED AND MAILED IMMEDIATELY SO WE CAN INCLUDE IDEAS INTO THE REPORT.

Dues

Again, the report for dues paid to the National Office is rather sad. Only five chapters have paid dues for the month of January. We realize that the month is not over and that many people are having trouble funding their own activities. However, we believe that if these five chapters can pay their dues (Los Angeles, New York City, Buffalo, San Jose and Providence), then so can all the other chapters.

At the last NSCM, there was a good discussion on how to democratize the voting procedure of the organization, so that NSCMs will be more representative of the will of the organization. Key to this was the idea that to have a vote in the organization, a member or chapter must pay for the functioning of the organization -- at all levels. This will mean that votes at future NSCMs, when the new procedures are voted on, will be based on the amount of dues collected by the National Office over a given period of time.

However, we find it rather sad that the only reason that people would pay dues is to acquire votes. That is not the idea. Instead, the major reason is to support the organization and its work and to make sure that it will continue to function. The National Office, nor the rest of VVAW/WSO, will survive (especially with the developing economic crisis, if members do not see the importance of paying their dues.

Brian Adams Doing Alternative Service

Brian Adams is doing his alternative service in Riverside, California. As stated in the proposal on alternative service, national coordinators may do their service at a National Project. In order to help on the Gary Lawton trial, as well as working with the Inland Empire chapter, Brian arrived in Riverside on Jan. 10th. He will be back in the NO around the first of February.

Amnesty Pamphlets Reprinted

The amnesty pamphlet has been reprinted and is ready for chapters which can make use of it. It is only slightly changed from the earlier editions, and the price is the same--10¢ each to chapters, and 25¢ each to the general public. If at all possible, please pre-pay orders for the pamphlet.

Draft Working Paper; Principles of Unity and the Imperialism Definition

Both of these issues are discussed in the minutes of the St Louis NSCM. The concept of the workshop is that people will begin with the draft working paper and the NYC and NY Regional proposals around changing the organizational by-laws; discussion of these papers and changes which chapters and regions feel should be made, should be given to regional delegates to the interim committee meeting, where a final draft working paper will be hammered out. That will then go back to the chapters and regions for further discussion, and be

voted on at the next NSCM in July. Each region is to select one delegate and one alternate to attend the interim committee meeting, to be held in Chicago sometime in late March (we also need ideas from regions and chapters about the date--Easter is the 30th of March, but Vietnam Veterans Day is the 29th when most people would probably prefer to be working in their regions). Input from chapters and regions, particularly if they do not feel they will be able to send delegates to that meeting, should be sent to the NO. A full set of the documents--the draft working paper, incorporating both changes from the workshop and some changes proposed by the NO; and the NYC and NY State proposals will be sent out within the next few weeks.

The proposal around principles of unity and definition of imperialism will be handled the same way; the proposal from Northern Illinois-Iowa will be mailed out along with the Draft Working Paper. One delegate and one alternate should be chosen by each region to attend the meeting of the interim committee; this is a separate committee from that which will draft the working paper, though, for the convenience of people who have to travel, we are planning to hold the two interim committee meetings at the same time in Chicago. This interim committee will arrive at a consensus on wording of principles of unity and the definition of imperialism (to include majority and minority positions, if necessary); these will then go back to the chapters and regions for discussion and vote at the next NSCM.

"Anyone care to give again to Vietnam. . . ?"

Winter Soldier Bills

Bills are being sent out with the latest shipment of WS, based on the position taken at the NSCM that it is the political obligation of chapters to pay for the paper. This amounts to 5¢ per paper received. NOTE: This is different from the idea put out in earlier newsletters that chapters should pay 5¢ per paper sold. The reasoning behind this change is that no matter what a chapter does with the papers, we still have to pay 5¢ per copy to the printer. The NO was also given the responsibility to make sure that chapters do pay for the paper in order to continue to receive shipments.

We understand that chapters and regions have worthwhile uses for the papers other than selling them--giving them away, postering with them, sending them out to mailing lists, etc. And we understand the political importance of getting the paper out to people and do not want curtail that outreach if it is at all avoidable. We think that the proceeds of one out of five papers (which is what 5¢ each amounts to) is a reasonable expectation. We do not, however, intend to be unnecessarily hardline, so long as we can still afford to get the paper out. If, for some reason, you feel that paying the 5¢ per issue received would be impossible and would curtail necessary outreach, let us know and we'll negotiate.

Third Class Mailing

A large third class mailing went out from the NO during the week of Jan 13th, and either has, or soon will arrive. A cover letter with that mailing explains most of what is there. One item was added after the letter had been written--the National Office response to the letter from the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. This copy is being sent to VVAW/WSO chapters before it goes out to other organizations. Included with that letter is a copy of the NSC resolution concerning the Alliance, and a letter which will go out with the main response explaining our inability to get a list of the members of the Alliance from Charlene Mitchell, Executive Secretary of the Alliance.

We sent copies of the minutes of the GI Work Weekend and the Draft GI Program to chapters which we know have an interest in that work, and as many other chapters as we had copies--if you did not get a copy and want one, let us know at the NO.

Information Requests

Contributions for Winter Soldier; Information on Vets

There was a lot of discussion at the St. Louis NSCM on how to improve the national newspaper. We have tried to implement some of the suggestions in this February issue of Winter Soldier, but in order to make W.S. more effective, it also takes the help of the chapters. The things we need most are materials for articles, photos and graphics. As has happened in the past, we spent a good deal of time tracking down stories, calling chapters for information, etc. It would be much easier if chapters would offer us information for articles, rather than us having to search around for things. If there is a struggle going on in your area which you feel we should be aware of for possible inclusion in the newspaper, get us the details. Along with this, photos are essential. There was a lot of talk in St. Louis about the responsibilities of the chapters to politically support the newspaper and this includes getting information to the NO. Though we realize there has not been much time since the NSCM to correct past practice, we were somewhat disturbed that only one region took the initiative to call us about an action the region had participated in (the Columbus demo). We are hoping that this coming issue of

the paper will be different and that many more regions will contribute. We can't print everything that a chapter might send in and have to weigh the importance of different stories, but at the moment, there is very little to weigh at all. So, please take some more responsibility for the newspaper by getting information to the NO.

Along these same lines, we need all sorts of information on the struggles of veterans. We feel the necessity to make W. S. speak to the masses of veterans and GIs, and to do this, we need materials relating to their struggles. We have heard many interesting stories about the problems vets are having with the VA, with getting jobs, etc. but we need more of this information. We are aware that many chapters are involved with regular work at the VA and that chapter members talk with veterans who are having problems several times a week. But we rarely receive the contents of those discussions. You may think that the story of what is happening with one vet is not important enough to pass along, but when you put all these stories together, we can begin to see trends and put out much better information on the nature of the struggle of veterans. Along with this, there is a great deal of research to be done on veterans, and we can't do it all alone. So, we would ask that chapters begin to seriously look into the problems of vets, including getting a hold of government statistics, compiled figures, etc. and send everything they have and discover into the National Office so we can get the information back out to people. We need just about everything you can come up with. We can't do all the research ourselves and we aren't in a position of having daily contact with vets to talk with them and find out their problems. So, the responsibility lies with the chapters to feed us all the information they come across -- no matter how insignificant it may seem.

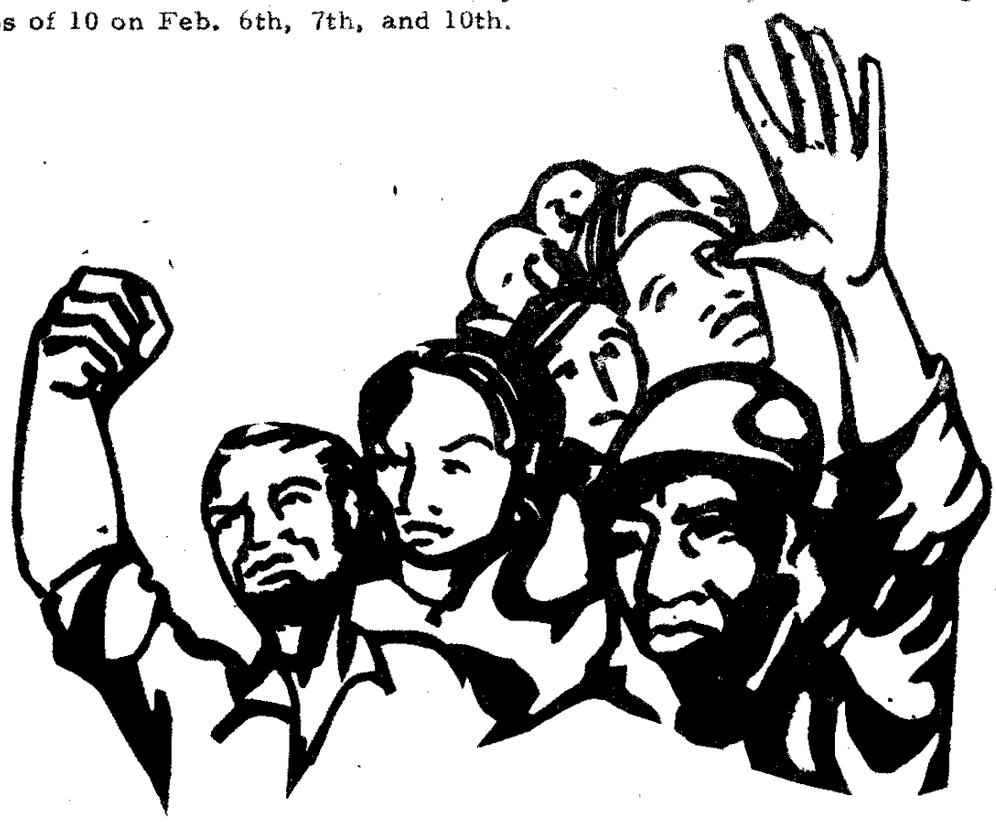
Information on Good Films

With the Jan. 27th actions coming up, we have been asked by some chapters about good films on Indochina. Many films cost a good deal of money to rent, and if chapters can't afford them, we need a source of cheap, good films for us to use. We haven't seen all the films that are floating around and can't make any kind of judgment as to their content. So, if your chapter has shown or seen films which would help us in our work and which have good political content, let us know. This regards films of all kinds -- not just on Indochina. We know that some chapters are involved in regular film showings, and it would be a big help if they could send us the names, prices and where to get a hold of those films which have been most successful and which have good politics.

New Cutbacks for Vets?

We have received word from one of the chapters that the local VA is cutting back on payments to disabled vets and vets on pensions as a result of the recent 5% hike in social security payments. These veterans are being called in to this particular VA and are being cutback by as much as 50%! We would like chapters that have contacts in local VAs to find out if this is being done elsewhere and to be able get back to us as soon as possible with any information that you might be able to gather concerning these cutbacks.

FLASH!!

29 Arrested at Ruchell Magee Support Demo

During the sentencing of Ruchell Magee on Jan. 23rd at the Santa Clara County Courthouse in San Jose, 50-60 people were demonstrating outside the courthouse with chants of "Free Ruchell -- It's Right to Rebel!" Police came in to break up the demonstration and 29 people were arrested and charged with picketing within 1/2 mile of a courthouse. Three of those arrested are VVAW/WSO members (from the San Jose and Santa Cruz chapters). Other organizations participating in the demonstration were Revolutionary Union, Sedition (an underground newspaper) Revolutionary Student Brigade and Wei Min She. All but about two of the demonstrators were released from jail on OR. They will be arraigned in groups of 10 on Feb. 6th, 7th, and 10th.